

# **DISCOURSES IN SAMBURU ORAL ANIMAL PRAISE POETRY**

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the Award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy in Literature of Moi University.**

**September, 2011**

## **DECLARATIONS**

### **DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE**

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**DEDICATION**

For Sr. Anna Lucia Piredda for her “KEEP THE FIRE BURNING; KINDLE IT WITH CARE.”

## ABSTRACT

This study explores the ways in which the Samburu employ oral animal praise poetry. Through the songs we collected for the study we illustrate in this thesis how the community employs oral animal praise poetry as a means of interpreting and constructing its cosmos. The Samburu are pastoralists who inhabit arid and semi arid areas such as those found in Samburu County, part of Laikipia County and Isiolo County. The community's oral tradition involves performing poetry centring on praise of and to (their) animals. Reviewed literature indicates that some attention has been given to praise poetry. However, an explanation on why the Samburu perform praises to animals has been wanting. Such knowledge as its content, performers, and situations of performance, structure and what the praises reveal about the Samburu is what this thesis set out to investigate. The thesis affirms the cultural diversity of the Kenyan people using the Samburu oral animal praise poetry as an example. To conceptualise how this poetry defines the Samburu, we treat it as a literary text. To obtain the texts we conducted fieldwork at Wamba Division in Samburu County. We collected praise songs and numerous accounts about the Samburu. Fourteen praise songs develop this thesis. The narratives, as well as, existing literature about the Samburu augmented our analysis. The study employed an eclectic approach based on a theoretical framework comprising of Michel Foucault's ideas on the production of discourse. Mikhail Bakhtin's argument on the distinction between language use in day-to-day transactions and in art directed our making sense of the diction of the praise songs. To read the meanings of discourses in the praise songs, we employed Norman Fairclough's definition of a discourse and Philip Louis and Marianne Jørgensen's thoughts regarding the function of discourse. The clarifications that our respondents provided on the Samburu acted as what John R. Searle term as reference and supplemented our interpretation of the poetry and its role in constituting the Samburu cosmos. In addition, we employed Stanley E. Fish's argument regarding reference as speech acts to determine how the narratives on the Samburu aided our description of the discourses in this poetry. The study established that the classification, performance and structure of this poetry are geared toward perpetuating the Samburu nation. An overriding feature of the nation is its concern to nurture a consciousness that it is homogenous. Our analysis of the structure of this poetry reveals how the performer function, role of a given praise song and a target animal

audience determine whether a genre sounds threatening or pleading. Thus, the structure of this poetry reveals the methods the community employs to survive. The survival of this nation is dependent on a determination to observe rules regarding power relations among the various members that comprise the Samburu and a collective concern to conserve its environment. We recommend further research on the concept of audience and its role in performances that involve non-human audience.

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THAT IS CONSTRUCTED IN A PARTICULAR WAY. TO DISCERN HOW THE ELEMENTS THAT CONSTITUTE THIS POETRY RELATE, WE EMBARKED ON A PROCESS OF WHAT STEVEN MAILOUX (1990) TERMS INTERPRETATION. HE DEFINES INTERPRETATION AS ‘... TRANSLATION OF A TEXT AND TRANSLATION FOR AN AUDIENCE (1990:121). MAILOUX ADDS THAT TRANSLATION OF A TEXT ENTAILS SOME ACCEPTABLE APPROXIMATION OF TRANSLATION (1990:121-122). AS IT IS ALWAYS DIRECTED, WE ALSO EMPLOY FAIRCLOUGH’S (2001:20) MODEL OF TEXTUAL ANALYSIS WHERE THAT WE PAY ATTENTION TO INTERPRETING THE STRUCTURE OF THE SAMBURU ORAL ANIMAL PRAISE POETRY AS TEXTS – THE PRODUCT, AND PART OF OUR RESOURCES FOR THEIR INTERPRETATION. IN THIS ANALYSIS, WE LIMIT OUR DEFINITION OF THE RELATIONS OF THE SAMBURU ANIMAL PRAISE POETRY TO ITS: PERFORMER(S), INTENDED FUNCTION, THE TARGET ANIMAL AUDIENCE AND THE CONTEXT OF THE SITUATION. TO REALIZE THIS OBJECTIVE WE SELECTED AND USED ONLY FOURTEEN SONGS THAT THE COMMUNITY DEFINED AS CONTAINING PRAISES DIRECTED TO SOME SPECIFIC ANIMALS.....26

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**SAMBURU BELIEVE THAT AN ELEPHANT WILL ALWAYS CHASE A WOMAN ON SEEING ONE. SUCH A MYTH SERVES TO ENSURE THAT WOMEN ACT AS DIRECTED BY THE PROCEDURES AND EXPLAINS WHY THE ROLE OF PROTECTING THE COMMUNITY AGAINST EXTERNAL AGGRESSION FALLS LARGELY ON MEN AND PRECISELY THE MORANS. IT IS THROUGH SUCH MYTHS THAT THE POWER THAT DIFFERENT GENDERS WIELD COMES INTO OPERATION – THROUGH A PRINCIPLE OF DIVISION AND REJECTION. IT IS ALSO IN SOME OF THE GENRES OF NARRATIVES AS WASAMBA (2009) AND OSAAJI (2009) ARGUE THAT THE SUBVERSION OF THE PATRIARCHAL IDEOLOGY IS INSCRIBED. ....38**

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

This thesis is a study of the discourses that emerge out of the songs that the Samburu perform to animals and in praise of them. Specifically it inquires into the ways in which the Samburu imagine their world through these praise songs. This study is literary in perspective and approach. It focuses mainly on the texture of the praise songs performed to animals and the context out of which they arise. Therefore, by analysing the discourses extant in these praise poems, one begins to understand how, as Mumia Osaaji (2009:19) discovers, that this poetry is "... a crucial tool of shaping the world view of the (Samburu) community." In addition, Peter Wasamba (2009:146) thinks that this poetry as part of the Samburu community oral tradition "...mirror[s] the [Samburu community's] struggles and achievements as it struggles to maintain cultural balance in a constantly changing world." For that reason, there is need as Wasamba (2009:145) suggests, to define the context of the discourses that emerge in the Samburu oral animal praise oral poetry in terms of "... origin, language and social organization of the Samburu community."

##### 1.1.1 Origin of the Samburu Community<sup>1</sup>

Marjory Waruinge (1986:21) observes that the Samburu community is a distinct entity even though it is related ethnically and linguistically to the Maasai. Waruinge notes the centrality of the oral tradition in piecing together the history of the

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<sup>1</sup> The information on the origin of the Samburu community derives from secondary sources, mainly GoK(1986)

Samburu. The Samburu are pastoral and nomadic people (Waruinge, 1986:21; Wasamba 2009:146; Osaaji 2009:21). The Samburu got their name from the Laikipiak Maasai owing to a leather bag that Samburu women carried. The bag, *Samburie*, is the source of the name Samburu. Before the adoption of the name Samburu, the Samburu referred to themselves as *Loiborkineji*, the people of the white goats (Waruinge, 1986:21).

Part of the community's oral history indicates that the Samburu have been occupying the Leroki plateau and the area north of Lake Baringo since the early eighteenth century (ibid). However, drought and subsequent loss of livestock, their main means of livelihood, forced them to migrate in a north-easterly direction from the Baringo area (ibid: 21-22). To save the remaining livestock, the Samburu needed to expand their grazing land. This resulted in their capturing of mountains Nyiro and Kulal from the Borana and Mount Marsabit from the Laikipiak Maasai (ibid: 22). The years between 1880 and 1900 are significant in the history of the community.

In the second half of 1880s, a smallpox epidemic drastically reduced the Samburu's livestock and dispersed them from the area around Leroki plateau. As a result, the Samburu resorted to fishing, hunting and gathering besides depending on their neighbours, the Rendile, for survival (ibid). According to Waruinge (ibid) "... the Samburu spent the decade up to 1900 rebuilding their stock." Our field findings revealed that some Samburu were unable to restock.<sup>2</sup> As a result, those who were unable to restock turned to hunting and gathering as their economic activity. This group of the Samburu (that resorted to hunting and gathering) adopted the name Dorobo. The word Dorobo in Samburu means, 'one who does not have anything.' In the context of the life of the Samburu, those who had livestock use(d) the phrase '*one*

<sup>2</sup> We owe this information to our conversation with Mzee John Lodikir at Golgotim in September, 2008.



*who does not have anything and one who relies on gathering and hunting*<sup>3</sup> to mean the poor who own no livestock. Those with livestock looked down upon the Dorobo. According to our Dorobo respondents, Chief Solomon Lenaipa and John Lodikir, the Dorobo's choice to hunt and gather aimed at dissuading overdependence not only on livestock but also on those who had livestock.<sup>4</sup> The Dorobo<sup>5</sup>, therefore, opted to move to the forested areas of the Leroki plateau. In such areas they resorted to hunting buffaloes, rhinoceros, and elephants. They also gathered fruits and harvested honey as part of their diet. Their relations with the 'other'<sup>6</sup> Samburu remain(ed) cordial. The Dorobo would trade such products as honey for livestock products. The 'other' Samburu would also purchase from the Dorobos such products as buffalo hides. A hide from a buffalo is highly valued as the best quality in the making of shields.<sup>7</sup> At around 1900, the Samburu and the Purko Maasai co-existed peacefully. However, explains that "The date of re-occupation of the Leroki plateau is not certain." But, the Samburu did occupy the plateau shortly after the eviction of the Maasai from the plateau from around 1913-1918. She further observes that "... half of the Samburu, by the early 1920s were living on Leroki plateau" (1986:22).

The locale of the Leroki plateau grants the Samburu a geographical setting that enables them to continue with their pastoral and nomadic lifestyle (Waruinge, 1986:23). The plateau has natural water sources. During the rainy seasons, there is

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3 This explanation was first availed by Mzee Leadekei at Ngilai, Wamba. We too got the same explanation from Job Lolkalepi at Wamba and also from Solomon Lenaipa, chief of Golgotim location and also from Mzee John Lodikir, in 2009.

4 We gathered this through an informed interview at Golgotim. Our informants were Mzee John Lodikir and Solomon Lenaipa, Chief of Golgotim location, Wamba Division.

5 The Dorobo are a category of the Samburu and not a different ethnic community from the Samburu.

6 The label 'other' Samburu serves in the context of this thesis for lack of a better term to delineate that category of the Samburu that managed to restock after 1880.

7 Mzee Lodikir in the process of narrating about the Dorobo educated us on this.

plenty of grass for the livestock and during drought, the Samburu move in search of pasture (ibid: 23).

### **1.1.2 The Samburu under Colonial Rule**

According to Waruinge, during the colonial rule, Leroki plateau remained a source of conflict between the Samburu, the British Administration and British Settlers. On numerous occasions, the settlers rallied for the relocation of the Samburu. They argued that they could put the plateau into a more productive use than the Samburu did. In 1933, a case over the right to occupy the plateau went before the Kenya Land Commission. After extensive discussions, the Commission ruled in favour of the Samburu but not without a condition: to de-stock (Waruinge, 1986:24).

Waruinge (ibid) continues to note that efforts at stock control that the administration had initiated increased friction with the local people. In 1956, the plateau was divided into 244 blocks of about 1,600 acres each. The subdivision of the plateau into blocks disrupted the life style of the Samburu. Each phratry<sup>8</sup> was supposed to occupy an allocated area (ibid). All this was to curb the movement of the Samburu from one location to another in search of water and pasture for their livestock during the drought. It was also geared towards introducing the Samburu into monetary economy. This kind of control was unpopular with the community and many left for the uncontrolled land. Those who remained had only one option: to sell whatever number of livestock that the British Administration defined as excess. By 1961, grazing schemes covered nearly one third of the area that makes Samburu East, Samburu Central and Samburu West districts – that constitute the Samburu County. This fanned hostility between the larger Samburu community and those of its

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<sup>8</sup> Phratry – a grouping of class or other social units within a tribe who have a common ancestor.

members who collaborated with the British Administration. As a result, in the same year, 1961, elders of all phratries met to pronounce a curse on all those who had collaborated in any way with the administration in the imposition of the schemes (ibid: 25). Between late 1940s and 1950s, the colonial administration's effort to control the movement of the Samburu and their livestock failed. This is attributed mainly to the ineffective means to police the area that the colonial administration employed.

The Dorobo also suffered during the colonial rule<sup>9</sup>. The colonial administration forcefully moved them out of the forested areas of Mt. Ngiro and Mt. Kulal. For instance, in Wamba, the locale for the study, the Dorobo are found in Milimani, near Wamba market, and in Golgotim location<sup>10</sup>. According to *Mzee* John Lodikir and Chief Solomon Lenaipa of Golgotim location, the Dorobo resorted to livestock keeping as an integral part of their hunting and gathering. Following their eviction from the forested areas, they had to adopt other means of survival. They, therefore, took livestock keeping and continued supplementing it with gathering of fruits and harvesting of honey in forests, caves and rocky regions. The colonial administration unfairly proscribed the hunting of their preferred animals. Our field findings revealed that the Dorobo observed definite procedures during hunting or gathering. They were also keen on environmental conservation as we illustrate using the songs they performed during their hunting or gathering expeditions. Their conservation expertise<sup>11</sup> is evident in the discourses that emerge in the songs they perform. Those discourses are discussed in chapter four of this thesis. The banning of

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9 This also emerged in the course of *Mzee* Lodikir's narration about the Dorobo

10 We first got this from some informants who directed us on where to find the Dorobos. These include Stanley Lekutai, Julius Magambo, Fidelius Mutwiri and Thomas Lolkirik all from Wamba.

11 We detected this in *Mzee* Lodikir's narration about the Dorobo

game hunting continued even with the collapse of colonial rule in Kenya. The Dorobo also differ from the other Samburu slightly more on dietary practices. Otherwise, other cultural practices resemble those of the Samburu in almost every respect<sup>12</sup>. For instance, it is a taboo to kill an ostrich among the Samburu. The Dorobo observe the same taboo. The Dorobo have an edified institution of Moran just as the Samburu do<sup>13</sup>. According to *Mzee* John Lodikir and Chief Lenaipa, the word Dorobo means ‘one who relies on gathering and hunting’<sup>14</sup>. What this study finds interesting is the place of the name Samburu in providing a site for the performance of the Samburu/Dorobo identity predicated on the economic activity of each.

The community employs the name Samburu to project a perception that the community is a homogenous nation. On the contrary, that perception is paradoxical. This becomes evident when one begins to learn about the Samburu oral praise poetry. The praise poetry represents the discourse of ‘othering’ invented and perpetuated through the categorisation of the praise songs. Hence, the community is keen on pointing out praise songs that the Dorobo author and perform. The Samburu/Dorobo distinction is a reality that the community observes even long after the Dorobo resorted to livestock keeping. Thus, the paradox adds to the curiosity to comprehend the centrality of discourses in the Samburu oral animal praise poetry in the life of the Samburu.

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12 Conclusion based on the narratives of Mzee Lodikir and Lenaipa at Golgotim, 2009.

13 A clarification we obtained from Mzee Lodikir. The knowledge of the proscription in the Samburu traditions on the killing of ostriches was initially relayed to us by Mark Leadekei, John Lmailin and repeated by Kitman Leamo after performing *lebarta*. Mzee Lodikir too confirmed this.

14 The meaning of the term Dorobo as defined on page 3 concurs with Mzee Lodikir and Chief Lenaipa’s explanation. Both definitions underline the fact that the Dorobo were considered poor for they did not have livestock irrespective of whether that lack resulted from calamities such as drought or outbreak of diseases. The Dorobo’s resort to gathering and hunting was considered, by those who owned livestock, unworthy the recognition and respect accorded one who owns livestock.

### 1.1.3 Samburu Social Categories

Duncan Ngare (1986:48) identified two institutions that aid in accounting for the division of the Samburu into categories. These are the segmentary descent system and the age grade system. The former comprises six levels. On the first level is the moiety<sup>15</sup>. This comprises the black cattle moiety and the white cattle moiety. The black cattle moiety considers itself ritually senior to the white cattle moiety (ibid: 48). A moiety is made up of a few phratries. A phratry is the second level of the segmentary descent system. The phratries of the black cattle moiety are *Nyaperei*, *lingwesi*, *Pisikishu* and *Masula*. The following phratries belong to the white moiety: *Loimuki*, *Lorokushu*, *Longeri* and *Lokumani*. The third level of the segmentary descent system is the clan. A number of clans form a phratry. A clan encompasses several subclans. A subclan forms the fourth level of the segmentary descent system. From the sub clan, the fifth level is the hair-sharing group. The sixth level in this categorization is the lineage. According to Ngare (ibid: 48), each level has its beliefs and prescribed form of behaviour.

The age-grade system comprises of all men who have been circumcised in youth during a specified period. This system is said to be responsible for the reification of the following institutions in order of ‘prestige’: The institution of *Moran-hood* that follows boyhood seems to enjoy the greatest share of the community’s admiration. The other one is *elder-hood* that is assumed after marriage. According to Ngare (1986:53) “Women do not belong to any age-set, but they have two age-grades, that is girlhood and womanhood.”

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<sup>15</sup> Moiety – either of two kinship groups based on unilateral descent that together make up a tribe or society

The brief information on the categorization of the Samburu is helpful in conceptualizing discourses in animal praise songs we describe in this thesis. This is because the community has a rich repertoire of oral literature and a specification of what each category or members of the same should do in regard to a given genre (Darkwa, 1986:133 – 139:140 – 144; Ole Sena and Ssenyonga, 1986:33 -39; Ole Sena, 1986:40 – 43).

#### **1.1.4 Language and Literature**

In the *Samburu District: Socio-Cultural Profile*, of special recognition to this investigation is the place of language and literature in the life of the Samburu. Competence in the Samburu language is one of the indicators of ethnic identity in the community. Sena and Ssenyonga (1986:32-34) imply that competence in the language endows an individual with a sense of belonging in the community and could elevate one's social status. "Eloquent orators ... become the age-set's spokesmen ... lead raiding operations and ... officiate at rites of passage which are religious as well as educational. Good oratory implies purity in the things that the Samburu value" (Ole Sena and Ssenyonga, 1986:33). The rich repertoire of Samburu oral literature contributes to the attainment of linguistic competence. The literature is designed to be both educative and entertaining (Ole Sena and Ssenyonga, 1986:34). Singing is a widespread activity among the Samburu. Ole Sena (1986:42) points out that part of the role of praise songs is to impart knowledge of livestock as well as to provide amusement and entertainment.

#### **1.1.5 Reliance on Livestock and/or Livestock Products**

The Samburu's overdependence on livestock is noted in studies done in the area (GoK, 1997:27; Osaaji, 2009:20; Spencer, 2004: xxv; Wasamba, 2009:146 and

Wandera and Kapule, 1986: 65). Livestock-keeping being a main economic activity in the county explains the community's reverence for livestock. The main animals kept are cattle, sheep, goats, camels, donkeys, chicken and bees (GoK, 1997: 27). The community also raises the animals for products that include meat, hides and skins, honey and eggs. By selling livestock (though rare) or their products, the community earns money it uses to cater for its other needs. Some of the community's cultural practices cannot go on in the absence of livestock products<sup>16</sup>. An example is the use of milk. During a church opening ceremony at Nkaroni, Wamba Division, elders sprinkled milk round a newly built church as a way of blessing it.<sup>17</sup> The Samburu too offer milk to snakes if they happen to slither into their manyattas<sup>18</sup>. Spencer (2004:164) notes that some ceremonies particularly those that mark transition from one stage to another demand the incorporation of animal products like meat, milk, skins and or hides, or even honey.

Onesmas Kahindi (2001: xxi) affirms how livestock is crucial to the Samburu. He notes that, 'Livestock is the mainstay in the Samburu society. Livestock is the main form of exchange and food during socio-cultural occasions involving marriage, circumcision, religious sacrifices, cultural exchange, compensation....'

The foregoing underlines the place of livestock in the life of the Samburu in addition to other features that define the community. The centrality of livestock in the life of

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16 This is a fact that was evident in the narratives the Samburu tell concerning transitory ceremonies such as marriage, and admission into moranhood.

17 This is a ceremony that we participated in. It was a Catholic Church function but elders had been invited to bless the church. The blessing preceded the commencing of a Holy Mass presided by the Bishop of the catholic Diocese of Maralal Rt. Rev. Virgilio Pante. Other priests included Fr. Peter Tallone, IMC, Fr. Mathews Odhiambo, IMC who were serving in Wamba Parish, Diocese of Maralal and affirmed that the Samburu bless with milk.

18 This is a widely notion among Samburu. The Samburu hold that if in a manyatta there is an expecting woman, if they spot a snake the woman will give birth to twins. It is against their traditions to 'chase' away from a manyatta such a snake. Instead, they offer milk to it.

the community explains why they even perform praises to them. As a phenomenon that seems not to have received much scholarly attention, if any, there was a justification to interrogate the place of these songs in the life of the community as well as to conceptualize the discourses that come into being during the performance of the praise songs to the animals. We set out to carry out a study of the discourses in the praise songs with a perception that the community also sings praise songs to livestock. Our field findings revealed that singing praises to animals transcends performing to livestock as a pastime. This realization reinforced the curiosity to go beyond investigating the purpose of these discourses and describe the emergent discourses in the praise songs the community creates for animals.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In 1980, the then Ministry of Economic Planning and National Development and the Institute of African Studies, University of Nairobi, drew a joint research project, the District Socio-Cultural Profiles Project (DSCPP). One of its objectives was to document systematically the cultures of the communities in Kenya. Between 1981 and February 1982, researchers taking part in the DSCPP focused on the then Samburu District and compiled the *Samburu District: Socio-Cultural Profile*. In the document, there is mention in passing of the existence in the community's culture, of praise songs for cattle. This curiously drew our attention to these and other praise songs meant for other animals. The disturbing/fascinating questions were: why do the members of this community sing praise songs to their animals? Of what significance are the songs? What do these songs say about their worldview? It is in this regard that we decided to inquire into the discourses in the praises the community sings to animals to find out how they help this community to make meaning of their world. Therefore, this study is a critical inquiry of the nature and implication of the



discourses in making meanings articulated in the praise songs the Samburu sing to animals.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

- i. How does the Samburu community define the songs it sings to animals?
- ii. What accounts for the structure of the Samburu animal praise songs as a discourse?
- iii. How does the praise poetry the Samburu sing to animals help them make meaning of their world?

### **1.4 Justification for the study**

The Samburu community is largely pastoralist. The Samburu keep goats, sheep, camels, bees and donkeys. Livestock is the mainstay of the community (Wandera and Kapule, 1986:65). In the *Samburu District: Socio-Cultural Profile*, “... a Samburu without livestock, particularly cattle is a very poor person” (Wandera and Kapule, 1986:65). The importance that the community attaches to livestock is due to the role they play in its life (ibid). For instance, cattle provide meat, blood and milk. The Samburu as well uses cattle to pay bride wealth. Sheep and goats provide meat during important ceremonies. In addition, the Samburu also sell some of their animals during drought.

The community has a rich oral literature that is part of its traditional education. The Samburu outlook of their world in addition to some experiences account for the creation of the community’s oral literature. Of special mention in the Samburu oral literature is the place of songs in the cultural life of the community. Researchers who participated in the compilation of the socio-cultural profile of the Samburu underline

the place of singing in the community (Ole Sena, 1986:36). A whole chapter in this profile is on music and dance.

In the chapter, Darkwa emphasizes how various members of the community integrate songs in some activities like grazing, watering, milking and also as a site of recording their knowledge about some animals and or their products (Darkwa, 1986:133-134).

The Samburu community uses songs as a site to inscribe its values and attitude toward life and what makes sense to it and to address some unpredictable challenges. For instance, if a goat kids or, an ewe lambs and fails to suckle its young one, women persuade it to suckle using a song. If a cow too ‘declines’ to take water, especially when herders have spent days in search of water, they sing to it to persuade it to drink water.

Singing to animals does not confine itself to singing praises to livestock only, but to animals in general. It is, therefore, such an interaction - of a praise song, a performer (s), and (an) animal(s) as the target audience or part of the audience [constituting what Bakhtin (1998:480) terms an artistic verbal utterance] - that inspired the need to identify, record, transcribe and translate some Samburu oral animal praise poetry for purposes of critical analysis and description of some praise songs for animals as artistic verbal utterances.

The investigation into the nature of the discourses in praise songs and their place in the life of Samburu is warranted considering that other aspects of the community’s orality – narratives, have been studied as is evident through studies conducted by Osaaji (2009), Wasamba (2009) and Mote (2004).

The community thus provides a genre, a supplement that links with other chains of supplements in rethinking what constitutes Samburu orality in addition to

audience as a defining feature of performance in oral literature. However, the concern was not to conceptualize the performance of the genre *per se*, i.e., the popularly propagated concept of performance as constituting the interaction of the oral text, performer and the audience in a given setting, in most cases planned or premeditated, but to map the discourses in the praise songs.

The interest to investigate the nature of this genre traces its origin to a concern raised in an English lesson in June 2008 by the form four students of St. Theresa's Secondary School, Wamba, in Samburu East District. The topic was on Oral Poetry. The discussion dwelt on the function, features and classification of oral poetry. In the course of the lesson, students raised concern with their teacher on how to classify songs the Samburu sing to animals. The guidelines provided and some of the available resources excluded the genre. The existence of the singing phenomenon to animals finds some mention in the *Samburu District: Social-cultural profile*.

Though the *Samburu District Social Cultural Profile* acknowledges the existence of the genre, it lacks details on the definitive feature(s) of the genre under investigation. In the profile, the researchers did not even document a single genre. The acknowledgement of the existence of the genre provides a basis to define the songs from the community's perspective.

Having thus noted the gap regarding the nature of the identified poetry, our study, therefore, endeavoured to fill it. In the words of Jacques Derrida (1992) on the supplement, the Samburu animal praise poetry provides a supplement not only to written literature about the Samburu, but also to literary scholarship. By providing a critical analysis of the Samburu animal praise poetry, this thesis stimulates further research on the praise poetry and other forms of the Samburu oral literature. We too add that this study was necessary as a way of conceptualising one of the cultural

practices in Kenya as well as keeping in line with the sixth national goal of education in Kenya that requires the *promotion of respect for and development of Kenya's rich and varied cultures* . By conducting the fieldwork and presenting the findings of the fieldwork in the form of this thesis, we supplement existing knowledge of the diverse cultures in Kenya.

We intended to share our findings on Samburu with others who may not have known of the existence of such a genre. The findings presented in this thesis are our way of making them available in libraries, classrooms and other media. In Derridian words, it is to make them (findings) present in those contexts where they remain absent. In other words, this thesis functions like writing that Derrida (1992) argues supplements /mediates speech (presence). The discourses described in this thesis exist (are present) among the Samburu and remain absent in many other contexts. Thus, through this thesis, we accord some presence to those areas where the discourses have remained missing.

