

**ELEMENTS OF PERFORMANCE IN TODDOBOBAX CEREMONY OF SOMALI
PEOPLE OF KENYA.**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this project is my original work and has not been submitted for the award of a degree in any university.



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DEDICATION
To Allah (SW)

Alhmdhulilah for all the blessings.

To my parents

My father, Hussein Ibrahim and my mother, Halima Abdulkadir your prayers, unwavering support and constant motivations are what gave me strength through all challenges. You are both my biggest blessing.

To my siblings

Hanan Hussein, Fatma Hussein, Nafisa Hussein, Yahya Hussein and Mohammed Ismail for the love and support. I love you all to bits.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	vii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
DEFINITION OF THE TERMS.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study	2
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	7
1.3 Objectives	7
1.4 Hypothesis.....	7
1.5 Research Questions.....	8
1.6 Justification of the Study	8
1.7 Scope and Limitation	9
1.8 Literature review.....	9
1.9 Theoretical framework.....	16
1.9.1 Ethnopoetics Theory	17
1.9.2 Performance Theory.....	18
1.9.3 Postmodern Theory	20
1.10 Research Methodology	20
1.11 Chapter Outline.....	22
CHAPTER TWO: THE ELEMENTS OF PERFORMANCE IN TODDOBABAX CEREMONY AMONG THE SOMALI PEOPLE OF KENYA.	23
2.1 Introduction.....	23
2.2 Structure of performance	24
2.3 The Space.....	28
2.4 Performers of <i>Toddobobax</i> Ceremony.....	29
2.5 The Costumes and Props.....	33
2.6 Song	35

2.7 Conclusion	43
----------------------	----

CHAPTER THREE: TRANSFORMATIONS OF TODDOBABAX WEDDING

CEREMONY PERFORMANCE AMONG KENYA SOMALI.....	45
-----------------------------------------------------	-----------

3.1 Introduction.....	45
-----------------------	----

3.1 Modernisation and <i>Toddobobax</i>	47
-----------------------------------------------	----

3.2 The effects of Migration on <i>Toddobobax</i> performances.....	50
---------------------------------------------------------------------	----

3.3 The shifting of the ritual structure	54
------------------------------------------------	----

3.4 Dialogue and the Preservation of Tradition in <i>Toddobobax</i>	56
---------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

3.5 The <i>Toddobobax</i> Shifting Performance Space	58
------------------------------------------------------------	----

3.6 The Evolving <i>Toddobobax</i> Costume and Décor.....	59
-----------------------------------------------------------	----

3.7 The Recorded SONG and DJ in the <i>Toddobobax</i> Performance	61
-------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

3.8 Borrowing and Emerging Choreographies in <i>Toddobobax</i> DANCE	66
----------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

3.9 Conclusion	69
----------------------	----

CHAPTER FOUR.....	70
--------------------------	-----------

CONCLUSION	71
-------------------------	-----------

WORKS CITED.....	72
-------------------------	-----------

APPENDICES	78
-------------------------	-----------

Appendix I: songs	78
-------------------------	----

Appendix II: Meaning of Somali words	85
--------------------------------------------	----

Appendix III: Pictures	87
------------------------------	----

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the elements of performance present in *the Toddobobax* ceremony. The ceremony is a post-wedding ritual and is the last stage of the Somali wedding process. *Toddobobax* which takes place on the seventh day after the wedding is a women's only ceremony. Its purpose is to celebrate the bride becoming a married woman. The study applies three theories; performance theory highlights the elements of performance in *the Toddobobax*. Secondly, the study uses Ethnopoetics theory in highlighting the rhythm of the songs, intonation and stress. The study deploys qualitative research methods for data collection. I employed the use of interviews, observation and participation to gather materials. Finally, postmodern theory is employed to analyze the transformations of *Toddobobax* performance. In this research therefore, I examine the elements of performance that makes this ritual a drama such as; structure of the performance, space, performers, costumes and props. The study seeks to add to the body of knowledge by analyzing the cultural elements of the Somali community through this particular performed art. This study also investigated changes *Toddobobax* performance has undergone to remain relevant in the modern world. The changes in the elements of performance can be noted in the structure of the ceremony, the space and the modification of costumes and props. The study therefore will help in evaluating adaptations in a changing society.

DEFINITION OF THE TERMS

Ritual performance A sequence of activities involving specific gestures, words and objects performed in a specific place for the purpose of achieving a certain goal or interest.

Toddobobax ceremony. This is a post wedding ceremony of the Somali people. The ceremony is held seven days after wedding. This is to pray for the bride's future.

Drama refers to the actions which are enacted. Elements of drama include, character, themes, sequence of events, spectacles, mimes, dialogue and music. Social drama is a social performative event performed by a group of people who share similar beliefs, interest and value. In a social drama there must be a breach, crisis, redress and reincorporation.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The Somali people belong to the Cushitic group and are found in four countries; Djibouti, Somalia, part of Ethiopia and Kenya. They are divided into clans which are known as *Qabil*. Putman Briton, Diana, and Mohamood Cabdi Noor in “The Somalis. Their history and culture” point out that “clans constitute the heart of Somali society” (2). The clans are headed by the sultans, who are responsible for the decision-making process; they solve issues and are very influential members of the community. According to Putman and Noor:

Somalis are primarily divided between the *Sab* and *Samaale*. The *Samaale* are the majority of the Somali people and consist of the four main clan families the *Dir*, *Isaaq*, *Hawiye* and *Daarood* and they are further divided into sub clans. They live in Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti and Somalia, they are nomads while the *Sab* are located in southern Somalia where they mix farming and herding. (13)

In Kenya, the Somali people reside in the Eastern and North-Eastern parts of the country. The majority of the clans found in Kenya are *Ogaden*, *Dogodia*, *Garee*, *Ajuraan* and *Murale*. Since the civil war in Somalia in 1991 other Somali clans have also moved to Kenya. The Somali are traditionally a pastoralist and nomadic community. They keep camels, goats, sheep and cattle. Traditionally, the Somali culture holds livestock in high regard as the animals serve as the measure of wealth. Animals are used to pay the bride price.

Somali are largely polygamous and the men were tasked with duties such as protection and the defense of both their families and the community. Men were further expected to build fences and stock pens. Women were responsible for taking care of the family, educating children, dismantling and erecting houses. Boys were in charge of herding while girls helped their mothers with domestic duties.

The wedding process of Somali people is similar to other Cushitic tribes. The *Toddobobax* performance is a common practice among the Somali people it is also celebrated in other Cushitic groups such as the Oromo and the Borana. The ceremony similarly happens after seven days. Although they are similar to Somali people there are variations for instance they don't have the *shaash saar* ceremony like the Somali people.

Taylor Allison in "Somali Diasporic Social Spaces as Communal Responses to War and Displacement," notes that in Somali culture, the process of becoming married happens in a series of steps and the said steps follow an ideal path. *Toddobobax* is the last step and after the ceremony, the bride and the groom are now welcomed into the society as a married couple (225). The different marriage processes start from the point when the boy and the girl are deemed age-appropriate for marriage. The boy even dresses in a certain way so that he can express his interest in finding a bride, he can also declare to his peers his interest in finding a bride. The boy who is searching for a bride is known as *guurdoon* (he who is looking for marriage). The girls and boys who are age appropriate for marriage can also at times join in some dances held at the home of the newlyweds, this is one way they interact as they (young) are encouraged to interact freely. from the dances, the interaction can lead to courtship. There are various ways of finding a

spouse it can also be arranged by the family and in other cases, a couple can elope (Mohamed Abdullahi in "Culture and customs of Somalia" 128).

The *Doonis* is the first stage which is the engagement stage, the grooms family goes to the bride's family to ask for her hand in marriage. The groom is accompanied by his father or uncles. They present a gift for the bride's family. When the two families agree the preparations for the celebrations begin. The *Nikhaa* stage is the second step, this is the Islamic wedding ceremony. The third stage is the *aroots* stage can happen on the same day as *Nikhaa* or the next day. Finally, the last stage *Toddobobax* which takes place after the *aroots* ceremony.

Toddoboobax is derived from two Somali words; *Toddobo* meaning seven in the Somali language and *bax* which means to emerge. The ceremony is a post-wedding ritual that takes place either after seven days or three days when the bride and the groom will be coming out from seclusion. If the wedding is the first for the bride, she is expected to stay seven days after the wedding and if the bride is on her second marriage then she can stay in seclusion for three days. For seven days after marriage when the couple is in isolation. The bride's family can host ceremonies in the evenings and everyone is invited especially the young. However, on the seventh day which is the *Toddobobax* ritual, only the women can attend the function.

The ceremony is an all-women event, it is prepared by women and only women get to attend the celebration. It is sacred because the main purpose of the ceremony is not only to usher in the new bride as a woman but also to pray for her lineage and new life as a married woman. The main purpose of a marriage in Somali community was the continuation of the lineage. In the Somali

culture, the marriage is not just between a bride and the groom or even the family but also involves the larger community. Sadia Ahmed in "*Traditions of Marriage and the Household*," notes the importance of marriages to the Somali community. They emphasize how marriage is mandatory in the community and also in the Islam religion; the dominant religion for the Somali people. Marriage is viewed as a process that will ensure the continuation of a lineage and that is why it is highly advocated for by society (51).

In most African cultures, there are ceremonies for different occasions. Rituals in ceremonies play the role of fostering relationships, reaffirming acceptable behaviours in the society and act as identity formation fields for the members of the society. Van Gennep in *Rites of Passage* defines rituals as events that accompany every change of age or status of the participants. He views the rite of passage as a life cycle. Wedding ceremonies are considered rites of passage. This is because it marks a person's movement from one group to the next.

Victor Turner defines ritual as "prescribed formal behaviour for the occasion not given over to technical routine (but) having reference to beliefs and mystical beings and powers" (19). The importance of the ritual is to restore and reinforce identity. From this definition, we can look at the whole Somali wedding process as a ritual. *Toddobobax* as the final ceremony is when the bride and groom are integrated back in the society as a married couple. Mohamed Abdullahi in "Culture and customs of Somalia" posits that, "In the Somali language the word *guur* has two meanings, to marry and to move away. Marriage is therefore viewed as both a rupture and a renewal" (119). Abdullahi sees marriage as a rupture and a renewal because the wedding ceremony can be viewed as a factor of reinforcing the identity of the bride and groom. Similarly,

Turner explains the three stages of rituals; Separation, liminal and transition. Rapture can be viewed as the Separation and liminal stage; the bride and the groom have lost their previous status and they are in between. Finally, the renewal is viewed as transition they are reintegrated into the society and they have a new status.

The *Toddobobax* ceremony as the last process of a Somali wedding includes performances such as dance and songs with specific costumes. The study focuses on how the *Toddobobax* performance is adapting to the modern world while still retaining its relevance. Therefore, the study seeks to investigate how *the Toddobobax* ceremony has evolved due to modernization and/or migration.

Performance is central to oral literature as it is only through performance that oral literature is realized. Ruth Finnegan in *Oral Literature in Africa*, asserts, "Performance is the basic characteristic of oral literature even though it is constantly overlooked in collections and analyses" (4). This is similar to what Joseph Muleka in "Images of Women in Abakhayo Bweya Oral Poetry and their Social significance for Girl Children." Muleka points out. He says that performance plays a central role and that if it is absent, the existence of oral work will be doubtful (3).

There is an intersection between rituals and drama. The history of drama is connected to rituals such as the Greek ancient drama heavily borrows from the Dionysus rituals. Traditional African drama has been disregarded and looked down upon since some scholars have argued that drama did not exist prior to colonization. However, the assertion has been challenged by several

scholars who prove that Africa had a form of drama in the various festivals, ceremonies and rituals.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There exists a strong link between ritual and drama. Ritual, in performance studies, is classified under Social drama which is recognized as a precursor to aesthetic drama. Rituals, despite fulfilling a social role, still retain their aesthetic aspects of performance. *Toddobobax* as a social drama is performed to welcome the bride into the 'married women circle'. Ritual performances (as a social drama) and aesthetic drama (stage performances) are products of society therefore subject to social and economic changes. To this end, songs as a genre that is integrated into social drama because of their ability as a socializing agent are the most versatile element in ritual as it is easily absorbs change in society. This study investigates elements of performance in *the Toddobobax* ceremony among the Somali of Kenya. It also evaluates the performance and the dynamic changes and adaptations caused by modernization and migration

1.3 Objectives

The study aims at achieving the following objectives.

