

"N G E R O A S A S O C I A L O B J E C T".

by

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(iii)

M.A. THESIS ABSTRACT

"NGERO" AS A SOCIAL OBJECT

This is a study of the art of ngero which is a genre of Luo oral literature.

The term ngero is in the singular. Like some Luo words whose singulars end in ro, the two letters are replaced by che in the plural which becomes ngeche.

Scholars of Luo oral tradition and culture translate and define ngero mistakenly as the proverb, thus making it lexically and culturally English by assuming that their naming systems are universal for all mankind. This generalisation variously identifies the ngero with short expressions, comprising brief statements, phrases and incomplete sentences.

In this thesis over two hundred texts (ngeche) and explanatory data (some in the appendices) provide clues for analyses, interpretations and conclusions, revealing features unknown to the proverb as defined in the English dictionary thus proving the concepts of brevity and incompleteness as terms describing the ngero as inadequate and false. A ngero, whether only one word or a little more, is complete, with the socio-cultural background and context making it a long and

huge text. These characteristics make ngero much bigger than the English proverb, with many aspects to its definitions.

One of the definitions is that ngero is a complex, puzzling matter or utterance. Verbosity, circumlocution and apparently unfulfillable promises are aspects of ngero synonymous with sigana. Ngero and sigana also mean folktale.

Riddle is ngero. Now commonly called kitanda wili, a ^{??}Luonisation of the Kiswahili kitanda wili, riddling is a children's verbal and intellectual game, preparatory to sophistication in ngero. Allusive, diplomatic talk, mind-teasers and didactic utterances are forms of ngero.

People's extraordinary characteristics and historical memorabilia are called ngero.

A person with unpredictable and intractable characteristics is called rangero (ra makes ngero adjectival and descriptive of the character.)

Figurativeness, alliteration, purposive repetition, phonaesthetics and agglutinativeness^{??} are features of ngero.

With all these features, ngero conveys the feelings, perceptions, emotions, desires, morals, norms, traditional sagacity, ~~morals~~ and concurring and opposing social ideas of its users. The study therefore concludes that

ngero is a special aspect of the language, recording and communicating its users' ways of life in changing historical circumstances and is a utilitarian art-form and therefore a verbal social activity receptive to creativity. Conversations from which ngero is derived are therefore social exercises about social affairs and the genre being part of these processes is a social object.

The final picture is that ngero is a cluster of complex phenomenon, ramifications, and implications for which most concepts of existing scholarship are inadequate. For example, the folktale -form of ngero is often compressed into a few words, meaning the understanding of the brief-form is incomplete without the folk-tale form and vice-versa. Another case is pakruok. A person praises himself on a merry-making occasion in negative terms, alluding to somebody in the party or simply having fun and being didactic. This is called pakruok, in certain respects a source and form of ngero; it is a praise-game as well as being educative. On its own, pakruok is a huge tip of the ice-berg called ngero.

The intergeneric relationships involved are resolved by relying on the Luo oral dictionary. This thesis reveals the existence of the relationships and concludes that further investigation of the genres is necessary to map out the whole range of ngero's complexity.

Peter S.O. Amuka

October 1978.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I.1 KANYADA

The primary physical area of study is called Kanyada, which means the place or home of Nyada. Like it did in every other part of Kenya, classical British colonialism called this area "location". Consequently, the official name has remained Kanyada location to this day. But the name is not as popular with Kanyada people as their traditional one: Kanyada.

Nyada is the ancestor of all Kanyada people. These descendants call themselves Kanyada or Jo-Kanyada.

They are further divided into what have come to be known as sub-locations, but otherwise each traditionally known as ^{the -ot} dhot. These sub-divisions are six and are each named after its ancestor-mother. They are Kanyadier, Kothidha, Kanyabala, Kotieno, Katuma and Kanyango.

According to the 1969 census, Kanyada has a total population of 30,320 in an area covering approximately 104 square miles or 167 square kilometres in South Nyanza.

Kanyada is surrounded by several locations. To the south are Kabuoch and Kanyamwa. To the north is the bay of Homa, itself an extension of Lake Victoria. This mass of water separates it from Uyoma and Asembo locations of Siaya District. It also lies between Kanyada and Karachuonyo. Eastwards are North Nyokal and Gem locations, while to the west is Gembe location.

Nyada, Kan, Boro and Agan were the sons of Silwal who hailed from the Ragak group of the Luo. All these sons lived in Alego in Siaya district some time in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries. For a long time they were peaceful and united and used to share hunting tools, among other things.

But the calm was not everlasting. A conflict arose between Boro and Nyada: one of Nyada's children accidentally swallowed a bead belonging to one of Boro's daughters and Boro insisted on recovering the same bead. Any other bead that was close by could not look exactly like the swallowed one. Nyada persuaded Boro to pick any of these alternatives as a substitute but to no avail. He was obstinate to the point that a bloody fight was imminent.

Nyada had to find a solution. He cut open his daughter's belly, scoured the stomach and intestines and finally got the bead.

A girl had been killed because of a bead. Nyada felt so angry and estranged he had to split from his brothers. He swore he would not stand living at the same place where his daughter had been slaughtered. The place was christened Bar Nyathi (the splitting of the child) and is still known by that name.

Nyada decided to cross Lake Victoria to settle far from the spot of his humiliating bereavement. Unfortunately the old man died before crossing. His grandchildren, however, crossed via Ndwara in Karachuonyo. They stayed near Ndwara for a while before fighting broke out between them and Karachuonyo people. Kagan people, determined to impress and win the friendship of the latter, burnt all the huts owned by Jo-Kanyada.

Surrounded by hostile neighbours, Jo-Kanyada chose to move further to the south. They crossed river Oluch at a place called Jieri and settled near Sota river at the foot of Mawigo hills. These are the hills that presently separate Kanyada from Kochia. From Sota some Kanyada people moved further and settled in Kanyamkago at a place called Obunga Otwagi. Omolo, the son of Sigume, who was later joined by Okendo Owaka from Obunga Otwagi, remained in the Sota area. From this area, Kanyada people spread into the area they now occupy, fighting and displacing Luo and non-Luo peoples.

The foregoing is only one version of the story. Another one goes like this. Kwedho had several wives (he was Nyada's descendant) namely, Awili, Tuma, Kidhungu and Ogelo.

Ogelo was the first wife. She had a son called Mbetu who multiplied into the Kambetu family. This family comprises the Kalanya and Kogwawi people (otherwise called Kanyango earlier).

Awili was the second wife. She had a son called Kuju. Kuju married a woman called Abuor the daughter of Adier. Abuor had two sons, Obuola and Ogwang'. The two multiplied into the group called Kanyadier.

Kidhungu, the daughter of Abala, was Tuma's baby-sitter. Tuma had a son called Oduong'o. Oduong'o is the grandfather of the current Katuma people. Kidhungu had two sons: the first was Otieno and the younger Abala. The descendants of the former form the Kotieno group, while the latter are known as Jo-Kanyabala.

Kwedho had a brother called Omol. Omol begat Othidha, whose family is currently known as Kothidha.

It is further said that the foregoing groups were the survivors of Nyada as he died before crossing the lake. The two sons of Nyada who led the group and from whom the current generations descended were Omol and Kwedho.

Kanyada was ruled by a ruoth. The first ruodhi were Omolo and Sigume and Okendo-Owaka, coming in that order. Using several tactics under the guidance of these chiefs, they acquired most of their present land.

One method they employed was fighting and evicting people from neighbouring locations. Kanyamwa, Gem and Kabuoch suffered most in this respect.

Another tactic was the use of a doctor's advice that Nyada's descendants should bring Wahambla, their slave, and marry for him. With a wife he legitimately acquired land from Kamwango and Kanyamwa people.

The reign of Okendo Owaka was followed by that of Nyambok Adhian'g. He was a hefty and courageous warrior. During his reign, a witchdoctor foresaw the coming of Europeans, motorcars, beetles and aeroplanes. When this prediction was realised, Kanyada people resisted British occupation violently. Nyambok advised them to stop fighting because of his dream of a bogno (a newly-born baby with a red skin) with sticks that would be pointed at anybody and kill instantly. The bogno were the British who had been burnt red by the sun. The sticks were their guns. The same time the British arrived, there was fierce fighting between Kanyada and Kagan. The cause was the fact that Kagan used Lala, their doctor, to bewitch Nyanganga Arot. Kagan were fought and pushed upto where they are now. The British are said to have

had a hand in stopping the fighting, but since then both groups (Kanyada and Kagan) started intermarrying because a dog was thereafter cut to break their blood-relationships.

After Nyambok, the other chiefs were colonial choices, followed to-date by post-classical colonial ones.

The British introduced Christian missions, hut-tax, forced labour on murram roads, church-controlled schools and square-houses instead of the original round ones. Some people succumbed to these institutions immediately, others took their time and the rest would rather die than bow to what newly-born babies had introduced. They stuck to their own culture.

One of the first converts was Isak Ogoma, who was also a chief from 1935 to 1942. One of the most memorable things about him is the way he re-organised the sub-locations which make up Kanyada. Ogoma made sure each started from the lake-shore and stretched into the hinterland. This was a clever trick to enable each sub-location to press for more land on an individual basis. As a result Kanyada people acquired a lot of land from Kamwango, Kabuoch, Gem and Kanyamwa. In addition, Ogoma argued that he wanted each sub-location to have its ligongo (backbone) stretching from the lake into the interior. That way each had its own measure of independence, not locking horns with one another for land.

Despite this, land disputes continue up to now.

The British ruled Kanyada as part of what was then called South Kavirondo. This was in the early 1900's. This portion of Kavirondo consisted of Kisii and South Nyanza, Kanyada being in the latter. The headquarters where the District Commissioner lived and ruled from were situated in Kisii. In the late 1950's, the two were split, with Homa Bay as the headquarters of South Nyanza. Homa Bay is wholly in Kanyada, and is slowly and surely spreading into the location, with the concomitant urban styles of life.

Averagely, Kanyada ranges between 3,000 and 4,000 feet above sea-level, rising gently from the lakeshore to the hinterland.

Ruri Hills form a long range to the west, at Kanyada's border with Lambwe settlement scheme. The conical Omako Koth hill lies to the south-west at the border with Kanyamwa. To the south is Kanyamwa escarpment, another natural border with Kanyamwa, while next to Homa Bay town are the conical Asego and Simenya hills. A few miles across the lake are the Homa hills (5,750 ft.) from which the town derives part of its name.

From the brief sketch of physical features, Kanyada seems to have experienced a lot of volcanic activity. Hitherto, earth tremors are not uncommon occurrences.

Open grassland, spotted with acacia and otho trees dominate most of the first half of the location beginning from the lakeshore.

Then comes a more closely wooded grassland of hyparrhenia (oboro grass), hare and red oat grass. This mixture of grass grows together with sangla, adugo and keyo (combretum populifolium) trees. This vegetation is succeeded by an open grassland community called oganga interspersed by various species of acacia.

The first half of Kanyada, bordering the lake, has a water-lacking soil in which cotton, cassava, groundnuts, millet, maize and wimbi survive for a season every year (January-August).

The rest is normally waterlogged throughout the year. Maize, groundnuts, fruits, sweet potatoes, cassava, sugarcane and various vegetables grow here between January and August, with maize having two annual crops.

Ngou and bongu trees are common along the water-courses that are well-distributed in the location and end in the lake for those whose volumes can take them that far. Various other trees grow in dry areas because presumably their roots reach deep into the underground waters. These include ober and ali. Where they thrive in the dry parts of the hinterland, buoye grass (loudetia kagerensis) also grows.

As for animals, rabbits, duiker (muanda) and the guinea-fowl are common in areas where oboro, buoye and red-oat grass communities are found. Hyaenas are not uncommon and are known to howl and threaten cattle, sheep and goats at night, particularly if the latter are not well and securely enclosed. The cemetery at Homa Bay is notorious enough for the stories of hyaenas exhuming and eating human corpses. Most if not all of the hyaenas are reputed to live in caves, so far inaccessible and useless to Kanyada people.

Various snakes live in the thick grass and holes. The majority are poisonous. People are particularly weary of encountering the puff adder at night when it is best at surprise pre-emptive lethal bites whose effects are reputed as incurable.

Apart from hunting the duiker and others, cattle, sheep and goats are relied on for meat in general and for milk in particular from cows. Often these domestic animals are pointed at as symbols of individual wealth. Those who live close to the lake fish for domestic consumption and cash in the outlying markets.

I.2 KAMAGAMBO

The secondary physical area of study is called Kamagambo, which means the place of home of Magambo. Official colonial records call it Kamagambo location. But the people who live in it simply call it Kamagambo.

Magambo is the ancestor of all Kamagambo people. These descendants call themselves Kamagambo or Jo-Kamagambo, both meaning the people of Kamagambo. Their major sub-divisions are Kabuoro, Kagoro, Kanyamamba and Kanyajuok. All add up to an area of approximately 300 square kilometres.

South Mugirango in Kisii district borders Kamagambo to the east, while to the north-east is Gem, north-west is Kabuoch and to the south and south-east is Sakwa in South Nyanza.

Kamagambo people are said to have migrated from Naya hill in Uyoma, Siaya district, about three hundred years ago.

Their great ancestor before they moved was known as Migerma. Migerma had a son called Miserma. When the former died the latter took over the leadership of the family.

Earlier a conflict arose between father and son: Migerma and the son whose name informants do not agree on. Be that as it may, the son thought himself wealthier

what with more cattle than the father. The old man did not like this challenge from an own child and told him he was lying. But the young man could not budge from his declaration and belief.

To resolve the dispute, the rivals climbed to the top of Naya hill with potfuls of milk. To prove who was richer they poured the milk on separate spots on the ground, although abreast. The milk flowed downhill and he whose milk went farthest would be the man of affluence. Miserma won the match although the old man had added a lot of water to his milk.

The milk flowed up to near the lake shore. Joluo were wandering close by, hungry after days of fruitless hunting. The smell and colour of the milk drew their attention and some of it started trickling into the lake. They took to licking it right into the water-mass. Then they licked their way right up to near the top of the hill.

Before they could prove who had more milk, the starving Luo known as the Ka-Chwanya group ambushed and captured them, killing Miserma, most of the accompanying men and a dog. Ka-Chwanya also appropriated the cattle to themselves. The only problem is that they did not know how to keep the cattle much as they needed the milk and beef. To surmount this shortcoming, they converted

Miserma's descendants into slave-shepherds. A few who were lucky escaped only to meet the captured relations where Kamagambo is right now.

All the same, the slaves remained in bondage as long as Kachwanya continued to wander towards South Nyanza. They could not be released because Ka-Chwanya's life and survival were their responsibility.

It is not known what happened to the whole group of slaves but the story proceeds that one of the sons who escaped arrest survived the sub-division that is now known as Kanyin'gombe. The captured group was survived by Kasimba. Although still a slave, Kasimba married Gambo at Kasigunga, opposite Rusinga Island in Lake Victoria. He died in Kasigunga but his descendants moved on towards the place where they are now, passing through Kanyada and Kabuoch.

Nyandiga, one of Kasimba's great descendants and after whom a group exists to-date, died and was buried in Kanyada at a place called Adiel.

Before their freedom could be secure and their present boundaries fixed, Kamagambo fought Kabuoch rather fiercely. For a long time afterwards, battles raged to have Kamagambo captives released from Kabuoch.

The Kisii also gave them war. They were fought and successfully resisted, occasionally with the help of the

Maasai whom Kamagambo people say they had blood, cultural and linguistic relations with before Ka-Chwanya rudely interrupted. In fact it is said that Kamagambo people have only spoken Dholuo for the last two and a quarter centuries, during which period they were also culturally absorbed.

As for the union of Nyin'gombe and Kasimba's groups into Jo-Kamagambo, the story runs that the latter were numerically superior and so they easily swallowed the former.

Kamagambo brag of having "civilised" most of South Nyanza. First, they introduced the Luo to beef and milk and therefore saved them from extinction and perpetual hunting.

Secondly, when European christianity arrived early twentieth century, their men were very effectively used as priests and pastors to churchianise most of South Nyanza because of their token and abortive resistance to Luo cultural imperialism.

Thirdly, they brag of having relieved Luoland of the custom of burying the dead in the house because the practice was never in their tradition. The British used them as an example of cultural survival and viability without burial in the house. A number of Kamagambo churchmen preached spiritedly against the Luo customs.

Whether or not they were used as stooges against the Luo, the important fact is that Kamagambo people are now Luo in every respect. Just like every other Luo community, they no longer bury the dead in the house, speak Dholuo and generally share the same culture.

Kamagambo is averagely warm at daytime throughout the year, but cool most of the nights except for June and July which are normally very cold and windy.

It is usually dry during the months of January and February. This is the period spent preparing the land in anticipation of the long rainy season between March and August. Most of the rain is convectional, falling mainly in the afternoons. In addition, there is the short rainy season which covers the months of September, October, November and December.

In the long rainy season, maize, groundnuts, beans, millet and finger-millet are grown mainly for subsistence. At the same time coffee, bananas and sugarcane are grown for cash.

During the short rainy season, maize, beans, cassava and sweet potatoes are planted.

Compared with Kanyada, Kamagambo is much higher, rising up to about 5,000 feet above sea-level. Generally it is very hilly and strewn with numerous V-shaped valleys.

Streams, and two rivers known as Kuja and Riana, make Kamagambo very well-watered without any danger of flooding since the drainage system is naturally efficient.

Most of what would have been a forest vegetation with a lot of grass, has nearly all been cleared to give room for human settlement and crop cultivation.