### **1.5 Limitations and Scope of the Study**

The study set out to identify, analyze and describe the discourses present in Samburu animal praise poetry and their meanings, while simultaneously taking cognizance of the existence of other praise songs that form part of the Samburu community's oral literature. This study however restricts itself to a critical analysis of the discourses in the animal praise poetry the Samburu sing to animals and their meanings in defining their world. It is in this sense that our study restricted itself to identification, analysis and description of the discourses existing in the animal praise poetry as literary material. The performance aspect of these songs though recognized as important was beyond the scope of this study and is only referred to when it

informs the conceptualization of the genre(s). This thesis develops without a consideration of the grammar and syntax of the Samburu language. This limitation, however, does not cripple the study. This is because the explanations our respondents gave regarding the Samburu, the(ir) animals and the praise poetry augmented the analysis of the praise poems and description of the discourses in the Samburu oral animal praise poems. As such, the scope of the study confines itself to the identification, analysis and description of form and content of the genre we examined and how the emerging discourses from the genre help us to appreciate the community's interpretation of its cosmos.

## 1.6 Literature Review

In a chapter on 'Music and Dance' in the *Samburu District: Socio-Cultural Profile* Asante Darkwa (1986:133-134) notes:

The Samburu have ... [P]raise songs. Of special importance to the Samburu are songs sung in praise of cows and others sung to indicate the importance of having cows. There are songs for taking cattle to grazing ground and back home in the evening, and yet others are sung when grazing the cattle and when drawing water for the animals. Praise for the cattle are sung by the Morans and uncircumcised boys who make mention of their colours, abundant milk, good, grade beef, durable hide and services provided by healthy cows and bulls.

It is evident from the quote that praising in the Samburu community finds its expression besides other means, in song. The centrality of praise in the life of the Samburu provided a basis for an inquiry into not only the content, texture and the context of the existence of discourses in Samburu oral animal praise poetry but also their place in interpreting and constructing the Samburu cosmos. The implication here is that it is only male members of the Samburu who praise animals. In addition, their praises focus on cattle. Our study takes into consideration praise songs to cattle as well as to other animals. In chapter two of this thesis, we present examples of the

classification criterion of the Samburu oral animal praise poetry sang to other animals as well. In chapter three, we also attend to the function of the performer in an attempt to establish whether the performance of praises to animals is a preserve of male members of the community or whether other categories are involved in their composition and performance. Darkwa (1986:134) observes that praises among the Samburu are about what makes sense to the Samburu from livestock, wild animals, God, people, trees, grass, beliefs, birds, wives, girlfriends and husband, to communicating feelings of love, hate, misery, fear and bravery. We endeavoured to single out praises to animals and read the sense that the community represents using praises to their animals.

There are also a number of works on praise poetry in Africa. However, not much has been written on Samburu oral animal praise poetry. Ruth Finnegan (1970) in her *Oral Literature in Africa* explores praise poetry specifically in the chapters: 'Poetry and Patronage' and 'Panegyric'. In the chapter on 'Poetry and Patronage', she notes the impossibility of a uniform definition of African poetry. She thus implies that a study of African poetry would be reliable if researchers consider the context that gives rise to it. She argues that "... even the most cursory account of poetry in Africa must begin by insisting on variety before going on to discuss certain common patterns" (1970:82). She suggests that a definition of African poetry should provide details on its nature, functions, the position of the poet who generates a given oral poem and, "... the condition and background that give rise to poetry in Africa" (1970:80). In this chapter, a lot of emphasis is on the poets and some of the reasons that lead them in composing some forms of poetry. The 'quasi-silence' on how audience participates in determining the texture of a poem remains unexplored in the chapter. As a result, our study in applying Finnegan's recommendations on how to

define African poetry took into consideration the role (an) animal(s) as the target audience play in defining the praises the Samburu sing to animals. We provide in chapter three of this thesis a description of the role a given animal audience plays in defining this kind of poetry and as a way of describing what accounts for the variety in this poetry.

In the chapter on ‘Panegyric’ Finnegan provides some generalizations regarding praise poetry in Africa. Drawing from various examples of praise poetry in various parts of the continent, she presents some direction for further exploration of the genre. She has described the formal features of praise poetry as well as occasions it is brought into being. In the description, there are details on the content of praise poetry. She further acknowledges that, “... in Eastern and Southern Africa, cattle form a popular subject in praise poetry” (1970:12). This acknowledgment introduces some curiosity on who constitutes its audience. Finnegan fails to account for the audience of such kind of poetry. This thesis attends to that silence more elaborately in chapter three. In our exploration, we have interrogated the place of animals in the actualization of this poetry. The poet/performer apostrophizes to animals as the target audience. We have also provided in chapter three, the formal features of this kind of praise poetry.

Following Amuka’s (1994) position that a literary audience is a construct, we set out to answer the intriguing questions as to why the community not only performs praises about animals, but also to animals as the audience. The community’s regard of some animals as the target audience allows us some space to critically analyse not only the reasons governing such perception, but also the emergent discourses when a member of the community performs a given song to an animal.

We too endeavoured to collect data that would aid in going beyond a mere acknowledgement of the existence of praise songs. Apart from affirming that the community sings praises to animals, there is not a single example of such a song in the *Samburu District: Socio-Cultural Profile*. Darkwa (1986:133-134) notes that:

[There] are songs in praise of cows. Praises for the cattle are sung by the Moran and uncircumcised boys who make mention of the colours, abundant milk, and good grade beef, durable hides and services provided by cows, bulls....

In this thesis, we go beyond the thinking that praises for animals are restricted to domestic animals. In chapters two and four of this thesis, we have presented examples of poetry sung to other animals and an account of their meaning to the community respectively.

In this thesis, we also respond to contestable arguments on the place of audience in the actualization of a given poem. Our first argument derives from *The Heritage of African Poetry*, an anthology of poetry edited by Isidore Okpewho. In the section on 'The Nature of African Poetry' Okpewho (1985:8) argues that:

Oral poetry achieves its forcefulness not only at the hands of the performer himself. Part of this forcefulness comes from the participation of various persons present at the scene of performance in the creative act taking place.

Okpewho's position regarding the forcefulness of oral poetry contradicts what he stated as his project in editing the anthology. One of the aims was to introduce students of African Poetry to the major topics that have occupied the attention of African poets whatever their medium of expression (Okpewho 1985:2). His second aim was to define the nature of African oral poetry. It is in his second aim that the contradiction we allude to manifests itself. Part of his definition that we have quoted excludes the kind of poetry we describe in this thesis. This is because, among the Samburu there are instances where the performance of a praise poem involves only the performer and an animal. This then raises the question: How does this poetry gain



its forcefulness? To answer this question, it was imperative to find out from the Samburu how this poetry could be understood to have some effect.

Another erroneous notion on oral poetry features in Okumba Miruka's *Encounter with Oral Literature*. In the chapter on oral poetry, Miruka (1994) posits that an audience plays a role in the performance of an oral poem. He states the role as one that can either motivate or demoralize a performer. This description invites the exploration of the nature of motivation for the performance of the praises the Samburu sing to animals. For instance, women perform praises to she-goats when they 'decline' to suckle their kids. Women sing praises to them until they suckle kids. This leaves one wondering whether there would be any motivation to continue performing to the she-goats once they oblige to the expectations of the praise singers.

Therefore, the nature of the audience's motivation in a performance needs re-evaluation. Applying Miruka's thinking that, in the case of the Samburu, singing praises to animals motivates a performer was instrumental in describing the role a target animal-audience plays as well as the function of praise poetry in the structuring of the Samburu oral animal praise poetry. This was due to the notion that for the Samburu, it seems that the longer a given animal audience takes to yield to the expectation of the performer, the more the performer gets motivated to perform.

Other studies on praise poetry lay an emphasis on human beings being the subjects and objects of praise. Other researches have also mapped out some of the salient features of such poetry. We allude here to the following works. Jeff Opland (1996:96) argues that the Xhosa's Izibongo is on human beings. This kind of poetry makes use of "... appellations, referring either to one person or to different people (in a lineage for example, or a clan); often the names are extended by an allusive qualifying phrase." We made use of Opland's model of describing the salient features

that define this poetry to make sense of the features that constitute the Samburu Animal Praise songs. To make more sense of the Samburu praise songs beyond the form, we too borrowed from the works of Bolanle Awe (2010) and Leroy Vail and Landeg White (1991). In 'Praise Poems as Historical Data' Awe illustrates that among the Yoruba anything valuable to the community receives some praise. The praising functions to preserve that reverence and it is packaged "... by giving the salient characteristics in very figurative and hyperbolic language ..." 1996:333). For our study, we saw the need to find out the valuable knowledge the community preserves in these praise songs. In *Power and the Praise Poem* Vail and White, argue that among the Ndebele of the Southern part of Africa, praise poetry focuses on the exploits of the kings and their achievements. The knowledge that praise poetry could serve as a means of preserving historical knowledge of a given community triggered our curiosity to analyse the content of the Samburu animal praise songs and describe the shared knowledge the community preserves in this genre.

Having identified inadequate attention to this kind of poetry through the literature we reviewed, we endeavour to not only supplement what exists on praise poetry in general but also on the animal praise poetry using the Samburu experience as our frame of reference. To read the Samburu Animal Praise Poetry and the discourses extant in it, we employed an eclectic theoretical framework.

### **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

According to Thomas Schram (2006:58) in *Conceptualizing and Proposing Qualitative Research*, a theory gives inquiry coherence. In this book, Schram defines coherence as:

...assuming a point of view, a way of thinking and seeing a context for [one's] inquiry in terms of which [one's] problems and [one's]

reasons and strategies for pursuing it make sense. Coherence gives significance to some piece of work for it conceptualizes that work.

Schram goes on to add "... ideas need a context, a sense of how they fit within a bigger picture, to attain significance" (ibid). Thus, the theoretical framework for this study served the task of what Schram considers as establishing the conceptual integrity for the enquiry, making a case for how, and why our ideas matter relative to some larger body of ideas embedded in the research, writings and experiences of others (ibid) *who have written about the Samburu and on praise poetry*<sup>19</sup>. This aspect of situating our study within other studies on the Samburu and on praise poetry allows the employment of theories of discourse analysis in order to answer the research questions. This agrees with George Yule (2006) who holds that:

Discourse analysis ... attempt[s] to arrive at a reasonable interpretation of what [an] writer (read author) intended to convey ... [in a text] ... [and it] entails a process of filling in a lot of gaps that exist in the text ... to create meaningful connections that are not actually expressed by the words ... (126).

The resort to adopting a discourse analysis approach finds further justification in conceptualising discourse in Fairclough's terms<sup>20</sup>. Fairclough applies the term discourse to mean, '... a way of speaking which gives meaning to experiences from a particular perspective...' (2002:66). Therefore, to arrive at what Yule calls a reasonable interpretation of the Samburu Animal Oral Praise Songs, our literary texts, we needed an approach that would guide us in making out some of the experiences the Samburu speak out through the perspective of praise. In order to, as Yule would have it, fill the gaps that exist in the praise songs as our literary texts, we had to adopt an eclectic approach in theory as well as in methodology. But before focusing on the

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<sup>19</sup> This is my own emphasis.

<sup>20</sup> This definition of discourse cited in Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) is one of the ways in which Norman Fairclough applies the term. For the other two more ways in which Fairclough applies the term read Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:66). For this thesis, the third definition serves the intent of this thesis.

concepts that add up to the theoretical framework of the study, we provide a working definition of discourse in this thesis and the specific elements that constitute the framework and how they operate.

### **1.7.1 What is discourse?**

The term discourse invites multi-definitions from various scholars. We do not intend to pursue these definitions in this section nor in another part of this thesis. At the core of any study of discourse, there seems to be a kind of agreement that it refers to an activity – a product and a process – that involves language use in a given context. This usage then implies a user of a language using a structure for a purpose and the interpretation (of the product) of its usage in a context. Thus, an analysis of the interaction between the users of a language item, the texts they produce and their interpretation in any context should also aid in explaining the process of producing the texts as well as the meanings they have for the producers. In the analysis of the Samburu oral animal praise poetry as a discourse and the types of discourse inherent in them, we describe the various categories of the songs as discourse, that is, as having a discernible structure. In addition, we read the types of discourses that emerge during the rendition of this poetry and their place in the Samburu cosmos. To pull off this intent we make use of Michel Foucault's (1992), Norman Fairclough's (2001), Marianne Jørgensen's and Louise Phillips' (2002), and Mikhail Bakhtin's (1998) views on discourse. We also adopt John Carlos Rowe's (1990) definition of what constitutes a structure to augment our account of the structure of this poetry as a discourse. Stanley Fish's (1976) thinking on speech acts enhances our elucidation of the structure of the discourse in the Samburu oral animal Praise poetry.

In their book *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, Marianne Jørgensen and Louise Phillips quote Fairclough (2002:66) as having defined discourse as, "... language use as a social practice ... and as a way of speaking which gives meaning to experiences from a particular perspective." In *Language and Power* Fairclough (2001:18) defines discourse as, "... language use conceived of as socially determined." He recommends how anyone interested in discourse analysis should proceed. From that suggestion we appropriate the term linguistic phenomenon to read the Samburu Animal Praise Songs. For Fairclough (2001:19) a linguistic phenomenon is:

... social in the sense that whenever people speak or listen ... they do so in ways which are determined socially and have social effects ... [it is also] ... that language activity which goes on in social contexts ... [and] not merely a reflection or expression of social processes and practices, it is part of those social processes and practices.

In this thesis, we treat the singing of praises to animals as a discourse, a kind of social practice and as a way of speaking that gives meaning to the Samburu singing praises to animals. It also holds to regard the singing of praises to animals as a linguistic phenomenon for its performance is carried out in socially determined ways that also have social effects. The singing of praises is part of the Samburu social processes and practices as we argue out in the other chapters of this thesis.

Jørgensen and Phillips' (2002:67) argument that discourse participates in, "... the construction of social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and meaning" guides our accounting of how the Samburu use the discourses in constructing and perpetuating identities and social relations using existing systems of knowledge within their cosmos. In order to inquire critically into the discourses that

come into being during the singing of praises to animals (a communicative event) we employ Fairclough's (2001) model of textual analysis of a text entails paying attention to the analysis of a text as a product and as a resource in the interpretation process. In this thesis, the praise songs serve as our texts. We therefore pay close attention to analysing the praise songs as texts, products of a process of production and as a resource in a process of interpretation. He also suggests the examination of the interaction of the processes of production and interpretation. All these should function in the context of what he terms as the social conditions of production and the social context, as well as interactions of interpretation. Fairclough's model of viewing discourse as a product and a resource in a defined context invites an interdiscursive approach. According to Jørgensen and Phillips, (2002:73) interdiscursivity is a form of intertextuality. They argue that, "... interdiscursivity occurs when different discourses and genres are articulated together in a communicative event ... [and] intertextuality refers to the condition whereby all communicative events draw on earlier events" (2002:73). This will be useful in deciphering the discourses that arise in the poetry we analyse.

This study being a kind of a discursive practice, a communicative event then incorporates selected ideas of Foucault and Bakhtin on discourse in ways we explain in the following sections. Augmenting these are Stanley Fish's arguments on speech act theory. A brief description of which ideas we put to use and reasons for doing so as well as what each will do follows.

### **1.7.2 Michel Foucault and Discourse**

Michel Foucault's (1992:214) stance on discourse is crucial in the description of the production of the genre, Samburu oral animal praise poetry, as a discourse and

the categorization of the discourse. Foucault contends that the production of discourse follows a process. He terms the process *procedures for the production of discourse*. He goes on to identify them as the procedures of exclusion external to the discourse; procedures internal to the discourse, and the rarefaction of the speaking subjects.

The procedures of exclusion operate from the exterior of a particular discourse and are the means by which the discourse is interarticulated with power and with desire (Foucault 1992:94). Foucault outlined the three procedures of exclusion external to the discourse as prohibition, the reason/madness opposition and the true/false opposition (Foucault 1992:95). For our study, we make use of the prohibition principle and the rejection/division procedure that anchors on the reason/madness opposition. These guide in explaining how the function of a performer, the context of production of a given praise text and its intent to a target audience configure them as discourses. This follows Foucault's argument that, "... not everyone has the right to say everything in any circumstance" (1992:95). Specifically, Foucault's external processes for the production of discourse and in particular the prohibition, rejection/division and reason /madness opposition ones aid in delineating the aspects that identify the praise poetry we analysed. These facets include performers (producers/authors), purpose(s), and the target of the discourses. This helped in labelling for instance the songs that only women perform. Women perform a number of praise texts but the songs differ from each other in some respects even when the rationale for performing seems similar. For instance, women plead with ewes and she-goats to suckle their young ones. The song they use to praise an ewe and the one they use for a she-goat differ not only in diction but also in such nuances as pitch. The adoption of a particular pitch for a given discourse erects a boundary that defines which praise is for which animal. The Dorobo praise a honey guide but 'other'

Samburus do not enjoy this privilege. This also applies to the right to sing to elephants that members of the Talas family claim. By applying the said procedures, we discerned how the song for milking a camel differs from that for milking a cow as well as how herders construct the praises for cows to drink water.

To explore how these discourses constitute in Fairclough's words the construction of social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and meaning (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002:67) we too explored them as speech acts. We employed Searle's notion of reference as a speech act as well as Stanley Fish's argument on the use of speech act theory in literary criticism.

### **1.7.3 Stanley Fish on Speech Act Theory and Literary Criticism and John R.**

#### **Searle's ideas on Reference as a Speech Act**

In an essay 'How to do Things with Austin and Searle: Speech Act Theory and Literary Criticism' Fish (1976) illustrates how the Speech Act Theory informs literary criticism. For purposes of our study, we made use of Fish's argument that speech act is, "... about language and its power: the power to make the world rather than mirror it, to bring states of affairs rather than report them, to constitute institutions rather than ... serve them..." (1976:1024). This argument helps in mapping out how the extant discourses participate in constituting the Samburu cosmos, the social relations that exist in it and knowledge about them.

According to Searle (1969:79), speakers use referring expressions to identify. Referring expressions point out particular things by way of providing answers to questions which? Who/ and what? We also used the proposition that "... if a speaker refers to an object, then he identifies or is able on demand to identify that object for the hearer apart from all other objects." This allowed integrating the clarifications on



the varied aspects of the song texts that we obtained from our respondents in the analysis of the song texts. We limited ourselves to using only referring expression, without delving into other nuances necessary as conditions for referring. The diction of the song texts served as referring expressions<sup>21</sup>. This we proved during the analysis of the song texts. We gave some of the transcribed song-texts to some members of the community (not necessarily taking part in the study) to read and make comments. Those who read were able to identify with ease such features as the performer, target-audience and the situation of performance of a given song-text.

To map our referring expressions, we adopted what Searle terms as singular definite descriptions (1969:72) "... which serve the purpose of 'picking out or identifying some objects or entity' " (1969:73). The use of Searle's ideas on reference aided our description of the aesthetic properties that constitute the genre.

Okoth Okombo (1992:19) argues for the identification of the aesthetic elements and principles of form in literary texts. To achieve this, he argues that, "... the aesthetic element and principle of form in a given text cannot be adequately identified without recourse to the artistic intuitions of the community that produced the text." This made us to consider using some of Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas on discourse.

#### **1.7.4 Mikhail Bakhtin's Theory of Discourse**

According to Bakhtin, the form of an artistic work is a discourse that has an evaluative significance. Bakhtin postulates that, "... a poetic work is a powerful condenser of unarticulated social evaluations ... [where] each word is saturated with

<sup>21</sup> We appropriate the term from John R. Searle's discussion of reference as a Speech Act in his 1969 essay. He applies the term in defining those sections utterances that perform the role of picking out or identifying some object or entity. In the essay, he spells out two conditions for executing reference. These are: one, there must exist one and only one object to which the speaker's utterance of the expression applies and two, the hearer must be given sufficient means to identify the object from the speaker's utterance of the expression where the expression must be an identifying description or the speaker must be able to produce an identifying description on demand. For more of this see Searle's 'Reference as a Speech Act' (Cambridge, 1969), p.73 – 96.

them” (1998:481). We treated the Samburu oral animal Praise poetry as a poetic work and proceeded to analyse it to approximate the Samburu’s experiences and perceptions of their cosmos. He further argues that, it is their social evaluations that organise form as their direct expression (ibid). This explains our choice of treating the song-texts as poetic works that the Samburu term as praise-forms. In the process of structuring, Bakhtin argues that, “... [a] poet selects words (some of the elements in the structuring process) ... from the context of life where words have been steeped in and become permeated with value judgment.” He goes on to argue that, “ Form is realized with the help of the material – it is fixed in material; but by virtue of its significance it exceeds the material, the import of form has to do not with the material but with the content” (ibid). This realization accounts for the use the Samburu put the form into as we have expounded in chapter four of this thesis. In summary, Bakhtin’s ideas on discourse directed the mapping of the discourses extant in the Samburu oral animal praise poetry for animals with an explanation of how it is packaged as discourse. The ideas on discourse aided this study in mapping not only the discourses inherent in the praise songs and their meanings but also how they are authored and when they are brought into existence and the role they execute once they come into being.

## **1.8 Methodology**

### **1.8.1 Research Design**

This thesis presents conclusions that resulted from an eclectic qualitative research. This approach entailed an analysis of primary data collected through an ethnographic-quasi-ethnomethodological field research. Data from secondary sources provided information that supplemented the analysis of the Samburu Oral Animal

Praise Songs and accounts on the Samburu we collected in Wamba Division, Samburu East District. Some of the secondary sources we analyzed contained only some information on animal praise among the Samburu. In some cases we found no details about the texts we have analyzed for this thesis. An example of a source that mentions in passing of the praise songs we undertook to analyze is the *Samburu District: Socio-Cultural Profile*. The profile does not go beyond acknowledging that the Samburu have praise songs for cattle. In order to get texts for a critical analysis, we resolved to collect texts (praise songs) and any other information regarding the songs or the community. Other sources include Mote's thesis, Wasamba and Osaaji's articles who all agree that the Samburu have a rich oral literature.

### **1.8.2 Secondary Sources**

A number of secondary sources were consulted. They were in the form of books, theses and articles in refereed journals. The sources aided in the development of this thesis by way of ascertaining what other studies had focused on about the Samburu. In addition, they were instrumental in aiding at arriving at decisions concerning the appropriate research design, methods of data collection, instruments to use to collect data for this thesis. In this section, we cite a few of the sources. The resolve to carry out a field study at Wamba put into use pieces of advice from Dan Ben Amos' (1975); Okot P'Bitek's (1986); Okoth Okombo (1992); Johannes Fabian (1990) and Thomas Schram (2006).

According to Schram a researcher who opts to carry out a field study fulfils the following. The first condition anchors on the researcher's willingness to immerse him/herself in "... the naturally occurring events of everyday life... [and] ability to let go(es) of control of possible confounding variables and to be prepared to go with the

flow of changing circumstances” (2006:8). This enhances what Schram terms as, “... [an] understanding of the social world through direct personal experiences in natural settings (ibid).” Being part of a community’s day-to-day rhythm of life during the study period provided opportunities to learn more about the community. Schram (ibid) observes that this kind of approach, “ ...[provides] opportunities made possible by being there and getting close to people and circumstances, either through physical proximity and participation over time or in the social sense of shared experience, empathy, and confidentiality.”

The necessity of researchers immersing themselves in a community’s life for the period of a study finds further support in P’Bitek’s (1986) position that non-participants in a culture cannot account for the criteria to critique creative works of such a culture. In the case of our study, we had to immerse ourselves for sometime in the Samburu lifestyle. This was to enable us observe how the Samburu evaluate this poetry as part of the process of mapping the discourses that arise in the process of its performance. Our resolve to conduct field study at Wamba benefited from P’Bitek’s (1986:37) advice where he points how we should approach such creative works in any given culture. He says:

Who can, then, judge ... creative works? Who can meaningfully announce the phrases ... good dance, sweet song...? It is only the participants in a culture who can pass judgments on it. It is only they who can evaluate how effective the song or dance is; how ... these have made life meaningful.

In order to answer the research questions raised in this thesis to an appreciable degree, fieldwork was core to the study. We needed to provide some description of the criteria of the Samburu employ to evaluate the praise songs they sing to animals they raise as well as those found in their environment and the discourses that arise. This description is grounded on the community’s knowledge and criteria.

Another reason why field research was core to this study finds explanation in Okombo's (1992) view on the role of ethnomethodology in the study of genres. He argues that a given community has a criterion for both producing and evaluating its own creative works. Some of the literature that we reviewed lacked such a criterion. Schram's (2006) argument on the necessity of going to the place where texts can be obtained agrees with both Okot (1986) and Okombo's (1992) observations. Schram recommends that researchers need to obtain such a criterion where it exists. What this implies is that we had to be present at that space where the criterion operates. At that space, the researcher, '... through talking, listening, looking, ... and reflecting in greater or lesser degrees of engagement with study participants, filters and affects what counts as meaningful knowledge of [an] inquiry' (Schram 2006:9). Our other reason why we resorted to fieldwork relates to context. This concurs with our treatment of the praise songs as discourses. Discourse is context-specific. This means that one makes sense of a discourse in a context. Amos (1975:165) in 'Folklore in African society' implies the centrality of sensitivity to context and particulars:

... forms of folklore, as speakers delineate and recognize them, have cultural symbolic meanings. Texts framed into genres and performed in socially defined communicative situations acquire significance beyond the literal meanings of their constituent words. The defining features of forms and genres are hence capable of communicating in society the symbolic meanings of a category of expressions, or of a single subject.

A description of what Amos (1975) regards, as 'symbolic meanings and of a category of expressions or of a single subject' in the light of the discourses we studied could not have been fruitful if data used for such description was derived out of its context of its performance among the Samburu. Consequently, for what Amos (1975:171) considers, 'The systematic formulation of the paradigm features of each genre'

[Samburu oral animal Praise poetry] calls for ‘... a thorough investigation of folklore knowledge of a genre being investigated.’

According to Johannes Fabian (1990) such features may be generated through the performance of some of those genres and also through the narratives about the community and also of the genres themselves. Therefore, to generate data for critical analysis, fieldwork was imperative. The need to be part of the producers of knowledge about these genres, what Fabian in the quoted treatise calls performative ethnography<sup>22</sup>, anchors on the centrality of performance in the production of cultural knowledge. Fabian (1990:6) asserts that members of community have some knowledge about some of their practices which they may not articulate in some communicative events. Such communicative events are those where a researcher solicits answers of some already prepared questions on some cultural aspects to members of the community. In our case, it would (not) be (un)easy for members to explain how long a performance should last or when to consider the rendition of a given praise song successful and effective. Fabian (ibid) argues for the centrality of performance in the production of cultural knowledge:

Members of all societies have ... certain kinds of knowledge and skills, which they can convey directly or indirectly.... What has not been given sufficient consideration is that about large areas and important aspects of culture no one, not even the native, has information that can simply be called up and expressed in discursive statements. This sort of knowledge can be represented, made present, only through action, enactment, or performance.