1. To interrogate the aspects of performance present in *the Toddobobax* ceremony.
2. To explore how the *Toddobobax* performance has been shaped by modernization.

1.4 Hypothesis

The study presupposes that

1. *Toddobobax* has elements of performance present.
2. *Toddobobax* has changed in the modern world due to modernization and (or) migration.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What are the aspects of performance present in *Toddobobax*?
2. How has the performance been shaped by modernization and migration?

1.6 Justification of the Study

A study of *the Toddobobax* ceremony could offer us an opportunity to access the Somali culture. This in turn will help in understanding the Somali community and will foster integration into the global community. The study seeks to add to the body of knowledge by analyzing the cultural elements of the Somali community through this particular performed art. Hassan Dahabo et al in, “Somalia: Poetry as resistance against colonialism and patriarchy” note when it comes to the documentation of Somali oral literature not much has been done on the Somali women oral literature. She attributes this to the fact that people do not consider literature by women and the subject they discuss as being as important as that of the men. This has contributed to the recording of oral literature from women being overlooked. It is evident in this case where very little has been written about the *Toddobobax* ceremony which is strictly an all-women event. The study is important because *Toddobobax* is pivotal to the Somali community. Therefore, the study will help in evaluating adaptations in a changing society.

1.7 Scope and Limitation

This study is limited to Somali people in Kenya and it was conducted in Nairobi. I was interested in interrogating the elements of performance in *the Toddobobax* ceremony and how it has changed due to modernization and migration. The study mainly focuses on attributes of performance in *the Toddobobax* ceremony.

1.8 Literature review

The literature review section examines the aspects of the performances of *Toddobobax* performance and how it has shifted due to modernization and migration. According to Taylor in *Somali Diasporic Social Spaces as Communal Responses to War and Displacement* argues that weddings in Somali are mostly organised and run by women. She notes how to get married in Somali tradition is a process, first, it starts with *Doonis* stage which is the betrothal stage, and this includes the preparation of the marital home which is mostly done by the women from the groom's side. The second stage is *Nikaax* or *Nikah* which is the official wedding and except in special cases, it is mostly men who are present. On the same day, women can have an evening event called *Aroos*, this is the evening party it includes singing and dancing. later after seven-day seclusion a ceremony that occurs on the seventh day of the marriage this is the *Toddobobax* ceremony. Taylor emphasized how the Somali marriage there is no mixing. The women have a separate celebration and the men also have their celebration.

Guerin, Elmi and Guerin in "Weddings and parties: cultural healing in one community of Somali Women" note how traditional Somali weddings would have been the grandest event in the community since they were closely interlinked and spend the most of the time together. Women are described as being central in the wedding process they are involved in planning, cleaning and decorating. Henna is important for the wedding process and the women will spend hours applying it on their hands and feet. Music is important in Somali wedding ceremonies and it is normally accompanied by dance. Guests must participate in dancing as this is regarded as a sign

of respect to the bride and therefore the guests will dance with vigor to show appreciation (2). Guerin and Guerin compare with how the celebration has changed since moving to New Zealand as the weddings have evolved as now they hire a band. Nowadays, weddings are even held in hotels. They further highlight how the wedding parties provided a safe, comfortable place for the women similarly (3).

Taylor, Gurein, Elim and Gurein seem to concur on the argument that Somali weddings take place in a series of processes and that the wedding hall becomes a social space. The scholars mostly focus on the *Aroos* part of the marriage process looking at the ceremony in the diaspora. They mention the seventh-day celebration but do not discuss the performance of Toddobobax ceremony.

Bonnie Washuk in "Tying the Knot: Somali wedding adheres to tradition," notes, that traditional Somali wedding celebrations are usually open for everyone. There is no need for an invitation. This brings the community together. Washuk further highlights the different marriage ceremonies which are similar to Taylor's discussion on the different marriage processes. Yvonne Otieno in "Somali Weddings" discusses the significance of weddings in Somali culture. She notes how wedding in Somali culture is central as she points out how it unifies two families and not just the couple. A wedding allows the community to inscribe itself into the future hence a sense of continuity. He further explains how in Somali culture marriage can either be arranged or be as a result of personal choice. The groom's family has to bring specific numbers of camels, a horse and a gun to the bride's family as a gift in the traditional Somali wedding. This was a sign of respect to the bride's family (1). Washuk and Bonnie research were beneficial to my study as

they focused on the importance of weddings in Somali culture my study went a step further to specifically explain the Toddobobax performance.

Mukhtar Haji in his article "Main Characteristics and Categories of Kenyan Somali Poems," Discusses the importance of poems in the marriage process in the Somali community. He explains how poems are used to communicate, "What is expected of both for the bride and the groom" (29). A poem, for instance, can explain an advice from the mother to the bride on what is expected of her as a married woman now (30). In the *Toddobobax* performance Songs/oral poetry are used to communicate the expectations in the society for the bride and also as a form of entertainment as are accompanied by dance.

According to Anthony Graham White in *Ritual and Drama in Africa*, presents the relationship between rituals and drama. He asserts that they overlap in terms of form and function; he states how it's not a surprise since a great deal of drama almost certainly originates in ritual. He further emphasized that most traditional drama included songs and elements of dance with few exceptions (348). Graham's argument is relevant to my study since I was examining how Toddobobax ritual is a drama.

African indigenous ceremonies have been classified as drama as they have aspects of performance present. However, there has been a debate as to whether they qualify as drama. Some scholars argue that Africa did not have drama present before colonialism. Finnegan states that Indigenous drama was not well developed as it did not have dramatic elements. She described the performances as "Quasi dramatic" (485). Her arguments have been refuted by

scholars who argue that Africa had drama before colonialism and that the drama was well developed.

Janet Kangogo in "The Elements of Drama in Koito a Traditional Wedding Ceremony among the Tugen People of Baringo Kenya," observes that there is a presence of drama in Koito wedding ceremony of the Tugen people which was performed by the community before the coming of the Europeans. Similarly, Wasambo Were in Ph.D. thesis, "A Traditional Ritual Ceremony as Edurama A Case Study of Imbalu Ritual Among The Bukusu of Western Kenya" argues:

Denial of African drama was closely related to the denial of African literature. At the advent of colonialism in Africa, there was the belief that African literature had to be written. Oral Literature was for instance not studied in Kenyan schools until 1982 because it was not considered as literature (35).

Robert Nixon in his book "*Reception Theory and African Oral Literature: The Question of performance*," states "Non-Western Oral literature is still sometimes roundly dismissed on the ground that they are 'primitive' and 'ritualistic' than their western written counterpart" (53).

Solomon Yamma in his thesis "The Dramatic and Theatrical Aesthetics of Izara Traditional Initiation Festival of Amo People of North Central Nigeria," similarly notes how due to western hegemony the Africans have been marginalized and their culture suppressed that is the reason Indigenous African performances barely gain any recognition (1). The critics have all refuted Finnegan's claim that drama did not exist in Africa precolonial. They showed how festivals and ceremonies that existed in Africa had elements of drama present. My study was investigating elements of drama in *Toddobobax* ceremony.

Abdullahi Ayinde in "Aspects of African Oral literature and performance," posits that one feature of African oral traditional drama is divided into, narrative, prose, drama and poetry (299). He further observes how the different forms of traditional drama can overlap since they all represent the imaginative work of art. Since the performance heavily relies on orality that is presented through performance (299). Further, when looking at Ereno festivals, Ayinde notes that "African traditional drama is an ingenious expression that imitates some actions and events which are significant to people" (306). This is similar to how Austin Bukenya and Jane Nandwa in the book "*African Oral Literature for Schools*," define Oral literature as "Utterances whether spoken or recited or sung whose composition and performance exhibit characteristics of accurate observation, vivid imagination and ingenious expression" (1). *The Toddobobax* ceremony has aspects of performance like oral poems, music and they are ingenious.

Peter Omoko, in "The Dramatic and Poetic Contents of the Idju Festival of the Agbarha Ame People of Warri," highlights the elements of drama which include; imitation, dialogue, procession, mime, music, costume and props (97). *Toddobobax* ceremony similar to Idju festival all fall under the traditional drama and Omoko assertion of elements of drama are similar to *Toddobobax* performance. Ola Rotimi in "The Drama in Africa Ritual Display" Describes the aspects of drama as characterized by mime. He believed for an African festival to be accepted as drama it had to show an element of either imitation or an action (93). He was influenced by Aristotle who refers to Drama as a "memetic process." Omoko and Rotimi's research discusses the elements of drama their studies informed my research since I was investigating aspects of performance in *Toddobobax* ceremony.

Mineke Schipper In *Beyond the Boundaries: African Literature and Literary Theory*, view traditional African drama as a total event in which all present take part. The audience does take part in the performance it can either be through dancing or clapping or even singing. This is also highlighted in Camara Laye's autobiography, *The African Child*. Laye highlights the aspect of performance where the spectators also join the performance. In the novel, he gives an account of the initiation festival and narrates how that year the whole town joined the performance and they danced for a whole week (93). The line between the audience and the performers is usually blurry in traditional performances; the audience will also participate in the performance. In *Toddobobax* performance, the women who attend the ceremony, danced to show how they respect and value the bride.

Chukwuma Azuonye in “Kaalu Igirigiri: An Ohafia Igbo Singer of Tales.” highlights that the performance is central in oral literature because without performance the traditional festivals for instance would not be complete. Performance can be achieved through drums, songs, body movements and participation of the audience. He further highlights the need for a proper setting (97). Laye in his autobiography also explains the space the performance took place as being an open space that everyone was welcomed (93). Space is important as it can also be symbolic, In *Toddobobax* traditionally the space was important and specific.

Ngugi Wa Thiongo in *Decolonizing The Mind* highlights how drama in pre-colonial Kenya was elaborately describing the Ituka ceremony describes how the Kikuyus celebrated by dancing and singing over a six months period. The central features of this festival were songs, dance and occasional mimes (37). He further argues that colonization destroyed the tradition of the Africans

by making the celebrations illegal and preventing the locals from participating in it. Ngugi draws the conclusion that the indigenous festivals were all destroyed because of colonization. His study was relevant in my research as he discusses features of ceremonies however my point of departure was I focused on how the ceremonies are still relevant.

Victor Turner, when observing the ritual performance of the Ndembu people of Zambia in his text *The Drums of Affliction: A Study of Religious process among the Ndembu of Zambia, Ithaca*, notes how rituals will perish if they are not in a stable environment and the people are free from outside influence more so technology. This claim is disputed by Margret Derwal in "Ritual Performance in Africa Today," through observing the Yoruba people notes that ritual is an ongoing process and further observes how the performances are being adopted into the contemporary spaces (25). Derwal's study gave my research a basis to interrogate how *Toddobobax* ritual performance is still relevant in the modern age and how it has evolved.

Richard Schechner in *Performance Studies* observes how rituals change and he argues, "Introducing newer technology sometimes subtly and sometimes more changes the ritual. Electric lighting, microphones and more recently the use of the internet have all resulted in changes in the performance of rituals" (81). Schechner's argument is similar to Turner but for Schechner, he views how the adaptability nature of a ritual is important because it will prove that the ritual can survive. My study benefitted from Schechner's research since I was examining the changes that *Toddobobax* rituals is characterized by newer technologies like the introduction of DJs.

Peter Wasamba in “*Nyatiti and Enanga Praise Poetry in East Africa*” observes how *Nyatiti* and *Enanga* praise poetry has transformed and notes how popular *Nyatiti* and *Enanga* praise poetry is as traditional as it is contemporary. The genre has not discarded traditional features such as the use of traditional instruments, yet there are apparent modifications in themes, form, audience and performance (1). This is similar to *Toddobobax* performance which due to modernization and migration it has adapted and some apparent modifications can be noted like the oral poems *Buraanbur*.