Cattle, goats and sheep are not as many as is the case with Kanyada. Wild animals are literally absent, except for snakes like the puff adder and the swift brown one, which occasionally seems to fly in combat.

Kamagambo is accessible by tarmac road from Kisumu to Migori and by ~~murrum~~ road from Homa Bay to Migori. Originally in South Kavirondo district, it is now part of South Nyanza district with the headquarters at Homa Bay in Kanyada. Despite little urban influence, Jo-Kamagambo went through the same colonial experience as Kanyada although they argue they are far more Europeanised and therefore sophisticated than Kanyada let alone the whole of South Nyanza.

I.3 JOLUO, NCERO AND DHOLUO

Kanyada and Kamagambo are only a small fraction of the southern group of people whom some academics have chosen to call "Nilotes". The people so called are known to themselves as "Joluo" or "Luo".

At the moment, some academic circles call them the southern Luo. This is in recognition of the fact that they have historical relations in the North, that is, in Uganda, the Sudan, and Ethiopia.

Joluo are an estimated 3 million, inhabiting most of the land around the gulf of Lake Victoria in Kenya. A sizeable group spills over the border into Tanzania and despite national differences they still interact with their brethren in Kenya. The former are said to be fast adopting Kiswahili as their lingua franca in preference to their mother tongue. A few of them, however, are seeking a home in Kenya because they prefer her laissez-faire economic style to Tanzania's socialist-inclined one.

In Kenya itself, a big proportion of Joluo has been heavily affected by increasing economic pressures. Turning their backs to cattle-herding, small-scale and subsistence agriculture, petty trading and fishing, many men and women have migrated to urban centres and large-scale farming areas to eke out some kind of living.

In most of the new places of residence they have made some token attempts to stick to their language and culture. Although the new environments have considerably eaten into the two, locations are still known to organise themselves into welfare associations, notably in Nairobi and Mombasa. Kanyada and Kamagambo are no exception. Fraught with squabbles, an association is normally most active when a dead body has to be transported from a particular urban centre to its ancestral birth-place. This illustrates that urbanisation has not killed traditional culture, although it has made it more expensive, what with the costs of transportation and elaborate funeral ceremonies.

One of the most enduring aspects of Luo culture is exogamy. Many as they are, Kanyada people cannot intermarry, just as is the case with Kamagambo. These are only a few examples. But suffice it to say that no matter where they move to, exogamy is revered among Joluo. The same way that rural-urban interactions facilitate foreign intrusions into Luo culture, exogamy enables the dissemination and sharing of those cultural elements which might be peculiar to certain locations.

Oral tradition (Ogot: 1967) has it that the Luo migrated southwards to where they are now. Their movements were along the Nile while others moved across Lake Victoria about the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries.

It is commonly said that they had either to jump across or simply wade through the latter. As has been said, they settled along the gulf. Increasing population must have necessitated migration into the hinterland, far from the lake, and where they now abound. Inevitably, they fought and had other forms of encounter with non-Luos. Some of these would expectedly be linguistic and cultural. One can only surmise that the language of the Luo must have been affected by being enriched or distorted or remaining untouched altogether.

These possible occurrences are in addition to others in Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda while the Luo were straggling southwards. The hypothetical argument does not underestimate the rural-urban contexts.

Whatever the nature of the occurrences, the fact is that they all distil into what is known as "Dholuo", "Luo" or Luo language: it is in this language that the occurrences are retold. It therefore seems to operate as a vehicle of socio-historical and cultural experiences. One striking aspect of the language is known as ngero. The study is about this aspect and its connections with the foregoing experiences. (Ngero - singular; ngeche - plural)

It is a truism that Dholuo is still being spoken and is therefore very essential as a converging point of social experiences and goings-on. Consequently, and more specifically, this study is about the social dimensions

of ngero as can be discerned in its current usages. In this, the exercise becomes as historical as it may be topical. Put another way, ngero is being treated as a carrier of social issues which may be past, present or futuristic. More than that, ngero is being hypothetically regarded as an art-form that has social purposes. This study aims to elucidate these purposes, the art-form and the social issues. The ensuing chapter attempts to show the methodology by which the aims are achieved.

An elementary introduction to Dholuo is, nevertheless, necessary because ngero is part of it.

Little conclusive work has been done on the language, although there is reported evidence of research in progress.

All the same it is useful to provide a pronunciation guide on Luo Consonants and vowels as this helps towards reading and understanding the collected items of ngero.

The provided guide comprises two tables. The first table shows the consonants in their orthographic representation followed by an IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) symbol and an example of a word in which the relevant consonant sound appears (the sound in question is underlined).

In the second table, the same thing is done for vowels. Where the same orthographic form has two different pronounced forms (especially in vowels) the same word is

used as an example to show this behaviour. In such a case, a full phonetic transcription of the word is given to show the two different pronounciations. Each table is followed by a phonetic chart showing the manner and point of articulation for each sound. (It has to be emphasised that Dholuo is heavily tonal and that this characteristic has a heavy bearing on the meaning of practically every verbal utterance).

(THE TABLES AND CHARTS APPEAR ON PAGES 21, 22 AND 23).

FIRST TABLE:

Orthographic Representation	IPA Representation	Example
P, p	p	pe 'snow'
B, b	b	bel 'scrgum'
W, w	w	wat 'relative' (n)
M, m	m	mol 'crawl' (v.i.)
F, f	f	fuwo 'foolishness'
TH, th	θ	tho 'death'
DH, dh	ð	madho 'to drink'
T, t	t	timo 'to do'
D, d	d	medo 'to add'
R, r	r	koro 'now'
L, l	l	mulo 'to touch'
S, s	s	somo 'to read'
N, n	n	nenō 'to see'
CH, ch	c	wach 'word (affair)'
J, j	ʃ	jok 'to be disgusted'
Y, y	j	ywak 'to cry'
NY, ny	ɲ	nyako 'a girl'
K, k	k	ka 'here'
G, g	g	Mago 'those'
N'G, n'g	ŋ	wan'g 'an eye'
H, h	h	hawi 'fortune'
MB, mb	mb	mbuwi 'spider'
ND, nd	nd	lando 'brown (feminine)'
NDH, ndh	nɲ	ndhogo 'to betray'
NJ, nj	ɲj	penjo 'to ask'
NG, ng	ŋg	ngero 'proverb, riddle, parat'

SECOND TABLE: Vowels (Okombo: 1977)

ORTH. REP.	IPA REP.	Example
A, a	a	<u>a</u> n '1st person sg. pronominal form (subject)
E, e	e	<u>k</u> elo 'to bring' [kelo]
	ɛ	<u>k</u> elo 'to space out' [kɛlɔ]
I, i	i	<u>p</u> ith 'a hill' [piθ]
	ɪ	<u>p</u> ith 'wealth' [pɪθ]
O, o	o	<u>h</u> ono 'miracle' [hono]
	ɔ	<u>h</u> ono 'to sell' [hɔnɔ]
U, u	u	<u>b</u> ur 'a hole' [bur]
	ʊ	<u>b</u> ur 'a boil' [bʊr]

- VOWEL CHART I: (Okombo: 1977)

	<u>FRONT</u>	<u>BACK</u>
<u>HIGH</u>	i	u
	ɪ	ʊ
<u>MID</u>	e	o
	ɛ	ɔ
<u>LOW</u>	a	

CHART 2 (Okombo: 1977)*

In the chart below, where voiced-voiceless pairs exist, the voiceless segment is placed above its voiced counterpart.

	LABIAL	DENTAL	ALVEOLAR	PALATAL	VELAR	POST-VELAR
<u>STOP</u>	p b, ^m b		t d, ⁿ d		k g, ^ŋ g	
<u>AFFRICATE</u>				c tʃ, ⁿ tʃ		
<u>FRICATIVE</u>		θ ð, ⁿ ð	s			h
<u>LIQUID</u>			l, r			
<u>GLIDE</u>	w			j		
<u>NASAL</u>	m		n	ɲ	ŋ	

KEY:

^m b	} Prenasalized stops
ⁿ d	
tʃ	
ⁿ ð	
^ŋ g	

* The tables and charts are derived from Okoth-Okombo's B.A. dissertation on tone among Dholuo speakers as submitted to the Department of Linguistics, Nairobi University, 1977.

CHAPTER TWO

PAST AND CURRENT LITERATURE ON THE "PROVERB"

Ruth Finnegan's (1970) analysis of proverbs in Africa is a summary of what fieldworkers have said and done.

She comments and reports that inter-relationships exist between the proverb and other genres in oral literature.

Also elaborately discussed is the fact that the understanding of the proverb is incomplete without a thorough knowledge of the culture in which it operates.

Characteristically, she does not forget her well-known assertion that the dividing line between oral and written literature is negligibly tiny. She therefore indulges all the terminology of literary criticism at her disposal into the analysis. Thus we are treated to metaphors, similes, hyperboles, irony, sarcasm, rhythms, tone, archaisms, etc., all of them critical items which are obvious to anybody who has had training in written literary tradition.

Finnegan also argues that proverbs can only be usefully understood if analysed in the context of specific situations where they have been or are being used. Arising from this is the fact that this genre actually enjoys social functions, sometimes even judicial.

She identifies the problem of the relationships between the proverb and the language structure and system in which it operates. Proverbs tend to defy these structures and systems by deforming them and yet still remaining comprehensible.

Another outstanding highlight of her arguments is the claim that proverbs are rare among the Nilotes. She says this claim has been verified and justified by other scholars. In fact, except for her contacts with the Limba whilst collecting their folktales, Finnegan entirely relies on the evidence and conclusions published by others to produce what is taken to pass for a treatise on the proverb. The following review of the available literature on the proverb attests to this.

The review is thematic, but where specific scholars are essential for elaboration and illumination, they are used.

As already explicit in Finnegan, the most harped-on aspect of the proverb is the socio-cultural dimension. Because of this apparently special quality, consideration is merited at a number of levels.

On the first level, Christensen (' 3), like many others (except Rattray [1.4.], Saankan [1.5.], Mboya [1.6.] and Ocholla-Ayayo [1.7.]) emphasises the contextual and situational nature of the proverb. The genre, according

to this school of thought, is best intellectually tackled within the live situations of its occurrences and usages in specific societies.

On another level, it is said that the imagery of the proverb derives from the flora and fauna of the various areas where it is spoken (Herskovits [8] ; Rattray [9] ; Okot p'Bitek [10]). Implicit in this claim is the tendency of the content of the genre to vary with the physical environment. Further to this is the fact that the genre varies with the different environments and peoples.

Tied to these variations are the diverse cultures of these people. Various scholars argue that these cultures are accessible via the genre (Andrzejewski [11] , Barra [12] ; Herskovits [13] ; Rattray [14] ; Masek [15] ; Messenger [16] ; Farsi [17] ; Kirk-Greene [18] ; Babalola [19]).

Furthermore the proverb is so integral to certain languages that to be ignorant of it is to be locked out of the languages and cultures thereof (Kirk-Greene [20] ; Andrzejewski [21] ; Nyembezi [22] ; Masek [23] ; Delano [24]). Perforce and obviously this means the genre is spoken as a specialised verbal performance.

It seems it is this peculiar quality that inspires Boadi (25) to complain that the "juiciness" of the

genre has been ignored or treated with levity in favour of the cultural perspective in general and the didactic one in particular. He postulates that aesthetics is applied to elevate and concretise these perspectives. Nyembezi (: 26), Achebe (- 27 -) and Herskovits (- 28 -) say of the Zulu, Ibo and Kru respectively that their words can only be "eaten" with the proverb. Andrzejewski (- 29 -) calls Somali proverbial style "leisurely refinement" incompatible with advanced and advancing technology. One implication of such an argument is that technology out-dates language, this despite the fact that man talks about, makes and names machines. It is the same as saying that machines tell man to stop applying and creating language. The issue here is the relationship between the proverb and historical change.

This relationship leads to another dimension of the genre under the social aspects: the proverb as a socio-historical artifact (Okot (30); Nyembezi (: 31); Njururi (. 32 .)]. In fact the latter charges Gikuyu with conservatism. But the consensus of opinions on this historical issue seemed to be that the proverb carries the "collective experiences" of a people. It is this collectiveness that makes the history social. In addition, the history of the Ijaw has been traced through their proverbs (33).

Another phenomenon in the study of the proverb has been the underlying conception of society in Africa.

Herskovits (. 34.) and Arnott (35) studied the proverbs of the Kru and Fulani respectively and noted how African they are. The former adds that the imagery of the Kru proverb shows how close to nature the African is. Nyembesi (. 36) confesses that the humour in the Zulu proverb confirms that the African is a laughing child of nature. Doke (. 37) calls his work Bantu wisdom-lore (my emphasis) thus underlining the assumed subcontinentality. West African proverbs are said to have been identified after a study of Fante proverbs by Christensen (. 38). As said earlier, reference has been made to Nilotic (my emphasis) proverbs.

Cultural differences in Africa are possibly as many as the different cultural groups that exist. Inferring African, East or West African, Nilotic, Bantu or Arabic characteristics after studying the proverb of a single ethnic group is therefore inaccurate. The assumption behind such social generalisations is that Africa is a continent seething with uniformity and similarity. The Acholi case illustrates the argument. Okot (39) has collected and analysed their proverbial lore. If generalisations are permissible then his study could be taken to be representative of the Nilotes and therefore

the Southern Luos. However, and despite their linguistic and historical relationships, the Acholi of Uganda and Luo of Kenya live miles apart in *different* physical environments. Consequently general conclusions on the similarities and differences in the proverb can only be arrived at after each group has been adequately researched into.

Despite the lack of such thorough works for all African societies, there seems to have been a rush for comparisons by the few existing scholars.

Equivalents from other societies have been gleaned to seemingly illuminate Acholi (.40) and Gikuyu (.41.) proverbs.

Some Maasai proverbs are said to abound in "oriental rings" [Hollis (42)]. The same man clutters his collection of Nandi proverbs with English and Latin equivalents [43].

For Merker (44) the original and comparative home for the Maasai proverbs is Babylon and Israel.

Compared with European ones, Ashanti proverbs are said to be nothing at all (.45).

Ocholla-Ayayo picks English proverbs (where possible) and posits them as alternatives for the Luo ones (46). His is an easy way out of the problems of translation and meaning.

But perhaps the best illustration on the infatuation with comparison is Njururi's. He takes a 600 B.C. Greek proverb and finds its teaching similar to a Kikuyu one. He further suggests that it is ".....possible....the African languages may be far more ancient than Greek and Latin" following the discovery of the oldest known pre-historic man in East Africa (.47.). The argument proceeds to claim that natural disasters like earthquakes, earth-folding, etc. might have interrupted or totally destroyed whole advanced civilisations in Eastern Africa as evidenced by the abundance of the lakes and the rift valley. As a result, great literary traditions are suspected to have been disturbed, thus making this African region fall back and behind the Greeks and others. ~

There is apparently a lot of speculation in Njururi's intellectual adventure. The problem with such an exercise is that rather than concentrate on the proverb of the society in question, the mind and the research stray, ultimately emerging as mere scratching of the surface. Moreover, Njururi is a victim to regional generalisations and therefore excels on the level of far-fetched imagination rather than delve into the Gikuyu proberb.

Behind these comparisons using foreign equivalents is the seeming assumption that the latter are universal. It is this concept of universality that straggles into the generic naming-system and gives us what has so far

been called the proverb.

In the naming-exercise, the majority of the scholars of the genre in Africa restrict their studies to the English lexical and cultural meanings of "proverb". The investigation of the potentialities of the genre are therefore so tailored to correspond to the English dictionary meaning. These are the adherents of the Oxford English dictionary definition of the proverb. They include Okot (.48.), Nandwa (.49.), Finnegan (.50.), Lindblom (.51.), Makila (.52.) and Ocitti (.53.). They have ignored the oral dictionaries of the societies they have studied although these very studies have been christened oral.

Okot reports that the Acholi call the proverb caro-lok⁵⁴ at the same time as relating it to the folktale. Caro-lok therefore means both proverb and folktale. It is therefore far bigger a genre than what ~~is~~ the English equivalent is.

Jane Nandwa admits the Abaluhya of Western Kenya have the same word for proverb and folktale, but does not care to proceed beyond that reportorial level.⁵⁵

Lindblom argues that the Kamba have no word exactly conveying the concept of the proverb as he knew it⁵⁶ In fact, he admits defeat in his attempts to understand it. He says there are varying ways of application and

conveying of meaning. He, however, does not delve into these investigation-begging problems.

The foregoing apart, there is another group of scholars, notably Farsi (. 57.). He gives us Swahili sayings, comprising riddles, proverbs and superstitions. The cultural and generic naming-system behind this title and subtitles are not provided. One agrees with Professor Berry (1958) here that some oral publications are nothing more than commercial.

On the other hand is Chinyeki (59.) who gives us what he calls *Sayings of Wisdom*. The title suggests a social basis for application as the indigenous title underlines: *Vihandyeka vya mana*. A similar attempt is made for the Hausa (60.). Another scholar in this group is Doke (61.). He concludes that Bantu Wisdom-lore comprises folktales, proverbs, riddles and are essentially functional. Messenger (. 62) argues the case for Anan's proverb-riddles while Berry (. 63.) eloquently defends the case for the co-existence of riddles, proverbs, narratives and praise-names under one generic name at the same time as positing that each can enjoy individual autonomy for analytical purposes. Merlo Pick (64.) prefers *Ndai na Gicandi* (Kikuyu Enigmas) to Njururi's and Barra's *Kikuyu Proverbs* (...). In fact he proceeds to classify these enigmas into riddles and proverbial poetry, not

hiding the fact that *ndai na gicandi* includes all these categories and probably more.