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<sup>22</sup> Johannes Fabian coined the term. It refers to the way(s) an ethnographer participates in the production of cultural knowledge. He contends that there is some cultural knowledge whose nature is realized through acting. Therefore, performance for Fabian is not only the text in its moment of text realization but also a description of both the ways people realize their culture and of the method by which an ethnographer produces knowledge about that culture. This was instrumental in defining what accounts for the effectiveness of a praise song for it allowed us to observe various performances from the beginning to the end as opposed to a situation where we would have inquired of the performance of the praise songs out of their contexts of actualization.

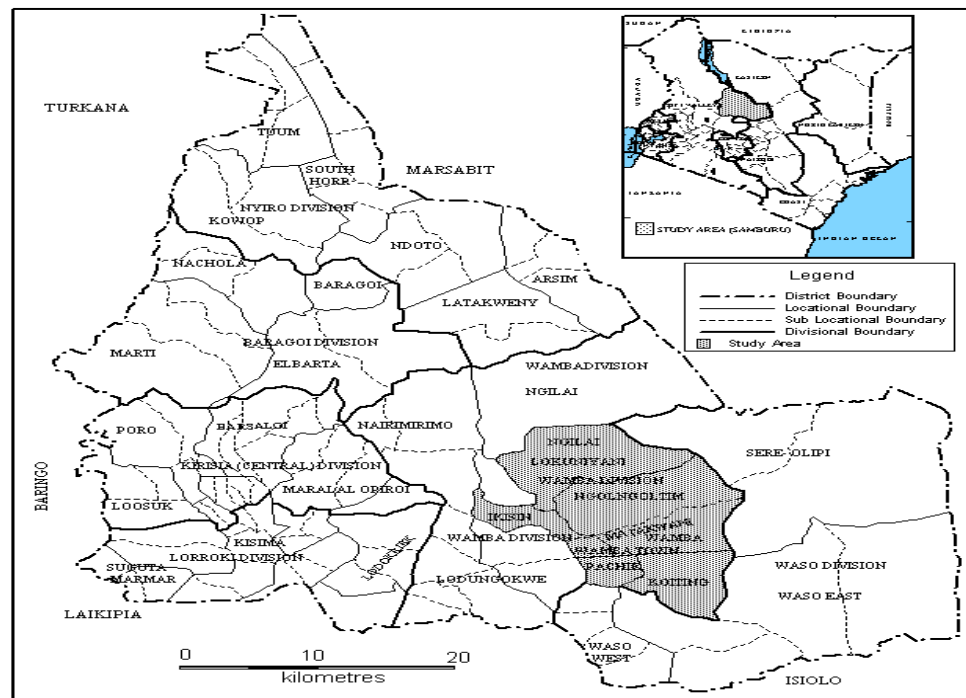
It is the shared knowledge about singing praises to animals as an aspect of the Samburu culture that our field research at Wamba pursued. Available and relevant literature on the Samburu supplemented the study. The texts identified, analyzed and described in this thesis are the result of a field research conducted in Wamba Division, Samburu East District.

### **1.8.3 Research Site**

The choice of Wamba was due to the researcher's familiarity with some areas within the division. This knowledge was vital in establishing rapport with members of the community to enable easier identification of research respondents, recruitment of research assistants, and administration of research instruments. It was also relatively cost-effective in terms of time and money. The familiarity with the place was crucial in planning how to carry out data collection owing to the facts we cite in the next section.

Wamba is dry most of the time in a year and receives some rainfall in the months of July, August and November. The rainfall pattern of the area was on record as having made transport within our research site and its environs impossible. We had scheduled our fieldwork to begin end of August, 2009. Wamba and its environs are prone to cattle rustling. To get to Wamba, one has to traverse some places like Maralal and Isiolo. Maralal and Isiolo have experienced cattle raids and are known to be prone to cattle rustling hence the need to find out about the security situation. Such knowledge made it relatively easy to collect, translate and transcribe eighteen songs within the planned period. Out of the eighteen songs, we used fourteen to develop this thesis.

**Figure 1:** A map of Samburu District (now Samburu County) obtained from Mzee



Drawn courtesy of Kanda, GIS Laboratory, Moi University.

#### 1.8.4.1 Pre-Fieldwork Logistics

To collect data for this thesis, our pre-field logistics involved making calls to people known to the researcher in Wamba and obtaining a research permit. The calls provided information we needed about the weather conditions and the security situation. This was useful in our planning and preparing materials and equipment we were to use during the fieldwork. In addition, it helped in monitoring the weather and security condition. The calls revealed that there was a severe drought. As a result,



herders had moved most of the livestock to mountainous regions in the division where there was a possibility of finding water and pasture. Owing to the drought, the majority of the people contacted advised that we postpone the fieldwork. The scare of an imminent *El Nino* predicted to start in October and continue all the way to December compelled the researcher to opt to make an effort to collect, transcribe and translate some praise songs between end of August and before the beginning of October.

This part of our getting ready for the fieldwork went hand in hand with preparation on obtaining a research permit. The obtaining of a research permit is a requirement clearly spelt out in the Moi University Research Policy and in the laws of Kenya. At Wamba, the permit was useful during the recruitment of research assistants. With it was relatively easier to convince research participants that our presence in Wamba was legal and also to create confidence that the data we were collecting was for academic purposes only. With the research permit, we were confident that we would not invite suspicious feelings as it comprised part of the identification documents. Having met the requirements to undertake the research, the second part of fieldwork started.

#### **1.8.4.2 Fieldwork Logistics**

Field logistics constituted travelling to Wamba ‘armed’ with the fieldwork gear that comprised recording equipment and materials, storage devices, and writing materials such as note books and pens. The recording equipment comprised a radio cassette, a video camera and a mobile phone. The storage device included some empty cassettes, and a 1 GB memory card. We also had some dry cells to power the radio cassette. The mobile phone had an in-built voice recorder and it was very useful in

recording some songs particularly at Ngilai where we were unable to carry with us the radio cassette and the video camera. The cassettes and the memory card stored songs that were recorded using either the radio cassette or the video camera.

On arrival, we reported both to the District Commissioner and the District Education Quality Assurance and Standards Officer of Samburu East District. At this time the research permit had not been processed. We requested the mentioned officers to allow us to begin collecting our data while waiting for the processing of our research permit. They allowed us to collect data and promised their support whenever needed. After the authorities granted the go-ahead, we embarked on mapping our research population from whom we were to collect praise songs and narratives on the Samburu. We also recruited our research assistants. Towards the end of our third week in the field, we got our research permit. On receiving it, we informed the relevant authorities in the area and for the time we remained in Wamba, we presented it whenever it was demanded.

#### **1.8.4.3 Research Population, Recruitment of Research Assistants and Data**

##### **Collection**

The research population for the study comprised the research respondents, friends from Wamba and research assistants. Friends at Wamba were crucial in two ways. First, they played a role in our identifying possible research respondents and research assistants. Second, they enhanced the establishment of rapport with our possible respondents and research assistants. The rapport we established was useful during our data collection. Our research respondents volunteered information on the songs and the community without fear that our study was a threat to their security as

well as that of the entire community. Our respondents were strictly Samburu who at the time of conducting the research were residing at Wamba.

In order to collect credible data for this thesis, recruitment of research assistants and patience were necessary. Eight research assistants participated in the research. The eight were recruited based on the following criteria. First, we considered the willingness of each one of them to participate in the study without expecting monetary returns. Second, being a resident of Wamba for a number of years. Third, one had to be conversant with the Samburu culture and fluent in KiSamburu. Fourth, we took into account the ability to converse and or write KiSamburu, English and/or KiSwahili to an appreciable degree. KiSwahili was to be the language of our interaction with our respondents and English was to be used during the compilation of the research report into a thesis.

The endeavour to carry out reliable observation saw the employment of Crapanzano (1986) recommendation on the incorporation of research assistants to aid in data collection. Our research assistants guided us in observing some of the community's rules regarding the obtaining of the praise songs. Every possible effort was made to collect the songs in their contexts of performance. Whenever there was violation of the setting this was done with the agreement of the respondents to perform the songs out of context.

On patience, Renato Rosaldo (1986) emphasizes that a researcher has to be patient during fieldwork. He points out a number of challenges that a researcher can turn into opportunities of learning more about the community. For instance, the arrival of (a) member(s) of the community during an interview schedule would result to the interruption of the interview process. Some of the challenges we experienced are

enumerated in another section of this thesis. Whenever they arose, we seized them as opportunities to learn a little more about the community.

Once the concerned authorities granted permission to collect praise songs we embarked on recruiting research assistants as well as mapping the locations where we could collect the praise songs. Research assistants were to serve in identifying respondents, orienting us on the locations we were to obtain the praise songs and also translate of our interviews with our respondents from English or KiSwahili to KiSamburu and vice versa for those respondents who could not respond in either English or KiSwahili.

They also helped in the administration of the research instruments to obtain information about the Samburu and the praise songs. The instruments went hand in hand with the methods we employed to gather the data we needed. The methods we utilized are interviewing, non-participant observation and recording of the songs during their performance. In addition, we also used the following instruments to collect data: interview schedules, field notes recorded in a research journal, unstructured interviews, translation and transcription. We also employed their services in transcribing and translating praise songs from KiSamburu and then to English. We put down the interviews in the form of field notes in a research journal. The recruitment of research assistants took place during the first week of our arrival at Wamba.

The first week proved very useful to the study. During that week, the kindness of friends in Wamba assisted in identifying respondents and recruitment of some research assistants. Other research assistants were recruited as the data collection went on. It is during our interaction with our research respondents and assistants that week that it became evident to us that the Samburu sing not only to “domestic” animals but

to wild animals as well. This was crucial for it alerted us on the existence of another category of songs we had not anticipated. This drew our curiosity to find more on the categories of praise songs the community performs to animals. This discovery was also resourceful for it hinted on how we were to identify various respondents and what assistants we needed. We, thus, managed to select respondents who helped us collect praise songs on animals such as camels, the hyena, and the honey guide from a Dorobo and praise songs members of Talas family perform to elephants. The relying on research assistants had proved useful to previous studies carried out in Samburu. Some of these include Abel Mote in 2004 who researched on the symbolism in the Samburu narrative; Mumia Osaaji in 2005 who collected a number of narratives around Maralal and studied the subversion of patriarchal ideology represented in the narratives women perform to women from the community, and Peter Wasamba who studied the institute of Moranism from narratives they had collected from 2003-2007.

Our research assistants' knowledge of the terrain and the anticipation of the *El Nino* rains led in arriving at a decision on a work plan. We thus targeted to collect as much data as we could from those places that would be inaccessible if the rains began as we were still collecting our data. To get to such places as Golgotim and Ngilai, one had to cross very deep gullies that our informants described as having the capacity of flooding and retaining large volumes of water for days. They had advised that if the rains began, our fieldwork would be confined within Wamba market. At that time, Wamba market could not generate some of the songs we were interested in. This was because most of the cattle had been moved to the mountainous regions. At Wamba, some respondents had assured us of getting praise songs sang to lactating cows as well as songs that the community performs to animals during watering. This is how

we resorted to travelling to Ngilai to obtain praise songs sang to cattle while milking and watering.

The interaction we had had with friends on arrival at Wamba helped in getting to know *Mzee* Leadekei, an elder from Ngilai and a game warden with the Kenya Wildlife Service. The elder from Ngilai hosted the researcher in his *manyatta* for three days. He also introduced the researcher to Jason Leariong, the Head teacher of Ngilai Primary School. Ngilai is fifty kilometres from Wamba market. The area around Ngilai has springs that provide water for the community and its livestock. At Ngilai, the springs had also dried up owing to drought. Through the guidance of *Mzee* Leadekei and Jason Leariong, we managed to collect, translate, and transcribe seven songs. Six of these were performed and recorded at *Mzee* Leadekei's *manyatta* in Ntoroto village, Ngilai location in Wamba Division. It is also in this *manyatta* that we recorded two songs that children aged between 5 – 11 years performed and we recorded them. We obtained the seventh song at Leisagor's *manyatta* in Lesirau village, Ngilai location. We used a mobile phone with a camera and a sound recorder to record the praise songs.

Getting to Leisagor's *manyatta* was the result of *Mzee* Leadekei's and Jason Leariong's courtesy. At Leisagor's *manyatta*, we found a cow but it was not lactating. We requested through *Mzee* Leadekei whether Mpiraus could sing the praise song performed during milking. She did comply. She performed the song as she mimicked milking it. We recorded this song using a mobile phone with an in-built voice recorder. We had not gone there in the first place to get the song. It was part of familiarising with the place and the community. When Mpiraus offered to perform the song, we could not sit on the opportunity. This followed the experience we had had in some places in some of the villages of Wamba where some respondents had given us

several appointments and on the material day, we would end up recording nothing. The transcription in KiSamburu and the translation from KiSamburu to English of the seven came to effect due to the efforts of Mark Leadekei, John Leadekei and Lmailin Leadekei who were all secondary school students at Wamba Boys' Secondary School. They were well versed with the Samburu culture, could speak KiSamburu competently and could also speak and write to an appreciable degree both KiSwahili and English. Wherever they were stuck, doubted or needed clarification on anything on the Samburu culture, they consulted *Mzee* Leadekei who generously provided the information sought from him. The three were also Morans. They too volunteered a lot of information on the beliefs about Moranism and the Samburu in general.

Getting to Ngilai was not without drama. We hired a motorbike to take us to Ngilai. The journey had to start at 6.00 am for the rider, Mr. Julius Magambo, wanted to get to Ngilai at around 8.00 am to enable him start his journey back to Wamba before 9.00 am. Riding the motorbike after 10.00 am on the sandy 'road' and in the searing heat would raise chances of the wheels of the motor bike developing punctures. The road to Ngilai traverses an area infested mostly with elephants hence the need to be cautious. On arrival, *Mzee* Leadekei welcomed us very warmly. He narrated a story about how people's behaviour takes after the behaviour of such animals like the ostrich, the giraffe and the elephant. Later in the course of the day, we walked to Jason Leariong's *manyatta*. On the way, *Mzee* Leadekei explained that the Samburu conserve the acacia tree, *nstepes* for more than nine of its uses.

We had intended this visit to create more rapport, to introduce the researcher to other elders who were to ensure our safety during our stay at Ngilai. The following day, we recorded two songs at *Mzee* Leadekei's *manyatta*. Lucy Leadekei performed

them outside the pen of the shoats. In the evenings, *Mzee* Leadekei would narrate to us some narratives that illuminated more on the Samburu.

On the second day some children at *Mzee* Leadekei's *manyatta* performed two songs that we also recorded. After the singing to the shoats, we accompanied the Morans Mark Leadekei, John Leadekei and Lmailin Leadekei to a watering point and grazing in the scrub vegetation.

During the watering, we recorded a song they performed to goats and camels. The same evening we recorded a song that Mpiraus Leisagor performed as she mimicked milking her cow, *Mouwai*. By the fourth day of our stay at Ngilai we had transcribed and translated the six songs from KiSamburu to English. On the morning of the fourth day, Lucy Leadekei performed a song women sing to a donkey when it is from a water-drawing mission or when the community is migrating in search of water and pasture.

We recorded it, and Mark Leadekei translated and transcribed. The same night, of the fourth day, we left Ngilai. We were lucky to get a lift from a vehicle that had come to ferry officers who had taken part in the 2009 Population and Housing Census from Ngilai to Wamba. *Mzee* Leadekei made every arrangement for us to get the assistance. The alternative was to walk to Wamba as the area had a poor mobile telephone network coverage making it difficult to seek assistance from Wamba, fifty kilometres away.

On getting to Wamba, we needed to get additional recordings of similar songs and a repeat of translations of even the recorded songs. We opted for a repeat recording in order to cultivate in us a feeling that we were working with relatively authentic texts. We also aimed at working with translations whose reliability during analysis and description would transcend our limited time in Wamba. Visits to



Embakasi and Lenarkit's *manyatta*, yielded five songs that we discarded after our translators transcribed and translated them. The translation from KiSamburu to English revealed that they were not meant for animals.

At Lpashie, at *Mzee* Joseph Loti's *manyatta*, we used a mobile phone with an in-built voice recorder to record two songs. His eldest wife, Ntingison Lesudda performed one to the shoats. With another woman she co-performed to a camel as they milked it. We recorded this during our third visit to *Mzee* Lesudda's *manyatta*. During the first visit, we recorded nothing since her husband Joseph Loti was absent. Our having not mastered the milking time for the camel frustrated the second appointment. We had been advised to be at the *Manyatta* at 6.00 pm. We arrived at the agreed time. On arrival, our informants informed that they had milked the camels. The option according to the host was to wait until 10pm or be at the *Manyatta* at 6:00 am the following day. We opted to walk to the *Manyatta* and be there by 6.00 am.

The following day, we found that the milkers had milked the camels at 3.00 am and we had to wait until 9.00 am. Luckily, at around half past six in the morning we recorded a performance first, of a song sang to lactating shoats and at around 9.00 am we recorded a song Ntingison Lesudda and another woman sang as they milked a camel. At 10.00 am, a volunteer guided us to Lpashie Laga. We found Jonathan Lekerpees and Lerammat Lekopiya performing a song to cows that were taking water.

The two morans were drawing water from a well they had dug in the laga. We sought permission to record the song and Jonathan granted it. After the recording, Jonathan Lekerpees offered to help in the translation and transcription of the songs but owing to the biting drought, he never showed up at an agreed point for transcription and translation. He had to look for pasture for his livestock. With the help of friends in Wamba, we finally got Haron Keni Lekartiwa who helped in the re-

transcription first in KiSamburu and then re-translation in English of all the songs we had collected. Haron had also worked with a religious group that was translating the Bible to KiSamburu. He is a graduate of St Paul's University. He is married and had one child. He was also conversant with the Samburu culture. He had also gone through most of the Samburu stages including Moranism.

This made him a more suitable and reliable research assistant. He also transcribed a good chunk of our praise songs. Translation and transcription took more than two weeks. Haron was available for only two hours in the afternoon of those two weeks. During this period of transcription and translation, we typed the songs and other information during the mornings. During the interaction with Keni, we managed to convince him to assist in getting the song, *Lkulonkoi*. No moran could perform this song out of context. Interestingly, Keni saw no harm in writing it down for us. However, we did not include it in this thesis for it turned out to be more of praise directed to a moran than any animal. The morans sing it strictly in the forests. Keni wrote the song first in KiSamburu and then translated it to English.

In the process of our stay at Wamba, a Consolata missionary who happened to know that some research on the Samburu praise songs was going on introduced us to a former Councillor, Job Lolkalepi. Job revealed knowledge about when the Samburu started camel keeping and possibly, why singing to the camels had not spread much in Wamba. He too helped in tracing a member of the Talas clan – one of the three clans that regard elephants as their relatives. Members of the clans have a song they sing to the elephants. Kitman Leamo, a member of the Talas family performed the song that we recorded. We did the recording at Laga Wamba. Kitman Leamo also performed songs performed to an ostrich, a type of bird the Samburu call *nairereai*, monkeys and

a song the community holds is a hyena's composition. Job Lolkalepi too helped in getting *Mzee* John Lodikir, a Dorobo from Golgotim location.

Thereafter, we arranged a pre-visit to Golgotim that was a success. Haron Keni had tried to prevail against the visit to Golgotim. His argument was that he could perform the song the Dorobo sing to the honey guide. We managed to convince him on the need to have a Dorobo perform the song. At Golgotim, Julius Magambo, the Headteacher of Golgotim Primary School introduced us to the area chief, Mr. Solomon Lenaipa who orally defined the Dorobo for us. After meeting *Mzee* John Lodikir, we arranged a meeting where he enlightened us on the Dorobo history. We then recorded two of the songs he performed.

We lost a third song to strong wind that was blowing when the recording was going on and our informant preferred to repeat it another day. We arranged another visit that we never carried out. This was because by the time we were to go, it had started raining. On the way to Golgotim, numerous elephants and deep gullies that flooded every time it rained made our visit impossible.

We therefore had to be contented with the song meant for the rhino and the one that Dorobo hunters sing to a honey guide when they are harvesting honey in the forest or rocky places. *Mwalimu* Benson Laapu Lerte assisted Haron Lekartiwa in the transcription and translation of our very last recordings. Besides, the eighteen songs we recorded, we took down notes on the Samburu culture. The sources of the notes resulted from the answers to the unstructured interviews we used during the collection of the data. Non-participant observation generated valuable data. Reviewed literature on researches done in Samburu particularly on their oral literature enriches the data for this thesis. By mid October, the area had started receiving rainfall. This could not allow more field visits.

All the same, by the time of leaving the field armed with eighteen recorded, translated and transcribed songs augmented with rich data on the Samburu, we had achieved a milestone in this research.

#### **1.8.4.4 Field Ethics**

All through we made efforts to observe research ethics. No performance was recorded without permission from the performers. The children performed in the presence of their parents. We took care not to intrude into the cultural affairs of the community. We paid no money to performers and where the community demanded proper identification, we produced documentary evidence that included the research permit and University identification documents.

#### **1.8.4.5 Post-Fieldwork Logistics**

The post-field logistics comprised the selection of material for the critical writing of this thesis. During the collection, it was evident that most of the songs had an element of praise but not all focused on praising animals hence the need for the selection. Out of the eighteen songs we collected, we resorted to using only thirteen for the development of this thesis. The thirteen selected have praise elements and the target audience is an animal.

During this stage, visits to the resource centres at the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University proved very useful. We had an opportunity to review additional literature for the study. The procedure for the classification of the thirteen songs is in chapter two. Their analysis in terms of form, function and content is in chapter three. Notes made during the fieldwork augment the analysis and description of the discourses in the animal praise songs of the Samburu. We also experienced a number of challenges that we enumerate as follows.

#### 1.8.4.6 Challenges

In the course of collecting data for this thesis, we did experience a number of challenges that at times turned to opportunities to learn more about the community. They include some of the following. First, most of the young people we intended to work with in order to aid in translation expressed their incompetence in written KiSamburu. This did not however stop us from collecting our data. We then requested the youths to direct us to other members of the community who could speak and write the language competently. Through them, we got reliable research assistants.

Second, quite a number of respondents failed to honour agreed appointments. We had to be patient and in the process, we came to learn that the community was just taking precautionary measures lest we were spying on it. Third, there was expectation that we were to pay for the data. When we made them aware that we were conducting the research legally and it was purely for academic purposes, they generously shared what we needed. In some cases, we had to show the research permit and cite the 'blessing' of the local elders and the administration in allowing us to carry on with the research.

Fourth, we experienced an instance of deception from an elder who led us to his manyatta where we recorded some songs that once translated could not be used for this thesis. This had arisen from the expectation that we were to reward the performers in kind. We learnt the danger of doing more recordings without proper guidance from a respondent we could trust. During that incident, we did not have a research assistant who could act as a translator from KiSamburu to either English or even Kiswahili. The respondent who had invited us could competently speak Kiswahili. This led us into trusting he could not mislead us.

In one instance, one of our reliable research assistants got into a marital problem and went to an extent of borrowing money from us. He was reliable for his relative competence in both written and Spoken KiSamburu, English and Kiswahili. This made us slow down in our progress on some translations. Before we resumed the translations, we spent more time doing some more recordings as we waited for the affected research assistant to organize his affairs.

In the course of collecting data an American couple that was touring the area got interested in what we were doing. They wanted some of the data that we had recorded but we never shared it. At some point, they wanted us to join their programme of activities but we humbly made them understand the repercussions it would have had on our schedule. We too feared that that would have affected the trust the community had accorded us.

Getting to some places was also demanding. In some cases where we had to use a means of transport most of the service providers demanded to know what was the reason behind visiting a given area. On learning that we were conducting research, they pronounced exorbitant charges arguing that the government funds researchers. Owing to limitation of funds, we in most cases walked those distances we could manage and to get to a place like Ngilai, we rode on a motorcycle. Its rider wore no protective clothing and also had none for his passengers. On getting to Ngilai, we got no cows. Luckily, we got a lady who accepted to perform a song sang to a lactating cow. At Ngilai, we too got very useful information about the Samburu and Mzee Leadekei gave us a map of the area.

The poor road network hindered the transportation of some delicate electronic equipment. The mobile telephone network was equally poor with a vast area being inaccessible using the service of a mobile phone. At Ngilai, one could only charge a

phone at Mzee Leadekei's *manyatta*. This proved a challenge should the mobile phone run out of charge during a recording session while away from the *manyatta*. This also made us to limit our recording but we ensured that whatever we recorded, we made efforts to transcribe and translate it the very same day. This was to ensure that we had some material safe in case anything happened to the phone particularly during our stay at Ngilai.

Another challenge that we had to bear with was the (un)availability of the research assistants. Some kept on shifting the times of their availability. This was understandable owing to the fact that it was a time of drought. We had to comply with such requests considering that we were not paying for the services they rendered.

In conclusion, this chapter introduces the problem of investigation as the need to make sense of the literary texts – praise songs that the Samburu perform to animals in terms of their: content, structure, classification and the meanings the community derive from the performance of these songs. It begins by contextualising the problem by focusing on relevant history (for this research) of the Samburu community. The rationale for conducting this study finds justification from the literature we reviewed. A gap regarding how the praise songs represent the community's philosophies exists hence the need to bridge it. First, as an avowal of a cultural practice that exploits creative use of language and second, to expand knowledge about the Samburu and also generate curiosity for further investigation of those aspects of the praise poetry that were beyond the scope of this research. In addition, the chapter defines the process of collecting, transcribing and translating the praise songs the theoretical framework employed in reading the texts as literary material. The following chapter undertakes the classification of the praise songs as the Samburu define them.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.0 CLASSIFICATION OF ANIMAL PRAISE POETRY**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the classification of Samburu community's animal praise poetry. The focus is on how the community defines this poetry. To achieve this, we employed Foucault's position regarding prohibition rule during the production of discourse. Thus, we describe the classification of this poetry paying close attention to the context in which the community produces it; who are its performer(s); and what is its content. We have also provided excerpts of the praise songs to illustrate how the



classification of this praise poetry fits within Foucault's thinking on production of discourse. The observation of the relevant procedures regarding the performance of any animal praise song is in itself a social practice whose communicative role is the concern of chapter four. In addition, Searle's notion of reference in a discourse aided us to incorporate the narratives about the community's beliefs and perceptions of a given animal in defining the function of a given praise song as well as the philosophy behind such composition. Full texts are provided in the appendices.

From field experience it appears that this community delineates an identity to a song sung to an animal by assigning what 'loosely' translates into a sense of authorship and function of a given song. Thus, the respondents who took part in this research used the phrase '*song of... for*' to define not only who performs a praise song but also to which animal and at what moment. Any discussion of praise songs begins with this definition. The mention of a performer of a praise song, its target audience, context and purpose erects a boundary that establishes the differences between the various praise songs. This follows Foucauldian rejection/division principle. The following illustration reveals our argument.

## **2.2 Songs of Women**

Among the Samburu, women perform quite a number of praise songs to animals. These performances accompany such chores like milking, 'suckling' lambs and kids and when migrating or drawing water, they sing to donkeys. We discuss examples of such songs below.