Finnegan argues that Africa society has never been static and changes have been constant. Referring to oral literature she posits that changes are not as radical as people might think that changes have been occurring even before colonization (53). Finnegan assertion of how Africa society has never been static helps to inform my study since my interest is in interrogating how the *Toddobobax* performance has transformed due to modernization.

1.9 Theoretical framework

The study makes use of three theoretical approaches; the Ethnopoetics theory, the performance and the postmodern theory. The three theories are necessary for this study. Ethnopoetics theory was applied particularly for the transcription and translation of information, for instance; in the collection of songs. Performance theory on the other hand is used to understand the *Toddobobax* performances like observing the gestures. The postmodern theory was employed to understand how the *Toddobobax* performance has transformed due to modernization and migration.

1.9.1 Ethnopoetics Theory

Ethnopoetics is the method of recording oral poetry and narrative in form of text. Ethnopoetics uses poetic lines, verses and stanzas. This is to effectively capture the aesthetic and performance of oral poetry and Narrative that will not be captured if a text is summarized in prose form. Ethnopoetics was coined by Jerome Rothenberg. He noted how the written text on Native Americans' oral tradition failed to capture the aesthetic value of performances on the text since they were written in prose form. He further notes the fault was in the way the researchers looked through the eyes of western poetic style therefore not capturing the work well.

Dell Hymes and Dennis Tedlock used Ethnopoetics to capture and rewrite already existing texts on Native Americans' oral tradition. The two theorists made a big contribution to the way oral poetry and narrative are collected in the field. Tedlock's view on capturing the oral poetry and narrative is that when one is recording they should pay close attention to not only the verbal part but also the silence, the tonal variation, the use of facial expression and gesture, the props used. He viewed by showing the performance of the oral performance in the written text then the aesthetic value will be clear.

Dell Hymes in his research on Native Americans, transcribed texts that were already translated by restoring the texts like "The Sun Myth" in which he recaptured stylistic and poetic devices that were lost due to translation. Dell Hymes in, *Ethnopoetics, Oral-Formulaic Theory, and Editing Texts*, discussing how to record narratives viewed narrative as performance and should be organized in lines and the story should be effective. He further states, "the relation between lines and groups of lines are based on the general principle of a poetic organization called

'equivalence,' which may involve any feature of the language," (330). The characteristic of language includes alliteration, rhyme, phonetic, intonation, pauses, stress and lexico syntactic features (330). He advocated that by understanding the native language a researcher will be able to accurately translate the work. The theory of Ethnopoetics is relevant in this study this is because songs make a big part of *Toddobobax* performance and to effectively capture and translate the songs I employed Ethnopoetics. Ethnopoetics is related to performance theory.

1.9.2 Performance Theory

Performance theory is interdisciplinary, the theory is mostly associated with Richard Schechner, in his text, *Performance Theory* he views performance as “any action that is framed, presented, highlighted or displayed is as performance” (3). In “Performance studies Floating Free of Theatre” Schechner notes:

Performance might be characterized as all the actions of a particular person on a specific event that serves to have an impact in any manner on any of the other members. Taking a specific member and his performance as a fundamental perspective, we may refer to the people who participate in the different performances such as the audience, eyewitnesses, or co-performers (18).

According to Erving Goffman in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, performance theory suggests that each one of us puts on a performance in our society; through how we dress, how we converse and this communicates our place within the society (28). This is similar to Schechner's argument on how he views performance as twice behaved behaviour this he states is "physical or

verbal actions that are not for the first time prepared or rehearsed...one may not be aware they are performing a strip of restored behaviour" (22). Schechner's idea on Twice behaviour is similar to Butler and Derrida's on how they view performance as how it seeks to reinforce and communicate our identities in society.

Schechner in his text "Performance Studies," views performances as how it "marks identities, bend time, reshape and adorn the body and tell stories" (28). He was influenced by Turner who similarly drew attention to the performative nature of societies around the world. Turner viewed Ritual as performance. Turner views how rituals and ceremonies are the basis of social structure and order and how all rituals have to pass through three stages according to Van Gennep in his text *Rites of Passage*, The first stage is the participants are stripped of their social status, which is also referred to as the separation. The second stage is the participants will pass through a liminal stage. In the third stage, the participant will be integrated into society with a better status.

1.9.3 Postmodern Theory

Postmodern theory is mostly associated with post-world war II. The theory later gained attention in the late 20th Century. Postmodernism theory is interdisciplinary it ranges from different fields not only in literature but also in other fields.

Postmodernism is derived from modernism that is why some scholars argue that it is a continuation and development of modernist ideas. Other scholars have viewed postmodernism as a theory that deconstructs the ideas of modernism as Charles Lemert states that "Postmodernism is from the word modernism this is why it goes without saying that postmodernism is connected

to what is allegedly happening to modernism. Therefore, if modernism refers to the modern age then postmodernism has something to do with breaking apart of modernism" (21).

Linda Hutcheon In her book *Poetics of Postmodernism* views Intertextuality as one of the tenets of postmodern theory. According to Julia Kristeva Intertextuality is not intentional, all texts are intertextual because they are posited within the larger structure of textual forms. This is why she views that all texts are intertextual. The theory is applicable in chapter three as I interrogate how Toddobobax performance has transformed due to modernization and migration. Elements like Dance where new dance styles are developed due to interacting and borrowing from other cultures. New dances have emerged by mixing the old and new this is pastiche. Even the songs, the themes have changed as now the topics can even be political at times.

1.10 Research Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative research method to facilitate the collection of data. Qualitative research methodology is appropriate because it deals with the non-numerical set of data. It is necessary for this study. In the field research, I recorded, observed and participated in *the Toddobobax* ritual to analyze the various elements of performance. I attended four wedding ceremonies. I employed the use of camera, audio and video camera to capture performances and interviews. I interviewed an elder woman, the *Buraanbur* performing group and the bride to get more information on *Toddobobax* performance. Ethnopoetics poetry was helpful as I was able to note the rhythm of the songs, stress and intonation in *Toddobobax* performance.

Performance Theory is important in this study as it deals with arts such as festivals and rituals. This theory is applicable in chapter two and three as it explores the aspects of performance in *the*

Toddobobax ceremony. *Toddobobax* performance marks the identities of the performers as now they will be accepted as a married couple in society. *Toddobobax* being a ritual is used to unite the community and the performers' status changes. The theory highlights the performativity aspect in the ceremony through the costumes the women dress in and the songs performed. The theory of postmodernism helped in examining how the elements of performance have evolved. I employed the elements of postmodernism such as, intertextuality and pastiche to investigate the elements of performance borrowed from other cultures.

The historical method is another research method I employed because I was interested in observing how *the Toddobobax* ceremony has transformed. The historical method will help in achieving that objective. Eguzoikpe in Research Methodology asserts that the historical method of research focuses on comparison. It compares the past and the present.

1.11 Chapter Outline

Chapter One

This chapter includes; the introduction of the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, the research questions, research hypotheses, justifications of the study, scope and limitations of the study, literature review, the theoretical framework of the study and the methodology in the study.

Chapter Two

This chapter presents the aspects of performance in traditional *Toddobobax*, the post-wedding ceremony among the Kenyan Somali. These aspects are sequence of events, performers, space, spectacle, songs and dance.

Chapter Three

This chapter focuses on studying the how the *Toddobobax* performance has evolved in contemporary world among the Kenyan Somali. This includes structure of Toddobobax, performers, space, costumes, props, dialogue, songs and dance.

Chapter Four

This chapter forms the conclusion of the study. It focuses on the findings, conclusions and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 2

THE ELEMENTS OF PERFORMANCE IN *TODDOBObax* CEREMONY AMONG THE SOMALI PEOPLE OF KENYA.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents at the elements of performance found in *the Toddobobax* ceremony, which is a wedding ritual practiced by Somali people. Although *Toddobobax* is common among the different clans of the Somali people there are some variations. This study focuses on the element of *Toddobobax* performance like; the sequence of events, performance space, costumes and props, performers and spectators. *Toddobobax* as a ritual that welcomes the bride into the "marriage circle,". Songs are used as a tool in passing important information about new expectations and responsibilities that the bride has in her new life. This chapter will therefore also examine songs as an agent of socialization during the *Toddobobax* ceremony. Songs play a big role in *Toddobobax* ritual as it presents the elements of the performance.

This chapter employs performance theory in discussing the elements of performance present in *the Toddobobax* ceremony. Schechner views rituals as drama since it exhibits common attributes with other performances. He outlines the value of time, Object, rules and space as attributes shared between games, sports, plays, theatre and ritual. (6). Emile Durkheim in *The Elementary Forms of religious life* discusses the relationship between rituals and drama, he points out that rituals are similar to drama as they have similar attributes (426). Performance can be defined as "activities of an individual or group of people which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers" (37). The performances include aesthetic drama (those performed in convectional

theater spaces) to social dramas (cultural activities and rituals in the community). The *Toddobobax* ceremony would be viewed as a social drama that allows a girl to transform from the bride to a married woman. Performers in a ritual go through a series of steps to transition from one stage of life to another. In Somali marriage, it happens in a series of different ceremonies. *Toddobobax* is the last marriage ceremony the bride and the groom are accepted as a married couple. The different stages all play an important role and for the process to be complete *Toddobobax* ceremony has to take place.

Turner in his book *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti Structure*, develops Van Gennep's three stages of ritual into a theory. The stages are separation, transition/liminality and incorporation. Separation refers to the detachment of an individual or a group from the initial status. The second stage which is liminal or transition is where the individual or the group is in a state of ambiguity they are "between/betwixt" (95). The last stage is the incorporation stage where the individual or the group is now integrated into the society with a new status. Turner develops the four phases of social drama: the breach, the crisis, redress and reincorporation. The breach is when something happens that threatens the stability of social unity. Crisis on the other hand represents the widening of the breach, redressive action is done to deal with the crisis and reintegration is the resolution.

The Somali wedding is divided into four stages, the first stage is the *Doonis* stage which is the engagement stage where the groom's family asks for the hand of the bride for marriage. The boy can choose the bride or the family can decide to choose the spouse for him. If the boy has someone he is interested in marrying he has to investigate if she is already promised to another

and only then can he proceed to let his father know about his intention. The father and the son will go to the bride's house to announce their interest. If the girl's family accepts only then can they plan for the *Doonis*, this is where elders on both sides are notified. If the girl is engaged elsewhere the boy is turned down immediately.

After the *Doonis* stage, the next stage is the *Nikhaa* stage which is the contract marriage stage. This is the official marriage stage. After that then there is *Aroos* which is in the evening and it is mostly a small celebration. *Toddobobax* happens after the *Aroos* ceremony and right after the *Aroos* ceremony, the couple stays in isolation for seven days. However, throughout the days leading to *Toddobobax*, celebrations would take place at the bride's family house. The young girls and boys would meet for songs and dance for the days leading up to the *Toddobobax* ceremony (119). On the seventh day, the women will attend the *Toddobobax* ceremony. The ceremony was strictly a women-only event, this was unlike all the other ceremonies which were more flexible. The *Aroos* ceremony mixing was allowed. *The Toddobobax* ceremony was strict as only married women were allowed to participate in the ceremony.

2.2 Structure of *Toddobobax*

Aristotle emphasizes how a drama should have the beginning, the middle and the end this is referred to as plot. Plot refers to the sequence of events that make up a story. Schechner highlights time as one of the qualities of rituals. Event time he points out refers to how the activities have a set sequence and must be completed regardless of the clock time. Finnegan on the other hand emphasizes the importance of the sequence of events as one of the elements of

drama. In the Somali Wedding process, there's a set sequence that one ceremony cannot precede the next ceremony.