What the latter group implies is in diametrical opposition to Okot's camp. The difference is particularly clear in the fact that their aim is not to provide something tailored and deformed to be comprehensible to a foreign English audience. According to Ben-Amos (1965) the moment a genre is so treated, its material substance is short-circuited because a particular naming-system normally has culturally symbolic content that foreign-consumption-bent distortion normally either submerges or does not notice altogether.

Paul Mboya (1966) makes this attempt at oversight. He assembles 164 "Ngeche Luo" as part of a study of Luo customs and tradition. Contexts of occurrence are not given but according to Mboya's title he has collected Ngeche Luo with meanings or purpose. The glaring implication here is that there are certain ngeche without meaning or purpose. This suggests that some have been deliberately omitted. In fact this is apparently the truth because at the beginning of the book, Mboya highlights that the aim of his study is to enlighten the Luo on what is (and is not) endorsable by Christianity in their tradition. He is therefore operating with an Anglo-Christian bias and prejudice and does not seem to be under the influence of the generic naming-system of the Luo. Of course, like Ocholla-Ayayo, he says these expressions

are imbued with didactic material. (It is fitting to add here that on this moral plane, all scholars of the African proverb seem agreed). Ayayo calls his collection "proverbs for normative education"⁶⁷, obviously and in clear terms telling us that he too has a bias, what with a conclusion drawn in and coterminous with the title before the evidence. Onyango-Ogutu, (. 68) in an introduction to a collection of Luo Oral literature, talks of proverbs, metaphors and sayings without identifying the basis behind this kind of classification. Whether it is his or the Luo is not stated.

It is in fact Nyembezi who discusses the problems of classification (169). He says there are so many cases of similarities among the Zulu that it becomes almost artificial classifying and separating the proverbs. Alphabetical arrangement is a problem in Zulu because one does not know which word in a proverb is alphabetically superior to the other. He therefore proceeds to classify Zulu proverbs according to general significance, e.g. proverbs on hospitality, bravery etc. Others (including Okot [1970]) attempt to categorise Nyembezi-style. The most popular technique, however, seems to be the alphabetical one. All in all, classifications seem to depend on each author's convenience and is not a subject for too much attention.

However, there are certain limits some scholars reach

which need to be reviewed. A number of authorities have analytically nicknamed their proverbs as variously consisting of "aphorisms, truisms, adages, saws, archaisms and even extinct expressions (Okot (..71.), Doke(72 Christensen,⁷³ the Merriams and Armstrong (..74.), Nyembesi⁷⁵ Babalola,⁷⁶ Hollis⁷⁷ and Rattray⁷⁸). Most of these expressions are borrowed from the English without even suggesting the existence of indigenous terminologies that most probably exist. More than that it is not clear what extinct means for expressions which are at the same time orally gathered, possibly live. The questionable thing, then, is the method of analysis because it seems to have a direct bearing on the problem of mis-classification. To appraise this methodological aspects requires a general review of the aims, methods and techniques of the various studies.

Finnegan, for example, seriously doubts the literary quality of proverbs and riddles, although her literary criticism of the two flood more than ten closely printed pages. I have already referred to her, but I want to re-emphasise that her critique has no basis in fieldwork of her own. In brief, hers is an exercise in speculation in the name of originality. Her already cited stance that little difference exists between written and oral literature enjoys Makila's support (..79). The irony with Makila is that he has published over one hundred pages of what he calls Bukusu Oral Literature (my emphasis). On the proverb

in particular, he reports that lessons in tales are normally condensed into proverbs and aphorisms while certain stories illustrate the meanings of certain proverbs. The inter-generic relationships are not explained in any substantial detail. Moreover, no care is taken of the nature of performance that clearly differentiates the written from the oral. In this case Okot and Eastman (80..) are good examples because they confess that proverbs need not be complete sentences for their users to understand what they mean. They could be half-phrases, single words or half-sentences⁸¹ Thus the style of performance is already recognised and whether the two eventually commit this finding to print, the crux of the matter is that they have recognised the structural qualities and differences that Makila ignores. To this extent it is clear that Okot's fieldwork and analysis coalesce.

But there is more to Okot's methodology and aims. And this is connected with his search for Acholi proverbs. The one thing that seems to have inspired this adventure is the famous and already-quoted claim that this generic item (proverb) is rare among the Nilotes. For the literary criticism of oral or written literature, the quantity of material for analysis does not count. Rather it is the quality of the form and content that is looked into. A two-line song or riddle merits as much attention as Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, the Mwindo Epic or a single expression

that an ethnic group might claim to be their sole item of proverbial lore. This is why there is no basis for springing into fieldwork because one has claimed paucity of a certain oral item. Moreover claims of scarcity, however loudly trumpeted, already ipso facto mean that ✓ very item has been noticed to exist.

Furthermore, the proof of paucity or otherwise, presumes a numerical search, limit and the fixity of the numbers and forms of the proverb. It is a limit after which no more expressions exist and none can be created. This is in conformity with fixed texts as Finnegan and Makila would like the case to be. This thesis of fixity denies oral literature the agglutinative attributes that Babalola claims it has (82)

What is even worse is that Okot does not pause to question the aims and methods of study the scholars used to arrive at this conclusion of lack of abundance. He seems to have embraced a report too readily, itself an unfortunate thing because some of the colonial students of oral literature I have come across are clearly questionable. A case in point is Rattray.

He has the distinction for understanding, collecting, interpreting, translating and publishing Ashanti (~~1916~~) and Hausa () proverbs after gaining a colloquial knowledge of these people's languages.⁸³ The implicit confession here is that these languages are very simple.

Or simply we have been given a version of their proverbs from a colloquial version of their languages. But be that as it may, the fact is that this amount of learning enables Rattray to read into the minds of these people, suggesting in the process that these minds are simple. This is typical of the colonial myth that the African is simple-minded.

Another case is Hollis (.84.). He studies the Nandi of Kenya after he has made up his mind that they are "free savages".⁸⁵ It is not surprising that instead of delving into the Nandi proverbs per se, he seeks Latin and English versions to help him understand them. In fact Rattray and Hollis are clearly colonial agents with the self-justifying prejudices as evidenced by the latter. He confesses that his aim in studying the folklore of the Maasai is to learn their thoughts and ideas before their extinction and contact with Euro-Christian imperial civilisation. In the same breath he has charged the Maasai with bloodthirst.

With this mass of bias, a colonial researcher can not be simply taken at face value. It is not surprising Kirk-Greene studies the Hausa proverb half-a-century later despite disregarded knowledge that Rattray had traversed the same area much earlier. Green helps us see what lack of prejudice and a degree of objectivity can produce, the quality notwithstanding. This is a way of, and an attempt

to, decolonise studies of African oral literature, away from the imperial universal assumptions and the concomitant prejudices.

Such indulgences continue to recur. The latest culprits in this are Abrahams and Babcock (1986). They seem to concur with most of the foregoing review and then, in a veiled search for critical originality they say other things.

First they agree that proverbs are social tools of communication. Then they express doubts as to whether the same social situations may recur every time a specific proverb is uttered. And in response to Boadi, they conclude that specific situations are not always essential and that since proverbs are scenic, one can always analyse them outside and in detachment from those situations. They say, in addition, that proverbial lore is supra-linguistic, but at the same time console themselves with the counterclaim that the absence of this dimension does not make literary criticism impossible and inadequate. On another level, they rule that the proverb is a fixed-form and is in any case a simplistic literary form.

The two critics do not indicate or imply any field-evidence to back their arguments. Having proposed the removal of so much material evidence from the proverb, they seem to be bent on reducing the genre to proportions

that these mode of written literary criticism do not suit. It is therefore, not surprising, that these reductionist approach leads to the maximal simplification of the proverbial genre to near nothing as a literary form. They have performed worse than Platonov: the latter converts and turns everything oral into written while the former doctors oral literature in general and the proverb in particular, into what they want it to be rather than what it is.

The question to address ourselves to in turn is the place of progn in the foregoing review. But before the question is answered, the genre has to be explored amongst the users.

Having identified the merits and demerits of these researchers and scholars, it is now proper to discuss the methods and techniques which, in my view, would be necessary to elucidate the nature of the progn so as to reveal how and why the present study goes beyond and departs from the assumptions and generalizations of the works reviewed in this chapter. Towards this end, a series of fieldwork were designed to gather data for new information about the art-form in order to show how the generalisations and assumptions are inadequate for progn.

4/19

2.1: METHODS AND THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The research method is basically descriptive, concentrating on Kinyaloo located in the north-west, incorporating Kamagabo located as a comparative study.

It has not been possible to cover the area equally within three and a half months. A primary choice has had to be made to place the emphasis on Kinyaloo. In an attempt to transcend this divergence, Kamagabo is also covered.

But singly or together, the localities are a thin slice of Dholuo-speaking Kenya. This study is therefore limited in scope. One cannot say it is representative. Yet in its intensive nature, it aims to be a typical model for similar studies in future. Only the ngero genre has been compiled and detailed representation of all Dholuo. This work, consequently, has no pretensions to universality.

All the same, note is taken of the fact that ngero is being studied in a fairly large language-community with common social characteristics and can therefore be collected, paraded and analysed to highlight and illustrate these very characteristics.

Conversations, social activities and interviews are the primary sources of data. Other sources are bound to arise and this therefore requires flexibility. That ngero is spoken and that speech is an everyday activity means fieldwork has to be done. In this the genre is being empirically identified in live situations. [In doing this various styles of performance, the purposes of the performances and the nature of the content of the genre are being noted. In brief, this approach yields the form and content of ngero. It also provides the available interpretations of ngero by its users at the same time as making texts available for textual interpretation. Combined, these interpretations are done with a bias for the social dimensions of ngero. It has to be emphasized here that the very fact that verbal utterances are being gathered from their users in the heat of conversations and other activities means that the ngero genre is already being treated as a social object of Luo verbal communication.

Obtaining the required material from the live situations obviously necessitates living in and participating in all the activities of Kanyada people. These include everyday conversations, palaver, social ceremonies, beer-drinking parties, among others. And in order to fit in these situations, a rapport has to be established with the community. Which is all the more

reason why residing and getting involved in communal activities are paramount to this utilitarian friendship.

It has already been stated that the sources are more than can be enumerated here. This is because verbal utterances occur anywhere anytime for various purposes. To be able to gather this unpredictable material, flexibility, hypersensitivity and attention to occasions are paramount techniques for obtaining the striking utterances. Furthermore, this kind of alertness facilitates the identification of the behaviour(s) of the genre in varying occasions, spontaneous or set (e.g. chiefs' meetings, etc.). Other set occasions mean interviewing a range of people to gather a range of interpretations and conceptions of ngeche and ngero as a genre. Together with textual analysis, these interpretations and conceptions lead to the drawing of conclusions on the nature of ngero as a social object.

An important task is the technique by which the fieldmaterial is recorded. First (and to state the obvious) the recording of the material is essential in order to have data from which the study is to be made.

One technique is tape-recording. Conversations, interviews and meetings are ideal for this with the permission of the participants. One of the best ways of doing it is by telling the particular people or person

that the recording is for the purposes of studying Dholuo. Put this way, the informants are not mechanically bent into using ngero for the sake of it. On the other hand, certain people are told that they are being interviewed on ngero and that this has to be recorded. Upon agreement, they are asked various questions, ranging from the concepts of ngero to the meanings of certain specific ngeche.

Where a tape-recorder can not be used, a pocket notebook takes over. These are cases where a tape-recorder has been rejected or is not immediately available; on another level it may be a spontaneous and unexpected situation or one gathered in reminiscence. In all cases as much data as possible is gathered. Where it is impossible to put everything down, selective recording is applied with special emphasis on what is deemed to have the potential of yielding the relevant material. In doing this, there is a clear flaw because while tape-recording necessarily captures every available piece of evidence, the latter technique (whether it is selective or not) excludes what might be vital. But because the research already has a bias for the social dimensions of ngero, the pocket notebook technique may very well have its positive points. One limitation, however, is that this bias might itself be so hyperselective that it crowds out what contradicts or does not enhance and corroborate the aspects of ngero being looked for. Because a tape-

recorder cannot be used in all cases, this is a limitation that the study cannot avoid. The other limitation is that certain notes have to be taken in forms that would appear like unintelligible to any other person who has not witnessed the occasions and styles of their occurrence. In order to surmount this shortcoming, an attempt is made to immediately reconstruct the notes to some intelligible end so that the sense of the original performance is captured before it is blurred in the memory. This is to use the product of memory and to take it that it has some degree of accuracy to be relied upon. Once again the reliance is not absolute.

Overall, it is the striking expressions which will be picked from these field notes. The contexts of their occurrences are also reproduced or paraphrased, depending on which method is decided upon for every case. The same is done for the tape-recorded versions. Only in this case, the material has to be transcribed, perused and the required material weaned out with the details of its context.

These expressions are first written in Dholuo in a form that is intelligible in that language and ^{reflects} the various contexts. Then they are translated into English in full knowledge that this does not do total justice to the origin although attempting to.

The same expressions are the texts. Each text is annotated in as much detail as possible. As already said,

the contexts are part of this annotation. More detail is provided so that in total the annotation of the text provides the fullest possible cultural, contextual, historical and any other background that offers insights into every text. These details are material for the analytical task. It is to be stressed that these insights are from the perspectives of the usages and the users and not the analysis. This is to enable the study to provide insights that are Luc first and foremost .

In the analyses, categories and sub-categories of ngero, and their characteristics as evident from the contexts of social use and the other details in the annotations are to be established. An analysis of language, form and content is also done. In all analyses, there is a deliberate bias for assessing the social nature of ngero. What is obtained here is lumped with the above details on the concepts and meanings of ngero in order to have a broad base of analysis leading to conclusions on ngero as a social vehicle with norms and values underlying its usages.

In the case of language-use, the assessment has special emphasis on ngero. It is also here that the various styles of expressions are highlighted as parts of the creative verbal activity in the society. These styles are viewed essentially in what ways they communicate the social content, thus regarding form as

a social function.

My methodological approach takes note of the fact that situations and circumstances are not exhaustible. Indeed they are persistently being created and recreated and can not all be captured within the time available for this research. This work has no pretensions to being absolute because of the limitations imposed by time. This, however, does not mean that the approach is incapable of yielding material that defies these limits nor is it being assumed that the expressions are necessarily imprisoned within three and a half months; on the other hand, they may in fact develop into other forms and even multiply in content. While it is possible that certain expressions defy history and retain their forms and contents, the ones here are what were collected within the stated period of time and the accompanying situations, and not necessarily universal for all times.

The limitations in translations have already been referred to. It is hoped that the annotation is sufficient to help overcome these and in fact make up for the shortcomings. This is one reason why rather than put the annotations separately, I have made them part and parcel of the texts.

In brief, this methodology is bent on investigating the extent of the expressiveness of Bholuo in general and ngero in particular by exposing the various social ideas

and values the genre contains.

2.2. SIGNIFICANCE:

This study is primarily of one genre among the Luo. In the event of seeking the social contexts of ngero, it is putting squarely into question Oeholla-Ayayo's and Mbuya's (1938) assumptions that the genre has only two purposes: narrative education and general social applications respectively. The intention of this work is to investigate possibilities that the genre contains much more. In so doing, the magnitude of its social value shall have been better expressed.

The existing so-called universal concepts and analytical terms are from other cultures than the Luo. They do not cater for the ngero genres. Consequently a full description is provided to make it possible to understand the ngero genres of Luo oral literature, how they are identified and defined and what their characteristic features are. This approach is essentially particularistic in order to acquire data for analyses and draw conclusions which might make it possible to compare the art of ngero with the corresponding forms in other Kenyan, African and human groups, some of whom border or are in social contacts with the Luo.

Assuming that oral literature performs social functions, this research shows that ngero is not only an artistic medium of interest to literature students but covers other branches of knowledge which might appeal to other disciplines and also show that the genre has a wider social application and significance than a single discipline.

The interrelations ngero is being treated as a contextual art-form. This is a significant departure from common practice that has assumed ngero is a mere few words thus restricting and starving its understanding and analysis.

This indigenous literature is lacking in written form for those it cannot reach orally. This study attempts to alleviate the situation in order to benefit Kenyan schools and the general public. In reaching so far into the society, the research can stimulate and generate interest in Kenyan oral literature and transmit how rich it is in content and form.

The next chapter defines the general Luo concepts of ngero as the beginning of the departure from the approaches and viewpoints in the literature review, particularly the tendency to generalise for the African proverbial lore without representative particularistic researches.

CHAPTER FOUR

LUO CONCEPTS OF "NGERO":

In this chapter, a summary of the Luo concepts of ngero are briefly discussed, pending more evidence from the texts.

To start off with the obvious, English translates ngero as proverb.

The word ngero is in the singular. Certain Luo words whose singulars end in ro replace the two letters with che in plural, the rest of the word remaining unaltered. Thus the plural of ngero becomes ngeche.

What the English translates as folktale is called ngero in Dholuo. Sigana is the other generic term that English translates as folktale. Ngero and sigana are synonymous in this respect. The folktale-meaning is only one aspect of ngero.

Ngero or sigana are also taken to mean verbosity and circumlocution. Any information, news or report that takes too long to narrate is rudely and contemptuously dismissed as ngero or sigana.

A promise or a visit that takes too long to fulfil or honour is cynically dismissed as boring and impossible and therefore branded as mere ngero or sigana.

A complex matter, difficult to explain and understand and riddled with a lot of mystery is called ngero or some times ngero "matut" (a deep matter).