### 2. 2.1 Women's Song for Milking

Milking among the Samburu within the *manyatta*<sup>23</sup> is the preserve of married women. Every married woman milks (a) lactating cow(s) or camel(s) from the allotted herd of one's husband. This singing accompanies milking that they execute within the *manyatta*. That is either early in the morning or in the evening after the animals return from grazing.

A distinguishing feature of these songs is the diction employed in their composition. An analysis of their phraseology reveals first that they are sung during milking and also that is either for a lactating cow or a camel. For instance, in the praise songs for milking, there is mention of the act of milking, milk and appellatives that identify whether it is a cow or a camel that is the addressee. In the one for the cow, we have for instance, '*Aruaki labura linong'op nanyor ee yeyolai namelok*, I am milking your foam when it is warm the loved sweet one of my mother.' In the song, '*your foam*' serves in the analysis of the song as a referring expression that refers to milk. In Text 3, the one for the camel, it first begins by mentioning *ntamesi*, a camel that is being milked. A milker then proceeds to tell the camel that, '*Nalepoki nkera...*, I am milking for my children....' Further analysis of their content reveals their relevance in aiding the conceptualization of the Samburu cosmos. Such relevance is the main concern in chapter four. To have a clear idea of how the community classifies some of the songs, we begin our description with three 'milking songs'.

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23 The term *manyatta* too has the connotation of a household comprising a man, his wife/wives and children and his livestock. The term also refers to a kind of a shelter built of twigs, and mud and plastered with cow dung. In this section, the term refers to marked compound where a family resides.

### 2.2.1.1 Women's Song for Milking a Cow

Women perform to lactating cows when milking them either very early in the morning before herders take livestock out for grazing or in the evening after grazing. Members of the community tell with ease a song sung in the morning and one sung in the evening. The use of some words like, '*enyoto*, wake up ... *nondoki ntimi*, go into the bushes ...' in Text 1 erects that boundary that indicates that these words are in a song that women sing in the morning. Our respondents too pointed out that if a song was done in the evening, the phrase *enteperi* meaning 'to sleep' would replace *enyoto* which means 'wake up'. In the case of Text 1, the use of the word *enyoto*, confirms that it is performed in the morning. In the following example, Mpiraus Leisagor performs as she milks in the morning:

5. *Hoo! Enyoto taa maimala paye epuo...*  
 13. *Enapu telkees keenapu pooki maitutumo Mowuoai namelok*

5. Wake-up my sisters/, let us praise *paye epuo*, so that they can go (to graze)  
 ...  
 13. As you carry (milk) from the wilderness you bring all (milk), let us be united Mowuoai loved one

Besides indicating when women perform the song, the use of the phrases, 'my dearest cow'/ 'heifer of my mother' explain that the praises are for a cow. The line, 'As you carry from the wilderness ... bring all ...' is an example of a referring expression to a lactating cow and the milk it is expected to provide later in the course of the day after grazing.

Diction in these songs erects boundaries that distinguish not only the time of performance but also who perform to which animal. In addition, the diction of the praise songs explains the reason why, for instance, the community strives to calm a lactating cow during milking. In Texts 1 and 2, there is an indication of a milker

failing to obtain milk if a cow being milked starts kicking. Kicking may lead to the pouring of milk. This is evident in:

9. *Ng'otonye ntawa nanyor ee yeyolai namelokai*
10. *Mukurwa aa lepito nonkutuk ee yeyolai namelok*
11. *Mukurwa aa lepito nonkutuk ee yeyolai namelok*
12. *Aruaki labura linong'op nanyor ee yeyolai namelok*

9. Do not kick me when I am milking you the sweet mouth of my mother
10. Do not kick me when I am milking you the sweet mouth of my mother
11. Do not let your white foam pour your foam (milk) to the soil the loved one and sweet one of my mother
12. Do not let your white foam pour your foam (milk) to the soil the loved one and sweet one of my mother

The diction of the songs also affirms the Samburu's dependence on cows. Through lines: 3, 7, 9, 13 and 14 of Text 1 one observes how milk from cows form part of the community's diet:

3. *Hoo maitotio taa neyeyio maitotio yoo nkera nainen o ninono*
7. *Hoo nanyorie lchekuti nanyurie taa larimi paye epuo*
9. *Nodoki hoo enyoto naicho emiperi enyuto taa maimala paye epuo taa nanyora ntimi oo nodoki taa nanyurai ntimi namelokai ntanguo eyeyiolai chomo akiti*
13. *Hoo nolatu enapita Mowuoai nameloka elotu taa inaptia labura*
14. *Enapu telkess keenapu pooki maitutumo Mowuoai namelok*

3. Hoo satiate us together with my children and yours too
7. Hoo the reason why I love calves, my children hoo Ntawuoai just remember children loved one, mine and yours and any others loved one so that, so that you do not kick your calf
9. Hoo walk slowly to protect your legs from being hurt by stones
13. Hoo Mowuoai, my cow my loved one, as you return home and you are carrying milk foam
14. As you carry from the wilderness you bring all, let us be united Mowuoai loved one

In addition, the diction in Text 3 for instance, hints that a cow provides the Samburu with other products. In Text 3, other products the Samburu obtain from a cow are implied in, '*Labura a leputei nkutukai namelok*, It is only milk am getting from you, my sweet mouth.' The choice of words in a given praise plays part in determining a category for a given praise poetry. Thus, a woman during milking must

use appropriate praise words for and to a particular animal. The knowledge of the words to use for specific animals and also knowledge of the times they should be used indicate the community's means of distinguishing the praise songs about and for animals. In other words, it is the prohibition principle that clarifies who should perform a given praise song and which words to use at a specified context. For instance, at no instance do men perform to lactating camels or cows within *manyatta*.<sup>24</sup>

The community holds that praising a cow during milking eases milking for it does not place cows in milking sheds during milking. The resort to using a praise song to make a cow remain calm during milking displays the community's knowledge of the potentialities of language in achieving a desired end. Stanley Fish regards it as, "... the power to make the world rather than mirror it; to bring about states of affairs rather than report them ..." (1024). For instance, a cow's size and strength would demand an expensive shed in terms of the cost of its construction. It would be uneconomical for the community to invest in milking sheds owing to its pastoral nature. The wording of these songs has praises meant for the cows, *Mouwai and Mayor*. The praises in lines 1, 2 and 3 of Text 2 for *Mayor* include such words as: *nkutukai namelok*, my sweet mouth; *nanyorai*, my dearest cow/ loved one and *ntawuo eyeyolai*, heifer of my mother. These phrases appear in Texts 1 and 2 more than once.

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<sup>24</sup> This is an explanation from various respondents from the field.

### 2.2.1.2 Women's Song for Milking Camels

The Samburu started the practice of keeping camels in the late 1970s<sup>25</sup>. According to a former councillor of Wamba ward, Job Lolkalepi, the first Samburu to stock camels was Mzee Lemokodou. The Lesamaja family then followed suit. After 1984, the late General (Rtd.) Lenges gave twenty camels to an assistant chief. In the 1980s, the ASALs<sup>26</sup> project also contributed to camel keeping among the Samburu. To get (a) camel (s) a Samburu would take part in the activities of the project. In return, the managers of ASALs paid those Samburu who took part in its activities using camels. This information of when the Samburu started raising camels explains why the singing to camels is not widespread among them. Not all Samburus keep camels. We collected two songs for the camel. The second one is not a milking song. It is for making the particularly the younger camels walk into a *manyatta* calmly when returning from grazing in the evening. It is children who perform the *calming* one.

Two women milk a camel several times in a day. During every milking session, one of the milkers sings to it. The song makes a camel tranquil throughout the milking. In some respects, it resembles the praising of cows for it first specifies an intended camel. Secondly, it lists the community's perception of a camel and its benefits to the community. In the song, we deduce that besides serving the community in other ways, the camel provides the community with milk. In Text 3 this is evident in the lines:

1. *Ntamesi Surua nkutukai namelok*
4. *Ntamesai surua nkutukai namelok*
5. *Nalepoki nkeru nkutukai namelok*
6. *Nkutukai namelok naororieki nkeru*

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25 This is derived from a narration from Job Lolkalepi on when the Samburu at Wamba started raising camels.

26 These initials stand for Arid and Semi Arid Lands.

1. My white camel, my sweet mouth
4. My white camel, my sweet mouth
5. I am milking for my children my sweet mouth
6. My sweet mouth I feed my children with your milk

In addition, a section of the content of this song in lines 1, 4 and 9 recognizes the colour of the camel, '*Ntamesi Surua ... My white camel ....*' In the same song, we also get to know the quality of a camel's milk in terms of smell and taste. The song records that milk from a camel is both sweet and aromatic as the following line depicts: '*Naropili kule ... sweet smelling milk ....*' A third similarity between the milking praise songs for cows and those ones of the camels points to the purpose the community puts both songs to. The intent is not only to make either a cow or a camel remain peaceful during the milking, but also to stimulate either to produce milk. From Text 3 we cite the pleading we have in:

10. *Mukurua aa lepito nongutok ee yeyelai,*
17. *Mutupukoo nkeru ngutukai namelok*
18. *Muure lepeta nkutukai namelok,*
19. *Nkaina kaituko ngutukai namelok*

10. Do not kick me when I am milking you my sweet mouth
17. Do not let children starve my sweet mouth
18. Do not fear the milking my sweet mouth
19. Am just washing hands my sweet mouth

The diction in each of these milking songs erects a boundary that leads in identifying which song is for which animal. In the song for a lactating cow, the phrase '*Mowuoai, my cow*' aids in naming the target animal for praise whereas in the one for camels, the phrase '*Ntamesi surua, My white camel*' performs a similar role.

### **2.2.2 Women's Songs for 'Suckling' Lambs/Kids**

The word suckling in the title of these songs refers to the effort the Samburu women make in making concerned she-goats and ewes suckle lambs and kids. Lambs

and kids less than a month old do not spend a night in the same pen with their mothers<sup>27</sup>. This is a cautionary measure to prevent older and stronger shoats<sup>28</sup> from trampling on them. During the day when shoats go to graze, women lock up the kids and lambs in specially designed pens. This separation serves the purpose of checking the frequency of suckling. Our informants indicated that if the community does not regulate the suckling, the kids/lambs are likely to over-suck. Over sucking may lead to diarrhoea and then death. The fear of losing the presumed future flocks impels the community to keep away the young ones from their mothers for some time until they can withstand the arid conditions that include walking for long distances in search of pasture and searing heat. This makes the community to suckle kids or lambs early in the morning before their mothers go to graze and again late in the evening when they return. This temporary separation of a young one from its mother leads to what the community interprets as a temporal failure to recognize a young one's pheromone.

The Samburu consider such a she-goat or an ewe as *rejecting its own*. To make such an animal *accept its own* they perform a praise song to a concerned she-goat or an ewe. This singing purposes to plead with a she-goat/ewe to *accept* and allow its young one to suckle. In some cases, a she-goat may kid or a ewe may lamb and may not have enough milk for its young one. In such an instance, women sing and make another lactating ewe or she-goat suckle a young one.

Women perform both songs in an enclosure for shoats. The Samburu place both the sheep and goats in the same enclosure every evening after grazing. The enclosure is made of acacia branches. The thorns keep off possible predators from reaching the

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27 An explanation provided orally and in writing through a short text message via a mobile phone from Florence Lesiantam.

28 This term refers to both goats and sheep. It is not our coinage. We first got its use among the Samburu from Haron Keni Lekartiwa, one of our translators.



shoats. It also prevents the animals from straying out at night<sup>29</sup>. During the performance of these songs, the audience comprises besides the target animal, children who may assist in getting hold of either the young one to suck or the animal to suckle. In most cases, the audience comprise of women and children from the *manyatta*. The distinction on which song pleads to an ewe and which one pleads to a she-goat is apparent first in diction and pitch during performance. A relatively faster tempo and a higher pitch mark the one for a she-goat. Another defining element of these songs is their content. In both cases, women make mention of the animal they are praising using a name for that animal. The Samburu do name sheep, goats and cows<sup>30</sup>. These names derive from physical attributes of an animal. For instance, in one of the songs that a woman sings to her cow *Mouwoai*<sup>31</sup>, during milking the name derives from the word *mouwuo*, meaning horns. In the song *lebarta*, a male ostrich is described as *sidai elopir oorok*, meaning a black-feathered ostrich. In Text 9, line 18, a rhino is described as, *nairoshi esupuko*, the heavy one of the forest or *nadokutuk epapa*, the red mouthed of my father in line 19<sup>32</sup>. In Text 10, an elephant derives its name from its trumpeting which in the text is denoted by the onomatopoeia *oloduraluai*<sup>33</sup>.

When they do not use a name, a referring expression such as *ng'oto lkineji*, mother-to-a-he-goat<sup>34</sup> or *nkine ai ana*, my favourite goat<sup>35</sup> or *sapuki moduo*, the big-dunged

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29 An explanation of Mzee Lenarkit of Embakasi village, Wamba.

30 An elaboration from Florence Lesiantam, Haron Lekartiwa and Mark Leadekei.

31 See Text 1 in the appendices on page 127.

32 See Text 9 in the appendices on page 133 - 134.

33 See Text 10 in the appendices on page 134, lines 2 and 5

34 See lines 3, 7, 10 and also 15 in Text 3 in the appendices on page 129.

35 See lines 1, 2, 4 and 5 in Text 5 in the appendices on page 130 - 131.

elephant suffices<sup>36</sup>. The songs contain ideophones that appear at the end of each line and that enhance rhythm of the songs. In the song for ewes, the ideophone is ‘oro’ while in that of a she-goat is ‘ori’. The songs exemplify the community’s knowledge of its environment and the behaviour of the(ir) animals. For instance, there is an allusion to some leaves of the tree *eloyaapsei* and *elongwaroi*<sup>37</sup>.

The community believes that shoats like the leaves from these plants very much. Our respondents indicated that whenever they are in plenty, shoats upon discovering them rush to feed on them. This aids our comprehension of the inclusion of intent to deny a given ewe or she-goat the freedom to go to where those leaves are growing. We further gathered that animals enjoy the company of other animals. A separation leads to an animal experiencing loneliness that comes out through continuous bleating. Therefore, the threat to tie an animal when the others are enjoying a delicacy serves to caution the animal not to lose such benefit owing to its irresponsibility. The addressing of animals as though they are human anchors on a communal myth. It states that long time ago animals used to talk to and with human beings.

Through these songs, the community recognizes the contribution of shoats in perpetuating its survival. In the song for the goats, the phrase ‘*my favourite goat*’ implies the existence of other goats besides the one targeted for praise. In these songs, we have an admission that there are special tools for carrying out specific activities. These songs single out *ngusur*, a knife for slaughtering shoats. This appears in line 11 of Text 4 *Ori kayeng ade ori tankalem ngusur ori*, Ori I will slaughter you today ori

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36 See lines 3 and 4 in Text 10 in the appendices on page on page 134.

37 We obtained this explanation from Mark Leadekei, John Lmailin during a translation session. We also got a written explanation from Florence Lesiantam. The three affirmed that the plants *eloyaapsei* and *elongwaroi* bloom during the rainy season and they are a delicacy of the shoats.

using *ngusur*<sup>38</sup>. The community buys the knife from the proceeds of the sale of one of its offspring. In the song for ewes, there is recognition of their contribution in serving the community. In the song, the praising of *Amarleliya* as ... *ng'oto lkineji*, mother-to-several-rams serve as an example. On enquiring why the community recognizes such an ewe as serving the community we got the following explanation<sup>39</sup>. When the community wishes to slaughter or sell a sheep, members go for a ram. Ewes are rarely sold unless they are either barren or upon lambing, their offspring do not survive. This trait of documenting in the song the importance of ewes seems obvious in all *manyatta* in Samburu. Various recordings of these songs show slight variation in diction but they feature what we have discussed in this section as part of their defining feature. The difference of these songs is in their beginning formula. For instance, the one we recorded at Ngilai begins:

*Nkine ai ana ori*  
My favourite goat<sup>40</sup>

The one we recorded at Lpashie begins:

*Nkineai ana ori,*  
This is my goat ori<sup>41</sup>.

The one for the ewes show the same trait. The one we recorded at Lpashie begins:

*Nker yai oro,*  
This is my sheep<sup>42</sup>

The text we collected at Ngilai begins:

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38 See Text 4 line 11 on the appendices page 129 - 130. John Lmailin and Mark Leadekei explained that *ngusur* is a specially designed knife for slaughtering goats. It was described as 'short' and preferred because when slaughtering shoats with it, there is no danger of those slaughtering a ram or a he-goat cutting a partner taking part in the slaughtering exercise as a longer knife would do. It also does not destroy the skin of the carcass during skinning.

39 We owe this clarification from Haron Lekartiwa.

40 See Text 5 lines 1 and 2 in the appendices on page 130 - 131.

41 See Text 7b lines 1 and 2 in the appendices on page 131 -132.

42 See Text 7a line 1 in the appendices on page 132.

*Amarleliya Ng'oto Ikeru oro Amarleliya oro,*  
Amarleliya mother-to-several rams Amarleliya oro<sup>43</sup>

Despite the variation in diction their intention remains that of convincing a concerned animal to suckle a given young one. The praise element in these songs is implicit and one gets to notice it when one begins to analyse the diction that constitutes them.

### 2.2.3 Women's Song for Donkeys

When drawing water or migrating, the Samburu use donkeys to carry water cans and/or luggage. In the process of carrying either water cans or luggage, women declaim song Text 8 to donkeys<sup>44</sup>. The audience for this song comprises other women and other donkeys taking part in the mission of carrying water or luggage. Women praise a donkey for its role in sustaining the survival of the community. The song sums up the community's perception of a donkey through some suspense women employ in describing donkeys. In lines 4 and 5 of Text 8, we were curious to find out why women in this praise song feature urine and dung of a donkey. Their description made us to inquire whether the community puts to some use urine and dung of other animals. We gathered that women make use of cow dung to plaster their *manyatta* while the morans make use of urine from a cow when plaiting their braids<sup>45</sup>. This song was also for a lactating donkey and one that is also in foal. This is evident in line 10, *Hooya! Ho! Nkuraruai naap elepo ...*, Hooya! Ho! Young donkey in-foal and lactating ...<sup>46</sup>. They too praise it for taking care of the already unborn 'donkey' and for

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43 See Text 6 line 1 in the appendices on page 131.

44 See Text 8 lines 4 and 5 in the appendices on page 133.

45 A clarification from Mary Salena Lenaimalda.

46 See Text 8 line 9 in the appendices on page 133.

suckling a foal. In the song, there is a hint of the travails women experience when drawing water from far and through hilly terrains particularly during the drought.

Through this praise song, women imagine the hardships a donkey experiences while at their service for example on hilly terrains. For instance, in Text 8, we note the women's sympathizing with their donkeys in:

*6. Ho! Ho! Loipangi tepero tooriong meima ngiron ang nemeiyolo,  
7. Nkejek loipangi hooya ho ntikiliaai*

6. Hills lie on your back for our donkeys to pass,  
7. Their legs are not accustomed to climbing the hills

In the song, there is also some mention of concern for children. The singer tells her donkey in line 11, '*mayaki nkeraang nkare*, Let us take water to our children ....' In the song, women sound gentle to donkeys as a representation of their acknowledgement of the role they play in the community's survival.

### 2.3 Herders' Songs

Male herders are responsible for performing the songs we describe in this category. We as well acknowledge that young girls also may sing to shoats while herding. We never managed to collect or have such a song written down. All we gathered was that girls perform to kill boredom that results from the tedious act of herding. The songs also serve the purposes of containing shoats from straying away. Straying away from a herd increases chances of wild animals like leopards and cheetahs attacking shoats<sup>47</sup>.

In most cases, the grazing and watering of livestock far away from *manyatta* remains the preserve of morans. During watering of cattle, morans perform a praise song for enticing their herd to take water. In such a song, a moran's praise sounds as if

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47 An explanation from Mzee Lenarkit.

it is to a singular cow but the reality is that it focuses on a herd. An example of how a moran praises a whole herd features in the refrain of text 14 that goes:

*Ejinang'uro kutuka eyeyolai nemeiro aakomama*  
The sweet one of my mother, the one that I give water during watering  
day and grass during grazing day

### 2.3.1 Herders' Song for Hyena

According to our respondents, herders, and specifically morans ideally perform this song while grazing away from *manyatta*. The community holds that this song was initially a composition of a hyena<sup>48</sup>. In the song, morans personify a hyena singing about a foolish, naughty, insensitive and stubborn goat. In this song, a hyena praises its own strength. That is, it is able to take a goat very far away. The strength of a hyena is represented in, '*Kaaya tekeper ...*, I will take you above the galaxy ....' The implication of taking a goat far away means a place that would be difficult for it to obtain protection from its keepers. A hyena goes on to explain what it will do to such a goat through:

7. *Napalu*  
9. *Neaku manyita*  
10. *Nkereri*

7. And I release you down  
9. And your intestines will straighten  
10. Like a clothes line

A hyena's resolve to kill a goat implied in the cited lines finds explanation in an earlier line where a Hyena expresses its dislike for such kind of goats. The hyena as well ridicules a goat for its foolishness – grazing alone and away from a *manyatta* and at dusk. In such a circumstance, such a goat is unlikely to receive protection from its

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<sup>48</sup> This narrative was performed to the researcher first by Kitman Lealmo at Mamboleo bar, Wamba in October, 2009. He also relayed the belief that the Samburu believe that animals used to converse with human beings. At that time, God was closer to human beings. Incomprehensibility of human language by animals and vice versa signifies the entry of sin in the Samburu cosmos.

owner. In Text 12, there is an allusion that such a goat will not be the first of its kind to be killed in a manner it describes as follows in lines 4,5,6,7, 9, 10 and 11:

4. *Nkine, piitum,*
5. *Enshere kaiba,*
6. *Kaaya tekeper nkakaua,*
7. *Napalu,*
9. *Neaku manyita*
10. *Nkereri*
11. *Naponie*

4. Goat, so that you know
5. That I dislike you
6. I will take you above the galaxy
7. And I release you down
9. And [your] intestines will straighten
10. Like a clothes-line
11. To add to the one of the already dead goats

In this song, the audience is implied. The morans do not necessarily sing it to a hyena that is on sight. This song is allegorical and employs images we find in line 8, ‘*Nkereri*, And your intestines will straighten like a clothes line’ and also in line 10, ‘*Neaku nshikat lpusi leai*, The goat will be farting the mist of God’ to underline how dangerous a hyena is.

### 2.3.2 Herders’ Song for Cattle – Watering Song

Morans sing Text 14 to cattle, camels and goats at a well or pond to appease them to drink water. The herders expect that when taken to a watering point, a cow for example must take water. In most cases, due to the scarcity of water particularly during drought, herders water some of their animals once a day. Only camels can go for even two weeks without taking water<sup>49</sup>. At times cattle may decline to take water if the water, according to our respondents, has some strange smell<sup>50</sup>. To entice them to

49 A narrative we obtained from Mzee Leadekei at Ngilai in 2009.

50 We owe this explanation to Moses Letimalo at Venus Café and Jonathan Lerkepees at Lpashie laga.

take water, herders make use of the song. The song tends to be among the longest. It ends once all the animals in a given herd have taken water<sup>51</sup>.

When they draw water from a well, herders empty it in a wooden trough. Since a whole herd cannot take water at the same time, herders water them in turns. Herders at first enclose the whole herd in a specially designed pen near a well or a pond. A herder or a young boy stands next to the entrance of the pen. He allows only a number of cattle to access the trough on receiving instructions from the one filling the trough. Once a group takes water to its satisfaction, one of the herders near the well drives them at some distance and then the filling of a trough begins in readiness for another group. Once satisfied, another group comes to the trough. The herders continue drawing water from a well and refilling the trough. As their cows continue taking water and the herders filling a trough, they praise their cows using a song<sup>52</sup>.

The song comprises parts made up of ideophones intercepted at some point by a line referring to a cow. For instance, in Text 14 the first part is made up of five lines all made up of ideophones. It begins:

Haako hokintiko haake hookulang'  
 Haako hokintiko haake hookulang'  
 Haako hookulang' haako hookumama haako  
 Hokintiko hake hookulang' haako  
 Hokintiko hake hookulang' haako

*Ejinang'uro kutuka eyeyolai nemeiro aakomama, My short-mouthed of my mother I give you water during watering day and I give you grass during grazing day.*

The chanting of the ideophonic sounds parallels the rhythm of pulling water in a can using a long stick with a hook on one end. Inside a well, a moran fills a can with water, raises it up and another by the well lowers the hooked stick and pulls the can

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51 An observation made at Lpashie laga

52 An observation made at Lpashie laga as Jonathan and his comrades watered their cows.



using it. The one scooping water is the one who leads in chanting the song. The one by the well joins in the chanting of the ideophonic chant as he pulls the water in a can; which upon bringing the can to the surface of the well, he empties it in a trough. It goes as follows. The one scooping begins chanting, '*Haako hokintiko haake hookulang*' as he bends to draw water and as he also raises a full can to the one by the well. The ideophone *hookulang* comes out with a rising intonation and at that particular moment, the can is hooked by the one doing the pulling. As he pulls, he also repeats the same line and finally utters the line that makes mention of the cow.

The one at the well also joins in the chanting of the same line. It thus becomes a means of representing the role which the (two) morans play in sustaining the life of the cows and by extension the whole community. In the song, such a role finds expression in, '*Ejinang'uro kutuka eyeyolai nemeiro aakomama*, My short-mouthed of my mother I give you water during watering day and I give you grass during grazing day'.

In most cases, the wells serve as sources of water for the community. It is not strange, therefore, when morans perform this song for women and young girls to comprise the audience. Their role remains a passive one. The community's traditions proscribe female members from performing this song. Another feature of this song that distinguishes it from others is its length. It comes to completion when all animals have quenched their thirst.

#### **2.4 *Lebarta*, Lads' Song to a Male Ostrich**

Male initiands from the community make this prayer to a lion(ess) to kill a male ostrich in order for the initiands to obtain black feathers. During circumcision seasons for boys, candidates must adorn themselves with black feathers of an ostrich. The Samburu proscribe the killing of ostriches. The song praises the ostrich for

providing candidates with feathers. Lads sing this song in those places where they are likely to find ostriches and lions. They believe that on hearing the song, the lion will kill an ostrich. Members of the community explained that the singing implies promising a lion meat of an ostrich and in return, they obtain feathers. The song also implies that ostriches are also powerful and at times, they kill young lionesses, as depicted in lines 4 and 8 of Text 13:

*4. Sidai-iai elopir oorok,  
8. Near sipen engatuny*

4. My ostrich of black feathers  
8. And kills young lioness

The morans whom we interviewed told us that on hearing the song, the ostriches go into hiding hence the need to enlist the support of lions. We point out that once they obtain the feathers, the community preserves them such that several generations make use of them.