The different stages of marriage are all interconnected. The first stage *Doonis* is where the groom lets the family of the bride know that they are interested in the girl. If the family gives their consent then the elders on both sides are notified so they can attend the *Doonis* ceremony. The groom's family comes with *Yerat* which is the gift for the bride's family. This can be informed of livestock like camel, goats, a horse and a gun. The *Yerat* shows how the groom values the bride. After the bride's family all agree on the wedding the ceremony begins. *Yerat* is not the bride price as the bride price is usually discussed on the main wedding day which is *Nikaax/Nikhaa*. *Yerat* is given to the bride's family while bride price is given to the bride. The song below which is usually performed in the different wedding ceremonies highlight how the elders of the two families decide on the marriage. This emphasizes the communal aspect of Somali marriage as it is uniting factor.

Marwalo ged faristaye

Garadba labada belotiyo

Sokeyo kala gudomane

(The elders are seated together

They have now become a family

They all came to an agreement.)

Before the wedding, the bride's family prepares the house for the couple. The mother is usually the one in charge as in Somali culture; women were responsible for building their own house.

The couple is supposed to stay in the house for seven days and only then is the groom and his bride free to leave the place. On the other hand, the groom's family also moves his belonging to this house.

Turner refers to four main phases of ritual that present the structure of *Toddobobax* performance. The first phase is referred to as the breach by Turner his is where the bride gets married this threatens the stability since she is no longer a girl. After the wedding the couple will stay in the house for seven days, they will be isolated from the outside world which presents crisis. On the seventh day, the *Toddobobax* ceremony is held. The ceremony is held at the bride's mother's house. The purpose is to welcome the new couple as now they are recognized as married. Just before the *Toddobobax* ceremony, the bride's hair is braided by her mother or her family as they prepare for the *Toddobobax* ceremony. The ceremony is the redress phrase. The *shaash saar* is the action that takes place to resolve the conflict. She can reapply her henna if it is faded however mostly the henna is still visible.

Through *Toddobobax* the bride is accepted as a married woman and through *shaash saar* which is the main event of *Toddobobax* the bride is adorned with *shaash* by other married women in the society. This is a type of silky small scarf that only married women wear on their head. According to mama Habiba, the *Toddobobax* performance was attended by only married women from the community. The ceremony is to welcome the bride who is now a married woman in her new status. The women engage in communal activities such as making the food together and later singing and dancing this strengthens the kinship that the community shares.

Toddobobax performance starts after the women have eaten lunch, they start with *Buraanbur* performance. They praise the bride and groom with their family. When the bride arrives, a stool is placed in the middle, but before she sits down, the bride dances with the other women and later sits on the stool for *shaash saar* ceremony. The women one by one start draping the bride with a *shaash*. The older woman from the bride's family is the first one to adorn the new bride with a *shaash*. It is mostly the grandmother who starts with a prayer then she places the *shaash* on top of the bride's head. If the grandmother is not in then the mother of the bride can be the first to place the *shaash* on the head of the bride.

When *shaash* ceremony is over the bride and other guests join in dancing and singing as they all celebrate the welcoming of the new bride. The new bride is accepted as now a married woman. This represents the reincorporation phase as she is now having a new status and is accepted by other women in society. After the ceremony, the bride and groom are free now to resume their daily life.

2.3 The performance Space

Schechner explains space as "a particular place where a ceremony takes place, where the mythic event has happened in the past, where beings manifest themselves through songs and dances and where special actions converge creating a theatrical place by poetic means" (166). In *the Toddobobax* ceremony the performance takes place at the home of the bride's mother which is transformed into a special space for the Toddobobax ceremony. At that particular time, the space is not just a house but it is converted. The space can either be inside or outside but it should be enclosed as only married women are allowed in the space.

Space in the *Toddobobax* ceremony also refers to the mat which is referred to as *dirin* it is a mat that is woven from grass, the women sit on the mat they sit forming a circle. This is similar to aesthetic drama where there is an arena stage where the audience will sit in a circle. Unlike the aesthetic drama, there is no separation between the stage and where the audience sits. As Kimingichi Wabende in "From The Bukusu Fireside to Stage: The Performance of oral Narrative in The Shifting Spaces," when discussing space highlights how in performances there are no marked conventional spaces where it alienates the audience. The audience can easily become transition into performers (48). This is evident in the *Toddobobax* ceremony where the performers and the audience are at the same level making the transitioning easy. The bride sits on *gambar* which is a small stool made from cowhide, the stool is placed in the middle but only during the *shaash saar* event. According to mama Habiba the *Gambar* is placed in the middle when the *shaash saar* is about to begin.

2.4 Performers and Spectators.

Finnegan emphasized that the most important element of drama is the idea of enactment which is represented through actors. The actors are responsible for imitating (501). This is true because without the performers the ceremony will not be able to take place. The performers also present other aspects of performance like the Sequence of events and costumes. Schechner points out how performances consist of twice behaviour which he explains, "even if we think we are being spontaneous and original, most of what is said and we do have been said and done before" (52). This is evident in *the Toddobobax* ceremony which the action performed by the performers are all actions that are always performed in the ceremony.

In *Toddobobax* performance, the performers are all women since the ceremony is only for women. The women should be married as no unmarried woman was allowed to participate in the ceremony. This represents the set of rules that Schechner highlights as one of the attributes of the performance. The rules are only married women are allowed in the ceremony, since the main purpose of the ceremony is to welcome the bride as a married woman. The main performer of the performance is the bride since the whole performance is centered on her. The bride during *shaash saar* sits on a specific stool and she is adorned with a *shaash* or several *shaash*. Each woman can place the *shaash* on her head one by one. The first person to place the *shaash* on the bride's head is the oldest woman from the bride's side of the family. This is the normal order, the grandmother or the mother if the grandmother is no more or it can be the caretaker for one without parents. As they place the *shaash* on the head of the bride they can bless the bride and her future. It is believed that the prayer of a mother/grandmother to the child is more powerful and their blessings effective. The grandmother or mother in some instances can perform a *buraanbur* for the bride.

Inan ku gabyo ayaila gudbon

Ubax gadgadudan ban dhinac yadadadhigi

Ninkaga garab jog Guleyso hoyo

Gardadi carut badan wilal iyo gabdhaba

Ducan kusogud binayaye iga gudom

(I could not keep quiet until I do you a *buraanbur*)

I would place red flowers on your side

Stay together with your husband to be able to go far together mum

Teach many children to walk both girls and boys

I have passed on you prayers receive it.)

In the above poem the mother is praying for the future of her daughter and also advises the bride on what is expected of her as a married woman.

Schechner, highlights that one of the characteristics of performance is the fluidity that exists between the spectators and performer. He notes how the spectators can easily become the performers (84). In traditional *Toddobobax* performance there was no designated performer, it was open to any woman who wanted to perform like singing and dancing. Mama Fatuma in an interview notes how the ceremony can have various women singing different songs. However, women who were well known to be good in performers were requested to perform during the ceremony. This shows how the audiences were performers too as they would participate in various activities like to place a *shaash* on the bride's head and to dance since dancing was part of the performance. The women danced to show respect and also to celebrate the wedding of the bride. In Landinfo report, "Somalia: Marriage and divorce," they emphasize how dance is important in the wedding party (*aroos*) if the guest do not participate in the dance it is an insult to the couple (15). This emphasizes that the audience were expected to participate in the performance. They alternate between being performers and audience.

The women also participate in singing and chanting where they sing along to the songs performed. Some of Somali wedding songs are characterized by call and response where the main singer/soloist is helped by the audience to perform the poems. The audience sing the chorus part. This emphasized the important role the audience play as the performers.

The song below shows an example of a call and response songs performed in the ceremonies.

Soloist: gobalo sogodeya

Audience: arimahe ana haban

Soloist: galbiyo sacab lociyaraye

Audience: arimahe ana haban

Soloist: gesiba gabar lasistaye

Audience: arimahe ana haban

Soloist: ana haban

Audience: Niman Helin mahan beynin

(The place is well prepared and ready

arimahe ana haban

People are all dancing and clapping

arimahe ana haban

The hero is the one who gets the girl

arimahe ana haban)

The song is a wedding celebration song usually performed to describe the wedding celebration.

The singer sings as the soloist and the audience join on to sing the chorus as they dance.

2.5 The Costumes and Props

Costumes and props are important in performance as they enhance the performance and captivate the audience. The costumes make the ceremony interesting, apart from the entertaining aspect they also send a message to the audience. Costumes are very important in African traditional drama as they are an enactment of a society's history and represent the tradition of the people.

According to mama Fatuma, during *the Toddobobax* ceremony, the bride wears *Guuntino* which is either a plain white or red stripes dress. The dress is usually long. She puts on *Kul* which are beads that are long she wears them across her shoulder to the waist on each side to form a diagonal in the middle. The bride also carries *Dhil* or the *it* is tied to her waist. *Dhil* is a small traditional pot that is used to store milk. The costume and the accessory are symbolic, *Dhil* represents the responsibilities the new bride has to fulfill as a married woman by taking care of her house. Milk is important to Somali people this is because Somali people are pastoralists and it is a common drink. Milk symbolizes the nurturing role the bride has to play in her new family as the mother and wife. This presents attributes of ritual performance which is the value of objects. Normally, *Dhil* is used for storage but in the ceremony, the meaning changes as it now represents the responsibilities of the bride.

The *shaash* is also symbolic since it is a scarf that the married women wear, it is used to represent the bride's new status. The bride is accepted as a married woman. Before the *Toddobobax* ceremony, she was not wearing the *shaash* but now the bride wears it. The cloth

becomes symbolic in this space as it is used to show the change of status of the bride. The song below it highlights the importance of *shaash saar*.

Waa Todobadiiye taginamayne

Tolmoon shah sha loo saaro,

(Today is the seventh day we are not going

Until we put *shaash* on *Tolmoon*)

In the song above the line is constantly repeated, this is to emphasize how the *shaash* is important to Somali people. It is the role of the women to adorn the new bride with *shaash*, for her to be accepted in society as a married woman. Before the wedding, the bride has to have a henna tattoo. The henna was applied using a stick and it was a way of beautifying the bride as henna is used in Somali culture to enhance the beauty of the bride. Henna was also applied by other women who attended the wedding ceremonies. Henna was mostly applied on special occasions like the wedding. In Somali culture, henna was applied on the hands and legs only to the married women and single girls were not allowed to apply henna. If the bride's henna from the wedding is faded she has to reapply before *the Toddobobax* ceremony.

In most African traditions tattooing the skin especially during initiation ceremonies was common. The tattoos were a representation of the culture and most times the status of the initiates. Heidi Gengenbach in her article "Boundaries of Beauty: Tattooed secrets of women's History in Magude District, Southern Mozambique." She discusses how the Mozambique women used body markings as a way of beautifying themselves, she further notes how the markings were used as a way of recording the history through the tattoos which were called *tinhlanga*.

Henna tattoo signifies the status of the woman as married. Sharaby, Rachel. “The Bride’s Henna Ritual: Symbols, Meanings and Changes,” discusses how henna shows the transformation of the bride. Since in traditional Somali culture henna was strictly applied by married women, the bride applying henna highlights her changing status, she is no longer a girl but a married woman.

The bride’s hair is braided and her hair is left open during the *Toddobobax* ceremony, this is usually for the *Shaash saar* ceremony. After the ceremony, she will wear one *shaash* which now symbolizes that she is a married woman. Mama Habiba notes how traditionally the girls never used to cover up and only the married women used to cover up. The bride after the ceremony ties the one *shaash* this now symbolizes her shift in status as she is now recognized as a married woman.

The other women also have to dress up, they wear the Somali traditional dress *Diraac* and *Gabsar*. The *gabsaar* mostly hangs on their shoulder or hanging loosely on their head to reveal *shaash* which they wear as it symbolizes their married status. The *Diraac* is a free dress which is usually colourful prints and they match with the *Gabsar*. The women also have henna drawings on both their hands and feet or some can decide to just apply on their hands.