What the English translates as riddle is called ngero in Dholuo. "Kitanda wili" has been adopted from Kiswahili and Luonised into "Kitanda wili" as the opening formula in what is essentially a children's game. Certain adults still remember riddles from childhood and either transmit to or test children with them. Rather than call them ngeche, however, most people now refer to them as "Kitanda wili". When an adult complains that a matter is too complex and seemingly impossible to resolve, he means that it is as hard as a riddle that has defeated a child.

Allusive talk is also ngero. Tauntings, conversations in which certain people are kept ignorant of what is being said in their presence and all indirect verbal utterances (i.e. those which do not mention their subjects directly) fall under allusive talk.

There are certain sayings which qualify as ngero because of their didactic values.

On another level, some people are renowned to have certain special and extraordinary characteristics. Sooner or later such people become legendary talk with the outstanding aspects of their characteristics being called ngech n'gane (so and so's ngero). A particularly striking historical occurrence (with special emphasis on

Wrong!
Riddles are
called
Ngeche

its memorabilia) is also called ngero.

Unpredictable and intractable characteristics are associated with ngero. Persons with such qualities are called rangero (ra is prefixed to ngero to make it adjectival and qualify the person as rangero).

Informants insist the riddle is strictly a children's game, yet certain adults still seem to engage in riddling. They say, in defence of their indulgence, that they are initiating the youth into intellectual application of Dholuo. Moreover, certain adults use the term tobo interchangeably with riddle. In this respect it means the ability to unravel, explain or expose the meaning of a statement, a saying or a joke. The term tobo is a Luo corruption of the Kiswahili toboa which means reveal. The term is particularly common on social occasions during which speakers are being urged to reel off every detail of a matter, however bitter (in Kiswahili). In Luo tobo is commonest in church and among contemporaries trying to test one another's intellectual understanding of certain issues.

A matter with lots of details is said to have a long ngero (ngeche bor). This can be an event that has got a lot to it. Similarly a person who has much to be said about him has a long ngero. In both cases, the matter may be historical and therefore a very long or complicated

narrative material.

Apart from these definitions, another question is how Dholuo speakers acquire ngero.

One answer is that ngero is part of Dholuo and is, therefore, a universal must for every proficient speaker of the language. Those who speak Dholuo and yet do not know ngero are said to be scratching at the surface of the language and uninformed of the best way to communicate in it.

Another view is that ngero is essential for diplomatic communication or conversation. Indirect language can keep people together and talking for much longer than would have been the case if the direct style were employed. This view further assumes that conversation is a source for learning ngero. And not only that: it is said that in so learning one is actually learning an essential style of conversation.

It is also argued that the best way an elder can command the attention of an audience is through the use of ngero and must therefore be well-versed in it. It is from the same elders that youngsters learn ngero. Indeed it is grandmothers who initiate children into the game of the riddle. Often when a child is unable to resolve a riddle, she will provide the answer on condition that the next time the child promises to be more knowledgeable.

Boys often learn ngero from their fathers. In the

evening when they go to simba to sleep, they share their fatherly findings, teaching one another in the process. If younger boys chance to be close by, they learn ngero while the exchange is in progress.

But a large number of informants contend that most people learn language-use from their mothers. In fact, it is said, most of the nuances of Dholuo are picked in childhood from mothers. Ngero is, for example, inherited from the mother without the child knowing and then getting it refined and ^{rooted} ~~is~~ in the mind from everyday conversation.

There is a popular claim that Dholuo and ngero in particular is currently totally unsuitable for wooing and seduction. Some elders and youngsters alike testify to this. The problem is that certain elders have so many wives with no grasp of the English language. The truth is that they must have used Dholuo, even if ngero was never applied, opposing informants argue. They contend that English is not necessarily the best medium for seduction and that one uses the language one is best versed in and which is comprehensible to the other party. More than that Dholuo is said to be self-sufficient in the language of eros and that ngero as part of that language is no exception.

Additionally, ngero is capable of communicating all ideas, cultural, social, historical, didactic. In this

respect, it is explained that ngero in being indirect is always an allusion to whatever idea or purpose it is being put to.

What is clear in the above report of the Luo conception of ngero is that ngero is a genre with many ramifications. It is also apparent that these categories are each a separate genre at the same time as belonging to a generic family.

The Luo folktale, for example, is suggestive of a huge area of study. However, it has been heavily implied so far that ngero is pregnant with allusions. This means that a brief expression, joke, or teaser might very well be connected with a folktale.

The ramifications further show that ngero is a social tool used to achieve desired ends. Whether it is an expression of disgust with verbosity or circumlocution on the one hand or bad behaviour on the other, the fact remains that the users of ngero seem clear that it is a social object. It is this social nature and its purposes that this study attempts to investigate.

To put it briefly, it is the short striking utterances that are being studied. The problem with such a choice is that it seems to abuse the intergeneric relationships in ngero by excluding those very genres for academic convenience.

Such a convenience is justified by the common belief that the Luo folktales are to children as the short striking utterances are to adults. The latter argue that the utterances are abbreviations of the tales they learnt in childhood and need only allude to them in conversation. The inference is that the utterances are comprehensible within their contexts and as applied by the adults.

The implications of the various meanings of ngero and the attendant Diks are discussed later. What is clear, however, is that ngero is bigger than the English term 'proverb'. In the collection of utterances that follows, this is taken into account with the result that all the ramifications of ngero are included under every expression should they appear.

CHAPTER FIVE
THE TEXTS:

The following are the texts with all the details field-work could yield. In most cases these details are summarised in a representative way and as if they are attempting to be live conversations or reports.

Where the pronouns "you", "I", etc., help to present the details of an expression, they are used as the subject so that in some cases there is direct rather than reported speech.

The texts are what have already been called striking expressions. Each is first given in Luo as indicated by the "L" that comes after the number. Then they are translated into English (E). But the ensuing details are a free translation into English, with an attempt to remain as close to the original and intended meaning as possible. Where free translation is impossible, transliteration is attempted. Alternatively, in instances where transliteration is ineffective, an explanation is offered in the lines of the usages in order not to lose and distort the meanings. These explanations are paraphrased meanings at the same time as some of them are derived from interviews.

1. L: *Notho ka gweno.*

E: He died like chicken.

It is abnormal for human death to be as cheap and

sudden as the brief cutting or twisting of chicken's neck for consumption. In this kind of death bleeding occurs, although it is believed human blood should not be shed inadvertently or otherwise.

Experiences have borne the social belief that human blood is "bitter" (*remb dhano kech*). The consequences for shedding such blood are many but a few will illustrate the argument for bitterness: the ghost of a person who had a chicken-like death may choose to haunt the people in the location of its occurrence; another ghost may decide to plant barrenness in men and women or bring ruin to their harvests through such catastrophes as droughts, locusts and armyworm attacks and other mysterious diseases. A ghost may also plant and institutionalise perennial social chaos and epidemics like cholera, splitting headaches and unexplainable deaths. Alternatively a person may be haunted for killing another person or having a hand in it.

But the most important aspect of the foregoing possible experiences is the shedding of blood because this is taboo and is believed to result in the hauntings and other disasters. It is these consequences which earn the blood the distinction for being bitter.

One has died like chicken when one is stabbed with a weapon in a brawl, beer-bar or when one is either crashed dead in a motor accident or clawed to death by a leopard. It is equally chicken-like to club somebody or

twist his neck and stangle him to death. These are only a few examples among others.

A cock is an essential accoutrement when one is erecting one's own homestead.

Every homestead must have what is called the cock of the home.

There is what is known as the spirit-possession-chicken (*gwend juogi*). The chicken can be slaughtered for various purposes associated with *juogi*.

Every homestead is supposed to breed chicken. In most cases they share the same rooms with their owners. In fact it is known some people sleep with chicken under their beds at night. So much honour is accorded chicken that predators are carefully and seriously kept at bay. It is not uncommon to find special shelter built to protect chicken at daytime.

When a youngster visits his uncle (mother's brother) he is given chicken to take home for keeps. This is supposed to be the animal with which the child starts off in the art of breeding wealth. Which is the reason why the chicken must be female. Cases are known where an uncle's chicken bred so much, the child turned to converting the products into bigger animals like goats, sheep and cattle.

When a woman is old enough to be a mother-in-law, eating chicken is forbidden her. On the other hand, chicken is traditionally slaughtered for visiting brothers-in-law.

The best food one can cook for a friend or a visitor is chicken. Additionally, the presence of chicken makes it extremely easy to entertain and satisfy an unexpected guest. There are normally no qualms in slaughtering chicken even at midnight for a respectable but sudden arrival.

2. L: *Koth mochwe ochok kawuono ok pim gi ma nyoro.*

E: Today's rain is never compared with ~~yesterday's~~ yesterday's.

However heavy the rainfall was yesterday, people's attention will only be riveted on today's. Whether stormy and destructive or constructive, yesterday's rain is forgotten as soon as today's falls, the differences in nature and quantity notwithstanding.

However famous and spectacular an event, a song, musician or any other outstanding professional, people forget as soon as the events or persons are past. Who and what they have in the present are more important than the past, however great that past. This is what is meant when it is said that today's rain is never compared with yesterday's.

Elders and the middle-aged who used to adore the late Tom Mboya and J.M. Kariuki, refer to them with this expression. Both were assassinated despite claims that they were doing a lot of good for their constituents and admirers. All they did and the fame that this gave them, seem to have been forgotten like yesterday's rain. People have turned their attention to what is current, the fruits that might fall in their hands today. Yesterday's fruits have been swallowed and forgotten. It is in fact remarked that the only thing that saves man from total ruin is his ability to forget the pain or beauty of the past.

As soon as a woman is widowed, men start angling for her. Some men are known to weep and howl as loudly as they can in order to impress and capture the attention of the bereaved woman, under the guise of commiseration as tradition dictates. The truth is that men go out of their way to compete to get the woman whatever her age. The same men have been great friends with the deceased, have been boozing and chatting with him and socially appearing to be some of his closest admirers. Normally the woman is a means to an end (or ends): to acquire real property which may be houses and land for occupation and renting, cattle, sheep, goats and probably chicken. The common lament is that people forget their friends so fast after death, it is no different from yesterday's rain.

Alternatively, the women often seem to have little regard for their deceased husbands. Some are said to re-engage while in mourning, thus implying little or no concern for the past.

Otuoma, Aton Mito and Olima were once the most famous Luo musicians. Those who remember them now compare their forgotten stardom with heavy rains that fell many years back but are no longer recalled seriously. Some elders claim that the current Luo musicians in their hundreds, although enjoyed by the youth, are no match for the three whom historical tides seem to have hidden.

This expression is profusely applied in reminiscence of a loved past.

3. L: *kata in ema ilamo gweno layo*.

E: Even if you can pray hard enough to make chicken urinate.

This expression is uttered in circumstances where a solution is believed impossible upon the swearing of the utterer.

For example, a common usage goes like this: "However hard you prompt me to grant your request, I will not budge even if you prayed hard enough to make a hen or a cock urinate". This expresses absolute refusal come what may.

There are certain misers who are so set on tight-fistedness, no amount of persuasion can change them even

if it means praying until chicken urinates.

Many other things that are deemed impossible are said to be comparable to the fact that no same person has seen chicken urinate.

Most people interviewed believed this comparison, saying it is accurate because chicken can only shit. Others argued that from close observation they have actually seen chicken urinate the same time as they are relieving themselves. The rest who mainly comprised upper primary school-children stuck to what they had been taught that all healthy animals must dispose of waste matter and that chicken is no exception. None of them adduced supportive evidence, but based their conclusion on what they got from their teachers. Furthermore, they confessed, the teachers concentrated on things that helped them (pupils) pass examinations rather than expressions like the one above.

As for the word *lamo* (prayer), elders and most of their immediate followers in age and language-interpretation, emphasise that it is used in the context of traditional religion. One can, for example, pray by invoking the names of one's dead ancestors, famous medicine-men like Gor Mahia, or any of their past medical feats. The prayer could be to let a patient recover, a lost wife return or to let thunderstorm and lightning

strike some foe.

A medicineman ⁿ ~~is~~ Kanyada ^{says} ~~said~~ he ~~had~~ prayed with a charm in his mouth in 1969 for about one hour at the foot of a tree, imploring his ancestors to help his charm dry up the tree the very instance they were satisfied with his devotion and belief. His aim was to demonstrate to the whole location that his charm was the strongest and that therefore nobody dare tamper with his property including cattle, goats, sheep, children and nine wives. The tree dried up immediately, following long prayer. The ground at its foot also dried up into huge cracks. Within weeks of its death, the tree fell down but because of its connection with the charm, nobody dare collect firewood from it to date for fear of death or some other physical deformations. The medicineman says that with such a feat on his name, he is sure he can make chicken urinate in broad daylight. What cannot be fulfilled is likened to the inability to make chicken urinate. But achieving the impossible is the same as making chicken urinate. It is the said non-fulfilment of these types of behaviour that are compared to the inability of chicken to urinate. All these behaviours are verbal, that is, in statements, arguments and addresses, as explained and illustrated earlier, but are said to have originated from traditional medicine.

Alternatively, there is a consensus of opinions that the word "pray" did not come from christianity and other foreign religions. Ardent non-christians insist that they found the word in circulation among people who had never gone to church and who actually died before the foreign religions got a firm enough foothold. Committed christians - some of them fanatics - contend that there are two prayers: the "civilised" christian one and the "primitive" Luo one. A sixty-two year old SDA pastor confessed that he saw his non-christian father pray by invoking his *juok* and other ancestors the same way he (the pastor) turns to Jesus and his relatives in and out of church. For him prayer means submissive exhortation for desired ends whatever the religion or context and with concrete results.

4. L: *Imoko e pier mon'gam.*

E: You are stuck and trapped in an open anus.

When one is trapped in an open yawning anus, one is in deep trouble.

The saying originates from a wildcat which is notorious for invading homes at daytime to trap chicken. It is called *ogwang an'gemo* (the wildcat that opens up) because when preparing to attack it opens wide its anus to display the red mucous membrane whose colour is meant to attract the chicken. As soon as a chicken pecks at the yawning attraction, the wildcat closes its anus in

a flash to cover the head of its prey and strangle it while running off into inaccessible parts of a forest for a sumptuous meal.

A person who has a serious problem is likened to the unfortunate chicken. A case in point is when one is caught red-handed stealing. Because he is bound to be beaten, speared or cursed to go filching all his life, he is in a red'anus.

Another instance is when one is caught sleeping with one's father's wife (other than one's mother). One is in deep trouble because the father is probably going to unleash a lethal curse. Some fathers are known to have undressed and pointed their penises at their sons, this in itself ruining the latter's lives because it is taboo for a father to do to a son what he does to his (the son's) mother. A former primary school-teacher in Gem-Asumbi location is known to have been cursed this way by his father. His wife died ^{at} in childbirth, he lost his job because he became so absent-minded that he used to forget his duty. He eventually became one of the most dreaded robbers and later fell victim to a policeman's bullet from which he died. His fate is attributed to the old man's angry reaction to his love-making to a step-mother. Another man who was cursed by his father for the same offence ended up committing incest with his own mother. Still living, he is a derelict dipsomaniac.

One is also in a deep anus if one gets married to a woman whose parents are either very greedy for bride-wealth and demand too much, or are wizards, traditional paupers from time immemorial (i.e. traditionally ordained poverty), night-runners or are users of traditional killing tactics of *ndagla* and *nawi*. The fear is that the woman or her offspring might inherit these characters, thus soiling the man's name and posterity. Alternatively, a woman can fall into the trap of being married to a man with these characteristics. Those who know will regret publicly or secretly how she has plunged into catastrophe.

There are many other disasters in which this expression is applied but one common case is in primary schools where some elderly headmasters are known to shout to upper primary school children "you've been trapped in a deep anus" whenever the pupils commit an offence worth manual labour or suspension and expulsion from school. Younger headmasters shun this expression and with their limited or varying degrees of commitment to christianity argue that it is too obscene for children. Despite these limited biases, the expression is freely applied with little or no regard to religion outside school.

An SDA pastor's widow reports that she saw nothing immoral in the expression because even Jonah is reported by the Jews to have been swallowed into trouble by a huge sea-fish.

5. L: *Macha ok ikom e kodhe.*

E: You can't sow with that one's rain.

When rain falls, people sow crops in the same type of soil but when harvest-time comes the yields are never uniform. This means every individual has his own luck with rain: a person will harvest a lot, another will be average or nothing at all. It is said in other words that each individual has his own luck, however similar people might look as human beings. It is this similarity in the quality and quantity of rain that individual luck still defies. And this is why, it is said, people cannot be equal and the same property-wise.

Taken further, this expression is used to emphasise individualism. Thus students in secondary schools often remark that in a boarding school, one relies exclusively on oneself because one never knows how well academic rain falls for his friend. And so however close as friends, they cannot usefully help one another pass.

Cooperation is said to be unreliable with certain people who will undercut and betray their very bedfellows in a sane pursuit of self-interest. Examples include swindling others out of a collectively-owned asset like a piece of land, a cooperative society or any other related type of venture. A person who behaves this way, succeeding where his friends have failed because of his machinations,

is said to have his own rain. Natural endowments are also said to be the respective individuals' rains.

Deviants are ~~also~~ said to have their own rains. These are people who agree to humbly follow laid-down procedure but in the same breath behave atrociously. A man is told that whatever grudges there are between him and his father and father's brothers, he should not fight them because this would be ruinous to his life. The man is known to be a rogue but all the same he is persuaded into promising never to fight. But when against all expectations he ends up doing the opposite, such a person's rain cannot be relied upon.