## **2.5 Songs for Elephants**

Two distinct groups sing to elephants. These are members of the Talas family and the Dorobo. The Dorobo praise the size of an elephant. Elephants are quite numerous throughout Samburu. Members of the Talas family perform praise songs to elephants to ward off possible human-animal conflict. The Talas family argues that elephants are their brothers and sisters. They claim ability to communicate with elephants<sup>53</sup>. They perform Text 10 in the presence of either (an) elephant (s) or absence of any. Even in the absence of one, they believe that the power of that praise song reaches a desired elephant or herd. In most cases, through the song they plead with an elephant not to harm people while on a journey. It also requests them to spare trees. If one does not belong to the Talas family, one is not allowed to perform this

53 An explanation of Kitman Lealmo at laga Wamba

song. Both men and women can perform this song. Both men and women if they are from the Talas family qualify to sing it. In this song, a singer pleads with elephants to spare some plants as is evident in lines 2 and 8 of Text 10:

2. *Oladarulai mijo nkoperia narumu ooyioe aeoyia*

8. *Kore tenesha ooyioe near ltepes leai ooyioe aeoyia,*

2. Oladarulai do not say nkoperia is what is carried by floods ooyioe aeoyia

8. When it rains ooyioe do not destroy the acacia trees of God ooyioe aeoyia

It cautions that some plants may not appear useful to elephants but they are so to the community. The song features the community's observation of what happens during rainy seasons. It illustrates that elephants just like the community celebrates during the rainy seasons, '*Sapuki moduo ooyioe nanya ntalengo pooki ooyioe aeoyia,* The big-dunged elephant ... celebrates all rainy seasons'. The elephants during the rainy season trumpet a lot. Members of the Talas family capture this in the onomatopoeia *Oladarulai*<sup>54</sup>. The song admits that floods occur and alludes to their effects such as 'carrying' away of plants that happen to be growing either along river banks or gullies or even on the surface and that cannot resist the force of floods. The elephant in the song is equated to floods. When they are moving from one location to another, they tend to break and even uproot trees as they chart a way forward. Just as floods sweep anything in their course, so do elephants. The song informs that what some people might dismiss as useless could be useful to others. It resonates with preservation of life through the conservation of what is within their environment. In this song, members of the Talas family use the song to demonstrate their importance

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<sup>54</sup> Kitman Lealmo during the performance of this song at laga Wamba stopped to explain that the term *Oloduraluai* refers to a trumpeting elephant. Haron Lekartiwa also confirmed this during a translation session.

in the society. Through it, they fight against any attempt to look down upon them by those who consider themselves endowed with livestock, an indicator of wealth. This features in the repetition of '*kejo lparakuo kirisio Mikirisio*, The wealthy say we are not equal but we are' found in lines 1 and 7 in Text 10.

## 2.6 The Dorobo's Song for the Rhino

Dorobo morans perform this song. It relates what the Dorobo know about the rhino. In Text 9, a rhino is figured as huge and heavy '*... nairoshi epapa*, the heavy one of the forest' – line 14. In most cases, a bird, the *Laria* (oxpecker) accompanies it wherever it goes:

18. *Keirukrukore laria nelo,*  
19. *Nemeliki netii tankaraki laria,*

18. Ever accompanied by an oxpecker  
19. You never fail to recognize it because of an oxpecker

They also record in this song how demanding it is to hunt a rhino. From line 13 and 16 of Text 9, we infer that during the hunting of a rhino, hunters remain tactful by crawling and camouflaging themselves:

13. *...Kulutoo siat kimbartu laingoni lemony ...*  
16. *Karujaki ntunatun tanaku etepero,*

13. *As we crawl under the grass trying to spot where the rhino bull is*  
14. *I target it when it has slept*

The song befits the travails of hunting a rhino such as being away from home. Being away from home signifies long distances the hunters make as well as other challenges they have to brave such as rough terrains and lack of places to hide. In lines 7, and 10, the performer of Text 9 sings:

7. *Oo-hoo mati nkang*  
10. *Oo-hoo-marti aai naliki yioo*

7. Oo-hoo when I am not at home
10. Oo-hoo it is the rough terrain that shows us

It also, in line 12, indicates some of their tools, '*loshuku nkawuo*, we carry along bows and arrows'. In addition to mentioning the tools, it is evident that to hunt a rhino demands that a hunter be brave, '*Nimikinshilari iyie iyie Imurani Loolkunet*, And I the warrior of Loolkunet cannot fear it' – line 9. The song also displays a hunter's knowledge about a rhino. A performer describes some of the physical features of a rhino such as the colour of its mouth as well as its appearance. A performer describes a rhino's mouth as red in colour just as the beak of an oxpecker. This features in line 2, '*...Eepae neiyia nkutuk nalaria... whose mouth looks like that of oxpecker*'. A performer illustrates that hunting of a rhino starts very early in the morning marked in the song by the chirping birds:

7. *Oo-hoo-mati nkang,*
8. *Ltolut ooyie pae neti ltam nkoriong*
9. *Nimikinshilari iyie iyie Imurani Loolkunet*

7. When birds sing in their nests
8. Oo-hoo when I am not at home
9. Oo yes! And the bags are on the back

An oxpecker follows a rhino. We, therefore, infer that if it chirps or if a hunter happens to spot it on the back of a rhino he would not hesitate to make use of such a cue to track a rhino to kill it. In line 3 and 4, a hunter sings:

3. *Kore ake paye elo ayiaya neisarashie*
4. *Ooyie pae nemelau netii ninye laria*

3. Wherever she goes to search for little food
4. Oo yes! She never fails the oxpecker

An oxpecker accompanies a rhino feeding on ticks on it as well as the insects that a rhino stirs from their habitats whenever it makes a physical movement<sup>55</sup>. Thus, an oxpecker aids in the hunting of a rhino as implied in lines 17, 18 and 19 of Text 9:

- 17. Oohoo-ooyiepae nairoshi epapa,*  
*18. Keirukrukore laria nelo*  
*19. Nemeliki netii tankaraki laria*

17. Oo-yes! The heavy one of the forest  
 18. Ever accompanied by an oxpecker  
 19. You never fail to recognize it because of an oxpecker.

From the foregoing, it is evident that Michel Foucault's arguments that every society employs some principles in the production and performance of its art are instrumental in defining the Samburu Animal Praise Songs as a discourse. This concurs with Chimombo's (1988) suggestion that in order to conceptualize the aesthetics in given oral forms, an explanation that attends to the principles must situate it within the culture and the language of the people it is supposed to serve. The classification we have discussed derives from the community's criteria anchored on what we collected during the fieldwork. We complemented it using other studies on the community.

In concluding this chapter, we hold that the term song delineates all those genres that the community actualizes through recitations, singing or incantation. Some of the recorded genres do not have a generic name, for instance *lebarta*. The community uses appellations *herders'* or *women's* or *Dorobo's song for ...* to label the songs. There too exists an explicit way of identifying the songs discussed in this thesis. Another norm of marking out these songs combines a prohibition principle and the division and rejection procedures. The phraseology of a given song comes into existence when the designated performer uses it in the appropriate context. By

<sup>55</sup> A narrative of Kitman Lealmo at Laga Wamba in 2009.

mentioning an animal using a name for a target animal, the singer erects a division that serves to reject any inclusion of such a song in another category. These procedures account for the reasons women, for instance, do not perform to any other animal, a song they compose to a lactating cow when milking it. The procedures explain the subcategories within songs for some animals. For instance, there are several songs for cows. The operation of both principles takes shape in the process of the interaction of the participants involved (Bakhtin 1926 qtd. in Davis 473-474). It is in the operation of these principles that we begin to see the emerging discourses in the praise songs for animals.

In this chapter, we have presented a classification that deviates from such criterion that lumps classification of oral poetry into broad categories of function of a poetry and occasion of performance. Our discussion attends to how additional nuances of diction, target audience, a community's beliefs and social structure needs to be taken into consideration in describing oral poetry.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0 STRUCTURE OF THE SAMBURU ORAL ANIMAL PRAISE POETRY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In 'Structure' John Carlos Rowe defines a structure as an "existing construction whether mental or material, that has the status of a 'thing' or

‘entity’”. He goes further to argue that relations that constitute it define it and not the individual parts (1990:28). It is, therefore, this Rowean concept of a structure that we applied in treating the Samburu Animal Praise Poetry as an entity: a product that is constructed in a particular way. To discern how the elements that constitute this poetry relate, we embarked on a process of what Steven Mailoux (1990) terms interpretation. He defines interpretation as ‘... translation of a text and translation for an audience (1990:121). Mailoux adds that translation of a text entails some acceptable approximation of translation (1990:121-122). As it is always directed, we also employ Fairclough’s (2001:20) model of textual analysis where that we pay attention to interpreting the structure of the Samburu oral animal Praise poetry as texts – the product, and part of our resources for their interpretation. In this analysis, we limit our definition of the relations of the Samburu Animal Praise Poetry to its: performer(s), intended function, the target animal audience and the context of the situation. To realize this objective we selected and used only fourteen songs that the community defined as containing praises directed to some specific animals.

### **3.2 Structure of Samburu oral animal Praise poetry**

The main concern in this section is to illustrate how the praise songs are constituted. The texts we selected and analyzed have varying relations of acknowledgements directed to a specific animal whether present during the performance of a given text or not. These acknowledgments from the described texts emerge as threats, pleading, and ‘self praise’. The forms that emerge as threats include songs women perform to ewes and she-goats. The pleading forms arise from those performed to camels and cattle during milking and when drawing them water. According to our respondents, women too through praise plead with donkeys particularly when they are using them to draw water or to transport luggage when they



are migrating to new locations. There also exist praises to plead with elephants to save some plants. The plants are useful to members of the community. The Dorobo too plead with the honey guide in their efforts to obtain honey. Self-praise is evident through what herders perform. An example is in a song that the community holds was the composition of a hyena. Another form manifests itself in the manner of a prayer.

An example is the *lebart*, which male initiands perform to male ostriches to obtain the black feathers for adorning themselves with during circumcision ceremonies. The identified forms take their shape partly from their diction. The diction of the discourse is also determined by the performer, target animal being praised and purpose of the discourse of praise as well as (the) context. Thus, the structure of these forms is dependent on the performer, the target animal of praise and purpose of the discourse of praise and a situation. How the performer, the target animal of praise and purpose of a particular discourse of praise determine the form and the structure of the discourses of praise in the selected texts is the next focus of this chapter.

### **3.2.1 The Performer**

The actualization of the discourses anchors first on the performer. In the process of their actualization, the prohibition principles and the rejection/division procedures of exclusion for the control of discourse as outlined in Foucault's theory of discourse direct not only to a given form of praise claiming a space but also the role a given performer plays in the coming into being of a given structure. Among the Samburu milking within manyatta is the preserve of women. Men and particularly the warriors, *Imurani*, also have songs for milking which they only sing away from manyatta and in the "absence" of women. In the community, women also perform

praise songs to goats, sheep, camels and donkeys besides performing praises to lactating cows. In addition, there exists a distinction as to which song they sing to which animal. For instance, during milking, a praise song for a cow is different from that of a camel. The praises they perform differ in such respects as tempo, pitch, wording and time of performance. For instance, the praise they perform to cows capture the fact that they milk a cow twice a day. In line 17, Text 2 the phrase, ‘*Mutupukoo nkerá*, Do not make my children sleep hungry’ implies that this befits evening time. In Text 1 the phrase ‘*enyoto*, wake up’ evident in lines 4 and 5 show that this praise song is performed in the morning. A performer has to be keen on such nuances. Our analysis of Text 3 is silent on when they milk a camel. It therefore emerges that for these praises, any definition of their structure must recognize the role of a performer in its production.

A performer is keen on which ideophone to use in a given text and at which point. For example, a performer’s use, of, for instance, an ideophone hints at a target animal for praise. For cows, in one of the texts performed during milking, the ideophone is *hoo*<sup>56</sup> and appears at the beginning of each line. For those praises meant for the ewes, the ideophone is *oro*<sup>57</sup> while for she-goats is *ori*<sup>58</sup>. In some songs, the performers’ diction reveals their gender. We observe some pattern in praises that women perform to cows. There is the referring of a cow as, ‘*eyeyiolai*, of my mother’ as is evident in texts 1 and 2<sup>59</sup>. Those that some male members from the community

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<sup>56</sup> See Text 1 on page 127.

<sup>57</sup> See Texts 6 and 7 on page 131 and 131 – 132.

<sup>58</sup> For the full Text refer to Texts 4, 5 on pages 129 – 130 and part of Text 7a and 7b on pages 131 – 132.

<sup>59</sup> See Text 1 line 5 and Text 2 line 1 page 127; 128.

perform make use of the phrase, ‘*neyieyio*, of my father<sup>60</sup>’ as we see in the songs the Dorobo hunters perform to rhinos and also the one that Dorobo hunters perform to honey guides.

The performer also accounts for variation in the diction of the praises as is evident in Texts 4 – 7 that perform the same function of pleading with a female animal to suckle a young one or Texts 1, 2 and 3 that plead with either a lactating cow or camel to remain calm during milking. As part of their structuring role, performers determine the position of structuring elements like ideophones. In such Texts as 4 – 7 the ideophones *ori* and *oro* occur at varied positions<sup>61</sup>. Texts 4 – 6 show a different ordering of the ideophones. In Text 4 for instance, the ideophones *ori* occur at least twice in a line. In Text 5, it occurs twice in the first two lines and thrice in the remaining lines. In Text 6 the ideophone *oro* occurs thrice in every line while in Text 7a the ideophones *ori* appear at the end of every line. This pattern operates in Text 7b too. This difference on where a given ideophone appears is only possible through the function of performers and affirms performers’ awareness and mastery of their role.

In addition, praises to elephants come into existence when Dorobo hunters are hunting or when a member of the Talas family pleads with elephants to spare some plants. Thus, a performer plays a leading role in determining such nuances of form such as its length. The ‘length’ of a praise song that women perform to an ewe or a she-goat persuading it to suckle a young one depends on the performer’s contentment that a given text has attained its desired end. Thus the effectiveness of such a discourse relies on a performer’s keenness to determine the extent to which its performance should go even when some of the elements of a song seem repetitive as

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<sup>60</sup> See Text 1 lines 1, 6, and 8 page 127.

<sup>61</sup> See Texts 4 - 7 on page 129 – 132.

evident in Text 14<sup>62</sup>. Whether the ending sounds abrupt or not, a performer regards such a performance complete and effective. We experienced this at *Lpashie* village, in Mzee Lesudda's *manyatta*. The women who performed to a she-goat stopped singing once it started suckling its young one. At *Lpashie*, the two women who were milking a camel stopped praising it once they were through with milking it. This then leads us to conclude that the forcefulness or effectiveness of this poetry is dependent on the performers' ability to tell whether it has served the intent of performing it. In other words, the texts as products rely on their producers to interpret a process of their production complete. But this does not imply that the target animal audience does not have a role in the structuring process. The role the target animal-audience performs in determining the structure of these praise songs is our next focus.

### **3.2.2 Target Animal Audience and Function of the Praise Songs**

There is a way a target animal audience and the function of a praise accounts for the structure and content of the praise poetry that we selected and describe in this thesis. This section explores the manner in which the target animal audience performs this role. In this section, we rely on the wording of the praises.

The phraseology of these songs serves first the purpose of identifying a target for praise. It provides a physical description of an animal and the community's evaluation of its behaviour. An example suffices at this point to illustrate how the community weaves the praises by considering the target animal audience and purpose of the song. We begin with the community's evaluation of the behaviour of goats as it is represented in the song that women perform to goats<sup>63</sup> when they decline to 'suckle' their young ones. The song reveals that there are some shrubs, *eloyapasei* and

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<sup>62</sup> Full Text is on page 137 – 139.

<sup>63</sup> Goats are part of shoats.

*elongwaaro* that bloom along the riverbeds during rainy seasons<sup>64</sup>. The Samburu observe that the two species are a delicacy for the goats. When praising a goat in a bid to make it suckle its young one, a performer makes mention of the shrubs as evident in Texts 4 and 5. In Text 4, through lines 12 and 13, she goes ahead to inform the goat that she would deny her the right of accompanying other goats to the riverbanks and enjoy the delicacy. Therefore, the community's knowledge about the tastes of the shoats not only constitutes the structure of the song but it also finds expression in the praise text.

In Text 13 the target of praise is a black ostrich. Lads allude to its appearance using the phrase '*sidai elopir oorok* black-feathered ostrich' as the first step in identifying it. In Text 10, members of the Talas family employ sound imagery when singing to elephants. An example is the onomatopoeia, *Oloduraluai* evident in lines 2 and 5. *Oloduraluai* is a Samburu word for the trumpeting of an elephant. Further use of physical descriptions of target animal audience in determining a discourse of praise is seen in Text 11 that the Dorobo sing to *Nchochoroi*, the honey guide. They describe it as the red-beaked one while in line 18, Text 9 the phrase, '*nairoshi esupuko*, the heavy one of the forest' alludes to a rhino whose mouth is likened to that of *laria*, an oxpecker. The community believes that an oxpecker always follows a rhino<sup>65</sup>. It feeds on ticks on the rhino as well as other insects that a rhino stirs as it moves in their habitat. In Text 10 the phrase '*sapuki moduo*, the one with big dung' refers to an elephant. In Text 12, line 12 a herder regards a hyena as '*taptap nkeju, lekiyia*, the one with limping legs, the one with big ears.'

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64 An explanation by John Lmailin and Mark Leadekei at Ngilai in 2009.

65 An elaboration of Daniel Kitman Lealmo at laga Wamba in 2009.

The use of such elements as ideophones depend on an animal praised. In Text 8, the ideophone *Hooya! Ho!* appears only in this praise. It is close to the braying of a donkey. In the song-text that the Dorobo perform to a honey guide, the ideophone *mpprr* resembles the sound that the honey guides produce. This observation reinforces the fact that the community employs its knowledge of an animal as an element in the structuring of these praises.

Another attribute of these praise songs is their exploitation of personification. The performers address target animals for praise as if they were human beings. This personification packages a given form as a prayer as is the case with *lebartá*, or as an appeal as in the songs that morans perform to entice cows to take water. There is also a paradoxical threat in the songs that women perform to shoats. Women perform to plead with concerned animals to suckle but an analysis of the pleading reveals the threat element that also encapsulates the praise. In Text 7 a woman reminds an ewe or a goat the intent to deny it of some freedom of keeping the company of a herd when it is enjoying delicacy as we illustrate as follows:

Neshomo nkerai oro	The flocks have gone oro
Neshomo nkerai oro	The flocks have gone oro
Lemateteyia oro	Lemateteyia oro
Lemateteyia oro	Lemateteyia oro

Eshomo ldonyo oro	They have gone to the plains oro
Eshomo ldonyo oro	They have gone to the plains oro
Lemateteyia oro	Lemateteyia oro
Lemateteyia oro	Lemateteyia oro

Nimlo anya oro	But you cannot go oro
Nimlo anya oro	But you cannot go oro
Lemateteyia oro	Lemateteyia oro
Lemateteyia oro	Lemateteyia oro

Tashamu lino oro	You must love your lamb oro
Tashamu lino oro	You must love your lamb oro
Lemateteyia oro	Lemateteyia oro

Lemateteyia oro	Lemateteyia oro
Pumlo anya oro	So that you go and feed oro
Pumlo anya oro	So that you go and feed oro
Lemateteyia oro	Lemateteyia oro
Lemateteyia oro	Lemateteyia oro
Nkeneai ana ori	This is my goat ori
Nkeneai ana ori	This is my goat ori
Neibaye lenye ori	That has hated its kid ori
Neibaye lenye ori	That has hated its kid ori
Nkeneai ana ori	This is my goat ori
Nkeneai ana ori	This is my goat ori
Neibaye lenye ori	That has hated its kid ori
Neibaye lenye ori	That has hated its kid ori
Olaaleyio ori	Olaaleyio ori
Olaaleyio ori	Olaaleyio ori
Neibaye lenye ori	That has hated its own ori
Neibaye lenye ori	That has hated its own ori
Olaaleyio ori	Olaaleyio ori
Olaaleyio ori	Olaaleyio ori
Neshamu lenkai ori	And loved another's ori
Neshamu lenkai ori	And loved another's ori
Tilita mbene ori	The leaves have sprouted well ori
Tilita mbene ori	The leaves have sprouted well ori
Elong'saroi ori	The leaves of elong'saroi ori
Elong'saroi ori	The leaves of elong'saroi ori
Netama nkerai ori	The other goats are grazing ori
Netama nkerai ori	The other goats are grazing ori
Nenya ni nono ori	And yours also ate
Nenya ni nono ori	And yours also ate <sup>66</sup>
Nimlo anya ori	But you cannot go to graze ori
Nimlo anya ori	But you cannot go to graze ori
Neibayie lenye ori	That has hated its own ori
Neibayie lenye ori	That has hated its own ori
Kayeng ade ori	I will slaughter you today ori
Kayeng ade ori	I will slaughter you today ori
Neibayie lenye ori	For you have hated your kid ori

<sup>66</sup> This line alludes to the singer informing that her offspring are enjoying the delicacy of the tender and juicy leaves of elong'saroi.

Neibayie lenye ori For you have hated your kid ori

A target animal for praise allows for the ordering of meaning(s) in a praise song. For instance, the slaughtering signifies an end of all privileges a she-goat is entitled to.

The singer reminds the she-goat that she will slaughter it with *ngusur*, a kind of knife for slaughtering shoats that she could have bought using proceeds obtained from the sale of one of its offspring, a he-goat. Such kind of threat, emanating from a member of a community that cherishes an increase in the number of livestock is paradoxical. In the real sense, a singer does not aspire to kill an animal she sings to. The community uses the expression to articulate disgust to an offence of running away from a duty. Suckling its young one would ensure perpetuation of life; more livestock and other accrued benefits. The mother-she-goat then becomes a site where the community inscribes its dislike for not only self-centredness but also the implication of the possible outcome of its behaviour. This and other possible layers of meanings are what we explore in detail in chapter four.

The performers in acknowledging traits of target animals for praise constitute elements that structure a praise song first as praise and second it specifies properties that distinguish praise for a specific animal. Acknowledgement operates like what Searle (1969:54) regards as, “necessary condition(s) for the successful and non-defective performance of the act.”

In the acknowledgement feature, we too deduce an element of reference. Reference according to Fish (1976:1021) points an object in a given context. Thus, the diction of these songs comprises referring expressions (ibid). In the Texts we analysed, referring expressions are evident in appellatives such as: *ntamesi surua*, my white camel in Text 3; *ng’oto lkineji*, mother to a he goat in Text 2; *Oladarulai*,



referring to a trumpeting elephant; *taptap nkeju, lekiyia*, ... the one with limping legs, with big ears in Text 12; *loolepo*, ripe ones (referring to honeycombs full of honey) in Text 11; ... *nkutuk nalaria*, ... whose mouth looks like that of an oxpecker, just to point out a few. Fish argues that a referring expression functions on the principle that there must be an object to be referred to. He states, "... the identifying capacity of a referring expression ultimately depends on ... the existence of one and only one object satisfying a certain description" (ibid). This aids in telling the difference of the various praise songs. For instance, the songs women perform to shoats employ the referring of some shrubs, *eloyapasei*<sup>67</sup>. The act of referring in this case erects a boundary that aids in the categorisation of the praise as befitting shoats. In Text 1, the horns, *mowuo*, of the cow, Mouwoai serve as a mark defining a basis for its praise and also what distinguishes it from other cows.

An analysis of the referring expression(s) as elements of praise depict to some degree the community's perception and regard of a specific animal. The expressions also enumerate reasons for the community revering a certain animal or how it perceives it; that is a given animal as either useful, dangerous or destructive but overall, a recognizable feature that weaves its praise. The following examples will suffice to illustrate our assertion. In the songs sang to goats, there is a reference to the way the community benefits from them. The use of the expression '*ng'oto lkineji*, mother-he-goat' in line 3 of Text 4 alludes to the contribution of a specific she-goat to the increase of the herd. The referring of an ewe as '*ng'oto lkeru*, mother-to-several-rams' affirms the community's interpretation of the contribution of such an animal in the survival of the community. Hence, in the song though in the form of a threat there is recognition of its special role in the community's life. The community uses a

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67 For the full text, refer to Text 4, line 4 on page 129 - 130.

special knife, *ngusur* that blacksmiths design specifically for slaughtering goats or ewes. The community purchases the knife, *ngusur*<sup>68</sup> with proceeds they derive either from the sale of rams or he-goats. The song, therefore, implies that failure to suckle the kid or lamb, then, part of the earlier benefits the animal has serviced the community with, are likely to determine its continued existence.

During milking, a performer of Text 1, in lines 1 and 2, in a pleading tone refers to the aspect of Mowuoai as having benefited the community more so in times of drought. This is evident from the use of the expression: '*Nikijo taa yoo maibongati taa nangarie mpukurot lbungaiko*, We are saying that we be united and we share in recalling the days/ *Nengarie taa lenkure lesumach namelok*, We have shared without food.' This expression and in a pleading tone records the reverence for a given cow hence its praise. The reference recognizes Mowuoai's supply of milk to the community with its milk and by extension the survival of the community. The morans as well employ reference when watering the cows.

One of the songs acknowledges an aspect of ownership. In Text 14, the refrain: '*Ejinamelok eyeyolai nemeiro nashonkare tamatisho*, The sweet one of my mother who doesn't know how to talk I give water during watering day and grass during grazing day' serves as a referring expression that indicates the owner of cow or a bull<sup>69</sup>. Thus, the community's aspiration of having more animals finds articulation through such praises.

For the case of a camel, a milker states that she milks it to obtain milk to feed her children. In the song, there is acknowledgement of how a camel provides the community with '*Naropili kule*, sweet smelling milk' hence its reverence. The use of

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<sup>68</sup> A definition from John Lmailin and Mark Leadekei at Ngilai in 2009.

<sup>69</sup> Among the Samburu, a son starts to build his own stock from what he receives from his mother. A mother gives a son a number of livestock from her allotted herd.

the expression '*Naropili kule*, sweet smelling milk' proves the community's high regard of the quality of milk from a camel. We affirm that through some of the praises, the community voices its dependence on some animals for its survival hence the employment of a pleading tone in order for the community to keep benefiting.

In the song that women declaim to donkeys, its wording permeates the recognition of the importance of other animals in the life of the community. The expression in Text 8 '*moboli larukuj lmurui menyeyi*, Your kidney-shaped-dung is inedible ... *nkula meripi*, your urine cannot be preserved for any use...' prompted us to seek the clarification of mentioning the dung of a donkey and its urine. According to our respondents, the community perceives dung of a donkey as resembling a kidney of a cow in shape. When compared to the dung of a cow, the one of a donkey is useless. The community uses cow dung to plaster its *manyattas*. The urine of a donkey is also of no use. According to the community, the urine of a cow is valuable. The morans use it when they are plaiting their hair<sup>70</sup>. However women praise donkeys for the way they help them, for instance, to draw water or when migrating. Through the singing of such praise to a donkey, the community juxtaposes the benefits of various animals and eventually agree that each has its own importance. This explains why the Samburu revere the cows not only for the way it benefits from their milk, hide(s) and meat but also for other products such as their dung and urine.