2.6 Song

Songs are central to most African ceremonies. As Nandwa and Bukenya explain, songs which are always accompanied by dance are central in traditional African communities as they stretch to every part of life (87). This is true in Somali culture songs are important even in everyday life. Johnson discussing Somali oral poems observes that poems were central in everyday life. It was

a tool used to communicate, educate and entertain. This is also shared by Andrezejewski who notes the power of oral poetry in Somali culture can help solve issues and create friendship or cause discord in the society. Abdullahi also emphasizes how poems were used by young men and women during courtship (119). This highlights how oral poetry is central in the Somali community. In *the Toddobobax* ceremony the main form of poetry performed is *Buraanbur*, this is because *Buraanbur* is the form of poetry that is only performed by women.

Chesaina posits songs are interconnected with every ritual like the naming ceremony, initiation ceremony, funeral and wedding ceremonies (11). This is true as *the Toddobobax* ceremony is predominantly characterized by songs. Songs help in communicating the expectations and responsibilities. for instance, in the song below.

(Waa Todobadiiye taginamayne
Tolmoon shah sha loo saaro,
Todobo wiil dhashidaa towbaa ka
Tuungnayee tolmoon shaash sha loo saaro
Talisadii gurgiyee ka
Tagimayne toolmon shaash sha loo saaro
Inaa tagoogagiye tolguura
Noqdaa towbaab kaga tigaaye
Inaas tagoogaagiye
Tolguura noqdaa
towaab Kaga tuuge)

(Today is the seventh day we are not going
Until we put shaash on Tolmoon
We pray to God
That you have seven sons.
As the one in charge of her house
We cannot leave until we put shaash on her
We pray to God
That your family lineage will be big as a whole clan.)

The song above is one of the major songs that is sung during the *Shaash saar* part of the event. As the women adorn the bride with the *shaash*. They pray for the bride and her future so that she can have children. This is one of the central purposes of *Toddobobax* where the women pray for the bride to continue her family. Ahmed notes the role of a woman in a marriage is to bear and nurture children (51). Children are considered as a source of wealth in Somali culture therefore a woman with many children is highly respected. In the above song the women were praying for a son, this also shows how in Somali traditional society having many boys were preferred.

Most traditional songs referred to the immediate environment. More so the praise songs that are very common in wedding songs. Maxamed Dahir in "Rural Imagery in contemporary Somali urban poetry: Debilitating carryover in Transitional verbal Art," notes how oral poems were embedded by Imagery which was driven from the environment (4). The praise songs relate to elements in the environment.

Haa Hoobey

Gama Farasay Gadi

Lacagay Ilays Nuray

Hanan Soo Soco

(Haa Hoobey

The bride is like the horse

The bride who is shining.

Hanan come walking.)

In the above song, the bride is compared to a horse, which is referred to as beautiful. Horses were treasured in Somali culture because they were regarded as a source of wealth. It was presented to the bride's family as a gift (*yerat*) to show how the girl is treasured. Comparing the girl to the horse shows how special she is.

As the songs are performed, the performers are able to creatively change the songs depending on the bride. The flexible nature of songs made the performance more interesting. Kabira and Mutahi attribute the adaptable nature of songs due to the evolving conditions. Songs can be the same but can change depending on the bride. *Buraanbur* poetry is flexible and changes easily depending on who the bride is, her family and also the groom.

Gabadhuway qimi badan tahay

Gesibadhalay

Alaw carur gesi yalsi

Alaw gacantoda geliwilal Gabdho

Alaw gey guri Qabow

Amalay Gurgaga guri qer qabo alaha kadhigo

(The bride has so much value

She comes from the hero

God to bless her with children who are heroes

God to give them children both girls and boys

God to take the bride to the blessed home

Amal your house may it be full of blessing.)

Buraanbur songs are all similar, they praise the bride and her family and also the groom. However, the praise song can differ from one to the other depending on who the bride is. Although the theme is similar the words can change. Also, in the song below the nature of songs being flexible is highlighted.

Haa Hoobey

Hanan Quruxey

Ayaan Badanay

Ilays Nuray

Hanan Soo Soco

(*Haa Hoobey*

Hanan the beautiful
The lucky one
The shining one
Hanan come walking.)

The song is used to welcome the bride and changes with the name so if the bride has a different name the song will change. Songs are the way the women in *Toddobobax* performance celebrate. They celebrate the marriage of the bride and this is expressed through songs. The songs can be repetitive so that the audience can easily sing with the performer. This engages the audience as they can sing together with the performer. The repetition also creates rhythm and this makes the songs entertaining as the audience can move because of the rhythm and feel like active performers. Repetition also is a tool used by poets to emphasize the message of the songs.

Waa Todobadiiye taginamayne
Tolmoon shah sha loo saaro,
Waa Todobadiiye taginamayne
Tolmoon shah sha loo saaro,

(Today is the seventh day we are not going
Until we put shaash on Tolmoon
Today is the seventh day we are not going
Until we put shaash on Tolmoon)

In the song, the line above is constantly repeated this is used to create rhythm and also to emphasize the purpose of the performance which is to adorn the bride with shaash. This symbolizes that the bride is now a married woman.

Dance is mostly present in any indigenous performance since it accompanies songs. Akporobaro shows the relationship between songs, dance and drumming as it's through songs that the rhythm of dance is achieved and drums help in creating rhythm. In Toddobobax performance, dance accompanies songs like buraanbur songs have specific dance that accompanies the songs.

According to Adrienne Kaeppler discussing dance states that "Dance emanates from the society which means that it is a culturally understood symbol within a given society. Dance is a form of communication as it conveys certain meanings like celebrating also presents the meaning of a ritual and a source of entertainment" (196). Similarly, Judith Hanna in Ethnomusicology notes that dance in African society communicates culture and identity as it models gendered behaviour especially with respect to sexuality (244). In *the Toddobobax* ceremony, dance can be viewed as a form of communication. Through dance, the performers express happiness as they all join to celebrate and praise the bride. The traditional dances were used to celebrate rites of passage, the performers were celebrating as the bride now becomes a married woman in the society. Through dancing the performers welcome the bride into the new status of being a married woman.

Toddobobax ceremony has two most common dance styles these are, *Buraanbur* and *Helo* dance. *Buraanbur* dance is one of the most common dances performed during *the Toddobobax* ceremony. *Buraanbur* dance gets its name from *Buraanbur* oral poetry. The praise poetry is

usually accompanied by the *Buraanbur* dance and drum. Akporobaro explains the relationship between songs, dance and drumming as the three create rhythmic movement. The above assertion is evident in *Toddobobax* performance as *Buraanbur* dances the song tempo and drum dictates the body movement.

The performer while performing the *Buraanbur* praises the bride, groom and their family. While singing the praise the performer sings slowly and the drum is slow so that her words can be clear therefore the audience will also dance slowly while clapping. There is a shift in the tempo when the performer sings the chorus the drum is faster and the dancers will jump to match up the energy of the singer and the drum. This highlights the interrelationship between songs, dance and drumming. The chorus is usually full of repetition.

Warka!...Warka!...Warka!

Sooka!

Warka!...Warka!...Warka!x2

Ashubaa ata x2

During *Buraanbur* the audience forms a circle and the middle then becomes the stage where different women will dance. The dancers can either be two or three and at times even one. The performers move from their corners to meet in the middle as they jump while moving. In *Buraanbur* dance performance the dancers use props to make their dance more alluring. The women will use their shawl to move from side to side as the jump this makes the dance performance interesting.

Helo is another type of dance this also accompanies the *Helo* type of music mostly involves the clapping of the hands as the audience sings along especially the chorus and dance using their hands and moving their legs slowly following the rhythm. Like most African societies the audience also becomes the performers. As Laye in *African Child* while describing a ritual performance, notes how everyone joined in the dance (93). This is similar to *Helo* dance performance as everyone joins in to make the performance interesting through clapping and singing.

Dance helps to unify communities, the women bond over the performance as they all dance they form a connection. Eneke emphasized how dance brings a community together as they dance together it promotes communal existence, therefore, helps in the preservation of a certain culture (11). This is evident in *Toddobobax* as the married women form a bond through the performance and promotes coexistence and support of sisterhood. Through *Buraanbur* and *Helo* dance there is the preservation of culture.

2.7 Conclusion

In the chapter above I explained the elements found in the *Toddobobax* ritual using performance theory. The structure highlights the series of events one after the other as they unfold. The performance space is the second element, this is where performance takes place. The performers and the spectators bring out the set of rules the ritual is supposed to follow like who are supposed to attend. Costumes and props are the special objects and how they are used in the performance.

Songs are also discussed in the chapter as a tool used in the ceremony to highlight the different elements. Songs are central in ritual performances this is why it is discussed in this chapter as it is interlinked with elements of performance. It is through songs and dance that the relationship between spectator and performer is highlighted. Since the spectators can participate in songs and dance it brings out the fluidity which Schechner emphasizes is a unique characteristic of the performance.

CHAPTER THREE

TRANSFORMATIONS OF *TODDOBABAX* WEDDING CEREMONY PERFORMANCE AMONG KENYA SOMALI

3.1 Introduction

The chapter's objective is to determine the transformation of *Toddobobax* performance in contemporary Kenya. Marriage in Somali culture is always a celebration as not only two people but two families are joined together. Through time there have been some notable changes in the way of life of Somali people. Therefore, the changes can be noted in *Toddobobax* performance. The elements of performance discussed in this chapter include; Structure of the performance, Space, performer, dialogue, costumes and props all of which have undergone various changes. Songs as the most dynamic genre are also discussed in this chapter.

The *Toddobobax* performance has been evolving through time and changes at a given place. Affiah Uwem and Jayne Owan in "*Dramatic analysis and interpretation of the Ekombi dance of the Efik people of Nigeria*" argue that:

oral performance is a living and dynamic art form. It is the product of a culture and culture is very dynamic and transient. As a result, over time, there are bound to be, and there have been, some changes, minor albeit, in costumes, make-up and even properties. However, these have never been, and are not likely to be, significant enough to cause any change in the thematic concerns and aesthetic principles and qualities of the performance (32).

This is true as the purpose of *Toddobobax* despite all the changes in performance the theme of *Toddobobax* has remained. The performance is all about celebrating the new bride who is

welcomed by other married women. The performance also is to bless the bride as she goes into this new life. This has not changed despite the aspects of performances in *Toddobobax* changing.

Alah Habara Keyo arskan

Alah Hageyo gur Barkaleh

Usu Imtan Koda Barkeyo

Labad Isdorto cawa aqal galago

Ducan idin wadna gurginalah barakeyo

(God to bless this wedding

God to take the bride to good house

God bless this the couple

The two who love each other we pray for you

And your new home to be blessed.)

In the song above they are praying for the new couple and the main theme of traditional *Toddobobax* performance was to pray for the new bride and her future. This is still evident despite the song being a contemporary song and played on a recorder. This indeed is a notable change in *Toddobobax* performance.

Uwem and Owan show that culture is dynamic and always changes this is also noted by Chesaina she states no culture is static and it changes as a result of social and historical circumstances just as oral literature (xi). As society develops, changes in culture are inevitable. Weddings are part of the culture and they have also undergone various changes.

Shitemi, Naomi in "Discourse on Semiotic and Functional Perspective of Narratology." observes how initiation ceremonies have aspects of oral literature like songs that have undergone changes and the adaptable nature of oral literature is why they are still relevant to date (87). This is true also in *Toddobobax* performance most traditional songs for instance have gone through specific adaptations proving the adaptable nature of Oral literature.

Enongene Mirabeau Sone in Swazi *Oral Literature Studies Yesterday and Today: The Way Forward* asserts,

Oral literature is dynamic and this is proven in how despite the effects of globalization which pose a major threat to oral literature, it defies extinction and transform expressing the dynamic part of oral literature as it can transform itself into new forms to adapt to the new environment, however, still retaining its essence (13).

This is true as despite *Toddobobax* going through various changes it has still retained the most important parts of the ceremony like the *shaash saar* part of the ceremony which is central to *Toddobobax* performance. *The Toddobobax* ceremony has evolved due to several factors the two main factors that I have highlighted in this chapter are modernization and migration.