6. L: *Dhandi en dhandi*.

E: Your human being is your human being.

In death, however poor or ugly, your relative remains your relative. Your husband remains your husband whatever his physical deformations or material poverty. So long as you live together, however ugly he may be he will be known to all as your husband. The case is the same for a wife.

Your child too remains your child whatever his appearance, that is, however ugly. In 1971, a woman in Karachuonyo division gave birth to a son with his mouth next to the navel. The child lived for about four months during which time the mother breastfed it through what was dubbed the "navel-mouth". People made fun of the

mouthless head and the excessively hairy body but the mother did not feel ashamed of giving him the attention she believed he deserved. The father suggested strongly that they treat him carelessly so that he would die. The mother could not hear of this. It is said that, ultimately, the father killed him with magic without the mother knowing. When later on she discovered the treachery, she swore never to have another child with him. She was avenging the death of her human being.

After all, even the dead revisit the living and they should not be angered.

7. L: *Gir kado ok penj mitne to alot to ipenjo.*

E: As opposed to vegetables, no questions are asked about the sweetness of soupy food.

The delicacy of chicken, fish and any other edible form of meat, is never questioned, but when a green dish arrives, heads start shaking in disgust, people eat little or simply pretend they are full. People prefer eating meaty foods, themselves types of food that are traditionally cooked and fried with a lot of soup. They keep chicken especially for visitors; they rear cattle for milk and beef. A few goats and sheep are also kept as human fodder. Others fish in Lake Victoria and rivers like the Kuja. Hunting is on the wane because of the legal protection of wildlife.

Those who eat greens are normally perjoratively referred to as eating caterpillars, beddings or simply "things that hyenas have urinated on". Others call greens herbs and animal food. Eating them is associated with poverty and insanity. Meat in soup is the sane traditional dish. In fact oral tradition says that the Luo have been moving for ages chasing fish and various other animals, hence their closeness to Lake Victoria.

The expression is also used as a teaser after eating, more so in the case of soupy foods about which diners are normally silent with joy and satisfaction.

8. L: *Wuoyi ma rapudo janeg maro gi tedo.*

E: A slim son-in-law kills the mother-in-law with cooking.

Mothers-in-law prefer sons-in-law who are fat, well-built with good legs and who show by the bulging of their bellies after a meal that they have eaten enough. But there are certain slim people who, however hard they eat, will not bulge. Such people overwork their mothers-in-law with so much *kuon* and soupy food to be cooked. Traditionally a son-in-law is cooked so much food it is normally impossible to finish but he must all the same show in one way or another that he is well-stuffed.

People who look full and well-built enjoy a reputation among mothers-in-law of being physically well-equipped to meet all their daughters' demands including ploughing,

housebuilding and safety and security.

In addition mothers-in-law are said to pity their daughters a lot, particularly if they (daughters) are doomed to overcook to bulge slim men. Some say their daughters might end up being thin, sinewy and grandmotherly prematurely because of overwork trying to make fat and sweaty men who were born bony and skinny.

Finally it is confessed that this expression is only a humorous remark about sons-in-law because once somebody is already being entertained as an in-law, there is no way he is going to be abused. Most of what would appear as taunting is in fact teasing. And when a son-in-law is being teased, his hosts (excluding the parents-in-law) normally revolve around his physical looks like a slim waist, big head, bushy beard, spindly legs, big belly etc. Normally a son-in-law retorts by saying that despite his slimness or fatness or long-toothedness, his hosts' daughter is dying to be his wife. The seeming taunting will however go on because a woman's family is traditionally supposed to pretend unwillingness to release their daughter for marriage. No sane father or mother will show that he is in a hurry to part with his daughter, hence the biting banter.

9. L: *Mi mana pieri.*

E: Just tighten your buttocks.

This is another way of saying "just continue to work hard and patiently".

A person who is working hard closes his mouth so tightly, sometimes he even holds his lower lip with the upper teeth to emphasise the degree of concentration. In addition he closes his anus (*olunde*) which means folding the buttocks (*piere*) tightly. It is believed that if he releases pressure through the anus, then he might sag with the pressure of work. The air (*muya*) that is spent in working is said to be lost if the mouth and/or anus are open. They must therefore remain closed while one is working.

As soon as a person finishes work or surrenders out of fatigue, he sags on his buttocks which are said to have collapsed. It is further said that he has released all the air he had in himself while working. To tell one to tighten one's buttocks is to encourage one to go on holding this air while labouring. Work includes studying, ploughing, weeding, making a granary, carrying something heavy like timber and paying heavy dowry.

10. L: *Lwal kilaw chage.*

E: Lwal the one whose milk is never shared.

Lwal was so dirty nobody dared share his milk, in *Kanyabai*.
Traditionally, two or three people can share milk from the same calabash in turns until they are satisfied.

But Lwal was so dirty he drank from his calabash alone. All his children were daughters and by 1966 they were married. Thereafter he had only himself and his wife. A woman does not eat from the same plate and room with her husband and Lwal's wife was no exception. Naturally they could not drink from the same calabash. Observers however believed that the woman must have secretly enjoyed her freedom from sharing Lwal's dirt.

Lwal died some time in 1971 on a morning. His wife died the same day but in the afternoon.

All their life, they rarely had guests. Those who visited tactfully turned down offers to eat because of the oppressive dirt in Lwal's house, compound and on his body. When he died and his wife followed immediately people said (and still do) that he deliberately infected his wife before he died.

Apart from his fame for keeping so much dirt, he also successfully refused to vacate a piece of land where a primary school was to be built. The school was ultimately put up but his house remained like an island in it, his cattle continued to graze there until a few weeks before his death when he was evicted.

What remains burned in people's minds after his death is the dirt. To refer to it, it is simply said that Lwal was the one whose milk was never shared. The

expression is however used as if Lwal is still alive, so that in every context its themes revolve around sharing. People who do not lend their clothes, cooking-pots and shoes are said to be just another Lwal. This is said even if they are clean because refusal is taken to mean one is concealing dirt. People who are so filthy nobody wants to eat their food are accused of emulating Lwal. Those who are mean are also called Lwal. It has in fact become a nickname or a teaser for people who are inclined to stinginess and various types of unsocial behaviour.

11. L: *Mano to ilin'go opuk e pige.*

E: In that case you have immersed the tortoise into its water.

A man worked very hard for a very long time. When he went home he was so exhausted he wanted to eat immediately. He checked the pot and found the tortoise eating the last of his vegetable. The man was so incensed he had to collect himself before he could revenge effectively. When he calmed down he asked the tortoise two questions: "Should I put you to death against a hard rock? Or should I throw and drown you in the river?" The tortoise paused, then answered: "Kill me in water".

Whatever its choice, the man knew the tortoise was bound to die. And so he rushed it into the closest river. Later on he returned to check in order to make assurance

double sure that the tortoise had died. Instead he saw the same tortoise shouting "look at me, look at me" as it swam into and out of the water. The man nodded his head, laughed, felt humiliated and left convinced that he had actually brought the tortoise home.

Since then, whenever a person gets angry with a tortoise and throws it into the river, stream or pond, he is told that the animal cannot die because water is its sweet home.

In the same way he is told: "If you assign somebody to a task that he is well-versed with or knows professionally, then you have immersed him in something he knows as well as does a tortoise the water into which it has been thrown.

"If you assign somebody a task assuming he is ignorant of it and therefore hoping to expose his inefficiency, a third party who knows he is efficient will tell you that you have immersed a tortoise in its water".

Out of admiration, a person is called a tortoise wallowing in its water because he is performing a certain task superlatively. A good orator put to address a political rally is a tortoise in its water. A womaniser left among women is a tortoise assigned to swim comfortably in its water. The same goes for a liar, a gossip-addict, and a good musician.

12. L: *Mano to dhoga gi uma.*

E: That is between my mouth and nose.

The saying is used to encourage people to go on errands. The shortest distance is between the mouth and nose. The two organs are said to be virtually attached to one another.

An errand which covers a short distance and therefore takes little time is likened to the distance between the mouth and the nose. The expression is always exclaiming the shortness of the distance and the ease with which it can be ^{covered.} performed.

13. L: *Oнено mare dhi gi dire Ondega chi Otieno.*

E: She-has-seen-hers-walks--sideways, Ondega the wife of Otieno.

Ondega was famous for sponging and begging with an unrelenting smile. But whenever she obtained her own thing, be it food, clothing, a hoe or utensils, she would hide them or simply walk sideways to shield these things from others. She had come to believe that because she was a beggar, everybody else was bound to beg in retaliation should she be seen with anything. This is why she walked sideways and hid articles in her armpit or any other position from which they could not be viewed.

When finally her tactics were discovered in Kotieno, anybody else who was seen to employ them got likened to her. Consequently the expression has gained currency as a means of checking the Ondega-type of behaviour. It is

also applied as a reprimand for so misbehaving: all mean people who happily eat other people's things but refuse to share their own are called Ondega, with the assumption that her name's connotations are socially known.

14. L: *Ru ruath e miyo ruath.*

E: Every day it wakes up, a bull increases in quality.

A bull begins from tiny origins in the mother's womb and with time and patience grows into a huge thing. This is like the growth of wealth. It is believed it starts from scratch and grows into herds of cattle, sheep and goats with time.

A child is never born wealthy, but patience, time and health see him turn into a millionaire.

A person should not be too impatient to become wealthy because time is always handy to take care of his desires.

To achieve one's desires takes time and cannot be an overnight experience. Those who are roaming urban streets and sugarcane plantations for jobs should not lose hope because one day they will get the jobs.

15. L: *In'ge man'geny ka romb Koyugi.*

E: You know a lot like Koyugi sheep.

To know a lot on the literal level simply means to be well-informed. To know a lot in this context means to be well-informed in a presumptuous and exaggerated way.

Knowing a lot among Koyugi sheep is to be seen in the light of the foregoing paragraph. Koyugi is a market-place between Kisumu and Kisii. Next to the market is a bus-stop and plenty of shops and bars. Shopping, drinking and marketing goes on every day, but on Friday people converge from Kisii, Kisumu and South Nyanza (in which Koyugi is) for the chief market-day.

What is peculiar to Koyugi is the behaviour of the sheep there. Nobody cares to know which home they come from but the important thing is that they are called Koyugi sheep and are famous for basking, eating and lying at the bus-stop. The most significant aspect of their daily sojourn at the bus-stop is the way they sleep under the buses and yet remain uncrushed. This means they know how to lie well enough to avoid the wheels. It is said people have died in motor accidents at the bus-stop but Koyugi sheep have not. They are exaggeratedly sophisticated enough to avoid death.

Anybody who shows this exaggerated sophistication in action or in talking is behaving like Koyugi sheep. Human sophistry, glibness and clever evasiveness are examples of Koyugi-sheep behaviour. The saying is evoked as a reprimand for these examples.

A display of knowledgeable ability, whether fake or real, is also dubbed an emulation of Koyugi-sheep behaviour.

Again this is said with a reproofing or complimentary voice as the case might be.

There is no context in which a man is commended for avoiding death the way Koyugi sheep do.

16. L: *Macha to ne odhi Kanyand guogi.*

E: That one went to Kanyand guogi.

Kanyand guogi is an untranslatable expression of a place that is virtually inaccessible and from which people do not and cannot return if and when they go.

When it is said "that one went to Kanyand guogi", it is meant that a person went so far he might not even return.

It is also an expression of fear. When black people were conscripted to fight for Britain in what were called the first and second world wars, some were taken so far it was feared by their parents and families they would not return. Distance apart, it was also fear of the unknown. Kanyand guogi combines great distances and the unknown.

When a person is sent and takes too long to return, it is exclaimed that he might have gone as far as Kanyand guogi. It is a place of death from which people cannot return. Nor can their spirits.

As to the question why "guogi" (dogs) are used, the

only reply from a number of knowledgeable elders was that when the dogs die nobody buries them. Instead they are left to rot anywhere or thrown into the bush or are simply eaten by hyenas. Ultimately nobody can identify their graves because they never exist. When a man goes and dies in *Kanyand guogi* he therefore has no grave his relatives can identify him with.

17. L: *Sunga mond waindi ma iketo go sitadi e um to iweyo it.*

E: The boasting of Indian women in which ear-rings are planted on the nose instead of ears.

Indian women are known to wear eararrings on their noses. The Luo women who saw this thought earrings were for the ears. Hitherto they say it is a perverted way of boasting by doing the abnormal. It is like turning things topsy-turvy.

The expression is used to disapprove of any kind of behaviour that is taken to be boastful. There are people who hold pipes for hours between their lips but never smoke contrary to what the case should be. Such people are roundly reprimanded for behaving like Indian women who put earrings on their noses instead of ears. The same goes for any behaviour deemed to be subverting social norms or what is taken as normal.

18. L: *Wan'gi okolo kudho.*

E: Your eyes have extracted a thorn.

A person who has no regard for people, particularly his elders, is said to be so rude and rough and tough-looking as if his eyes have done the impossible by extracting a thorn stuck deep in somebody's sole. He is also described as hard-eyed.

A young man or child who refuses to help an elder and expresses himself rudely in the process is so "hard-eyed" his eyes are said in reprobation to have extracted thorns.

A person who has been helped but afterwards refuses to reciprocate through goodwill, is said to have developed hard eyes which can extract thorns.

A respectful person will normally not look the person he is talking to in the eye, particularly if and when the latter is an elder. He will look at the ground or elsewhere but his eyes. This respectful look is called "softening" the eyes, that is, looking as if one is drawing a flap over the eyes. This is contrary to looking at an elder straight in the eye, looking hard at him, so to speak. This is the kind of eye that has extracted thorns.

19. L: *In to in dhian'g in gi kiti.*

E: You are a cow and you have your colour.

A person is said to have acquired a clear and special distinction when he/she is a son-in-law, husband or a wife. Such a person is told that "you are a cow and you have your colour". To have one of the titles is to bear a distinct colour.

The colour is said to be indelible and even if the marriage were to break people would still talk about it. In this connection it is also said that marriage is one of the most difficult things to reverse once it has been fixed.

Before a marriage can be ratified, a number of things have to be done. Among these are *kisera* (wooing) and *nyombo* (payment of bridewealth). Other rituals associated with marriage are *ndaria*, *wendo* and *riso*. A number of head of cattle is actually paid as bridewealth. Parental consent is necessary for both parties before a marriage can be legitimate.

20. L: *Mano to adiewe.*

E: I have diarrhoead on that one.

To diarrhoea on something is to pour contempt on it, that is, to "pooh-pooh" or scoff at it.

Although diarrhoeaing is regretted as a disease, it is regarded as a very contemptible and hideous sickness because of the stench. What is diarrhoead on is anything that is ruthlessly treated as a reject or waste-matter-like. It is worth emphasising that the action is verbal.

21. L: *Mano aninde.*

E: I sleep on that.

To sleep on something is to literally lie on it. There is another style of use. In this, sleeping on something means taking it and claiming it as personal property. Put another way, to sleep on something is to embrace it, to envelope it as absolute and personal property. This property could start from an agricultural implement to anything as massive as a mansion.

The remark is made when property is being shared out publicly or among friends sharing sweets, books and other tokens at a party or some other gathering.

There are other ways of claiming and sharing things. A person claims parents' property as a birthright. The same person has a right to lay claim to parents' relatives' property. Similarly he can claim a brother's, sister's or cousin's property. In brief, blood-relationship is a basis for claiming one another's property.

A father's property is traditionally meant to be shared among his offspring, normally the sons because the women are supposed to be married.

When two or more people are walking together and one chances on an item like a coin or any other precious item, he will shout in jubilation. Then his companions will shout "*adiere!*", meaning "I have claimed it". It is one of

these companions who takes the chance-item and not the person who saw it first. The claimant, by taking the thing, is said to be blessing the finder to pick more and become wealthier in future. This is similarly the case with hunting, be it of birds or bigger game. It is he who has not hit who shouts "*adiere*", so that finally he either takes the game or shares it out depending on the size.

22. L: *Gino obirona racham.*

E: That thing came to me from the left.

Bad luck comes from the left.

Anything evil whether it finally arrives from the right must have shot off from the left at the beginning.

When a person fails in an adventure or expedition, he will claim that everything started leftwise. Misfortune is the child of the left.

In a nutshell, bad luck, evil, failure and misfortune are products of the left.

A left-handed man cannot help one erect a new home because he works with the evil hand alone.

A cow's, bull's, goat's or sheep's left limbs are known as the limbs of the devil. Children who display a tendency to be left-handed are spiritedly trained away from it because it is not a safe hand.

23. L: *Dher n'gato ka inyiedho to nyaka ingi n'geyi.*

E: You have to keep looking backwards whilst milking a borrowed cow.

The owner of the cow may decide any time to reclaim and so while milking it you must not be too complacent because your ownership is never everlasting. Similarly if a woman offers her daughter to babysit, she (the woman) must not be forgotten as she might change her mind. She should be rewarded in a way. Any returnable borrowed thing can be recalled any time. And so one should only be content and complacent with one's own property.

When one is milking a borrowed cow one must not forget to occasionally please the owner with a gift of milk or some other delicacy or rarity to keep him from demanding back the cow.

24. L: *Oyumb jo-Adwen ma iban'go mogo to iweyo kon'go nikech osemedie thowi.*

E: The hypocrisy of SDA's (Seventh Day Adventists) is that they eat beer-flour but abstain from drinking the beer itself on the pretext that yeast has been added.