We therefore take the position that the use of the referring expressions following explicit rules that tell who uses them and in what context and for what purpose leads to our treatment of the discourses of praise as speech acts. We too concur with Fish's argument on literary works as speech acts. He says literary works are full of speech acts (1024). By asserting that literary works are full of speech acts,

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70 A clarification obtained from John Lmailin and Mark Leadekei at Ngilai in 2009.

he means that they participate in the implementation of desired states. As speech acts, one of the overriding functions of the animal praises is that of nurturing the image of a homogenous community and a nation. This is because the performance of these praise songs obeys rules which as Fish argues exempt no one who wants to embrace the identity of a Samburu. As speech acts, the praises to animals are full of, "... rules of their performance, the price one pays for obeying those rules, the impossibility of ignoring or refusing them and still remaining a member of the community" (1021). The meaning(s) the community attaches to the performance of these speech acts is the concern of chapter four.

Another feature inherent in the praise songs is their employment of intertextuality. Intertextuality means texts draw upon other texts. We treat a performance of a text as a text that draws on texts that include a performer, a target animal audience, context and the desired end of a discourse. We owe this to Ruth Wodak who argues that, 'discourse constitutes situations, objects of knowledge and the social identities ... (17). We mean that a performer finds definition in the process of performing and describing these songs, an instance of exploring how language operates to define one. The same applies to the conceptualisation of context, target animal audience and purpose of a praise song as a text. The community's knowledge about its environment and also about a given animal as well as existing roles and relations enhance the weaving of the praises. In the song, for example, herders sing to a hyena, it has a mythical explanation that traces the existence of the song to that time in the history of the community when members of the community and the animals would converse. The song too contains an allegory. In it the hyena recounts what it had done to another stubborn goat. Thus, the intertextuality also cuts across another feature that defines the genre. In all the songs we collected, there is the echo of that

mythical aspect that elevates the animals to a level of what Searle would call a hearer in a speech act theory. In the myth, animals have the ability to interact with human beings through speech. This explains why the community composes praises to animals because it believes that animals do in some way understand the various performers and performance.

In this chapter, we have defined the structure of the Samburu Animal Praise poetry as a function of the relations of its performers, target animal audience and the role a given text should execute. Other features of this praise poetry such as the tone and ‘shape’ like pleading and threatening forms are useful in accounting for the rationale behind the Samburu employing praise in making sense of their cosmos. We explore that objective in chapter 4. The diction and other aspects of style that we have described are determined by the web of relations defined by the role of a text, its performer and a target-animal-audience.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4.0 MEANINGS OF THE SONGS – TEXTS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, we present our interpretations of the praise song-texts and what the extant discourses tell about the Samburu. In this discussion, we allude to Bakhtin’s (1998) idea regarding form and Rowe’s (1990) argument on structure, as facets of a discourse. We as well incorporate Fairclough’s (2001) thinking on what discourse does and how it carries out its role as a social practice and as a way of speaking.

In ‘Discourse in Art and Discourse in Life’, Bakhtin (1998) advances the argument that a form tells about its producers. It comprises carefully selected and ordered material that poets (performers) select, ‘from the context of life where words

have been steeped in and become permeated with value judgments' (1998:481). The diction of the praise poems is for our case what Bakhtin terms material. The diction of the Samburu Animal Praise Poetry depicts the community's evaluation of its environment and what that environment offers. For that reason, we make use of Bakhtin's position in accounting for the Samburu's weaving of praise with a threat to accomplish a desired end. From Rowe (1990:35), we employ the contention that, 'A structure is a simulacrum that imitates a natural object in order to transform it. The purpose of this transformation is intelligibility but in an interested, humanly useful manner.' We apply the 'interestedness' that Rowe (1990) implies to define how it operates to accomplish the function of a discourse that Fairclough (2001:18) spells as a way of speaking that gives meaning to experiences all aiming at constituting what Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:67) regard as social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and meaning.

#### **4.2 Nationalism, Survival and Continuity**

In these praise poems, we read how the Samburu community imagines itself as a nation. In addition, the praise songs participate in the proliferation of that consciousness. We adopt Benedict Anderson's (qtd in Ashcroft et al 1995:124) definition of a nation in our interpretation of how the Samburu view their nation-ness. Anderson considers a nation as imagined. In *Imagined Communities*, he argues:

... a nation is imagined because members of even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.

Upon subjecting the Samburu oral animal Praise poetry to Anderson's definition of a nation, we read in these praise songs, a conscious effort to represent its imagination as a nation. This commitment is in diction and the resultant tone and form of the praise

poems. In Text 1 for instance, we read the imagination of the Samburu nation as defined by a concern to perceive it as homogenous through the use of pronouns ‘we’ and ‘us’. In Text 1 we use the first two lines to explain our claim.

1. *Hoo! Nikijo taa yoo maibongati taa nangarie mpukurot lbungaiko*
2. *Nengarie taa lenkure lesumach namelok*

1. Hoo we are saying that we be united and we share in recalling the days
2. We have shared without food and we shared the thirst of water and hunger loved one/sweet one

The same lines capture a desire to nurture a homogenous Samburu nation both in the present and in the future. The desire to propagate that perception in the future is founded in similar experiences and imagined to have affected the nation. In line 2, the days are defined as days of scarcity of some basic needs represented by, ‘without food and ... the thirst of water.’ In the same text, *we*, refers to both the members of the Samburu community and cattle. In it, the community underlines the interdependence of both for survival.

We also observe that tone, a defining aspect of the form of this poetry, is also directed toward perceiving the Samburu as a homogeneous nation. The Samburus’ determination in viewing themselves as a nation, serves the following purposes. First, it defines what constitutes its nationness – one whose structure is paradoxical. Paradoxical because at the outset, the Samburu project their nation as homogenous but an analysis of its internal structure reveals heterogeneity that is veiled by the name Samburu as a strategy for survival. Second, the determination is an allegory that stipulates expectations that every Samburu should observe to nurture that imagination of the Samburu as a nation defined not so much by an attachment to a territory but by

shared experiences and values. Before pursuing this argument further, we illustrate how the alluded commitment finds expression through the diction of the praise poetry.

For the Dorobo to gather honey, they plead with honey guides. In the pleading, we deduce that the Dorobo's survival is partly dependent on the ability of honey guides to directing them to a spot they would get honey. Thus, they plead:

1. *MPRR! MPRR! Tilimu loolepo*
2. *Misap nkosheke ino nimisap naai MPRR!*
6. *Kutudunyo nkasurot emanya*
7. *Maape taa*
9. *Misap nkosheke ino nimisap naai*
10. *Mikiya ngoki epola*

1. MPRR! MPRR! Tell me where ripe-ones are
2. Do not lie to your stomach and mine too MPRR!
6. We have passed through very thick and bushy forest which hides many animals
7. Let us go
9. Do not lie to your stomach and mine too
10. So that you don't perish from a curse

The determination to survive leads members of the community to brave tribulations such as those alluded in line 6. The same determination reveals that failure of a member to play his or her role in ensuring the survival of the nation risks the life of the nation. Any member who risks the survival of a nation is cursed and eventually perishes. This is an example of what Emmanuel Ngara (1990:14) terms a patterned communicative utterance (poetry) that aims at achieving a greater communicative effect than everyday language. For the case of the Samburu, and through the Animal Praise Poetry they communicate the fear of perishing as a result of being cursed. The poetry further reveals the necessary conditions for the continuity of the Samburu nation. We illustrate this further with the song *lebarta*.

When performing this song, the initiands affirm their desire in ensuring their own survival as members of the community and also as a way of participating in the



survival of the nation. They prove their commitment toward the survival of the nation first by observing the proscription of killing an ostrich to obtain feathers and second through complying with the rule that they enlist, through praise, the help of lions in killing an ostrich. In performing the song as part of a process of their transition toward moranism, the initiands take part in a social practice that ensures the survival of the Samburu nation. Such participation is an actualization of the determination of each individual initiand to prove his imagination that the survival of the Samburu anchors on an initiand's role to abide by all that guarantees the existence of the Samburu nation.

The other purpose of imagining their nation as harmonized serves to cultivate values meant to nurture that imagination. In this poetry, its diction comprises words that Bakhtin (1998) considers as full of value judgments. In Text 3, the words, '... that has hated its own ...' summarize the community's interpretation of the behaviour of a she-goat in relation to an expectation. In Text 4, '*ng'oto lkineji*' meaning 'mother to several rams' also indicate an interpretation that is based on the behaviour of an ewe in relation to others in the same context. The expected values include being aware of other nations – that are imagined to be a threat to the existence of the Samburu nation. This knowledge is allegorized in the song morans sing to hyenas. In the song, the morans project the community's fear of being conquered by other nations. The use of the words 'I' denoting the identity of (an)other nation(s) and 'you' (goat) symbolizing the Samburu nation as the addressee and the use of a threatening tone expressed in the future reveals the Samburu's imagination that as a community, it is certain of its existence at the present. Underlying the threatening tone is a desire to survive beyond the present. Hence, the community justifies its need to be prepared for any eventuality

that might threaten the survival of the nation more so in the future. The following section of the song serves as our illustration.

6. *Kaaya tekeper nkakua*
7. *Napalu*
8. *Neaku nshiket Ipusi leai*
9. *Neaku manyita*
10. *Nkereri*
11. *Naponie*

6. I (Hyena) will take you (Goat) above the galaxy
7. And release you down
8. The goat will be farting mist of God
9. And the intestines will straighten
10. Like clothes line
11. To add to the one of the already dead goats

In this song, the pronoun ‘I’ signifies hyena, representing (an)other nation imagined as determined to conquer the Samburu nation for another time as is evident in, ‘*Naponie*, To add to the one of the already dead goats’ (Text 12, line 11).

In the line, we read a representation of a past experience – the conquering of a section of the nation. We note that it is not all the goats that were killed, but one. In this case, hyena intent is not to kill to obtain food – eat a goat but to kill, destroy and boast of the number of times it has conquered the Samburu. The lines too capture the Samburus’ imagination of how a perceived enemy (nation) threatens Samburu nationalism by altering its internal structure to an irredeemable state:

9. *Neaku manyita,*
10. *Nkereri*

9. And the intestines will straighten
10. Like clothes line

The same lines too portray the Samburu as peaceful but other nations as aggressors:

- 16 *Kaaya tekeper nkakua,*
17. *Napalu*

16. I will take you above the galaxy

## 17. And I release you down.

The pronoun I identifies the agent of aggression: a representation of the community's imagination of its attitude toward its enemies. Consequently, that imagined knowledge of a threatened existence justifies the existence of the institution of moranism, an institution charged with the responsibility of countering external aggression. The justification of the existence of the institution of moranism and its place in the survival of the Samburu is envisioned in *lebartá*.

The song also reveals the community's having learnt from previous experiences. These are expressed in the first line of Text 12. A herder describes a goat as foolish: *Mara kemaē nkine Lengeiyia*, 'The goat of Lengeiyia is foolish.' The foolishness of a goat (Samburu nation) is defined as grazing after dusk. This song satirizes ignorance for it is a threat to the existence of the nation. In this representation of a past experience, a failure to observe a certain value – being aware of threats to nationhood serves as a resourceful lesson to avoid such a mistake in future.

The satirical tone of the song serves to caution the community on the need to remain vigilant and ever ready to protect its own existence. Another facet of knowledge that aids the community in defining its nationness from being conquered is represented in the song Dorobo hunters perform while hunting rhinos. The song demonstrates that the survival of the nation is a contest between might and tact. The songs then come to represent how the Samburu narrate their nation (Bhabha, qtd in Ashcroft, *et al.* 1995: 133).

In Text 9, the alluded contest is represented. The rhino symbolizes the might of (the) other nations and an imagination of the possibility of such nation(s) exploiting such might to conquer the Samburu. However, to conquer the other (perceived to be

against the survival of the Samburu nation) tact is a requirement. In Text 12, the representation of that tact is imminent in:

- 9. Nimikinshilari iyie Imurani Loolkunet*  
*13. Kulutoo siat kimbartu laingoni lemon*  
*16. Karujaki ntunatun tanaku etepero*  
*17. Oohoo-Ooyiepae nairoshi esupuko*  
*18. Keirukrukore Laria nelo*  
*19. Nemeliki netii tan araki laria*

9. And I the warrior of Loolkunet cannot fear it  
 13. As we crawl under the grass trying to spot  
     where the bull (rhino) is  
 16. I target it when it has slept  
 17. OO-yes the heavy one of the forest  
 18. Ever accompanied by an oxpecker  
 19. You never fail to recognize it because of an oxpecker

The mention of how the Dorobo morans target a rhino when it is sleeping as well as the way they crawl aiming to spot it in addition to their reliance on an oxpecker to locate a rhino is part of the tact and knowledge relevant for survival of the Samburu nation. Hence, the community counters threat from (the) other nation(s) using the knowledge it has about other nations.

The Samburu also imagine their nationhood and demonstrate their struggle to nurture it through their knowledge of how they could exploit available resources and talents. For resources (such as some plants) the community, in a pleading tone, shows the need to conserve them. For instance, in Text 10, a member of the Talas family pleads with an elephant not to destroy acacia trees and *nkoperia*, a kind of plant that blooms during the rainy seasons or along river banks. The plants serve as food for livestock. An acacia tree is useful to the community as illustrated in an account we gathered from Mzee Leadekei.

In the account, members of the Talas family plead with elephants to spare some plants that the Samburu value or their products for being food for their

livestock. For instance, in Text 10, a performer in line 2 pleads with elephants to spare, *nkoperia*, which the elephant may despise as useless. The plant serves as food for the community's livestock. In the song, there is also some advice to those who are wealthy in terms of livestock not to despise those who are poor. We treat this as the community's strategy to nurture the imagined homogeneity of the Samburu nation. In line 6 and 7 of the same text, a performer sings, '*kejo lparakuo aeyioe*, Someone rich in livestock says ooyioe we are not equal aeoyia/ *Mikirisio kirisio ooyioe aeoyia*, While we are equal ooyioe aeoyia.' In line 8, a singer makes an appeal to an elephant to spare *lteses*, acacia trees that according to Mzee Leadekei serve the community in some of the following ways. An acacia tree provides shade for both human beings as well as their livestock. Thorns of acacia trees serve as surgical tools during those times when the Samburu are piercing their ears for ornamentation or when removing (a) thorn(s) that could be 'buried' in skin. The thorns are useful during sewing. There is a way the Samburu make an eye on a thorn and it serves as a needle. An acacia tree also produces some pods that serve as food for both the livestock and people. It also provides the best fuel for roasting meat particularly during ritualistic ceremonies. The Samburu use barks of an acacia tree to make straps they use to tie luggage when on transit. In addition, the roots of an acacia tree have a medicinal value<sup>71</sup>.

In line 2 we get, '*Oloduraluai mijo nkoperia narumu ooyie aeoyia*, Oloduraluai do not say nkoperia is what is carried by floods ooyie aeoyia' and in line 1, we have, '*Kore tenesha ooyie near lteses leai ooyie*, When it rains ooyie do not destroy acacia trees of God ooyioe aeoyia.' The reason for this appeal makes sense from some observation we made in Samburu and what our respondents explained. The acacia bloom and flower during the rainy season. During this season, acacia

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71 A narrative from Mzee Leadekei at Ngilai, Wamba in 2009.

produce some pods that serve as food for both humans and their livestock during the dry spells. Therefore, destroying such plants during the time when they should be blooming (a representation of hope) translates into denying the nation an ingredient of its survival.

The recognition of a special talent that the Talas family has – that of compelling elephants to comply with their wish – is our reading of the community's recognition of talents of different members of the Samburu nation. Thus, in the praise songs we get to know how such talents participate in the proliferation of the Samburu nation.

The Samburu nation demands that its members remain loyal to it. The community through these praise poems represents its resolve to dissociate itself from any member who behaves contrary to the values of that nation. This is brought out in a threatening tone in those praise songs where some animals are threatened with death. In Text 4, an aspect of patriotism is allegorized. Unpatriotism of a member of the community calls for such members to be excommunicated for their unbecoming behaviour. In Text 4, line 6, the dissociation is symbolized through the implication that a mother-she-goat (a representative of the nurturing role) that declines to suckle its young one will be tethered and then slaughtered. The tethering is symbolic of the community's determination to cut links with members who through their absconding of their nurturing roles are considered a threat to the survival of the Samburu nation. The survival of the nation is dependent on each member playing his/her role as exemplified in the act of suckling. To slaughter a she-goat more so for its failure to fulfil an obligation is a representation of the community's resolve not to identify with unpatriotic members.

Loyalty to the nation as an aspect of patriotism also features in the song Dorobo perform to honey guide. In the song, Dorobo hunters appeal for the honesty of the bird arguing that its honesty will sustain both the lives of hunters and its life. In lines 2, 3 and 4 of Text 11, we have:

2. *Misap nkosheke ino nimisap,*
3. *Amu nkitajeunnot Amu nkitajeunnot*
4. *Yee-pai lodokotuk lepapa*

2. Do not lie to your stomach
3. And do not lie to my stomach too, my stomach too...
4. Because that will sustain both lives for this day

Another defining feature of the Samburu nation is the way it employs the plural to imagine homogeneity of the nation. This emerges in some praise songs whose diction comprises mainly of personal pronouns and nouns in plural. An analysis of their usage in the context of these songs is metaphorical of the Samburu's imagination of their struggle toward nationhood.

In Text 1, we have, '*... nikijo taa yoo maibongati taa nangarie mpukurot lbungaiko...we are saying that we be united and we share in recalling the days....*' This line foregrounds a collective call to members of the community to perceive the community as a nation, a limited entity in Benedict Anderson's (2006:8) terms defined by experiences that are archived in its memory. It alludes to recalling some specific days defined in the following lines as days of scarcity. The use of 'we' in Text 1 line 1 represents an imagination that the experiences were homogenous. Such a memory reminds the community why it should imagine itself a homogenous nation.

In the same text, a number of nouns are in plural. They include children, herders, calves and heifers. The use of these nouns in plural implies how the community projects its imagination as a nation even in such circumstances as when milking. Milking then becomes a metaphorical expression of such imagination. The

pleading tone of Text 1 reveals the community's strategy of reminding its members, the importance of working toward their nationhood.

The employment of a pleading tone in Text 5 reveals how the Samburu perceive and represent their nationness as fragile, dependent, and delicate and use it as a trope to emphasize the need to nurture the values that define it. In the song, the image of a child explains the perception of the Samburu nation as fragile and delicate. Hence, one that calls for the collective participation of all its members in nurturing it. When a Samburu woman in Text 3 pleads with a she-goat to suckle a kid using the following line: '*Nkine ai, ade ori, naibayie lenye; ori neshamu lengai ori*, My favourite goat that rejected its own kid, and loved another's ori' affirms her commitment to nurture the nation. The sarcasm in 'my favourite goat that rejected its own' serves to deride being loyal to others, '... and loved another's' at the expense of one's life. They stress the irony of negating one's nationness by shifting loyalty to other nations. They do not seem to discredit other nations but the emphasis is to love one's nation first. In the song, being unpatriotic is unfathomed hence threatening of an unpatriotic member with excommunication should they fail to comply with the nation's expectation.

The survival of the Samburu nation likened to the dependence of a child also features in the song that the Samburu sing while milking camels as well as when using donkeys to draw water. Thus, children feature as a central motif in the narration of the Samburu nation. In Text 3, the concern is expressed in the lines 5, 8, 12 and 13:

- 5. *Nalepoki nkeru nkutukai namelok,*
- 8. *Nkutakai namelok naororieki-nkeru*
- 12. *Naoro nkeru nkutukai namelok*
- 13. *Nkunanang onenkai nkutukai namelok*

- 5. I am milking for my children my sweet
- 8. My sweet mouth I feed my children with your milk
- 12. The one who feeds children my mouth is sweet,



13. You feed the children, my sweet mouth, ours and for others

In the song, the act of milking to feed is a representation of a particular section of the community's responsibility to ensure the survival of the community. In the same song, the community also represents what it imagines aids its own definition as a nation – its dependence on either the animals and or/ their products and in some instance not just their products but also their services. This accounts for the reverence the community has for the animals it raises as well as those found in the(ir) physical environment. One starts appreciating that respect when one considers the structuring of the praise texts. The structuring employs a pattern that in Bakhtinian terms comprises of carefully selected words that are replete with value judgements from the Samburu cosmos. The product of that structuring is a representation of an imagination of a Samburu nation that the Samburu are ready to die for.<sup>72</sup> This further explains the regard of such animals as cows and camels as sweet mouths. The mouth in the praise texts for the cows and camels are synecdoche denoting the functional organs that ensure the survival of the nation. We also add that the kind of endearing expressed through the phrase 'my sweet mouth' alludes to the alluded readiness to die for ones nation. This also persuades us to perceive the animals that the Samburu praise as metaphors for interpreting and constructing the Samburu nation. The readiness to die for ones nation is also manifest when one starts to consider what the nation (read the animals) accomplish in the survival of the community. The community perceive the nation as central in the survival of the community – it provides food, a sense of belonging and security hence the regard of the nation as, 'The one who feeds children (Text 3:12).

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<sup>72</sup> The aspect of one being ready to die for one's nation is in Benedict Anderson's definition of a nation. For more of this, see Anderson (20068).

The Samburu through these praise texts imagine their nation as sovereign in Andersonian terms.<sup>73</sup> The Samburu's sovereignty as a nation is hinted at in line 13 of the cited text, 'Nkunanang *onenkai nkutukai namelok*, You feed the children, my sweet mouth, ours and for others.' The pronouns 'ours' and 'others' infer awareness that their nation is different from other nations a trait that lead Anderson to consider a nation as limited.<sup>74</sup> This aids in comprehending the symbiotic relationship that exists between the animals and the Samburu community. The animals contribute to the existence of the community and hence the responsibility of the community to ensure that its nation – animals survive. We define further the symbiotic relationship between the animals and the Samburu.

An instance of the community's dependence on some of the services of the animals they raise is represented in Text 8. We illustrate this with line 11 of the song women sing to a donkey when drawing water. In the song, women plead with the donkey as: '... *Hooya! Mapeti taa mayaki nkerang nkare Hooya*, Hooya! Let us go now. Let us take water to our children Hooya!' Though the urine of a donkey as well as its dung are perceived as useless to the community when compared to those of cows, there is a tinge of irony when the community privileges the donkey. This is because donkeys are important for their services to the survival of the nation and not its products. In line 6 of text 8, we get women performing their concern for the animals to survive when they plead with the hills to be kind to their donkeys as they serve them. This accounts for the employment of a pleading tone in text 8 and in text 1 as we already explained in another section of this thesis.

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73 Benedict Anderson in the introduction of his *Imagined Communities* spells out what he regards as the defining elements of a nation. In addition to a nation being an imagined and limited community, he also considers the sovereignty of the community.

74 By terming a nation as limited, Anderson means that a nation has a finite boundary.

Having illustrated the presentation of the Samburu nation defined from the outset as homogeneous and one that is dependant on the collective participation of its members in nurturing that imagination, we then turn to how the praise songs are a site where distinct Samburu identities are performed. In the following section, we illustrate how discourses of identities are constructed and illustrated in and through the praise poems directed to animals.

### 4.3 Constructing Samburu Identities

Among the Samburu, identities of social categories also permeate discourse. Each category has a distinguishing feature that is discernible in instances of language at work. For instance, when each category performs a specific praise song guided by clear procedures, it participates in performing identities that constitute the Samburu nation. The knowledge of the place of the ‘other’ and the observation of the criteria that define the ‘other’ participate in the construction of social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge among the members of the community.

There exists an explicit distinction as to who is a ‘real’ Samburu and who is not. The Dorobo, though being a section of the Samburu, are /were looked down upon by the rest of the Samburu. According to *Mzee* John Lodikir, a Dorobo, the term Dorobo refers to one who depends on hunting and gathering. According to Job Lolkalepi, the Dorobo are /were poor in terms of livestock ownership.

The community’s oral tradition holds that the Dorobo were the first, in the history of the community, to receive food donations in the form of flour from the missionaries<sup>75</sup>. They are known for their hunting and honey harvesting skills. For that

<sup>75</sup> This narrative we got from Job Lolkalepi at Mamboleo Bar, Wamba in 2009. Job is not a Dorobo but he was instrumental in directing us on how to get John Lodikir, a Dorobo. His narrative is an indicator of the sustained knowledge of identity formation in the community.

reason, they have hunting songs that the ‘other’ Samburu decline to perform despite knowledge of their existence. The Dorobo, according to *Mzee John Lodikir* use(d) hunting songs to guarantee their own survival and conservation of their environment. He enumerated for us when the Dorobo performed during hunting.

First, Dorobo hunters sang when hunting. They hunted animals strictly during dry spells and they spared any animal with a young one or that was pregnant. On killing a big animal like an elephant, a rhino or a buffalo (there were rules prescribing the killing of such an animal until after a given period), several families would consume its carcass. The Dorobo preserved game meat in honey. Secondly, the songs sang to the hunters<sup>76</sup> congratulated the hunters for having killed a big game. The killing of a big game earned hunters a higher social status. There exist rules that govern hunting. These rules check the hunters’ greed for social status. The rules specify the number of games that should be hunted within a given period. In addition, during rainy seasons they harvested and preserved a lot of honey to supplement game meat during dry-spells<sup>77</sup>.

The song the Dorobo compose(d) and perform(ed) to the honey guide remains largely unknown to the ‘other’ Samburu. The praise song to a honey guide thus participates in the construction and perpetuation of such identities as what defines the Dorobo. The ‘otherising’ is a product of the prohibition principle for the control of discourse. It is explicit in the diction of the song to a honey guide. For instance in Text 11, the phrasing of the song illustrates that its situation of performance is during a hunting expedition and in a forest. In line 6 it is clear that the song gets to be performed in a forest, ‘*Kutudunyo nkasurot emanya*, We have passed through very

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<sup>76</sup> We do not in this thesis provide examples of such songs for our interest was on praise songs directed to animals and not praises to the Samburu.

<sup>77</sup> This clarification we got from John Lodikir at Golgotim in Wamba, 2009.

thick and bushy forest which hides many animals.’ In lines 13 and 14 of the same Text, we get the idea that hunting is tedious, represented in a pleading tone that runs through the whole song. The following lines capture how the Dorobo persuade a honey guide to supplement their hunting skills:

*13. Oi adeepuonu lashumpa,  
14. Pakinyangakini nkenke putum aima, mpirikat elkeek emuata  
MPRR!*

13. May the Special ones come  
14. So that I can buy you some energizer to give you strength to go through small spaces *MPRR!*

By performing the song during a hunting expedition, the Dorobo assert their identity as a people, a component of the Samburu nation whose survival depends on hunting and harvesting of honey. Thus, through such a praise song, the Dorobo perpetuate their identity as a subset of a larger identity, the Samburu nation.