3.2 Modernisation and *Toddobobax*

Modernisation in Africa has been linked with the concept of westernization. Yahia in explaining the difference between Modernisation and westernization argues that modernisation entails the change of beliefs on how the material world works on the other hand westernization means a

change in how one believes they should live. Modernization has various definition Huntington define Modernization as a system which is transformative and changes traditional structures and values (30). Shilliam on the other hand looks at Modernisation as a term synonymous with society.

Modernization can be viewed as a process in which transformational effects can be noted in the social, economic, religious, political and cultural environments. As Africa is affected by the west this has also affected our various ceremonies. Wedding ceremonies in Africa for instance have adapted the western wedding style through the use of white gowns. This is also evident in Somali weddings where the bride will wear a white gown.

In *Globalization, Post-Interdependence and poverty in Africa*, Offiong, views modernization as among one of the reasons for Africa's traditional performances to be sidelined and this is because they are considered backward compared to contemporary performances which are important in the modern society (39). Since traditional clothes are frowned upon more brides tend to wear the white gown rather than wear a *guuntino*. This shows how due to modernization more aspects of traditional performances in a wedding ceremony are abandoned.

There has been a debate on the effects of modernization on Africa ritual performances Turner argues that modernization will render the ritual absolute while some scholars do not think that is the case as Drewal has emphasized rituals still being relevant in Africa despite modernization. This can be seen as the ceremonies become adaptable to the changes it retains their relevancy in modern times.

Every aspect of performance in *the Toddobobax* ceremony has been impacted by modernization. Modernization is visible through digital technology which has changed *Toddobobax's* performance. Songs are now played in a recorded version and this requires people like the DJs and also most people are choosing to record their ceremony to remember this has resulted in additional members like the videographers. This has changed the whole performance. Traditional *Toddobobax* ceremony was an all-women event however that has changed since now additional people like the DJs and Videographers who are mostly male are now part of the performance.

Western education which is also an effect of modernization has impacted the *Toddobobax* performance. In indigenous society, education was presented in oral literature. At a wedding, songs were used to educate the girl on what is expected of her. Even the costume the bride wore with *dhil* on her hand is to symbolizes her responsibility as a married woman. But with the coming of western education, has impacted the way *Toddobobax* performance was before.

Mama Fatuma observes how most educated girls no longer see the importance of *shaash* they view it as just a piece of clothing and also *dhil* as just a traditional prop. This has made brides change the guntino costume and at times do not carry *dhil* or instead, some carry a small bag instead of guntino.

Sam and Falola in *Culture and Customs of Ghana*, observes that western education and urbanization have impacted oral literature however despite all that Oral literature has thrived

(60). Although *Toddobobax* has changed as a result of education and urbanization it is still a relevant ceremony to the Somali people.

3.3 The effects of Migration on *Toddobobax* performances

Migration can be due to different factors like economic factors being one of the reasons for the rural-urban migration in Kenya. Most people looking for work have moved from north Kenya to Nairobi. Ever since the civil war in Somalia, a large number of Somali people from Somalia have also moved to Nairobi bringing in their own culture although similar to Kenya Somali however they have variations.

The migration to Nairobi has impacted Somali culture as a whole as they interact with other cultures. Some argue that migration poses a serious threat to Oral literature as people migrate to the urban space which is heterogeneous resulting in Oral literature being sidelined and people find other sources of entertainment (11). Some's argument is valid as fewer people care about Oral literature like the *Buraanbur* poems which originally have been passed down from one generation to the next fall into a threat of going extinct because young people are more interested in listening to pop songs.

Apart from the songs other aspects of *Toddobobax* performance have also changed due to migration. The language used in the ceremony was always the Somali language however, that has changed due to migration. One of the reasons can be because of Intermarriage as a result of Somali's interacting with other cultures which have resulted in the change of language. The language mostly used is Kiswahili which is the national language of Kenya. This however has

impacted the whole marriage process more so *Toddobobax* performance as some people might decide to overlook the post-wedding performance.

Ngugi Wa Thiongo states that language is important as language represents culture. It is not just a means of communication. Language in *Toddobobax* performance in some instances tends to use Kiswahili or English this can be due to various reasons. This prevents the transmission of the Somali language through *Toddobobax* and Somali culture. The effect of using a different language is the performance would not feel like the *Toddobobax* ceremony. Language is important as it is only through language that thoughts and songs are presented. Through the Interview, Mama Fatuma commented that a change of language makes the whole marriage boring because it does not feel like a Somali marriage. This is similar to Ngugi who refers to language as culture.

Due to migration, it has resulted in a new group of Somalis "Somali sijui" the term refers to Somali's who barely understand the Somali language. Some notes how African languages are usually sidelined and some languages like English are preferred compared to the different African languages. Language has never remained static and changes with every new occurrence and idea that can come from interacting with different people (Valdaeva 379). Migration has impacted language as people who grow up in Nairobi barely know how to speak Somali well and therefore the *Toddobobax* performance is also impacted.

Somali people were pastoralists however, this has changed more and more people are moving to Nairobi and other urban towns. This has impacted how the idea of wealth is viewed. In

traditional weddings, the groom will present *Yerat* the gift will be in form of livestock like a camel. However, this has changed as now money is what is given. This has also led to weddings becoming lavish. Weddings have become a way to show economic power. The more the wedding is lavish and expensive the more the groom and even the bride's family gain respect. The weddings are held in expensive hotels for instance. Virginia Luling and Anita S. Adam describing Somali wedding and the changes in the article, “Continuities and changes: Marriage in Southern Somalia and diaspora.” notes:

There have been significant changes and developments in the way that weddings are conducted and to some extent in the choice of marriage partners...One change in Somali weddings both at home and abroad in the North and South is the growth in the expense of the actual celebration. Wedding parties have become increasingly large and lavish (156).

This is also evident in the gifts the bride receives during *shaash saar*. In traditional *Toddobobax* women could only bring a *shaash* or even one or two *shaash* were enough but the women would come together to celebrate the wedding of the new bride and less importance was placed on what they brought for the bride. In contemporary *Toddobobax* gifts have become valued and the women give expensive gifts to the bride.

Modernization and Migration are interlinked as it is because modernization becomes one of the reasons for migration. This has impacted the *Toddobobax* performance as during *shaash saar* there is an introduction part where each woman is introduced to the audience and how they are related to the bride. This was not necessary for traditional *Toddobobax* performance since everyone knew each other but as a result of modernization and migration it becomes necessary for such announcements

...*Zahra caadey Daqsow*.....

.....*Iskaferiyee Gabda hoyoodey*

...*Zahra Caadey*.

...*Habaryaye Sharifaa wayee*...

...*Habaryaye Khadija Dubey*

...*Edo Gabadaye*...

(The beautiful Zahra hurry up...

Look it's the mother's bride

Zahra the beautiful one

Aunt Sharifaa is here

Aunt Khadija Dubey

The bride's aunt is here)

The announcer above is announcing all the women who are presenting the *shaash* to the bride and how they are related to the bride. This emphasizes how kinship is important to Somali people and even in modernisation they have developed a way to maintain and celebrate the kinship. Traditionally Somali people lived in a tight knit community, everyone was well acquainted. Due to modernization and migration people rarely meet. Therefore, announcements like the one above become necessary.

3.4 The Shifting Structure of the ritual Performance

The Toddobobax ceremony which normally took place on the seventh day after the marriage has now changed that most people host it the same day as the wedding day. It has been merged into one day as *aroos* which usually takes place in the evening. The bride changes clothes two to three times which signifies the change between *aroos* and *Toddobobax*.

The engagement period has not that much difference, the groom is accompanied by his male relatives asks for the girl's hand in marriage. The gift *Yerat* which traditionally included a camel, a horse and a gun has been replaced by giving out money. The wedding date is mostly decided by the couple. Unlike the traditional, the girl and the boy have more freedom in choosing the bride. In the article, "They all encouraged me to do it, but after all the decision is mine: Marriage practices among diaspora Somalis in Finland." Abdirashid Ismail notes although at times families might decide to play matchmaking it is always the decision of the boy and the girl as they will choose who they want as their partner (128). This is also noted by Luling and Adam, that the choice entirely lies with the couple and this has resulted in most young people marrying from distant clans, unlike the old times where people married from the near clans (156).

Instead of building a house for the bride, the mother of the bride will help the daughter by buying a household for her new house. Mama Habiba notes that before the mother of the bride was in charge of the bride's new home but nowadays the bride and the groom will plan their own new house by choosing their household items. The bride's new home can be as far as a different town and it is different from the *Akhal hori* housing which was temporary.

The ceremony which normally took place at the bride's house has now moved to hired halls or hotels. Not just anyone is invited to the ceremony as only guests are usually welcomed. Mama Habiba and Mama Fatuma both agree that including only invited guests makes it easy to budget in terms of space and food. Since the structure has changed so have Turner's phases of a ritual. In this modern performance, the phases can be identified through the change of costumes. The breach is now the bride is married she is at first separated from the audience who enjoy the music performance as the guests arrive and later the bride comes in accompanied by her bride maids, The bride walks through the to the aisle flooring where she dances as others join her in the performance it is mostly a praise song for the bride. This is the crisis stage where she has been stripped of her title of the girl. The bride later takes pictures in her first dress, then proceeds out for her second dress which is the *Toddobobax* ceremony. The changing of costumes represents the crisis stage.

During the *Toddobobax* ceremony the bride does not move to the podium but seats in a chair not *Gambar* which was the traditional stool. The *shaash saar* begins which is the main event of *the Toddobobax* ceremony. This is the redress phase; the event is held to resolve the crisis. In the contemporary *Toddobobax* ceremony *Shaash* signifies the gift the bride gets it can be a blanket, curtains, or *diraac*. The women do not just give the gifts but if the gift is not heavy it is placed on the bride's head two to three times and then placed down. If it is heavy the gifts are just circled over the bride's head and placed on the side. This is considered as a way of blessing the bride in her new life. The mother of the bride or her grandmother is usually the first to present the *shaash*

this is similar to the traditional *Toddobobax* ceremony. The mother can say words of advice or word of prayer for the girl.

...Waxalagusiyay wil rer sareya

Ahdhalay sintiga Abgal Cusman

Balagaga daray suldamah laboga firdadutahay

Sifican unolow adunka melsareqar

(You have been given to a boy whose clan is so high

Your groom's name Abgal Osman is the one you are married to

You are from the clan of the kings and queens

Live a good life and in this world may you go far.)

After the *shaash saar* ceremony, the bride walks out of the hall as now she is recognized as a married woman. In the final part of the *aroots* this one the bride comes in dress in a white gown. To distinguish between the two events the announcer usually announces the end of *Toddobobax*. This part is the main part of *aroots* with her bride's maid who also changes their costumes through the three events they make their way to the altar she seats down as she takes pictures with the guests later the husband also comes in wearing a suit. Then after a while of dancing the couple leaves together to their new home.

3.5 Dialogue and the Preservation of Tradition in *Toddobobax*.

Dialogue delivered by characters moves the Sequence of events and activities along in a drama. They provide exposition and define the distinct performers. During the *shaash* ceremony as the

women get ready to present the gift to the bride, there is an announcer it varies at times it can be a hired entertainer or it can be just a woman from the crowd. One of the purposes is to introduce the women as they present the gift stating how they relate with the bride and also it is for entertainment.

Lidwien Kapteijns in his text, "Gender relations and transformation of the Northern Somali Pastoral tradition." Notes how Somali people took the importance of kinship as it was central to the way of life of the people. he further highlights how every structure of the Somali community was kinship-based. Kinship is still important to the Somali people and one of the reasons why they announce the name of each woman who presents the bride with a gift and how they are related is to strengthen the kinship bond. Apart from mentioning the name of the guest and how they relate to the bride they also include what the guests have presented as their gifts.

...Waxasareso gabda hoyadeda macan Xalima Macalin Abikar...

...Habaryar Sacido waxay kentaye duvet, shaash

...Habaryar Ruqiyo waxay kentaye diraac

... Walasheda Fartun waxay Kentaye Dahab Bangkok

...Walasheda Qadra waxay kentaye duvet wa 20,000ksh.