Eating beer-flour is holy according to SDA's. But yeast is evil. When it is added, SDA's keep their safe distance. It is, however, known that there is plenty of flour in beer only now transformed into alcohol. Furthermore the SDA's drink wine for holy communion, defensively arguing it is dilute and sweet but safely skipping revelation

of its alcoholic content.

Although most commonly used in condemnation of SDA's, the saying is generally applied on various types of hypocrisy. One example is the case of somebody saying he cannot drink milk and yet drinks milk-tea, and eats greens that have been fried with milk.

25. L: *Gigo to niaso aniasa dongo.*

E: Those things ^{with} *niaso aniasa* growth.

In free translation *niaso aniasa* could mean sluggish, unhealthy growth. Some crops and children grow this way and are in fact the subjects of reference.

But *niaso aniasa* is phonaesthetic. It expresses the growth in itself and translation only serves to eclipse the snail-like movement that the sound and meaning of the two-word expression has. The case here is of poor health and undernourishment which are also embodied in the expression. Alternatively, the unhealthy growth may be attributed to bewitching.

26. L: *Mano obara ndasi.*

E: That one has burst my appendix.

"That one has split me into pieces". This means it has overwhelmed and defeated me. I have been overstretched to the last atom of my strength.

Work can overstretch to the point of bursting the

appendix. Torture can split one into pieces. An intractable man or woman can burst the appendix of a wooer or courter by overworking patience.

Something can burst the appendix by being exceptionally sweet or bitter. This is the same as saying that the thing is unquestionably sweet.

By being unreasonable an issue is said to have burst the appendix.

27. L: *Ibor ka kat wich.*

E: You are tall like the salt for the head.

A cow's, bull's, goat's and sheep's head is known to be naturally oversalted. Experiences have shown that the least salting does not help. It is therefore thought that any salt put in the head is tall, is extensive or rather the head makes the salt grow tall and extensive.

In brief, salt is uncontrollable when it enters the head; it attains great heights like tall people.

When salt is used in the context of tall people, the element of sweetness is excluded in the sense that the person being described is not said to be sweet. Rather it is his height which is said to be equal to the sweetness of salt in the head.

When a person is so described, it may either be a teaser, a compliment for growing tall or simply an expression

of blame for being unnecessarily or excessively tall.

The person may be able to pick an object from a height nobody else can. He is then commended for being as tall as the salt of the head.

Another person will keep banging his head on roofs for being too tall. He will also keep demanding long blankets and mats whenever he goes visiting. He is publicly or privately chided for being tall like the salt of the head.

28. L: *Ochuer mos mos ka nyaduon'g.*

E: It is dripping bit by bit like *nyaduon'g*.

It is assumed that the dripping "it" is known; that is, those conversing already know what the subject is or can conjecture what it is.

The "it" refers to anything (human activity) that happens underground or openly but so stealthily nobody hears with ease. *Nyaduon'g* is known for this stealthiness and secretiveness.

The history of *nyaduon'g* dates back to when the Luo were extracting salt from their immediate surroundings. There was a particular soil known as *orongo*. This soil was put in a pot. Then a small hole was bored in the bottom of the pot. The pot was in turn planted over another pot and heated. The soil had to be wet. Little by little the salty water would drip into the bottom pot

through the hole. It is this drip-drip process that is likened to the drip-dripping from *n'yaduon'g* plant - a plant which is said to be capable of slowly seeping water for ages without drying up.

When one astounds one's community with an outstanding achievement for which he was never seen to be preparing, then such a person has been drip-dripping like *nyaduon'g*. A case in point is one of studying privately and secretly in the house at night but working in an office at daytime and yet proceeding to pass an examination with flying colours.

Machinations, like elaborate collusions to waylay somebody in the dark either to kill or rob him, are also called drip-dripping *n'yaduon'g*-style.

29. L: *On'geyo mana gi iye.*

E: He knows it within his belly.

He knows how to keep secrets.

He knows it but refuses to give the impression that he does. He is silent on his knowledge and keeps it in his belly.

He knows it but refuses to give the impression that he does until he is in a situation to apply it. He keeps it in his belly until time for its use arrives.

30. L: *Mae tind² sigana.*

E: This has now turned into a long tale.

When a matter, an affair, a court case or any issue has been awaiting attention for too long, then it is said to have turned into a long tale.

Any matter that takes too long to resolve turns into a long tale.

It is an expression of resignation, surrender and boredom with what is deemed to be taking an unnecessarily too long.

If a person promises to visit a friend and he keeps postponing its fulfilment for too long, then it is angrily remarked that the promise has turned into a long tale. Any kind of procrastination is dubbed a long tale.

A person applies the expression out of disgust and disappointment with what seems impossible to fulfil.

31. L: *Wach pod ni e chuodho.*

E: The matter is still in mud.

When a matter is still in mud, it is still stuck in the thick of discussion and consideration without any resolution reached as yet.

The mud being referred to here is the thick black sticky soil called *anywan'g*. It is slippery and at the same time difficult to pull oneself out of. Any matter still wallowing in this kind of mud is going through tough

and rough times.

The matter can be a negotiation of dowry, land dispute or any other communal issue that requires collective efforts to resolve.

A request for a loan, a hand in marriage, love or any other thing that has not been replied to negatively or positively is still stuck in mud.

Some matters remain stuck in mud for ever if they are unresolvable.

32. L: *Koth ywagowa*.

E: Rain is mourning us.

When there has been drought for some time and then rain decides to fall, it is said to be mourning people who would have died from the drought, thirsty and without crops. Rain is endearingly called the "father of food", because without it nothing grows to be harvested. When it comes in the thick of a drought it is said to be mourning its people. This kind of mourning is an expression of sympathy at the same time as providing material relief and confidence in life.

33. L: *Pamba oluoro chuodho*.

E: Cotton dreads mud.

Cotton is white and only gets a market-price if it retains this colour. Any stains earn automatic rejection

or lowering of price.

Anybody who is immaculately clean dreads the stains of mud as does cotton (this is the thick, sticky and black *anywan'g* mud). Anybody who is careful to be clean is emulating cotton. These are however very rare contexts.

But calling somebody "cotton dreads mud" is simply and most commonly praising him. In fact the expression is a form of praise-name. A girl can be called "*Atieno pamba oluoro chuodho*". She does not, like any other person who earns the praise, have to be impeccably clean. She might earn the praise in a *pakruok* (praise-naming) game, when she is literally dressed in mud. Whoever names her must (or might) have seen her clean sometime earlier or simply talks to provoke another member of the party who claims monopoly of the same praise-name.

34. L: *Gari ochayo thim*.

E: Train defies forests.

A train is so brave it winds its ways through difficult terrain and forests (*thim*) and comes off unscathed.

One way a person can show he is the bravest of men is when he can behave like the train. Not that anybody is known to have achieved this. It is only a praise-name used by a musician called D.O. Misiani: he calls himself *Owino wuod Adongo gari ochayo thim* (Owino the son of

Adongo the train defies the forest). Other people use it too as a praise-name, the same way as the "cotton-dreads-mud" one.

There are, however, no railways in Kamagambo and Kanyada, indeed the whole of South Nyanza.

35. L: *Ma en rabala.*

E: This one has horns growing wide apart and in opposite directions.

The horns are growing as if they are rebelling against one another, in other words, to call them *rabala* is to say they are rebellious.

Cows and bulls with horns growing this way are called *rabala*.

A person who is unsocial, does not like cooperating and is individualistic in his actions is called *rabala*. He is behaving like the horns that are rebellious. In a word a person who is *rabala* is rebellious and individualistic.

Such cows and bulls are never paid as bridewealth because they symbolise future dissension in the marriage.

36. L: *An chwado gi chun'g.*

E: Please be beating with the husk of millet.

To beat with the husk of millet is to play cool on an issue where a social misunderstanding may be arising.

This is the husk of sorghum after grain has been removed, and to beat something with it is to treat an issue with coolness as if it is nothing.

The expression is used to obtain restraint where a brawl or some other kind of fighting might explode or to beg moderation in a discussion, debate or dispute and to ask for patience. In brief, the expression is used to ask people to take it easy and play it cool.

The same husk is used to light fire in hearths and to transfer embers from one hearth to another.

There is also a common traditional claim that the Luo carried millet from Ethiopia to their current geographical location and that as they passed through ethnic groupings they sought peace with them by offering them the grain.

37. L: *Gin ka tandawuoya.*

E: They are more than plenty here.

The keyword is *tandawuoya*. It is meant to express a numerical value of items or people that surpasses counting; the kind of number that "catches the mouth", that is, makes it impossible for it to articulate any figures because the things or people are beyond numbers. So "they" refers to the items or people. The knowledge behind the saying is that the items are clear in the minds of the people conversing.

38. L: *Wagolie uru rembwa.*

E: Let us withdraw our blood from this affair.

A conversation is going on and a matter has arisen which is becoming purposelessly difficult to handle. A participant decides that the best thing to do is to stop any discussion of the matter and perhaps digress to something else. It is this stopping that is called "withdrawing.....blood". This withdrawal is meant to avoid conflict and make conversation run on smoothly.

39. L: *Sani tekre mon.*

E: This is the hour of the strength of women.

Between three o'clock in the afternoon and just before sunset, is the period traditionally reserved for women to collect firewood, draw water and gather or buy food enough for their families' supper, breakfast and lunch. Doing these is an exercise in showing their diligence and strength (*tekregi*).

Men use the expression in conversation in reference to what women do at this time.

On the other hand, slovenly and sluggish women are reminded with this expression that they should attend to their social functions.

40. L: *Giywayo koda tol mine.*

E: They are really pulling the rope against me.

When ropes are being pulled against me, secret or open attempts are being made to remove me from my position

of authority, shop or land or some other form of real property. When people are threatening to deprive me of my beautiful wives (or wife), they are said to be pulling the rope against me.

In the cited conversation, a rope is being pulled against a community trying to build their school. The adjacent community is covertly working for the failure of the project.

41. L: *Lit machwer remo.*

E: It is so painful it is bleeding.

A clan collects thousands of shillings to build a school. They let their political leader bank the money. Soon, however, they learn that this man has converted the money into more wives and stonehouses for himself. That such an embezzlement should occur for people who have taxed themselves so mercilessly to develop their area is so painful it is bleeding blood.

Any other instances where a painful wronging has occurred are said to be bleeding. In all cases, it is the occurrence that is said to be painful and bleeding. Bereavement, eviction, robbery and other inhuman occurrences are painful enough to bleed.

42. L: *Gigo otimo newa.*

E: Those things are very many.

The translation explains what the expression means

in a nutshell. But the keyword which means "very many" is *newa*.

Ne means look (verb). *wa* if suffixed to *ne* means "just look!" This new creation is exclamatory because attention is being drawn to the uncountable mass of things. Once joined the word loses its original sound and is pronounced with a high falling tone, with a stress on *ne* and a milder falling accent on *wa*. It consequently sounds like a new word. But it means "just look at the myriads and more".

43. L: *Oseredhore*.

E: He has slumped.

When one has slumped, one is dead. One has collapsed into the shape and status of a stone that falls down without feeling. A tired man also slumps after a long walk or hard work.

44. L: *Mago weche mag ler*.

E: Those are words of cleanliness.

Words of the Judaeo-Christian Bible are clean and holy as opposed to what traditional religion preaches. The speaker is telling his listener that traditional Luo religion is "dirty" and unholy.

45. L: *Piny maya wan'ga*.

E: The world is depriving me of my eye(s).

When the sun sets and one can no longer see, one's

eyes have become virtually useless. The world has gone dark and therefore deprived one of one's eyes, that is, the ability to see.

The expression is uttered when sunset is approaching and one is either feeling he is not going to be able to accomplish a task that requires daylight or is simply asking for leave to go to his residence before it is too dark.

46. L: *Nyis dhakoni ka.*

E: Show you womanness here.

Displaying womanness by a woman is the demonstration of her outstanding physical and material qualities. Successful management of a difficult task is applauded as a display of womanness: she can for example carry a heavy load single-handed. If in a fund-raising meeting she contributes a lot of money, she has displayed her womanness. Any other outstanding activity or performance by the woman (including good dancing and singing and land-tilling) are termed shows of womanness.

A slovenly woman is blamed for failure or inability to show her womanness.

Alternatively a man is also expected to show manness in the contexts of his traditionally defined roles.

47. L: *Kuma liech okadhe umo ok yot.*

E: An elephant's hoofprint is difficult to cover up.

The elephant is the biggest animal. In this form it also symbolises the biggest actions. Thus wherever it walks, a deep hole is known to be printed. Any animal who dares plunge into the hole is sure to remain and rot in it because it is too big and deep for it.

Similarly a human being is believed a possible victim of this fate.

What is being said is that nobody can perform better than an elephant what with the biggest hole that it makes. Anybody who does anything so well he cannot be bettered has performed an elephant task. However hard one tries to supersede one will only end up swimming in the task. One should not, if one is not a gifted orator, emulate a speaker for whom public applause after an address is deafening.

48. L: *E mae to orire chok fulu madiere.*

E: Ee this one is a squeeze-myself-in like the middle bone of *fulu* fish.

"This one" is referring to a person who always squeezes himself into positions of prominence, publicity and power when least expected or when it looks impossible he can do one of these. Alternatively, he is a person who likes jockeying for power, authority or prominence.

The middle bone of *fulu* fish looks very daring because of its position in the mess of bones. The

conclusion is that it braved its way into that position, bypassing all the other bones and arrogantly occupying the centrally prominent position. The same goes for a person who, against all odds, occupies a position where he looks like he defied thousands of bones.

Such achievements include success in stiff political contests and well-paying power-packed job opportunities.

A footballer or a netball player who scores from the most unexpected and difficult angles, defying opposition successfully in the process, is "a squeeze-myself-in like the middle bone of *fulu* fish."

49. L: *In'gielori ka pany kech.*

E: You are rolling like a famine-time mortar.

When there is no finger-millet or millet to thresh in a mortar, it is left to be sat on or rolled on by children. Anybody who comes by may inadvertently or advertently kick it because it is useless and empty after all and in any case it is round and will always roll.

Anybody who is idling, seemingly begging for something to occupy him and not finding it, is said to be rolling like a famine-time mortar.

A big head is also referred to tauntingly as a famine-time mortar because of its abnormal and superfluous size which rolls for nothing.

50. L: *Koth biro ma on'ger e ma dere.*

E: It is coming to rain so heavily the monkey is strangling itself.

The monkey rarely or never cares about drizzles or small rains. It goes on eating and pranking. When heavy rain comes threateningly, the monkey shows anxiety and struggles very spiritedly to hide in trees. In these life-saving attempts, it sometimes hangs from branches as if it is strangling itself. To go to the extent of seeming to be killing themselves shows the magnitude of the coming rain. The expression is a verbal exclamation of this magnitude.

51. L: *Nyar ku manyien.*

E: The woman from the new place.

A woman from a new place is a newly-married. She is said to have come from a new place because her parents are in a different location or sub-location and is therefore a bond for establishing new relationships (through exogamy).

Calling her "a woman from a new place" is normally a prerogative of her parents-in-law. The address is endearing.

It has strayed into the vocabulary of some youth, who now freely use it in reference to their newly-acquired girl-friends or acquaintances.

52. L: *Ogo gara.*

E: There is as much as the noise an anklet makes.

An anklet comprises a tiny round piece of metal that is enclosed in a small sheet of metal; a small hole is bored in the sheet and a string passes through it to attach it to a dancer's leg. Anklets may be worn from below the knee to the instep. As a dancer stamps the ground with his legs, the anklets make a rhythmic sound (in consonance with the stamping).

Because the enclosed metal makes the noise, it is taken that it is clamouring to be released. It is as if the enclosure is full and brimming with the metal. It is taken that the enclosed metal is threatening to come out.

When tea, water or any other liquid and solid are poured up to the brim of a container so that they appear on the brink of pouring out and yet not doing so, it is said that there is as much of them as the noise an anklet makes. This is the noise of "just-enough" and "not-more-than-enough".

"*Ogo gara!*" expresses quantitative adequacy that does not exceed prescribed limits. It is an exclamatory expression of how to the mark something is.

The anklet is tied to the ankles during a funeral or after-funeral ceremonies as a musical instrument.

53. L: *Nyaburu dhako oyien'g burone chuore wach.*

E: Woman, the daughter of pouring, pours words to her husband when she is full with food.

(*Nyaburu* is divisible into two syllables of *Nya* and *burú*) *Nya* stands for "daughter of" but in a different sense: it means exceptional endearment to *buru*. *Buru* here means an effusion and in this saying an effusion of words. The woman is therefore endeared to talking too much to her husband when she has had a satisfactory meal.

It is believed that most women talk more to their husbands after meals than before.

But anybody talking too much at any time also falls victim to the expression. Such a person is likened to the *nyaburu* woman.

In all cases, the talkers are either being teased, blamed or complimented for their capacity to talk so much.

54. L: *Oyundi ni bi chiem oyundi ni sese sese to oyundi ni dhi puodho oyundi ni tienda lit.*

E: When *oyundi* bird is invited to eat *oyundi* moves *sese sese* but when *oyundi* is asked to go and till the land *oyundi* complains about a sore leg.

This expression is uttered in a sing-song voice.

Oyundi bird is known to be semi-domesticated because it normally eats grain as it is being threshed or dried.

As opposed to other birds therefore, it does not go hunting for its food in the farms and forests. Instead it lives on what has been harvested and brought home. This is why there is the fixed expression of its *sese-sese*-movement when it sights what has been prepared rather what it has laboured for.

Sese-sese describes the movement; the quick short steps that go se--se--se--se in the direction of the prepared food. On the other hand, the moment *oyundi* is told to till the land and plant a crop it says it cannot move because of a sore leg. He gives the same excuse if asked to harvest.