We also observe that the songs the Dorobo perform to animals for instance honey guides and rhinos contrast with the praise songs the other Samburu perform in that the Dorobo praise songs perpetuate the identity that they rely more on hunting and gathering. The song alludes to their hunting skills as we have illustrated. In the praise songs of the other Samburu, it is revealed that the community relies on either the products or services of the animals for survival.

In the cited illustration(s), the principle of division/rejection opposition operates to delineate the ‘real’ Samburu/Dorobo categories. Each category is aware of its identity and that explains why the other Samburu do not sing to a honey guide as the Dorobo do. Both categories have songs for elephants but still there is the observation of the rule that specifies which category sings for an elephant and for what purpose. The wording of Text 10 and in particular line 1 hints that it would be inappropriate for a Dorobo to perform it considering line 1 ‘... *kejo lparakuo kirisio*

*mikirisio* ..., you say we are equal and we are not...’ We also add that such knowledge should not be used to alienate the Dorobo as constituting the Samburu nation hence a revision of the cited assertion in line 5 that asserts ‘*Mikirisio kirisio*, The wealthy (in livestock) says we are not equal while we are equal.’

The Dorobo have since the arrival of Christian missionaries<sup>78</sup> embraced cattle keeping yet the distinction that the Dorobo are hunters and gatherers, does persist. The distinction of who is not a Dorobo finds its observation even in the praise songs they sing to animals. This observation reveals the Samburu’s knowledge of their geographical environment in terms of what it offers for their survival and how they put such knowledge into use for their survival. For instance, when Samburu women<sup>79</sup> are drawing water for their families, they imply their reliance on the ability of a donkey to carry water or luggage over long distances or rough terrains signified in the song by mentioning of a hill. This we find in lines 5, 6, and 7 of Text 8. In this line, women praise a donkey for its role in supporting life through its suckling a young foal while it is also in foal. Praise to such a donkey is then a representation of a modest behaviour expected in ensuring the survival of the Samburu nation. The appreciation is felt in the line where women also sympathise with it hence their telling the hills to lie low for the loaded donkeys to climb:

*6. Loipangi tepero tooriong meima ngiron ang nemeiyolo nkejek loipangi*

6. Hill lie on your back for our donkey to pass; their legs are not accustomed to climbing the hills

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78 Job Lolkalepi hinted that Dorobo’s dependence on hunting and gathering suffered some setback from the arrival first of the Christian Missionaries and then the introduction of colonial administration that discouraged their economic activity. They ended up being driven out of the forest. John Lodikir confirmed this assertion and added that he had worked for many years with the colonial administration and with among the first Consolata Missionaries as a catechist. He added that at the end of the colonial era, the regimes that took over did not permit the Dorobo to resort to their hunting and gathering,

79 The Dorobo do not keep donkeys. Their seeming tendency to reside in forested areas makes them not to be in need of the services of donkeys.

Another form of social identity reveals itself in observing rules regarding the place of the Talas family who are defined by a rare prerogative of pleading with elephants to spare *nkoperia* and *lteses*. The family enjoys the honour it receives from other members of the community for being of use to the whole community.<sup>80</sup>

Thus, the othering that defines who sings what and in what context to which animal for a reason leads to social effects that Fairclough attributes to discourse in terms of what Jørgensen and Phillips term as ‘... the construction of social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and meaning’ (67). The identities that arise have such labels as the Dorobo, clan, moranhood, womanhood, boyhood etc. Every member of an identity knows what defines their identity, its role, its social place and expectations at a particular time. For example, the morans know their protection role for the community to proliferate hence their singing to hyenas when herding. The lads when they are in the process of becoming morans perform *lebartá*. The song defines their space in the community’s life. It is also an expression of their commitment to shed boyhood and embrace moranhood and all that it entails. Women’s effort of feeding children as captured in the songs they sing to either lactating cows or camels demonstrate their acceptance of such a role for it contributes to the Samburu community imagining itself as a nation.

The knowledge of an identity and its role in the survival of the community at large constitutes part of the community’s system of knowledge. For instance, though the other Samburu tend(ed) to look down upon the Dorobo, they respect their hunting skills. This is evident in the way they relate. The other Samburu purchase honey and hides of some forest animals from the Dorobo<sup>81</sup>. A moran knows that it is a taboo to

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80 An account of Kitman Lealmo.

81 An elaboration of Mzee John Lodikir.

sing the song, *Lebarta*. A married man in the context of the Samburu does not milk at home. For the case of the Samburu women, they demonstrate their power of making situations using language. For instance, when praising their ewes to suckle the lambs, they portray their knowledge of tackling a life-threatening situation without necessarily depending on another category. In the process, they pass that knowledge to prospective wives. We add that theirs is not a contest of power on which category or gender wields more power over the other but a practice of ensuring the continuity of the survival of the community as a nation. The social identities represented either in the diction of these praise songs or observed during their performance reveal power relations among the Samburu and how those relations contribute to the perpetuation of Samburu nationalism.

#### **4.4 Power Relations**

Spencer (2004: xxv) regards the Samburu as a gerontocratic society. In such a society, political power is essentially in the hands of the elders. The exercise of power finds expression through the performance of praise songs to animals. Elders thus exercise such power through circumstances as those that forbid men particularly married ones to sing to cows when milking within *manyattas*. It is the duty of women to milk. Morans do also milk but not within *manyattas*<sup>82</sup>. They do it particularly when they have taken cows far way from *manyattas* in search of pasture and water.

Power relations among the Samburu manifest themselves in for instance when a given performance should be. It is elders who make almost all rules that govern the expectations and roles of the various categories in the community. And all these rules are spelt out to ensure the survival of the Samburu nation. An example of such a

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<sup>82</sup> During one of the translating sessions, Haron Keni Lekartiwa relayed this information.



stipulation regards the performance of praises to cows. For instance, only male members of the community praise cows when watering them. Married men, Morans and boys too praise cows in such a circumstance. The community prohibits its women from drawing and giving water to such animals like camels and cattle. Hence, they do not praise cattle and camels when they are taking water. The community permits them to give water to donkeys. In such times when there is scarcity of water and probably an available source of water serves as a watering point and a source of water for domestic use. The following procedure applies. Once they get to a well with their herd, herders proceed to water the herd. In case some women would be in need of water, they wait until a herd quenches its thirst. If the herders wish to bathe, their bathing follows the watering of a herd.

To perpetuate this rule, a stereotype that women are likely to contaminate water for cows explains why they have to wait until a herd has drunk to its fill. Contravening this rule implies that the male members have the right to ridicule and even physically beat any woman who acts contrary to such a rule<sup>83</sup>. Observation of such a rule serves to nurture a sense of *nkanyit*<sup>84</sup>, defined as the highest level of respect. It promises acceptance, praise and even status in a society.

The attempt to attain *Nkanyit* guides in preventing the eruption of possible conflicts over scarce resources and when conflicts arise, their peaceful resolution should also aim at nursing respect for each other. That is why the Samburu elders cannot perform a kind of a song, *Lkulonkoi*<sup>85</sup> that morans perform. Lads, i.e. uncircumcised male should not sing it. Violation of such a rule may result in wild

83 This elaboration, we obtained from Jonathan Lekerpees and a young boy who had directed us to Lpashie laga had knowledge of this procedure and delighted in narrating how women risk beating should they contravene such a rule. We also observed women who had come to draw water from a well at the same laga drew their water after a herd had taken water. Jonathan and his colleagues bathed after watering the herd.

84 *Nkanyit* as the highest sense of respect should be an aim of every member of the community.

animals attacking the boys. Married men, should they perform it, risk death. The belief is so strong that no one among the respondents interviewed agreed to sing it within or near a *manyatta*. The same song demands that Morans perform it far away from *manyattas* and upon approaching a *manyatta*, they stop singing it.

Most respondents told us that elephants are at times destructive. They destroy trees that the community reveres for their benefits. An example of such a tree is the acacia, *ntepes*, as the Samburu call it. According to Kitman Leamo, of *Karrapar Talas* sub-clan that performs songs to elephants, members of the clan can plead with them (elephants) not to destroy trees: '*Kore tenesha ...near ltepes leai ooyioe aeoyia*, When it rains ... do not destroy acacia trees of God ooyioe aeoyia.' In this particular case for example, the Samburu get an opportunity to showcase an example of a power relationship. By observing the belief that the Talas family possesses some special powers that they exploit to influence elephants to submit to the clan's wish the Samburu recognises its power over other clans. That power gets to be realized when it is performed as praise to an elephant. Other clans recognize Talas' family power to compel elephants act in a desired way. They do so by for example, requesting a member from the clan to either send an elephant away or to stop an elephant from destroying acacia trees. To approach a member of the Talas family with a request to make an elephant behave in a desired way is an indication that other clans accept and respect that family as one endowed with some useful power that also contributes to the survival of the nation. Such a criterion of recognition not only creates an opportunity for representing an example of power relations in the community but also as a feature that aids defining the Samburu as an entity comprising of multiple

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85 This is a kind of a praise song sang by morans when they are journeying particularly through forests believed to be a habitat for wild animals. It is a self-praise. This means that a moran praises the self as opposed to directing such praise to animals. For this reason, we omitted it.

categories each with its distinguishing features. For example, the power to make elephants comply with wishes is an attribute that distinguishes such families as the Karrapar of the Talas clan.

There too exists in the community's oral literature, a song that the community regard as belonging to the hyena. The Samburu explain that the hyena originally composed the song to praise itself. This song is allegorical. It is meant to constantly remind morans against laxity and ignorance in their duty as the standing army of the community. The hyena, a renowned archetype of greed and cowardice in the Samburu oral literature accords us a chance to explore what it allegorizes in the life of the community. It represents the community's awareness of the existence of enemies. This awareness is an articulation of the power in their knowledge of their possible enemies and the effort it makes to over-power/conquer whatever threatens its existence as a nation. For its survival, the community through the song stresses the need to be vigilant. It is not by chance that it is a performance of morans. Their performance is their way of remaining alert against any possible threat. The song serves a dual purpose. It performs the function of acknowledging the morans' position as the community's army, a position that elders assign them. It also participates in perpetuating the community's survival by cautioning on possible dangers of ignorance.

Another interesting feature about some of the praise songs on power relations reveal why, for instance, women among the Samburu, do not claim ownership of livestock apart from donkeys yet the majority of the praises to animals are compositions by women. Of the fourteen songs we selected and analysed, nine were performances of women. This finds explanation in the community's myth which

elders exploit to determine how things should be done. To get a further glimpse of this power relation we have the following aetiology on why women do not own livestock.

The myth has it that long time ago all animals belonged to women. One day, a woman sent an elephant to fetch some firewood. The elephant kept on bringing the wrong size of firewood. The woman kept on sending the elephant until it got tired. Finally, the elephant despaired and left. From then onwards, animals developed mistrust toward women. Some left the company of the Samburu and the Samburu believe that an elephant will always chase a woman on seeing one<sup>86</sup>. Such a myth serves to ensure that women act as directed by the procedures and explains why the role of protecting the community against external aggression falls largely on men and precisely the *Morans*. It is through such myths that the power that different genders wield comes into operation – through a principle of division and rejection. It is also in some of the genres of narratives as Wasamba (2009) and Osaaji (2009) argue that the subversion of the patriarchal ideology is inscribed.

The observation of those procedures that define the varied power relations functions as one of the agents that the Samburu depend on to assert and perform their survival tactics and express their knowledge systems. In other words, they function like what Derrida (1992) calls the proxy that functions to reclaim a desired presence. One of their desires is to survive. It is only when they survive as a community that they are able to illustrate to others what defines the community and what it employs to survive. Their observation of such procedures also plays an active role as well in the conservation of their environment. A few examples illustrate this thinking.

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<sup>86</sup> Haron Keni Lekartiwa narrated this myth /etiology.

#### 4.5 Knowledge of their environment and efforts to conserve it

During the initiation ceremony particularly for boys, a stage that marks transition from boyhood to *moranhoo*, a very revered institution, the initiands have to adorn themselves using black feathers from a male ostrich. The Samburu traditions proscribe the initiands from killing an ostrich yet the initiation candidates must have feathers of a male one during the ceremony. This requirement hints that the community is aware of the availability of ostriches in their environment. The initiands are then faced with a daunting task of obtaining feathers of an ostrich without necessarily killing one. The Samburu too believe that when it is time for initiation, the ostriches are aware and hence they tend to 'hide'. This makes it more demanding on the part of the initiands. The hunting they embark on is a marker of their preparedness to join the institution of Moranism. Their patience is therefore put to test. Additionally, their ingenuity in tackling challenging situations that may hinder the survival of the whole community gets an opportunity to be represented. Since the belief in the power of prayer is so strong among the Samburu, the initiands pray that a lion(ess) gets to kill a male ostrich<sup>87</sup>. The initiands therefore make incantations to a lion. Their expectation is that a lion(ess) should kill an ostrich for them to get the feathers. Once they obtain the feathers of a male ostrich, the community makes use of them and after the ceremonies preserves the feathers so that several generations could use them. Through such a taboo, the population of ostriches is guarded<sup>88</sup>.

In lines 1 and 2 in the song *lebarta*, initiates sing, '*...sidai elopir oorok ...*, Ostrich of black feathers/*Mikitara lngatunyo*, May the lions kill you. The use of the modal auxiliary *may* after identifying what a lion(ess) should kill indicates that

<sup>87</sup> We got this narrative from Kitman Lealmo at Mamboleo bar at Wamba, 2009.

<sup>88</sup> A clarification from Haron Keni Lekartiwa during one of the translation sessions at Wamba in 2009.

initiates are not obliged to kill an ostrich. This is unlike what the Dorobo hunters do when hunting a rhino. They are not proscribed to kill a rhino though there are rules stipulating how the hunting of rhinos should be carried out. In their song, they elaborate how they go about killing a rhino. Line 17 of Text 9 represents part of the hunting procedure as: ‘*Karujaki ntunatun tanaku etepero*, I target it when it has slept’. In both songs, it is evident that each category knows which animal is found in their environment. In their determination to obtain for instance, feathers from an ostrich or meat or hide from a rhino, they put into consideration the community’s expectations regarding obtaining such products. In *lebarta*, an initiand in lines 7 and 8 tells of a male ostrich that kills young lionesses. He then prays that the ostrich becomes a victim. His aim is to obtain feathers. The Dorobo hunters are aware of a rhino’s ability to charge at anyone that threatens its life hence targeting it while it sleeps. Such knowledge would hardly be easy for anyone not from the community to come by. It also illustrates the community’s wisdom in exploiting the knowledge it has about the animals in their environment.

A concern with the environment also features when members of the Talas family in Text 10 plead with an elephant to spare trees:

1. *Oloduraluai mijo nkope lia narumu ooyioe aeoyia*,
2. *Sapuki moduo near ltepes leai aeyia*

1. Oloduraluai, do not say nkoperia is what is carried by floods  
ooyioe aeoyia
2. The big-dunged elephant that breaks down acacia trees of  
God ooyioe aeoyia

These lines are examples of how the community makes efforts to conserve some plants such as nkoperia and Ltepes, acacia. We have already alluded to some of the uses of acacia. The community’s consideration of some behaviour of an elephant as

destructive serves as a means of commenting on its distaste for the destruction of its environment which to an extent determines its existence.

Women when praising donkeys also remark on their physical environment. For instance in their praise to a donkey, they illustrate how hilly some of the places they obtain their water from are. Hence, in their sympathising with donkeys, they wish that hills would ‘obey them.’ In line 6, the wish is in a pleading tone: ‘... *loipangi tepero tooriong meima ngiron ang nemeiyolo* ...Hill lie on your back for our donkey to pass; their legs are not accustomed to climbing the hills.’ When praising their lactating cows, they advise cows to walk slowly as they go to graze. They inform the cows of the presence of some stones that are likely to hurt them hence the advice that they walk with caution to avoid injuries:

13. *Taa nanyora ntimi oo nodoki taa nanyurai ntimi namelokai ntanguo,*

13. Hoo walk slowly to protect your legs from being hurt by stones.

The concern that women perform toward the animals point to the fact that the Samburu perceive their nation as delicate and one that is dependent on the vigilance of the members against anything that is likely to hurt any of the organs that ensure its survival. The mention of the stones and their ability to injure the legs of a walking cow illustrate the community’s knowledge of what are its possible threats as well as the organs that are likely to suffer from such threats should members ignore such precaution. Such notion proves imperative to the survival of the community as a nation in its environment and also justifies the exploitation of the power relations that exist in among the Samburu.

From the foregoing discussion in the chapter, the poetry the Samburu perform to animals is one way of asserting its identity as a nation and also propagating that identity. The praising aspect, therefore, remains a conduit through which values that

determine the survival of the Samburu as a nation gets to be actualised and archived. The praise songs function as what Fish terms speech acts through which the Samburu interpret and construct their imagination as a nation.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 Findings and Conclusion

In our effort to critically inquire into the discourses inherent in the songs the Samburu perform to praise specific animals we began by defining the Samburu in terms of their history as documented in their oral narratives and printed material. Here, we focused on the circumstances that led them to settle in some of the areas they inhabit. In chapter one, we have also traced the aetiology of the term Samburu that the Laikipiak Maasai used to refer to the community's regard for *Samburie*, a leather bag made from a skin of goats. Goat comprise some of the animals the Samburu raise. We then stated the need to describe the form, content and relevance of some of the praise songs the Samburu sing to animals. To achieve this we had to collect some praise songs and other narratives on the Samburu for our reading of the praise songs as literary material. To read the praise songs, we employed Foucault's ideas on the production of discourse. Foucault's ideas guided our description of how the community classifies the praise poetry. We then used Bakhtin's distinction



between discourse in real life and discourse in art to account for how the song-texts participate in the interpretation and construction of the Samburu cosmos. Fish's argument on the role of reference as speech acts augmented Bakhtin's ideas that we employed in our interpretation of the praise songs as literary texts. We have treated the narratives about the Samburu as reference in a speech act as defined by Searle. We as well employed Fairclough's argument in reading how the poetry participates in the construction of the Samburu nation and the varied identities that constitute it. To conceptualize how the Samburu weave this poetry, we made use of Rowe's argument regarding a structure. In the chapter we also justified the necessity of carrying out this study. The study was necessitated by evidence on the inadequacy of documented print material featuring how animals as part of the target audience aid in processing and interpreting the Samburu nation.

### **5.1 Summary and Findings**

In chapter two of this thesis we have illustrated how the Samburu define the poetry they perform to praise animals. In their definition, emphasis is on who performs a given praise and to which animal in a context. The definition also lays emphasis on the intended function of praise poetry. We, therefore, got to know that strict procedures are observed in regard to the performance of this poetry. For the poetry to be considered effective, performers prove their competence by telling when a given performance has achieved its intended purpose. An example regards what determines the length of a performance. Length as we observed during the song women performed to shoats and also the one morans performed at Lpashie is dependent on a performer's satisfaction that it has achieved its purpose. The classification that we have described in the chapter is based on a criterion that we documented from our field findings.

Chapter three attends to how the praise songs are structured. We mapped those elements that Rowe regards as relations that define a structure. The relations are the: work of a particular performer, target animal audience and also the function of a given composition. For example, for a cow or a camel to remain calm during milking a Samburu woman pleads with either through a praise song. An analysis of the role such a performer plays in structuring specific praises reveals that the diction of these praises is an indicator of some summary based on the community's knowledge regarding an animal. The diction reveals what Bakhtin (1998) considers is as a result of some value judgement. Competence on the part of a given performer manifests itself through analysis of diction. For instance, a performer selects diction that suits a particular situation. It is also the performer who determines the effectiveness of this kind of poetry. The effectiveness of the poetry we analysed rests in the ability of every performance of a particular praise in achieving its intended purpose. Such purpose would include a moran singing to mimic a hyena. Such a performance serves the role of affirming that the community is alert against any external aggression and that should anyone dare threaten the sovereignty of the Samburu nation, then a moran is ready to go any length in defending it. Our findings diverge from Okpewho's argument that it is the audience who determines the forcefulness of a given performance. We state here that for the case of the Samburu oral animal Praise poetry, it is the performer who determines that forcefulness. That is when a praise singer is contented that a given performance has achieved its purpose.

Miruka's thinking that it is the audience that determines the length of a performance is also inadequate in explaining the role of audience in the actualization of the Samburu oral animal Praise poetry. Miruka's position would hold in such instances where a performance is designed for entertainment purposes. The

inadequacy anchors on the thinking that an audience motivates or demotivates a performer during a performance either to proceed or to quit. Miruka alludes to an instance where an audience would shout down a performer who it considers boring. In such a case, such a performer may not feel motivated to continue. This is not so with the Samburu oral animal Praise poetry. A lad would not stop making an incantation toward a lion(ess) however long it takes to obtain the feathers of a male ostrich. A herder stops singing to cows during watering once all the cows have drunk water while the need to obtain honey leads the Dorobo to their praising a honey guide until they gather enough honey.

In chapter four, we have described possible meanings extant in the praise songs. From the songs, we deduce how the Samburu imagine and project a homogeneous image of their nationhood. The image is represented during the performance of the praise songs. We argue that the classification of the songs according to who performs what praise in defined contexts and to which animal enriches that imagination and is a pointer to rules members must observe to ensure that the Samburu nation survives. The forms of these songs too attend to that project hence the employment of threats to remind members of real threats to their nationhood. The threat motif is evident in the diction of some songs. The diction of these songs also gives shape to a form. For instance, in those praises that exploit a threatening tone, we get an imagined representation of knowledge of what is likely to curtail the perpetuation of the Samburu nation.

The Samburu nation is also represented as delicate and as dependent as a child. This is seen in those songs that exploit the child motif. This tells how they regard their nationness as delicate and one that is dependent on collective efforts of other members for its survival. In the songs, there is a clear articulation of how animals contribute to

the proliferation of the Samburu nation. Some like camels, goats, cows and sheep provide food for the community. Donkeys though they do not provide food, offer vital services like carrying luggage during migration to new places to look for pasture or while drawing water. They also help in transporting food bought from markets. Ostriches provide feathers that are central to the transition to the institute of moranhood. This is the standing army of the community. Other animals like honey guides reveal how the community employs its ingenuity to survive. Other animals like the rhino are used as a site to illustrate that the survival of the Samburu nation in the midst of their enemies relies in addition to the availability of a standing army, on some form of tact.

The songs also reveal the community's mastery of the knowledge of its physical environment and how it exploits available resources to meet its needs. This is also helpful in explaining why the Samburu are so much concerned with the conservation of their environment as represented, for instance, in the song the members of the Talas family plead with elephants to spare acacia trees and *nkoperia* or the reliance on lions to kill an ostrich instead of the lads killing ostriches. The Dorobo too have rules governing the hunting of big game. Any hunter who kills a big game earns more honour. To check greed for recognition, rules regarding how and when such elephants should be hunted are emphasized.

In addition, the discourses indicate that there is a lot that needs to be researched to liberate some oral literatures from generalizations that tend to lump them in very broad categories as we have illustrated using examples of the place of audience in performance of texts. At this juncture, we agree with Chimombo on the cultivation of an African Aesthetics for some of the principles that have been applied in attempting to make sense of the African indigenous arts relegate such arts as lesser

or of less value. This explains in part the impartial treatment of such arts as the Samburu oral animal Praise poetry in instructional materials used in Kenyan schools and other parts of the world. Such a genre has its own life just like an elegy, an epic, a sonnet and attempting to make it fit in such classifications as work songs, hunting songs to cite only a few perpetuates the marginalization of such arts. Therefore, facets of how its producers perceive it, or the manner in which it comes into being, and what motivates its production as well as the nuances that govern the production of every aspect of that art demand due attention.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

This thesis functions like what Derrida calls a supplement. It presents how the Samburu configure their cosmos through the songs they perform to animals. It also adds to existing knowledge about the Samburu besides detailing how the production of this poetry is part of a process of structuring the imagined Samburu nation. The study affirms that the classification, performance and structure of this poetry toward perpetuate the Samburu nation. An overriding feature of the nation is its concern to nurture a consciousness that it is homogenous. Our analysis of the structure of this poetry reveals how the performer function, role of a given praise song and a target animal audience determine whether a genre sounds threatening or pleading. The threatening or pleading tones serve to remind members of their role in the continued existence of the nation. Thus, the structure of this poetry reveals some of the methods the community employs to survive. The survival of this nation is dependent on a determination to observe rules regarding power relations among the various members that comprise the Samburu and a collective concern to conserve its environment. We recommend further research on the concept of audience and its role in performances that involve non-human audience.

There is hope that the findings in this thesis will find their way in some instructional resources. This is for use in institutions of learning in order to illustrate the treasures preserved in our heritage using the Samburu experience as an example. There is also optimism that the findings will stimulate additional researches of this nature not necessarily among the Samburu but in different contexts as well. In other words, it is one of the means the community exploits to speak about its limited and sovereign identity while perpetuating that identity. Our field findings reveal that the Samburu have a rich oral tradition and it participates in ensuring the survival of the nation. In it, we get details of the values that the Samburu consider vital for their survival.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

We recommend further research on the concept of audience and its role in performances that involve non-human audience in those communities that do have performances to non-human audience. As regards Samburu oral traditions, there is still a lot to be discovered through research on the community's recourse to incorporating songs in almost all their activities. During our fieldwork, we observed that the Samburu have some special songs performed during drought to appease God to send rain. The songs are performed by women but in this thesis it is beyond our scope to define nuances of their performances. At Ngilai, we got from Mzee Leadekei that the Samburu have songs they perform at night during an eclipse. Therefore, our study recommends further studies on what the Samburu do with songs.

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## APPENDICES

### Text 1

#### Song of women for milking a cow

*Hoo! Nikijo taa yoo maibongati taa nangarie mpukurot lbungaiko*  
*Nengarie taa lenkure lesumach namelok*  
*Hoo maitotio taa neyeyio maitotio yoo nkeru nainen o ninono*  
*Hoo enyoto naicho emiperi namelokai maimala taa paye epuo*  
*Hoo enyoto taa maimala paye epuo Mowuoai namelokai eji*  
*nanyorie neyeyio*  
*Hoo nanyorie lchekuti nanyurie taa larimi paye epuo*  
*Hoo nanyorie larimi leneyeyio hoo ntawuoai taparu ake nkeru*  
*namelokai nainen taa oo nino taa onenyana namelokai eji taa pee merek nkeru*  
*Nodoki hoo enyoto naicho emiperi enyoto taa maimala paye epuo*  
*taa nanyora ntimi oo nodoki taa nanyurai ntimi namelokai ntanguo*  
*eyeyiolai chomo akiti*  
*Hoo chomo akiti mear nkejek soito mowuoai namelok naa ntawuoai chomo akiti*  
*Hoo enyoto naicho emiperi enyoto maimala paye epuo*  
*Enyoto naicho emilura namelokai maimala neyeyio*  
*Hoo nolatu enapita Mowuoai nameloka elotu taa inaptia labura*  
*Enapu telkess keenapu pooki maitutumo Mowuoai namelok*  
*Hoo maitutumo taa paye epuo Mowuoai namelok maitutumo pukura.*

### Text 1

[Hoo we are saying that we be united and we share in recalling the days  
 We have shared without food and we shared the thirst of water and hunger loved  
 one/sweet one  
 Hoo satiate us together with my children and yours too  
 Hoo wake-up all heifers, do not sleep loved one, and let us praise because you (will go  
 to graze)  
 Hoo wake-up, let us praise so that they go Mowuoai, my loved one, the reason why I  
 love, you sister  
 Hoo the reason why I love the herders, the reason why I love the calves so that they go  
 Hoo the reason why I love calves, my children hoo Ntawuoai just remember children  
 loved one, mine and yours and any others loved one so that, so that you do not kick  
 your calf  
 Hoo wake-up all heifers, do not sleep, wake-up and let us praise so that cows can go  
 into the bushes and go into the bushes my dearest cow, loved one, heifer of my mother  
 walk slowly  
 Hoo walk slowly to protect your legs from being hurt by stones  
 Mouwai loved one just walk and slowly too  
 Hoo wake up young ladies do not sleep wake up and let us praise so that they go  
 Wake up young women do not sleep, loved ones let us praise so that they go  
 Hoo Mowuoai, my cow my loved one, as you return home and you are carrying milk  
 foam  
 As you carry from the wilderness you bring all, let us be united Mowuoai loved one

Hoo let us be united so that you go Mowuoai, loved one, let us be united.]