(Who is putting on the shaash? It is the lovely mother of the bride Halima Maalim

Aunt Saadiya has brought the bride gifts, Duvet, *shaash* and *Dirac*

Aunt Ruqiya brought *diraac*

Sister Fartun has brought Gold from Bangkok

Sister Kadra has brought duvet and 20,000 ksh..)

In traditional *Toddobobax* women could only bring *shaash* and it was not necessary if there was even one *shaash* that was enough to adorn the bride with. This has however changed as now not only *shaash* is presented but other gifts. The gifts highlight how monetize the performance has become as a result of modernization and migration. The gifts can range from household to electronic to clothing for pride. Although in some weddings they do not announce the specific gift the bride has received. It is still performed in other *Toddobobax* performances.

After the gifts have been presented the performer announces the end of *shaash saar* and therefore the end of *Toddobobax* performance. Dialogue makes it easy for the *Toddobobax* to transition to the *aroots* since the two events are combined.

3.6 The *Toddobobax* Shifting Performance Space

The space of modern *Toddobobax* performance changes as Ngugi wa Thiongo argued that traditional African drama was performed in open space, not in special buildings set aside. He states that the "empty space" was impacted by the coming of the colonizers who enclosed the "empty space." The space changes into supervised urban community halls, school halls, or social halls. Ngugi's assertion presents how *Toddobobax* performance which normally took place at the bride's family has now moved to a hired hall or even a tent. This is because they are the only available places.

The ceremony just like most African ceremonies due to urbanization is now performed in special buildings. The space which is the rented hall or tent is converted to be where the performance takes place the decorations are usually put in place to transform the space. The traditional space resembles the way the stage is presented in aesthetic drama where the bride who used to sit in the

middle now sits at an altar that is separated from where the audience sits. The space where the actions happen is also set aside unlike in the traditional Toddobobax performance where there was no separation.

3.7 The Evolving *Toddobobax* Costume and Décor.

There's a notable shift in how the performers dress and even how the space is decorated. Due to modernisation the costume has evolved, the bride *guuntino* which was mostly either white or red stripes now a bride can wear any colour they prefer. The *guuntino* was not long however the length is altered and now the dress is long. This is borrowed from the western idea of wedding dresses that are usually long. The *Guuntino* traditionally was a one hand dress however due to Islam influence the dress has undergone changes like the sleeves have been added. The change of the dress also attributes to the fact that the ceremony is no longer strictly for women and because the ceremony is recorded there is need for the bride to cover up.

The bride will change her costume to wear about two to three dresses. She will wear a *guuntino* during the *Toddobobax* ceremony and a white wedding gown which is what the bride wears after the *Toddobobax* ceremony. Luling and Adam note "Elements borrowed from non-Somali traditions are now firmly part of diaspora weddings. An obvious example is a white dress worn by the bride" (153). The change of the dresses can be noted as a mix between the old which is preserved and the new which is keeping up with the trend this is pastiche. The brides imitate the western wedding tradition by wearing a white wedding gown.

The bride's hair is not braided it is usually covered in a headband design this is because the ceremony which was an only women event now has changed with people like DJ and videographers. This has resulted in most of the brides covering up their hair which was not common. The bride carries *Dhil* but is smaller and usually decorated with glitters, unlike the traditional *Dhil*. It does not have anything but is used as a prop. The bride uses additional accessories like earrings, chains and bracelets which are made of gold instead of the traditional beads *Kul*.

Apart from the bride, her bride maids also change their costumes to coordinate better with the bride as they will be next to the bride. They have to match or complement the bride. In the *Toddobobax* part of the ceremony, they can also wear *guuntino* or a *diraac*. *Diraac* just as *Guuntino* is considered a Somali traditional dress.

The other guests either wear *Diraac* which is mostly sparking and of bright colours or dresses. Henna is still used but there has been some improvement in terms of design and length. Traditionally henna was mostly applied with a stick and it was long to the elbow. Due to the interaction with other cultures like the coastal people more henna designs have been adapted and it is usually applied on the whole arm extending to the neck and the back. Henna has also evolved as now the bride can apply both black and red henna.

The wedding hall is normally decorated with chairs and tables on each side of the Aisle runner which has an altar arch at the beginning and where the bride sits is a raised stage with an altar backdrop decorated with flowers and lightings. The bride has a long sofa and sits on a raised

stage. Between the guests and the raised stage, there is an altar flooring where the performers dance. The bride seats on a normal seat during *Toddobobax* performance and seats at the altar flooring where the other women will be able to adorn for her *shaash saar* but nowadays the bride is not only adorned by *shaash saar* but with other gifts like clothes, blankets. Circle the gift on top of the bride and place it down. This is different from the traditional *Toddobobax* where it was only the *shaash* that the bride was gifted. The wedding gift is a concept borrowed from other cultures.

Taylor discussing marriage in Minnesota relates *aroos* to a club this can be attributed to the role the lighting plays and also speakers that project the music in the hall. Since the wedding is mostly performed at night the hall is usually decorated with different lightings to create the mood of happiness. *Toddobobax* has undergone various transformation on the props and the costumes used. There is pastiche and intertextuality evident, borrowing from other cultures around the world like using different lights and speakers to mimic a club. Modification of traditional clothes.

3.8 The Recorded SONG and DJ in the *Toddobobax* Performance

The most flexible genre of oral literature is songs as they can easily change depending on the performance or performer. The songs are a big part of any African ritual drama. They are central as it is through the songs that the themes of the performance are driven. They are used as a form of entertainment. They are also used to inculcate.

The songs have evolved as now they are presented by DJs the recorded version at times they hire a group of performers who specialized in that field. This highlights the commercialized aspect of performance. Dahir asserts:

Somali poetry is a representation of how society is transitioning from the old to the new, the contemporary Somali poetry represents a society moving from a traditional way of life to a modern way of life, The poetry changes from oral methods to now a blend between of orality, techno orality like the mix of video recording and audio and written alternatives (10).

Wedding songs, are either performed live or recorded. In one of the weddings, the bride Zamzam said she had to hire a performer to record a song which required her name and because she could not afford to pay the performer to perform live she opted for the recorded version which was the role of DJ had to play at the right time.

Haa Hoobey

Ubax Dayriyo

Dhul Ugbaadliyo

Udgoon Badanay

Zamzam Soo Soco

Haa Hoobey

Sida loo

Kacay Sahal

Mahe Taan

Sugeywaay

Zam Zam Soo Soco

(Haa Hoobey

She is a flower that blossoms in the spring

She smells nicely

Zam Zam welcome

Haa Hoobey

The way people have come to see the bride

the one we have been waiting for

Zamzam welcome.)

The Song above is played when the bride is walking into the room and it always includes the name of the bride. The downside of the performer prerecording the songs challenges the nature of oral poetry where it is flexible and adapts to the change of environment or event. *Buraanbur* is a type of praise poetry that is mostly performed in the wedding and *Toddobobax*. The praise poetry used to praise the bride and the groom, her family and his family. Taylor observed how *Buraanbur* songs talk about *qabil*. This however was not common as mama Habiba noted *Buraanbur* rarely focused on *Qabil* this she attributes to the fact that Somali people lived in a kinship community and the majority were from the same clan. She admired the older *Buraanbur* poems as she said they were creative and always different. However, the performance now is the same and monotonous. She added that the performers only praise the Qabils if they know they will be paid well. Taylor concurs with Mama Habiba observation as she notes how *Buraanbur* has been repetitive and it becomes boring (218).

Buraanbur Song

Wixibisinka lagbilawin barkamaleh

Gabadhu waa darod Ismaicl

Alah hadayo amantoda waadiyar

Duriyad gabadhu waa kuwii sotalinifiray

Ada laga beray nimanki dadka loojecla

Dad deqsioodicesan ba kudhalay

Talada dardaros iyo niman andeqdalagugarin

Alah Hodaye amantodu way dhantahay

(The bride's clan were leaders in the old times

The bride you are of the people who are loved

The bride is from the generous clan

Your parents are generous and blessed.

Leaders of darod Ismaicl

Darod is well known for being generous and kind

God to bless the couple to grow old.)

In the *Buraanbur* above the poet is praising the bride's tribe and this is usually followed by the poet receiving money. As she praises the bride she is also expected to praise the groom's clan similarly.

Buraanbur

SacidMaxmudow ragwangasan Bakudhalay

Singiga darodba siflashegata

Waasingiga lel kasa aman balasi naya

Alaha gurkaga habarakeyo

(Said Maxamed you come from the long line of great men

You have a great name the Darod.

The clan of Lalkasel which is praised a lot

God to bless your marriage.)

The poet can go around also singing praise to other clans who are present in the ceremony. Most *buraanbur* can last for hours at times. Apart from *Buraanbur* there are other modern songs which are played at the wedding. They have modern Somali songs. Shaadiyo Sharaf song "Arooskiina Allow Tiiri." The Song is a praise song however the theme is different.

Aqon cusub batihi

Iftin baxayatini

Ubaxi cish qigatihini

Jacayl Hadhasha

Tihin dul Qadkanal kuma

(Both of you are young and educated people

Both of you radiate

You are the flower of love

You have the new kind of love

Have patience in this marriage.)

In the song above the singer praises the groom and the bride as being educated. This highlights how education has become important to the Somali people. As Daahir notes, "The use of rural imagery in Somali songs, more so modern songs are not applicable" (7). Daahir observation is noted as new Somali Songs talk about different issues. In Traditional Songs, while praising the girl she will be compared to a horse but in the song above she is praised for her education prowess. The distinction between the two highlights how songs have evolved.

Due to modernization, they have included songs from Arabic, Borana and Kiswahili songs. The religious song "Mashallah" by Maher Zain is a wedding song in Arabic that is usually played in wedding songs. The use of Arabic songs can be from the influence of Islam a religion that most Somali people subscribe to. Technology has also made it easier for people to access songs from all around the world easily.

3.9 Borrowing and Emerging Choreographies in *Toddobobax* DANCE

Dance holds a very important place in Africa traditional ceremonies. The songs in the traditional African ceremonies were normally accompanied by dance. Dance is an aspect of performance that communicates the culture and identity of a certain community. It also plays the role of uniting people. In the traditional *Toddobobax* ceremony there was two dance style that was common *Buraanbur* and *Helo* dance that was performed in *Toddobobax* ceremony. The two traditional dance styles are still relevant however there have undergone some modification. The two dances have borrowed from other dance styles this is a form of pastiche.

In the *Buraanbur* dance the women normally the shawl was hanging loosely on their shoulder or head but the women while dancing will drape the shawl all over their face covering their face. Taylor observes the reason for this is to prevent the gaze of others especially the men. Since traditionally the ceremony was only for women but with modernisation, the ceremony is recorded therefore the women hide their faces (245). The performer can also tie a shawl on their waist to highlight their hip movement a style of dance that is common with Swahili women.

The borrowing from Swahili dance style is seen also in *Helo* dance which mostly included clapping, the performers move in a circle clapping and dancing this is also synonymous with Swahili dance. This is attributed to modernization and migration as a result pastiche happens as the Somali dance borrows from other cultures.

Performers in *Toddobobax* performance both indigenous performance and in the contemporary the bride is the main character. The main event of *Toddobobax* which is *shaash saar* is still a relevant event although it has changed a bit. The bride who normally sat on *Gambaar* a traditional stool now seats on a modern chair, although having a podium she seats on the altar flooring which is where the dance performance happens. The altar flooring replaces the traditional mat (*dirin*).

Similarly, to most African traditional performances where there is no distinction between the audience and the performers, contemporary *Toddobobax* ceremony also the audience become active performers. The women participate in the *Shaash saar* ceremony where they adorn the bride with *shaash* or they can give the bride a gift at times both. Each woman will either place

the *shaash* on the bride's head or if it's a gift they will wave it over her head and then place it down. The ceremony was only performed by married women but in the contemporary performance the rules are not strict, mama Fatuma notes how now even the unmarried women gift the bride which should not be the case. The audience also participates through dancing as they dance to celebrate the bride and the groom coming together as married people.