A person who rejoices in using what has been prepared rather than preparing his own fits this *oyundi*-expression. Such a person does not go ploughing or sowing but *sese-seses* for a dish of the harvests. A woman who does not pluck vegetables on her own but goes from house to house, eating other women's is *oyundi*. She is lame at the time of the search but stands upright at the consumption period. She goes sponging with the *sese-sese* steps of joy.

The expression originates from the contempt for *oyundi's* behaviour and is used to condemn people with the *oyundi*-tendency or are inclined to it. Those who are genuinely deformed are excluded.

55. L: *Wan owewa wamuonyo mana olawo ka kiye.*

E: We have been left to swallow saliva like orphans.

When a person is left in a state of expectancy, he will keep salivating every now and again. If a person's parents have been expecting gifts from him, they must have repeatedly salivated in vain hope. Guests will always hope that their hosts are bringing food and remain in a voluble state of sweet suspense.

When the waiting takes too long, the expectant are being treated like orphans, that is, being taken for granted. Not only do they complain about this orphan-like treatment, but also argue that they are swallowing their own saliva for too long. In other words, their mouths have been watering for so long, they have been literally feeding themselves with the saliva.

In the conversation, from which the saying is picked, the man's parents are expecting him to have finished school and got a job in order to be able to buy them basic necessities like food and clothing. They think he has been in school for too long and that it is high time he earned a salary to save them from too long an expectation like orphans, always salivating and never sure when and whether they will be saved from their "hunger" ordeal.

56. L: *Oru kodi nade?*

E: How did it rise with you?

"It" is an allusion to the sun, which means the question could be "How did the sun rise with you?"

When two familiar people meet for the first time in the day, this is the formal question after greetings.

Alternatively, strangers might meet for the first time any time in the day. Naturally after greetings they will ask one another this question.

People also invariably ask one another this question as the first thing in the morning in a homestead. The question is first and foremost about one's state of health as one woke up. Secondly, it is alluding to what might have happened to a person at night to justify and warrant claiming that the "sun didn't rise well with me": one might have had bad dreams, one's child might have died or threatened to die or some other misfortune might have befallen one. If such things happened, then the sun must have "risen badly" with the person.

57. L: *Yawuoyi ema yombore.*

E: It is men who outstrip one another.

Men compete in everything but ultimately one or some will win and the rest lose. The belief is that there are always losers and winners.

In a rivalry for a bride, only one man will be the conqueror at the end. To round-off the competition, it will be uttered that it is men who outstrip one another.

The same saying is uttered by spectators or the vanquished after a victor has emerged in a competition.

The aim of the utterance is to soothe hurt feelings and disappointed expectations in order to help avoid a vendetta, or other forms of vindictiveness.

58. L: *Ithanyori kayap Akech Kodongo.*

E: You are as shallow as Akech Kodongo's dam.

A person is being told that he is narrow-minded in his interpretation of issues. He takes things at face-value and does not delve into shades of meaning and other implications. For these characteristics of the man's mental behaviour, he is being as shallow as Akech Kodongo's dam.

The dam is shallow and the young and old wade through it at the same time as cattle, goats and sheep also go right into its centre to drink.

A person's mind is likened to this dam to jolt him into being broad-minded. The accompanying tone is taunting and chiding.

59. L: *Ulokowa nyithindo.*

E: You have turned us into children.

Old men are complaining that they are being treated like children. They have been told to expect a gift for too long and now it sounds like a child's joke. And they are too old to be joked with. This is their complaint to their juniors in age.

60. L: *Ochalo dhian'g malur.*

E: He is behaving like a barren cow.

The expression is being uttered about a busybody who pokes his nose into social matters out of sheer jealousy and mania for positions of leadership. It is said that a barren cow behaves this way.

It has been observed that a barren cow is always jealous of other cows having children. And so whenever it sees these cows mating with bulls, it too will start flaunting herself for a bull even if it is not ripe. This is one way it shows its jealousy. Another way is to go climbing bulls and cows indiscriminately when it sees mating in progress, thinking and behaving as if it is nothing but a climbing spree. Sometimes it wants to feed calves although it does not have milk.

61. L: *Chiero ma ihongo e ma gawi.*

E: The bad eye that you cured always turns to torment you.

Two people have been helped out of virtual social obscurity into positions of responsibility, leadership and affluence, but ultimately do not feel grateful.

It is this social obscurity that is known as the "bad eye". The help rendered is the cure. The failure to be grateful is the torment from the helped. The ungratefulness takes many forms.

One form which is carried in the expression entails the cured eye turning against the "doctor" with ill-feelings, intentions and machinations. Moreover, there are certain people believed to have eyes that by merely looking bewitch and inject a person, his wife, children, relative(s) or belongings with misfortune or death.

The saying is cautioning benefactors not to expect to be repaid by their recipients. Alternatively, they are being cautioned not to be shocked should recipients of their kindness refuse to reciprocate.

62. L: *Nyodo tek.*

E: Pregnancy and childbirth are hard.

The woman is expressing the load of the unborn and born child and how difficult the task is. However far from her child and whatever his social status and whether deformed or not, the woman values her child because of the heavy experience. The expression is almost exclusively restricted to women but ~~these~~ sentimental men ~~will also~~ use it. In any case, all married people value children for middle and old-age security. Some parents expect economic returns from children and therefore the more the better. Others use children (sons) to grab or obtain more pieces of land.

63. L: *Awendo ok we yiere.*

E: A guinea-fowl never parts with its feathers.

Guinea-fowls stay together because they have common characteristics. Their behaviour is the same. The sticking together is the reason for saying a guinea-fowl does not part with its feathers. The same way a child is likened to a guinea-fowl behaving this way if his behaviour-pattern resembles his father's. Similarly, people with common characteristics will always stick together. Examples are thieves and people with common sporting characteristics.

On another level, it is being said that a person normally inherits the characteristics of his parents or other ancestors. A child could be a night-runner because his father or great-grandfather (maternal or paternal) was one. A girl may be a good sprinter because her father or mother or great-grandparents were. A person may have a predilection for a particular dish because his parents or grandparents had the same.

When such inheritances occur, it is remarked that a guinea-fowl never parts with its feathers. The remark normally comes after careful observation that the similarities actually exist.

64. L: *Uchalo jok mane oneno min pesa kanyuol.*

E: You are behaving like people who saw the mother of money giving birth.

Some people are being miserly and are being reprimanded because there is no need for that kind of behaviour. To be

so hard on money is to act as if they saw it being born by its mother. This is an allusion to childbirth which is believed to be one of the most arduous tasks on earth. Having borne her child, a mother becomes very possessive unto death because of her experiences (see 62 above). Possessiveness is ascribed to the pain of childbirth. A person who does not want to part with money or any other thing is behaving like a woman and her child. He is behaving as if he saw the pain of moneybirth.

What is being said is that there is nothing as difficult as childbirth and that comparison is totally misplaced.

65. L: *Jadhako achiel nyawan'ge achiel.*

E: A monogamist is one-eyed.

Having one wife is equal to having one eye. When the wife dies, the husband is left alone, literally blind. When the wife is sick, the husband does all sorts of feminine duties. If she should divorce, then there is no alternative bed to go to. Moreover, one wife has the tendency to be hard-headed and rude to the husband because she has no rival.

What is being said is that polygamy is the best for a man who wants to avoid having one eye. Polygamy is being hailed in preference to monogamy.

66. L: *Kama gweno ok kognie ok in'gadie bura.*

E: You do not pass judgement where the cock does not crow for you.

"Where a cock does not crow for you" means a place where you do not live and not sleep. Cockcrow-at-dawn does not find you there. It is simply not your home. And because it is not, you do not know enough about it to pass judgment in any issue. It maybe a dispute you can very well resolve, but the most that is expected of you is a cautious, light and uninvolved contribution.

Disputes include marital disputes and numerous other domestic matters within a homestead, like a wife complaining about too much beating by the husband.

It is a cautionary statement for a person poking his nose into other people's domestic matters. It is also a statement one makes when one realises one is getting too deep into an affair outside his home, that is, self-cautioning.

A typical Luo home must have the cock of the home. (See No. 1 above).

The self-cautioning person is neither a husband nor a wife in the home. More than that, he is neither a son nor a daughter there. Even if he is a servant in the home, he will still be told that the cock does not crow there for him.

A cock-crow must not find a son-in-law in his parents-in-law's house. If it does, then he shall have committed a crime because he cannot turn it into a bedroom, what with

the knowledge that he is husband to their daughter. He can sleep in the home but in his brother-in-law's cottage or house.

67. L: *Iori ka dho ko man'gwe.*

E: You are as impatient as the mouth of a stinking gourd.

A stinking gourd is noticed when the lid is removed because the stench is so pervasive and unrelenting as if it is impatient and in a hurry to come out and assail noses.

Any person who is excessively impatient and unrelenting is behaving like the mouth of this gourd. This maybe a child pestering his mother for food. To restrain and abuse him he is told that he is behaving like the stinking mouth of a gourd. Any other behaviour that is accompanied by excessive hurry is likened to the gourd's.

Cow-milk is poured into a gourd and left overnight to curdle with the lid tightly screwed. The following day it is churned and cream separated from the milk. The cream is either used for cooking or converted into ghee. The milk is drunk with ugali, cassava and sweet potatoes. Alternatively, some of it is cooked with vegetables, meat or fish to thicken and sweeten the soup.

It is women who take care of the gourds which they are expected to keep clean from not only dirt, but anything

that might create the offensive stench.

68. L: *Okuny dhano to owe biero.*

E: It is the human being that was buried instead of the placenta.

An utterance of regret, when a person, whatever age, appears too weak to be seriously taken as a human being. It is physical weakness involving inability to work on land, carry a heavy object and any other related task. In addition, he who trips easily, even when he accidentally "kicks a bird's shit", is reputed too weak.

When such weaknesses are detected, it is doubted if the person is really what ought to have been kept alive. People begin to remark that "the way he is behaving, it is the human being that was buried instead of the placenta". In other words, the living person is just a placenta.

Weakness of the mind, bankruptcy of ideas and steadfast will; inability to converse well and effectively and any other behaviour associable with weakness, lack of initiative and idleness are referred to by the expression.

69. L: *Ok natim kata in e ma ichuoyo chieth gi ku~~o~~ho.*

E: I will not do it even if you prick faeces with a thorn.

"I have completely refused and nothing will change my decision. However audacious you may be in your persuasion

even if you go to the extent of pricking human faeces to express your determination, I will not change".

Human dung is stinking waste matter and after its expulsion nobody (unless he is abnormal) is expected to touch it or play with it. It is therefore very daring for a normal person to take a thorn and stick it in shit. In the expression, there is total disagreement and the disagreeing party is daring the other party to do just this with the thorn as a measure of resolve. But even if this is done he will not budge.

Moreover, pricking dung with a thorn is the very last and desperate thing a person will do in a deadlocked dispute. Nobody testifies to having witnessed this action.

70. L: *Ipowo lok.* (le)

E: You have bored the handle of the axe.

The top of the handle that holds the axe is reputed the strongest thing available, what with the fact that the axe is so strong and yet cannot break it.

When a person is so inflexible nothing can change him in his resolution whether it is bad or not, then that person has bored the handle of the axe. A child plays truant so much no amount of flogging can change him; such a child has bored the handle of the axe. A person is cautioned against excessive drinking and does not heed it, then it is said he has bored and broken the handle of the axe.

This expression refers to people who are incorrigibly inflexible. A baby refuses to stop crying and the resultant comment is that it has bored and broken the handle of the axe.

71. L: *Itar ka min ojow bie.*

E: Your skin is as whitish as that of the mother-of-the-gatherer of chickens' ants.

When gathering ants for chicken, a person kneels and soils his feet. At the end of his task, he removes the soil but his black skin will remain whitish. This is reputed to be standard whitishness. And so any other whitishness whatever the cause is measured against this one, much as it is regarded as untidy.

"*Min ojow bie*" means the mother-of-the-gatherer-of-ants. It is however not the mother that is being referred to. Not even the gatherer himself is here. This part of the expression is only describing him. It is saying that he is as whitish as if he is the bearer (mother-origin) of the gatherer of ants. The assumption is that the mother must have been whitishness personified with the result that she gave birth to a whitish offspring.

The saying is chiding with a bias for cleanliness. It is very commonly used to castigate youngsters for looking dirty but rarely in the case of adults.

72. L: *Bwoch mor ka dhok tho.*

E: An impotent man enjoys when cattle are dying.

He enjoys because he does not need cattle for bride-wealth. He has nothing to do with a woman. More than that he is envious of the potent men who enjoy having wives and therefore have to pay bridewealth which they cannot find if the cattle were to die.

This expression is most commonly used as a praise-name in dance-parties in particular, by people who are well-known to be potent. They may, at the same time, be alluding to persons known or rumoured to be impotent. Normally the people with such defects will either keep quiet, walk away or react violently.

A second rare usage is when a person is seen to be rejoicing when cattle are dying. Such a person is told he is happy as if he is impotent and has no need for the cattle.

73. L: *Ichwe ka buoch.*

E: You are as fat as an impotent man.

An impotent man is said to be normally fat because there is little else he does but eat and sleep undisturbed and inactive throughout the night. He is comfortable because there are no children for him to labour to bring up. It is said that he has only his stomach and ultimate death to live for.

A person who is too fat, although not impotent, is

either accused of or teased for being as fat as an impotent man.

74. L: *Omiwa mana ohaya to owe n'gor.*

E: We have only been given the cuticle while the real peas is left behind.

This means we have been given what we do not need rather than what we need.

When going to war, no good results are expected if inexperienced youths are taken rather than aged veterans. The youth are the cuticle of society and the old are the peas. This expression is said to have origins in the wars the Luo fought among themselves and against other ethnic groups.

Any offer of a helper or object that is inadequate and inefficient is the cuticle rather than the substance. The expression is used as a blame and complaint for this deficiency and behaviour. It is, for example, considered contrary to sense giving one the cuticles instead of the peas for a meal.

75. L: *Mano jakol kudho.*

E: That one is the extricator of thorns.

An extricator of thorns is a companion in a journey or an adventure. He is a kind of helper just in case the person at the centre of the journey is in trouble or needs some kind of aid.

An extricator accompanies a bridegroom gone to negotiate a marriage with parents-in-law-to-be. He negotiates on behalf of the latter (bridegroom) because tradition forbids him from talking to these in-laws directly on this occasion. The case is the same for a seduction mission, a mission to elope or some other kind of errand.

Literally, if a thorn should prick and stick in somebody's sole, then help will be essential and a companion is the most logical resort for help. Any kind of helper on any mission is called *jakol kudho*.

76. L: *Budho e dwonde ariyo ja miji miriambo.*

E: Chatting around two different hearths has a tendency to make people liars.

People eat and chat around a hearth (*dwol*) in every homestead in the evening. There are, however, certain individuals who are notorious for visiting more than one homestead, talking impressively and even backbiting the group in the preceding home as a way of courting favour and food. Ultimately such a person ends up lying all over the clan to make friends and fill his tummy. He even lies that he has not eaten when he arrives at the next home so that he is fed there also.

Traditionally eating from *dwol* to *dwol* is not forbidden. In fact it hurts to welcome one to eat and be turned down. A person who does this is said to be equally reluctant to

let others eat his own food.

It is in fact not unusual for neighbouring homesteads to come together at mealtimes but particularly in the evening. It is at this time they chat on various issues of the day, let ~~also~~ another know the following day's programme and possibly discuss current rumours and other forms of folklore.

In addition, there is a popular belief that food is sweetest when eaten in a group from the same dish or bowl. Most people would therefore like to eat in *dwol*.

77. L: *Opodho liswa* or *Opodho agwambo*.

E: He has done that which is taboo.

He who has done that which is taboo has slept with his mother, sister, a goat, chicken, etc.

He who decides to humiliate his brother by excreting on his roof has done that which is taboo. Cases like this are known among brothers who have land disputes or other forms of conflict.

If a person misbehaves beyond social tolerance and morality, he has done that which is taboo.

The culprit in every case is believed doomed to misfortune and disaster. "*Podho*" means falling, in this context. The culprit has therefore fallen to doom whatever *liswa* (cleansing ritual) is performed cannot save him.

78. L: *Mandi osepon'go lweti*.

E: Your testicles have already filled your hands.

When your testicles can fill your hands, then you have attained manhood. This remark normally comes from elders to their juniors.

The junior maybe is being encouraged to embark on a task for which he is still a doubtful starter agewise. An elder will tell him to sacrifice because his balls have filled his hands. In other words he is being told he has become an elder.

On the other hand, elders use the expression to chide and reprimand youngsters who, because their testicles have filled their hands, are behaving disrespectfully, without traditional respect to gerontocracy. When a boy is seen to be behaving childishly or below his age, he is reminded that his testicles have filled his hands. If he is being cowardly, he is told the same thing.

Two or more colliding boys will tell one another the same thing in case one of them is behaving in the foregoing ways. He may also be dared to fight or do a challenging thing if he thinks his testicles have filled his hands.

79. L: *Kungu nyanan'go ywe dhogi icha'l n'gatma ok obilo.*

E: Armyworm the licker wipe your mouth in order to appear as if you have not licked a thing.

Armyworms eat crops and grass voraciously and continuously. Even though they do not stop, they never look full. In fact they eat at the same time as they are excreting so that the difference is not apparent. The result is that throughout its life the worm appears hungry at all times as evidenced by its endless eating.