## Text 2

### Women's song for milking a cow

*Mayor ee yeyolai nonkutuk namelok*  
*Mayor ee yeyolai naylor ee yeyolai*  
*Mayor ee yeyolai nonkutuk ee yeyolai namelok*  
*Ng'otonye lmoogi namelok ee yeyolai*  
*Ng'otonye lmoogi namelok ee yeyolai*  
*Ng'otonye ntawa namelok ee yeyolai*  
*Ng'otonye ntawa namelok ee yeyolai*  
*Ng'otonye ntawa nanyor ee yeyolai namelokai*  
*Ng'otonye ntawa nanyor ee yeyolai namelokai*  
*Mukurwa aa lepito nonkutuk ee yeyolai namelok*  
*Mukurwa aa lepito nonkutuk ee yeyolai namelok*  
*Aruaki labura linong'op nanyor ee yeyolai namelok*  
*Aruaki labura linong'op nanyor ee yeyolai namelok*  
*Naleputa ake ee tukutuk nanyor ee yeyolai namelok*  
*Mukurwa aalepito nkutuk ai namelok*  
*Labura a leputei nkutukai namelok*  
*Mutupukoo nkeru nkutukai namelok*  
*Muure lepeta nkutukai namelok*  
*Nkaina kaituko nkutukai namelok. Hiik!*

## Text 2

[My mother's *Mayor* with sweet mouth  
 My mother's *Mayor* the loved one of my mother  
 My mother's *Mayor*, the sweet mouth of my mother  
 You are mother to our bulls, the sweet one of my mother  
 Mother to our bulls, the sweet one of my mother  
 Mother to our heifers the sweet one of my mother  
 Mother to our heifers the sweet one of my mother  
 Mother to our heifers the sweet one of my mother  
 Do not kick me when I am milking you the sweet mouth of my mother  
 Do not kick me when I am milking you the sweet mouth of my mother  
 Do not let your white foam pour your foam (milk) to the soil the loved one and sweet one of my mother  
 Do not let your white foam pour your foam (milk) to the soil the loved one and sweet one of my mother  
 I am milking your foam when it is warm the loved sweet one of my mother  
 I am milking your foam when it is warm the loved sweet one of my mother  
 Do not kick me as I milk you, my sweet mouth  
 It is only milk am getting from you, my sweet mouth

Do not make my children sleep hungry, my sweet mouth  
 Do not fear milking, my sweet mouth  
 I am only washing my hands clean, my sweet mouth. Hiik!

**Text 3**

**Women's song for milking a camel**

*Ntamesi Surua nkutukai namelok*  
*Labura aleputa nkutukai namelok*  
*Naipungua aitokkonkaik nkutukai namelok*  
*Ntamesai surua nkutukai namelok*  
*Nalepoki nkeru nkutukai namelok*  
*Nkutukai namelok naororieki nkeru*  
*Nemera nenyana nkutukai namelok*  
*Nkunannang onenkai nkutukai namelok*  
*Ntamesai surua nkutukai namelok*  
*Naropili kule nkutukai namelok*  
*Labura aleput nkutukai namelok namelok*  
*Naoro nkeru nkutukai namelok*  
*Nkunanang onenkai nkutukai namelok.*

**Text 3**

[My white camel my sweet mouth  
 I am milking milk foam my sweet mouth  
 I came out of the house having washed my hands to milk you my sweet mouth  
 My white camel, my sweet mouth  
 I am milking for my children my sweet mouth  
 My sweet mouth I feed my children with your milk  
 And not your children with my sweet mouth  
 Ours and for others my sweet mouth  
 My white camel my sweet mouth  
 Your sweet aromatic milk my sweet mouth  
 I milk your milk foam my sweet mouth  
 The one who feeds children my mouth is sweet  
 You feed the children, my sweet mouth, ours and for others]

**Text 4**

**Song of women for goats**

*Tilita mbene ori tokuna seriak ori*  
*Numulo anya ori ng'oto lkineji*  
*Ng'oto lkineji ori tilita mbene ori*  
*Elong'waaro ori eloyapasei ori nomulo ori*

*Ori numulo anya ori*  
*Kaen ade ori Kayeng ade ori*  
*Ng'oto lkineji ori ng'oto lkineji ori naibaye lenye*  
*Ori lechamu lenkae ori*  
*Namara lenye ori*  
*Ng'oto lkineji ori ng'oto lkineji ori kaen ade*  
*Ori kayeng ade ori tankalem ngusur ori*  
*Nayengie ntare ori nayiengie ntare ori*  
*Tilita mbene ori tilita mbene ori elong'waaro ori*  
*Eloyapasie ori tokuna seriak ori tokuna seriak ori*  
*Nomulo anya ori ng'oto lkineji ori.*

#### **Text 4**

[Some tender leaves have sprouted ori in these rivers ori  
 And you cannot go and eat ori mother to a he-goat  
 Mother to a he-goat ori some tender leaves have sprouted ori  
 Elong'waaro ori eloyapasei ori  
 And you cannot go and eat ori  
 I will tether you afterwards today ori I will slaughter you today with a short knife ori  
 Mother he-goat ori mother he –goat ori one who has disliked hers ori  
 And preferred another's ori  
 And it is not hers  
 Mother he-goat ori mother he-goat ori I will tether you afterwards today.  
 Ori I will slaughter you today ori using ngusur  
 The knife I slaughter goats with ori I slaughter with ori  
 Some tender leaves of elongwaaro ori have sprouted ori elong'waaro ori  
 Eloyapasei ori in these rivers ori  
 And you cannot go to eat ori mother he-goat].

#### **Text 5**

##### **Song of women for goats**

*Nkine ai ana ori kayieng ade ori*  
*Talalem ade ori layiengie ntare ori*  
*Nkine ai, ade ori, naibayie lenye ori neshamu lengai ori*  
*Kayieng, ade ori, nowoto mbene ori, elongwaroi ori*  
*Nkine ai, ade ori, naibayie lenye ori neshamu lengai ori*  
*Kayieng, ade ori, nowoto mbene ori, elongwaroi ori.*

#### **Text 5**

[My favourite goat ori, I am going to slaughter you ori  
 Using the usual knife ori, purposely designed for slaughtering goats.  
 My favourite goat ori that rejected its own kid ori, and loved another's (kid) ori

I am going to slaughter you ori while already the leaves of Longwaroi are green ori  
 My favourite goat ori that rejected its own kid ori, and loved anothers kid ori  
 I am going to slaughter you ori while the leaves of Longwaroi are already green ori]

### **Text 6**

#### **Songs of women for ewes**

*Amarleliya oro ng'oto lker a oro amarleliya oro*  
*Kaen ade oro amarleliya oro tilita mbene oro*  
*Amarleliya oro tokuna seriak oro amarleliya oro*  
*Nomulo anya oro amarleliya oro ng'oto lker a oro*  
*Amarleliya oro naibaye lenye nechamu lenkae oro*  
*Amarleliya oro lmara lenye oro*  
*Ng'oto lker a oro amarleliya oro kaen ade oro*  
*Amarleliya oro numulo anya oro amarleliya oro*  
*Ng'oto lker a oro amarleliya oro kaen ade oro*  
*Amarleliya oro kayieng ade oro amarleliya oro.*

### **Text 6**

[Amarleliya oro mother to several rams Amarleliya oro  
 I will tether you today oro Amarleliya oro Amarleliya oro some tender leaves have  
 sprouted oro  
 Amarleliya oro in these rivers oro Amarleliya oro  
 You cannot go to eat oro Amarleliya oro mother to several rams  
 Amarleliya oro has refused its own and has preferred /loved anothers oro  
 Amarleliya oro the dotted one  
 Mother to several rams Amarleliya oro I will tether you today oro  
 Amarleliya oro you cannot go to eat oro Amarleliya oro  
 Mother to several rams oro Amarleliya oro I will tether you today oro  
 Amarleliya oro I will slaughter you today Amarleliya oro.]

### **Text 7a**

#### **Songs of women for ewes and goats**

*Nker yai oro*            This is my sheep  
*Nker yai oro*            This is my sheep  
*Lemateteyia oro*       Lemateteiya,( name of the sheep being  
*Lemateteyia oro*       addressed)  
*Naibaiyie lenye oro*    That has hated its lamb oro  
*Naibaiyie lenye oro*    That has hated its lamb oro  
*Lemateteyia oro*       Lemateteiya oro  
*Lemateteyia oro*       Lemateteiya oro



*Neshamu lenkai oro* And loved the other one oro  
*Neshamu lenkai oro* And loved the other one oro  
*Lemateteyia oro* Lemateteyia oro  
*Lemateteyia oro* Lemateteyia oro

*Nenganashenye oro* of its sister oro  
*Nenganashenye oro* of its sister oro

*Neshomo nkerai oro* The flocks have gone oro  
*Neshomo nkerai oro* The flocks have gone oro  
*Lemateteyia oro* Lemateteyia oro  
*Lemateteyia oro* Lemateteyia oro

*Eshomo ldonyo oro* They have gone to the plains oro  
*Eshomo ldonyo oro* They have gone to the plains oro  
*Lemateteyia oro* Lemateteyia oro  
*Lemateteyia oro* Lemateteyia oro  
*Nimlo anya oro* But you cannot go oro  
*Nimlo anya oro* But you cannot go oro  
*Lemateteyia oro* Lemateteyia oro  
*Lemateteyia oro* Lemateteyia oro  
*Tashamu lino oro* You must love your lamb oro  
*Tashamu lino oro* You must love your lamb oro  
*Lemateteyia oro* Lemateteyia oro  
*Lemateteyia oro* Lemateteyia oro  
*Pumlo anya oro* So that you go and feed oro  
*Pumlo anya oro* So that you go and feed oro  
*Lemateteyia oro* Lemateteyia oro  
*Lemateteyia oro* Lemateteyia oro

### **Text 7b**

*Nkeneai ana ori* This is my goat ori  
*Nkeneai ana ori* This is my goat ori  
*Neibaye lenye ori* That has hated its kid ori  
*Neibaye lenye ori* That has hated its kid ori  
*Olaaleyio ori* Olaaleyio ori  
*Olaaleyio ori* Olaaleyio ori  
*Neibaye lenye ori* That has hated its own ori  
*Neibaye lenye ori* That has hated its own ori  
*Olaaleyio ori* Olaaleyio ori  
*Olaaleyio ori* Olaaleyio ori

*Neshamu lenkai ori* And loved another's ori  
*Neshamu lenkai ori* And loved another's ori  
*Tilita mbene ori* The leaves have sprouted well ori  
*Tilita mbene ori* The leaves have sprouted well ori  
*Elong'saroi ori* The leaves of elong'saroi ori  
*Elong'saroi ori* The leaves of elong'saroi ori  
*Netama nkerai ori* The other goats are grazing ori  
*Netama nkerai ori* The other goats are grazing ori  
*Nenya ni nono ori* Nenya ni nono ori  
*Nenya ni nono ori* Nenya ni nono ori  
*Nimlo anya ori* But you cannot go and graze ori  
*Nimlo anya ori* But you cannot go and graze ori  
*Neibayie lenye ori* That has hated its own ori  
*Neibayie lenye ori* That has hated its own ori  
*Kayeng ade ori* I will slaughter you today ori  
*Kayeng ade ori* I will slaughter you today ori  
*Neibayie lenye ori* For you have hated your kid ori  
*Neibayie lenye ori* For you have hated your kid ori

### **Text 8**

#### **Women's songs for donkeys**

*Hooya! Ho! Sikiriaai. Ho! Nkuraruai. Hooya! Hooya!*  
*Maape taa tanapa taa nkare neja taa*  
*Ho! Hooya! Ho! Sikiriaai Ho! Nchonkoro nkejek*  
*Moboli larukuj lmurui menyeyi Ho! sikira*  
*Nkula meripi Ho! Ho!*  
*Loipangi tepero tooriong meima ngiron ang nemeiyolo*  
*nkejek loipangi*  
*Hooya! Ho! Nntikiliaai*  
*Chuee! Chuee! Hooya! Hooya! Hooya! Ho! Sikiriaai*  
*Hooya! Ho! Nkuraruai naap elepo tana*  
*Mboo enkiposorogi*  
*Hooya! mapeti taa mayaki nkeraang nkare; Hooya! Ho!*

### **Text 8**

[Hooya! Ho! Young one of a donkey hooya! Hooya!  
 Let us go now. Carry water now like that  
 Ho! Hooya! My donkey ho your *nchonkoro*-shaped legs  
 Your sealed kidney-shaped-dung is inedible my donkey  
 Your urine cannot be preserved for any use  
 Ho! Ho! Hill lie on your back for our donkey to pass  
 their legs are not accustomed to climbing the hills  
 Little one of a donkey  
 Chuee! Chuee! Hooya! Hooya! Hooya! Ho! Oh! My donkey  
 Hooya! Ho! Young donkey pregnant and lactating like a herd of Oryx

Hooya! Let us go now. Let us take water to our children Hooya!]

**Text 9**

**Song of the Dorobo for the Rhino**

*Ee ninye neyieyio,  
Eepae neiyia nkutuk nalaria  
Kore ake paye elo ayiaya neisarashie  
Ooyie pae nemelau netii ninye laria  
Aa-haa-haa lmurani  
Tenieru nkweny  
Oo-hoo mati nkang  
Ltolut ooyie pae neti ltam nkoriong  
Nimikinshilari iyie iyie lmurani Loolkunet  
Oo-hoo-marti aai naliki yioo  
Hoo lmurani loolkunet  
Ooyioo-hoo loshuku nkawuo  
Kulutoo siat kimbartu laingoni lemony  
Oohoo-oyiepae, nairoshi esupuko  
Ohoo-oo-oyiepae nadokutuk epapa  
Karujaki ntunatun tanaku etepero  
Oohoo-ooyiepae nairoshi epapa  
Keirukrukore laria nelo  
Nemeliki netii tankaraki laria*

**Text 9**

[Yes! She is the one of my father,  
Oo yes, whose mouth looks like that of oxpecker,  
Wherever she goes to search for little food  
Oo yes! She never fails the oxpecker  
Aa-haa-haa warrior  
When birds sing in their nests  
Oo-hoo when I am not at home  
Oo yes! And the bags are on the back  
And I the warrior of Loolkunet cannot fear it  
Oo-hoo it is the rough terrain that shows us  
Hoo warrior of Loolkunet  
Ooyioo-hoo we carry along bows and arrows  
As we crawl under the grass trying to spot where the rhino bull is  
Oo yes! The heavy one of the forest  
Oo yes! The red mouthed of my father  
I target it when it has slept  
Oo-yes! The heavy one of the forest  
Ever accompanied by an oxpecker  
You never fail to recognize it because of an oxpecker].

**Text 10****Talas' Family song for elephants**

*Ooyioe aeoyia kejo lparakuo kirisio mikirisio ooyioe aeoyia*  
*Oloduraluai mijo nkope ria narumu ooyioe aeoyia*  
*Sapuki moduo near ltepes leai aeoyia*  
*Olodarulai ooyioe mijo nkopelia narumu ooyioe aeoyia*  
*Kejo lparakuo ooyioe*  
*Mikirisio kirisio ooyioe aeoyia*  
*Kore tenesha ooyioe near ltepes leai ooyioe aeoyia.*

**Text 10**

[Ooyioe aeoyia you say we are equal and we are not  
 Olodarulai, do not say nkopelia is what is carried by floods aeoyia  
 The big-dunged elephant that breaks down acacia trees of God ooyioe aeoyia  
 Olodarulai ooyioe do not say nkoperia is what is carried by floods ooyioe aeoyia  
 The wealthy (in livestock) say ooyioe we are not equal while we are equal ooyioe  
 aeoyia  
 While we are equal ooyioe aeoyia  
 When, it rains ooyioe it destroys acacia trees of God ooyioe aeoyia].

**Text 11****A song of the Dorobo for the Honey guide, Nchochoroi**

*MPRR! MPRR! Tilimu loolepo*  
*Misap nkosheke ino nimisap naai MPRR!*  
*Amu nkitajeunnot Amu nkitajeunnot*  
*Yee-pai lodokotuk lepapa,*  
*Tilimu loolepo, tilimu lpurpurit*  
*Kutudunyo nkasurot emanya*  
*Maape taa*  
*Taranyu tonkume MPRR!*  
*Misap nkosheke ino nimisap naai*  
*Mikiya ngoki epola*  
*MPRR! Neyieyiolai iyie papa oyieyio,*  
*Nkwenyie aai epapa, nshio pai,*  
*Oi adeepuonu lashumpa*  
*Pakinyangakini nkenke putum aima*  
*Mpirikat elkeek emuata MPRR!*  
*Yie papa oyieyio, pirpir nkiyia*  
*Tankailipai motosho minyorit enya nashi*  
*Ira lonkitajeunot,*  
*Tolimu loolepo,*  
*Lino lebata MPRR! Hae! Hae! Hae! MPRR! MPRR!*  
*Loyie ootu amu nokulo.*

**Text 11**

[MPRR! MPRR! Tell me where ripe-ones are  
 Do not lie to your stomach and mine too MPRR!  
 Because that will sustain both lives for this day  
 Ooh-yes red-beaked one of my father  
 Tell me where there is enough honey show me *lpurpurit*  
 We have passed through very thick and bushy forest which hides many animals  
 Let us go  
 Go on singing using your nostrils  
 Do not lie to your stomach and mine too  
 So that you don't perish from a curse  
 MPRR! My sibling oo-yes of my father and mother  
 My bird, my father's bird, bravo!  
 May the special ones come  
 So that I can buy you some energizer to give you strength to go through small spaces  
 between trees with twines all round them MPRR!  
 Flap your ears in fear as the *minyorit*  
 Eats up the honey, being of grace  
 You are the sustainer  
 Tell me where the ripe ones are  
 Reveal to me where bees are. MPRR! HAE! HAE! MPRR! MPRR!  
 Guys! Come. They are here!]

**Text 12****Herders' song for the hyena**

*Mara kema nkine lengeyia*  
*Nawuon adaa talmari emuto*  
*Meyiolo taptap nkeju, lekiyia*  
*Nkine, piitum*  
*Enshere kaiba*  
*Kaaya tekeper nkakua*  
*Napalu*  
*Neaku nshiket lpusi leai*  
*Neaku manyita*  
*Nkereri*  
*Naponie*  
*Mara kema Lengeiyia*  
*Nawuon adaa talmari emuto*  
*Meyiolo taptap nkeju, lekiyia*  
*Kaaya tekper nkakuwa*  
*Napalu*  
*Neaku nshiket lpusi leai*  
*Neaku manyita*

*Nkereri*  
*Noponie*

**Text 12**

[The goat of Lengeiyia is foolish  
It continues to graze after dusk outside the manyatta  
The goat does not know the one with limping legs, with big ears  
Goat, so that you know  
That I dislike you  
I will take you above the galaxy  
And I release you down  
The goat will be farting mist of God  
And the intestines will straighten  
Like a clothes line  
To add to the one of the already dead goats  
The foolish goat of Lengeiyia  
Stays grazing outside the manyatta after dusk  
And it does not know the one with limping legs, the one with big ears  
I will take you above the galaxy  
And I release you down  
The goat will be farting mist of God  
And your intestines will straighten  
Like those of  
The one I killed before you.]

**Text 13**

***Lebarta – Song of the lads to the ostrich***

*Aa ooyiayooia sidai elopir oorok*  
*Mikitara lngatunyo*  
*Ooyiayooia abayie maiteki*  
*Sidai elopir oorok*  
*Mikitara lngatunyo*  
*Oolale-olaleoyia-ooyiohoo-ololale*  
*Sidai-iai naitore nkuo*  
*Near sipen engatunyo*  
*Oyia-oolale*  
*Sidai-iai elopir oorok*  
*Mikitara lngatunyo*  
*Oolale-olaleoyia iyioyiohoo oolale*

**Text 13**

[Aa ooyiayooia Ostrich of black feathers  
May the lions kill you]

Ooyiyooia I do not believe if the lions can kill  
 Oolale-olaleoyia-ooyiohoo-ololale Ostrich of black feathers  
 May the lioness kill you  
 Oolale-olaleoyia-ooyiohoo-ololale  
 My ostrich who leads young ones  
 And kills young lioness  
 Oyia-oolale  
 My ostrich of black feathers  
 May the lions kill you  
 Oolale-olaleoyia iyioyiohoo oolale]

#### **Text 14**

##### **Herders' song for watering cows**

*Haako hokintiko haake hookulang'*  
*Haako hokintiko haake hookulang'*  
*Haako hookulang' haako hookumama haako*  
*Hokintiko hake hookulang' haako*  
*Hokintiko hake hookulang' haako*

*Ejinang'uro kutuka eyeyolai nemeiro aakomama*

*Hookinti haako hookulang' haako hokintiye haako*  
*Hookinti haako hookulang' haako haokuutae ee*  
*Ejinamelok eyoyolai nemeiro nashonkare tumeatisho*  
*Nashonkujit taarohi, haakomama*  
*Hokintiye haako hookulang'*  
*Haako lookumana haako hokintiya*  
*Haako hookuntae hake hookulang'*

*Ejinamelok eyeyolai nemeiro nashonkare tamatisho*

*Nashonkujit taaroni*  
*Haako hookulang' haako hokintiko*  
*Hake hookulang' haakomama*  
*Hokintiya hake hookulang hakomania*

*Ejinang'uro kutuk ayeyolai nemeiro nashonkare tamatisho*

*Nashontujit taaroji, haakooma*  
*Hokintae haako hookulang'*  
*Haako hokitiya haako hookulang'*  
*Haako hokintiya hake*  
*Hookumana haakohokuntae hake*  
*Hookulang' hake hookulang' hokintiya*  
*Hake hookulang' haako haakoomama*

*Ejinn'uro kutuk eyeyolai nemeiro nashonkare tamatisho nashonkujit taaroni  
haakomaa*

*Hookuntae memeti hookulang haako  
Hookulang haako hookuma hake  
Hookulang hake hookintiye haako  
Hookulang haako*

#### **Text 14**

Haako hokintiko haake hookulang'  
Haako hokintiko haake hookulang'  
Haako hookulang' haako hookumama haako  
Hokintiko hake hookulang' haako  
Hokintiko hake hookulang' haako

My short- mouthed of my mother I give you water during watering day and I give you  
during grazing day

Hookinti haako hookulang' haako hokintiye haako  
Hookinti haako hookulang' haako haokuutae ee  
Ejinamelok eyoyolai nemeiro nashonkare tumeatisho  
Nashonkujit taarohi, haakomama  
Hokintiye haako hookulang'  
Haako lookumana haako hokintiya  
Haako hookuntae hake hookulang'

The sweet one of my mother who doesn't know how to talk I give water during  
watering day and grass during grazing day

Nashonkujit taaroni  
Haako hookulang' haako hokintiko  
Hake hookulang' haakomama  
Hokintiya hake hookulang hakomania

The sweet one of my mother, the one that I give water during watering day and grass  
during grazing day

Nashontujit taaroji, haakooma  
Hokintae haako hookulang'  
Haako hokitiya haako hookulang'  
Haako hokintiya hake  
Hookumana haakohokuntae hake  
Hookulang' hake hookulang' hokintiya  
Hake hookulang' haako haakoomama



The short mouthed of my mother, the one I give water during watering day and grass during grazing

Hookuntae memeti hookulang haako

Hookulang haako hookuma hake

Hookulang hake hookintiyē haako

Hookulang haako

## RESEARCH PERMIT

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



## NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Telegrams: "SCIENCE TECH", Nairobi  
 Telephone: 254-020-241349, 2213102  
 254-020-310571, 2213123

Fax: 254-020-2213215, 318245, 318249

When replying please quote

**NCST/5/002/R/827/5**

Our Ref:

P. O. Box 30623-00100  
 NAIROBI-KENYA

Website: www.ncst.go.ke

**7 September, 2009**

Date:

**Wachira James Maina,  
 Moi University,  
 P. O. Box 3900,  
 ELDORET**

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "*Discourses of Praise in Samburu Oral Animal Praise Poetry*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake your research in *Samburu East District* for a period ending *30<sup>th</sup> October 2009*.

You are advised to report to *the District Commissioner and the District Education Samburu East District* before embarking on your research project.

Upon completion of your research project, you are expected to submit two copies of your research report/thesis to our office.

**PROF. S. A. ABDULRAZAK Ph.D, MBS  
 SECRETARY**

Copy to:  
 The District Commissioner  
 Samburu East District


The District Education Officer  
 Samburu East District

RESEARCH PERMIT

PAGE 2 PAGE 3

**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:**  
**Prof./Dr./Mr./Mrs./Miss.** WACHIRA  
 JAMES MAINA  
**of (Address)** MOI UNIVERSITY  
 PO BOX 3900 ELDORET  
**has been permitted to conduct research in**  
 Samburu **Location,**  
 Samburu **District,**  
 RIFT VALLEY **Province,**  
**on the topic** DISCOURSES OF PRAISE IN SAMBURU ORAL  
 ANIMAL PRAISE POETRY  
**for a period ending** 30TH OCTOBER, 2009

**Research Permit No.** NCST/5/002/R/827  
**Date of issue** 07.09.2009  
**Fee received** SHS 1000




*[Handwritten Signature]*  
 Applicant's Signature

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
 Secretary  
 National Council for  
 Science and Technology

**CONDITIONS**

1. You must report to the District Commissioner and the District Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit.
2. Government Officers will not be interviewed without prior appointment.
3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.
4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.
5. You are required to submit at least two(2)/four(4) bound copies of your final report for Kenyans and non-Kenyans respectively.
6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**  
**RESEARCH CLEARANCE PERMIT**

GPK 6055—3m—10/2009 (CONDITIONS—see back page)