The bride is accompanied by bridesmaids whose main purpose is to help the bride they are mostly two but some weddings can have as many as the bride wants. When the bride is making an entry the bride maids are there to assist with her dress and also as props. They have to dance with the bride. They help during the *shaash saar* ceremony by placing the gifts well.

The performers who sing and play the drum in the traditional *Toddobobax* performance were women who came from the community, however, in the contemporary *Toddobobax* performance the singer is hired. They are groups that are hired, the group constitutes of the singers, drummer and their dance group. They aim to entertain the audience. The group is hired in different parts of the world like in Nairobi, Somalia, or even diaspora. Apart from the hired performers, the DJs are also hired they play mostly recorded songs. The DJ replaces the performers and plays recorded songs. Okepe who asserts that the performer plays a very interesting role as it is through the performer being resourceful that they can entertain the audience (253). He highlights one of the character traits of Africa indigenous drama is the spontaneity nature of the performance that makes it more entertaining, however, this is lost as the performance is mostly recorded songs.

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have highlighted how *Toddobobax* performance has undergone various changes and mutations over the years impacted by various reasons like modernization and migration. Comparing chapter two which highlights traditional *Toddobobax* performance and contemporary *Toddobobax* performance it is evident that *the Toddobobax* ceremony has indeed changed. The changes can be noted in the modification of the costumes as the performers despite wearing the same traditional clothes it has undergone some modification by imitating other cultures. There have been additional performers like the bride maids who help the bride. Change can be noted on how *Toddobobax* which was an only women event has now changed and some men are present like the DJ. The songs and dance have also changed as now not only Somali songs are played but Songs from other parts of the world and this is as a result of modernization. The change of space has also resulted in the *aroos* and *Toddobobax* performance being combined. Luling and Adam sum up that "Despite these new influences, there is an understanding that weddings are times to celebrate *Somaliness*, bringing together members of the same clan and family" (161). This is why in as much change as the ceremony undergoes the main essence of the celebration is retained through the various performances.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

My study sought to add to the body of knowledge on Somali oral poetry by focusing on the elements of performance in *the Toddobobax* ritual and examining the changes in *the Toddobobax* ceremony. *Toddobobax* as a ritual has elements of performance that make it a drama and over the years the practice has gone through a series of changes to retain its relevancy to Somali people. The objectives of the study were: to interrogate the aspects of performance in the *Toddobobax* ceremony, and to explore how *Toddobobax* performance has been shaped by modernization.

The *Toddobobax* ceremony is central to the Somali people.

The study concluded that Toddobobax ceremony exhibits the elements of drama that are similar to the elements of ritual performance. Further, the study noted that Toddobobax's performance has not been static it has witnessed changes of the different elements of performance as a result of post-modernism. The changes are characterized by intertextuality, pastiche and parody. The changes can be noted in the various elements of performance like the Sequence of events, *Toddobobax* which normally takes place after seven days has now been moved to the same night as the aroos ceremony. In *the Toddobobax* ceremony, they expected the women to only come with a *shaash* but now the women come with a gift like household things to pieces of jewelry and even money.

The study demonstrated that performance has also changed, in the contemporary world such as, there are hired performers who sing and even dance. The space has also changed from the mother of the bride's house to a hired hall or hotel. The costumes have also gone through

modification, pastiche is evident as the costume also adopts to other cultures although still maintaining the guntino type of dress. The study also noted that despite the changes the *Toddobobax* ceremony has undergone, it has retained the core elements of the performance. The themes are still the same like the ceremony is still performed for the bride to pray for her future.

This study concentrated on the aspect of performance in *Toddobobax* performance and how it has evolved. There are however areas that have not been explored. The study, therefore, recommends the study of the place of *Toddobobax* performance in mixed weddings. I also recommend the investigation of the *Toddobobax* ceremony of the Somali people and other Cushitic groups with post-wedding rituals to ascertain the difference in performance dynamics. The study also recommends research into the linguistic aspects of *Toddobobax* performance because of the centrality of language to the practice.

The study further recommends research into the Doonis aspects of performance as not much has been written on it despite being the first stage of the Somali marriage process. The study recommends further study of *Buraanbur* poetry and its implication on politics in North Eastern Kenya. Most research on Somali weddings in the diaspora has focused on *Aroos* however my study recommends the study of the *Toddobobax* ceremony in the diasporic spaces.

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Appendix I:

Songs

Shaash saar song

Waa Todobadiiye taginamayne

Today is the seventh day we are not going

Tolmoon shah sha loo saaro,

Until we put shaash on Tolmoon

Waa Todobadiiye taginamayne

Today is the seventh day we are not going

Tolmoon shah sha loo saaro,

Until we put shaash on Tolmoon

Todobo wiil dhashidaa towbaa ka

We pray to God

Tuungnayee tolmoon shaash sha loo saaro

That you have seven sons.

Todobo wiil dhashidaa towbaa ka

We pray to God

Tuungnayee tolmoon shaash sha loo saaro

That you have seven sons.

Waa Todobadiiye taginamayne

Today is the seventh day we are not going

Tolmoon shah sha loo saaro,

Until we put shaash on Tolmoon

Waa Todobadiiye taginamayne

Today is the seventh day we are not going

Tolmoon shah sha loo saaro

Until we put shaash on Tolmoon

Talisadii gurgiyeeey ka

As the one in charge of her house

Tagimayne toolmon shaash sha loo saaro

We cannot leave until we put shaash on her

Talisadii gurgiyeeey ka

As the one in charge of her house

Tagimayne toolmon shaash sha loo saaro

We cannot leave until we put shaash on her

Waa Todobadiiye taginamayne

We pray to God

Tolmoon shah sha loo saaro,

That you have seven sons.

Waa Todobadiiye taginamayne

We pray to God

Tolmoon shah sha loo saaro,

That you have seven sons.

Inaa tagoogagiye tolguura

Today is the seventh day we are not going

Noqdaa towbaab kaga tigaaye

Until we put shaash on Tolmoon

Inaa tagoogagiye tolguura

Today is the seventh day we are not going

Noqdaa towbaab kaga tigaaye

Until we put shaash on Tolmoon

Waa Todobadiiye taginamayne

Tolmoon shah sha loo saaro,

Waa Todobadiiye taginamayne

Tolmoon shah sha loo saaro,

We pray to God

That your family lineage will be big as a whole clan.

We pray to God

That your family lineage will be big as a whole clan.

Waa Todobadiiye taginamayne

Tolmoon shah sha loo saaro,

Waa Todobadiiye taginamayne

Tolmoon shah sha loo saaro,

Today is the seventh day we are not going

Until we put shaash on Tolmoon

Today is the seventh day we are not going

Until we put shaash on Tolmoon.

Haa Hobey Song

Haa Hoobey

Haa Hoobey

Hanan Quruxey

Hanan the beautiful

Ayaan Badanay

The lucky one

Ilays Nuray

The shining one

Hanan Soo Soco

Hanan come walking

Haa Hoobey

Haa Hoobey

Abti Manliyo

A wealthy uncle

Abti wacaney

A good uncle

Asal Dhaladay

She is from the original background

Hanan Soo Soco

Hanan come walking

Haa Hoobey

She shines bright

Ubax Dayriyo

Haa Hoobey

Dhul Ugbaadliyo

She is a flower that blossoms in the spring

Udgoon Badanay

She smells nicely

Hanan Soo Soco

Hanan come walking

Haa Hoobey

Haa Hoobey

Sida loo

The way people have come to see the bride

Kacay Sahal

the one we have been waiting for

Mahe Taan

Haa Hoobey

Sugeywaay

The beauty like no other comparable to a

Hanan Soo Soco

horse

Haa Hoobey Gama Farasay Gadi

The bride who is shining.

Lacagay Ilays Nuray

SONG (Ana Haban)

Soloist: gobalo sogodeya

The place is well prepared and ready

Audience: arimahe ana haban

arimahe ana haban

Soloist: galbiyo sacab lociyaraye

People are all dancing and clapping

Audience: arimahe ana haban

arimahe ana haban

Soloist: gesiba gabar lasistaye

The hero is the one who gets the girl

Audience: arimahe ana haban

arimahe ana haban

Soloist: ana haban

The one who narrates the helo did not leave

Audience: Niman Helin mahan beynin

anything out

Soloist: Hobay gobwanagsan weyane

They arranged the ceremony which is

Audience: arimahe ana haban

beautiful

Soloist: Hobay gacal sharafle hweyane

arimahe ana haban

Audience: arimahe ana haban

They are people who are well respected and

Soloist: Hobay gurkoda lagufarxyey

they love people

Audience: arimahe ana haban

arimahe ana haban

Soloist: ana haban

The marriage may it bring happiness

Audience: Niman Helin mahan beynin

arimahe ana haban

Soloist: Marwalo ged faristaye

Garadba labada belotiyo

Audience: arimahe ana haban

Audience: arimahe ana haban

Sokeyo kala gudomane

They have now become a family

Audience: arimahe ana haban

arimahe ana haban

Soloist: ana haban

They all came to an agreement

Audience: Niman Helin mahan beynin

arimahe ana haban

Soloist: Makana asal baisgursadaye

The one who narrates the helo did not leave

Audience: arimahe ana haban

anything out

Soloist: Gaman faras lagu galbinayaye

They are well known to be pure they get

Audience: arimahe ana haban

married

Soloist: Gaman faras lagu galbinayaye

arimahe ana haban

Audience: arimahe ana haban

Soloist: ana haban

The bride is carried home with a horse

Audience: Niman Helin mahan beynin

arimahe ana haban

The one who narrates the helo did not leave

The bride is carried home with a horse

anything out

arimahe ana haban

The elders are seated together

The one who narrates the helo did not leave

arimahe ana haban

anything out.

Arooskiina Allow Tiiri Song

Aros wacan Batihin ehel sharfabatihin

You have a family that is respectful

Laman isdortayo isaminatihin

You are people who have chosen each other

Jacaylugub batihin Dhawan al kumatihin

You have the new kind of love which is new

Aroskena alow tiri amin

May God protect you all from the evil eye

Alow taqabal amin alow tosi amin

Have patience in between you

Aqon cusub batihi iftin Baxaya tihin

Your wedding may God make it strong

Ubaxi cish qigatihin jacayl haddhasha

You are all young educated people

Tihim dul qadkanaalkuma

You are all shine as light emanate from you

You are like flower of love

You have a new love

It's a good wedding you have here

Have patience in this marriage.

Appendix II:

Meaning of Somali words

Doonis is the engagement celebration of the Somali people. The boy asks for the bride's hand in marriage.

Yerat it a gift the boy gives to the family of the groom.

Nikhaa/Nikxaa is the contract part of the marriage. It is a wedding practice common with Muslims

Aroos is the celebration after *Nikhaa* which is less formal. The ceremony can be for only women or at times it can be mixed.

Toddobobax is the ceremony after aroos it is performed on the seventh day after the wedding.

Shaash is a type of silky scarf that the married women wear.

Shaash saar is the ceremony where the bride is adorned by the shaash

Buraanbur is a type of oral poetry mainly performed by women.

Buraanbur dance is a type of dance that accompanies the *Buraanbur* oral poetry

Helo is a type of oral poetry performed by different people

Guuntino is a traditional Somali cloth.

Dhil is a type of pot used as storage for drinks and food stuffs.

Khul is a type of beads that women wear in Somali culture.

Diraac is a traditional dress that Somali women wear

Gabsaar is a type of shawl that is worn together with *diraac*

Gambaar is a type of stool that is made of wood and goat skin used as a seat. It is used as a prop in this study.

Qabil refers to the different tribes/clans of Somali people.

Aqal Hori is a traditional house of the Somali people which is portable and could easily be dismantled and carried away.

Dirin is a mat made of grass and usually painted.

Appendix 3

Pictures



Dhil is a pot carried by the bride.



The bride during the *shaash*

saar ceremony.



The bride wearing a modern modified Guantino dress.



***Shaash* this is worn during the *shaash saar* ceremony.**



A traditional *Guantino* dress.