A person who eats endlessly and always gives the impression that he has not tasted anything is nick-named the armyworm. The expression is uttered about him as a compliment for proficiency in eating. On the other hand, it is applied as a derogatory compliment to restrain him from eating like an armyworm.

Others use it as a praise-name in a gathering or in allusion (*go n'gato ngero*) to a glutton in the gathering. To conceal discovery, the glutton might remain quiet or walk away secretly. Alternatively, he might burst out and protest that it is only what one eats that matters and that after all it is the stomach "one dies with".

80. L: *In gili nyadiwuor.*

E: You are *gili* of the night.

Gili is the one animal that does not sleep and is therefore reputed as perpetually alert physically and mentally, day and night.

A person may be complimented or blamed for behaving like *gili*. Such a person is either so active in the mind

and so hardworking it does not matter whether it is night or day. Alternatively, he is such a talkative, he does not want to go to sleep.

A child who overstays at night or seems too defiant of sleep is chided or driven to sleep by being told he is behaving like *gili*. On the other hand he is being praised for mental alertness.

81. L: *Piny opichoni*.

E: The world is glittering for you.

"*Opichoni*" means "glittering for you" although a complete meaning can only be got if it is explained further.

When the world is glittering for a person, he is having his material needs well-satisfied. Alternatively, he might find a fortune for which he will be complimented with this saying.

The "world" here means the real and spiritual environment.

82. L: *Amulo ka malit*.

E: I have touched the wounded spot.

Another way of putting it is "*atuomo tulo*".

I have touched the wounded spot means I have exposed somebody's ugly past or a matter that pains him to hear. The result of such an exposure may be a fight, perpetual enmity or war of attrition.

83. L: *Ma nyanyuog len'ga.*

E: This is a busybody he-goat.

"*Nyanyuog*" is the descriptive reference to the goat and in fact another way of saying he-goat.

When on heat, a he-goat becomes so restlessly reckless it ventures into any herd even if there are equally fit he-goats. In so behaving, it is intruding into the herd when its he-goathood is uncalled-for and not lacking; it is being obtrusively superfluous.

Another typical characteristic of a he-goat under sexual pressure is that it wants to mate indiscriminately, even with its own mother.

It is this indiscriminate and reckless jumping that is called *len'gruok*. *Len'ga* is derived from this term and it describes the climbing tendency and the addiction to it. After that descriptive level, the term combines with "he-goat" ultimately becoming a noun and therefore the goat itself.

There are people who have these he-goat characteristics. In a word they are busybodies. They poke their noses into other people's affairs when those people have the qualifications and abilities to handle those affairs themselves. This is the he-goat straying into other herds. Such people normally pry into any matter, dangerous or otherwise. They include politicians, senior civil servants, co-wives, clar-

elders and teachers. The expression is used to check this kind of behaviour.

84. L: *Wendo ber gariyo.*

E: A guest is preferred with two.

When it is said that "a guest is preferred with two", the allusion is to the fact that he should not visit for more than two days.

For the two days the guest should not be made to do any hard work. He should relax and chat and eat well. However, on the third day, he should be given a hoe or a jembe and made to work.

Eating well means anything but greens. The best food means beef, mutton, goat-meat, fish and chicken. Vegetables and any related foods are not right for a guest. But when a guest spends a third day, these greens are not misplaced; he should eat them and the soupy stuff should disappear.

Finally a guest should not visit for more than two days because he may get to know the inner secrets and "dirty linen" of the hosts. This knowledge may estrange him from his hosts and either adulterate or destroy the friendship.

This expression is a remark by people other than the hosts. No host dare tell his guest in his hearing that "a guest is preferred with two". The guest ought to know

as well as does everybody else. This means the saying is being used as a reprimand but only privately because a guest is traditionally not supposed to be advised to go away.

85. L: *Ichwe ka n'gat machiemo gi muofu.*

E: You are as fat as a person who eats with a blind man.

A blind man attacks a dish indiscriminately without caring to choose the fattest and most delicious bits. It is the person with eyesight who eats these bits and ultimately gets fat.

The expression is uttered either as reproof for excessive and purposeless fatness or in praise. Other people use it as a praise-name in public gatherings.

"Achwe ka n'gat machiemo gi muofu": "I am as fat as a person who eats with the blind". He does not have to be fat to use the expression.

86. L: *Ngama oloyi onego kwesi meru.*

E: A stronger man than you are has crashed your mother's pipe.

The utterance is made with a tone that means a question and exclamation. The wonder and question is that what does a man do when another man, much stronger, comes and openly crashes the former's mother's pipe. The answer is assumed rather than vocalised: the weaker man will feel hurt and

ashamed of his inability to avenge the deprivation of and emotional pain caused to his mother.

The breaking of the pipe in his face is deliberate provocation. Silent response is equal to defeat.

The saying is used to sting a person into retaliation not only for the broken pipe but for other things: one's wife is beaten or raped by a neighbour; one's property is tampered with or taken without permission; one's child is unreasonably beaten by another person; etc.

87. L: *Bul pek ka ji duogo.*

E: The drum is heavy on the return journey.

When going to a festivity a drum will be carried and beaten on the way and during the ceremony itself.

A funeral ceremony, for example, is the most typically drum-accompanied. In fact drumming is virtually totally associated with funerals. Besides this, moaning, dancing, drinking and eating are essential auxiliary activities because the dead must be escorted with happiness lest they return to torment the living disastrously. This is why a funeral ceremony is also a festivity.

While going to this festivity and in the heat of it, drumming is enjoyable and the drum itself is very light but on returning, there is a reluctance to carry the drum and beat it because the festivity is gone.

Every grown-up man should have his own drum, spear

and shield (*kuot*). This is in readiness for any funeral ceremony during which a man can be very painfully teased for not having the items. Men can allude to "this person who is a woman but is a man". Others will allude to "this man whose spear, drum and shield were taken by the wife".

88. L: *Muok wuotho gi kweye.*

E: The antbear walks with its hoe.

Wherever an antbear goes, it is armed with its own hoes and other digging implements. These hoes and implements are its feet and teeth. It digs its holes and tunnels with them. It is also presumed that it eats with these tools. It is self-sufficient.

A self-sufficient person is called an antbear. First he has a cheerful personality and is not offensive-looking. Secondly he does not go begging for help, material or physical, because he is self-sufficient and reliant. He does everything by himself. When asked for anything, he always provides it promptly. The expression is used in praise or as a praise-name in a public gathering, although the person does not have to be and is not necessarily always self-sufficient.

89. L: *Isemoto e badi.*

E: You have only gathered enough firewood to carry in your arms.

When a person gathers only enough firewood to carry in his arms, it is meant that he has achieved nothing. A reasonable harvest should be carried on the head. In other words, firewood in the arms is equal to total failure.

A person has gathered firewood in his arms if he fails in a courting mission. It is also firewood in the arms in the event of failing an examination. An abortive search for a lost animal or child is called a collection of firewood in the arms. Disappointment of any manner of expectation is equal to a collection of firewood in the arms.

A praiseworthy woman always carries a heavy load or vessel of water on the head because it is too much weight for the arms. It is a lazy woman who carries her harvests (firewood, water, millet or vegetables) in the arms.

If a person is warned against a venture but proceeds to execute it, he is blamed later for coming off with nothing by being told that he has only gathered enough firewood to carry in the arms.

90. L: *Adita achiel ok icham kendi itieki.*

E: You do not finish a whole basket of food alone.

Food should be eaten in a group rather than alone (see no. 76).

Even if one is alone, one should eat expecting a visitor any time. One must therefore have more than he

needs at table just in case an extra mouth arrives.

A family-man should always expect his children to scramble for what "father left for us" even if they have had their share. He should therefore ensure he does not clear a whole basket.

When a person acquires a piece of land, business or some other property, he should not enjoy it alone but should incorporate friends, relatives, brothers and sisters. He should not eat or enjoy alone.

The expression is applied to reprimand people for various sorts of selfish behaviour.

91. L: *N'gama imuodo nyoche wiyi ok wilgo.*

E: You do not forget a person whose *nyoyo* you once ate.

Nyoyo is a boiled mixture of maize and beans or peas or groundnuts which is sometimes fried and salted. The literal meaning is explained by the translation. But what *nyoyo* actually stands for is a man or a woman. Once you have eaten a man's *nyoyo* you (a woman) cannot forget him and vice-versa.

The eating of *nyoyo* stands for a sexual relationship that is, those who have had an affair do not forget the experience of lovemaking. Eating *nyoyo* specifically means lovemaking.

A woman who has been made love to by a man may get

married to another man. However, the woman might return to her old friend and re-live the past. The man, too, will feel for the re-match.

But the commonest is the lingering of the memory of the experience if the two do not marry. They do not have to meet for a re-match but every time they think of one another they will feel warm and sentimental in reminiscence. When they chance to meet they will not think of a repeat-performance but rather they will be good friends the short time they are together.

When a person appears too sentimental or touchy about a past boy or girl-friend, he or she is teased that "you do not forget a person whose *nyoyo* you once ate or used to eat."

92. L: *wan'ge tar*.

E: Her (his) eyes enjoy looking in and embracing all directions.

"*Tar*" means whitish. But in this saying it means whitish and directionless. In traditional medical diagnosis eyes which are whitish are so blurred that they are useless for seeing. In this expression, however, the eyes are blurred and whitish because they have failed to make a choice as to whom should be admired and loved and stuck to.

Such people are prone to jilting, divorce and marital chaos because every man or woman they see is sweet-looking

and a candidate for sex. They are people who are either sex-maniacs or whose passion for sex is only transiently satisfied or who only enjoy the experience if and when they change men or women.

In a word they are people who enjoy sex for the sake of it and whose marriages keep breaking. I was told of a typical case of a medical assistant who has divorced twenty-one times since 1952. At the time of this research he was single and spiritedly courting an old nurse.

This expression is not only descriptive of such characters. It also condemns them in the same breath because it is immoral to live on breaking marriages.

93. L: *Imiya ka juok.*

E: What you have given me resembles a gift of *juok*.

An offer the size of the gift of *juok* is very tiny. But *juok* means a lot in traditional Luo belief.

An ancestral name for a kinship group is called the *juok* of that group.

A night-runner is called *ja-juok* because of that activity.

A person whose eyes have the evil-power to stare at a diner and cause stinging stomach pains is called *ja-juok*.

Any person who does anything harmful to another person, like urinating on him or shitting in his compound is either *ja-juok* or behaving like a *ja-juok*.

In the expression above *juok* means not giving enough and leaving the recipient wanting. It is commissioning or bewitching him to go on and on begging. It shows reluctance to cure the need and instead abandoning him in the jaws of inadequacy. And to leave somebody in pain is to bewitch him. That kind of bewitching is called *juok*. As expressed above it is a lament against stinginess or close-fistedness.

94. L: *N'gama oloyi ok yan'g dheri.*

E: He who is stronger than you ~~are~~ never skins your cow or bull.

You cannot allow a stronger person to skin your animal because at the end he will pick the best bits and you cannot have a say as he can beat you. What you do, therefore, is to ensure such a person does not come near or handle your cow or bull.

What is being said is that you should never allow a stronger person to handle your property because if he chooses to appropriate it to himself you have no way of reclaiming.

Apart from being cautionary, it is also used as a praise-name in public gatherings or among friends: a person may praise himself or another person with the expression.

95. L: *Liech on'giyo gi oporo.*

E: Elephant is used to the trumpet.

It used to be fashionable to blow a trumpet in order to

frighten an elephant off a place it was not wanted. After some time the elephant learnt that the trumpet was harmless after all and it ceased to care. And so people discovered that the elephant had got used to the trumpet-sound and knew it was ineffective. No longer was it a warning of danger. Eventually a saying grew out of this experience: "elephant is used to the trumpet".

Elephant had effectively defied the warning, but this behaviour was also noticed in certain people. These are the people who are so used to being warned without heeding. They are warned against playing truant, stealing or misbehaving in all sorts of ways and yet they do not care. They will do exactly what they have been warned against. The warnings are like the trumpet-blows the elephant defied.

Where Joluo live now used to be inhabited by all sorts of wild animals, elephants among them. With the increasing need for land and settlement, these animals were either killed or pushed away so that now there are no elephants. But before their disappearance, this expression was coined. Informants contend that elephants used to co-exist amicably with man, but after too much trumpeting, elephant became defiant and hostilities have remained to date.

96. L: *Chunyi rach ka n'gat moa e liend n'gama diep onego.*

E: You are as ill-tempered as a person just returned from the funeral of another person who died from diarrhoea.

Diarrhoea stinks as much as a person who has died from it. When one goes to mourn such a person on or before burial, one will depart with a feeling of the disgusting smell still sitting on one's face. The next person the mourner meets easily notices the disgust which is taken to indicate ill-temper.

Anybody is chided for showing ill-temper and in order to remove the feeling from him he is reminded of the case of a person who has returned from the funeral of a diarrhoea-victim.

97. L: *Ok ibulo n'gor.*

E: You did not roast peas.

Peas are said to roast in a split-second or less. But when a person is told that he has not roasted peas, he is being told that he has spent too short a time where he has been or is leaving.

When told he has not roasted peas, he is being blamed for impatience and hurrying too much before he is entertained by his hosts. On the other hand he is being complimented for exceptional speed on errand.

98. L: *Jagam dhoge ariyo.*

E: The go-between is twin-mouthed.

This is the go-between (*jagam*) involved in precipitating a marriage. He or she persuades the bride and her family and simultaneously does the same with the bridegroom

and his family. In the exercise he suppresses all the negative aspects of both sides' character so that only the positive is known in favour of the marriage.

He is twin-mouthed because he is behaving as if he is talking to two people at the same time, that is, impressing both in the same breath. The expression is meant to portray this characteristic of a go-between.

The saying is applied ⁱⁿ ~~only~~ describing the go-between, his role and anything related.

99. L: *Ok in rech an'g idogie pi.*

E: Since you are not fish you will not return into water.

The water meant here is a river or Lake Victoria. After fish has been caught it is capable of escaping back into either of these. If it does then it has beaten the fisherman. By so doing it has expressed its anger and used it to create freedom.

But a human being is not fish. He cannot escape into the lake or river because he is angry. No amount of threat of death or expression of anger matters because ultimately he gives up and becomes sociable.

With very little or negligible exceptions, the expression revolves around domestic squabbles between husband and wives.

Although it is unethical for a husband to reject a wife's

food, however angered by her he may be, cases are known where this happens. After the woman has fruitlessly implored the man to eat, she will blast him that after all "you are not fish and you will not return into water, but will eat your anger and sleep right in my bed". Some men are known to go to the extent of angrily going out of the house, but women do not care because they know they are not fish and will always return. Even if they storm back and beat the wives, they have all the same returned, unlike fish.

100. L: *Openda kawuono onyuol.*

E: The dark-brown cow has given birth today.

The dark-brown cow is believed and known to give most milk. It is said no other cow of a different colour can challenge it.

When it delivers, it is remarked that plenty of milk and cream has arrived. It is explained that this characteristic was observed after many experiences.

Any mass pay-day (end of the month) is called the day the dark-brown cow has delivered because this is the day of shopping sprees, all-day and dusk-to-dawn boozing and faces generally beaming with the pleasure of money's arrival. When the dark-brown cow has delivered, certain people do not return to work for days until all the money has been drunk and whored off. Primary school-teachers in South

Nyanza are renowned for the dark-brown-cow-behaviour on payday.

The dark-brown-cow remark is very common in bars and markets at the end of every month. There are also certain people who use the expression as a way of alluding to their possession of plenty.

101. L: *N'gama oran thone tek.*

E: An imbecile's death is rare and difficult.

Imbeciles include mental cases, of people who walk the villages naked and eat like dogs; others may be ruined by an irrepressible *juogi* (spirit-possession). Generally they are people who are deformed and behave abnormally: some are known to laugh and talk with flies; another current case is of a man who hates all women but readily sleeps with males of all ages. In 1970 it was discovered that he had been sleeping with a senile eighty-year-old man for over a month. A man who goes around sleeping with other men is an imbecile.

What is observed in the expression is that such men rarely fall sick and take too long before they die. Moreover personalities who have the magic with which they can be killed rarely waste the medicine because there is nothing to kill an imbecile for. He is not aware of property or wife-grabbing and therefore no cause for concern.

It is because they are never in a hurry to die and nobody is in a hurry to kill them that it is remarked

"an imbecile's death is rare and difficult". The remark is made as a death-wish when one feels bothered and disgusted with the behaviour of an imbecile. Furthermore the remark can be made in sympathy with the deformation and suffering of an imbecile who might have been pariahed into bushes, riversides or garbage-heaps. In such a case a quicker and sooner death is wished to save him from prolonged suffering. But however frequent and serious the wishes, such people will go on and on living as if they are doomed to suffer for ever.

102. L: *Ber ok cham ka kech nitie.*

E: Beauty is not eaten when there is hunger.

However beautiful a person is, it is a fact that beauty cannot be eaten.

It is the quality of the behaviour of the beautiful person that matters: the person should be social and sociable, kind, honest and hardworking.

The remark is made in reaction to any comments relating to how beautiful or good-looking a person is. It is said that however beautiful-looking the person is, nobody is going to eat that beauty.

A few elders contend that beauty is only crucial in respect to women: that it is women who should be seen to have the above qualities because their beauty can be deceptive when they are barren and unsocial. They should

be able to procreate, otherwise their killing looks would be purposeless. An unrecorded lyre-player in Kanyada, who unfortunately died recently at the age of about thirty, composed a song for a girl-friend. In it he expressed his view of beauty:

Luo: *Yand adhiyo wuoth Gem Oremo*
kuma bia otiape x 2
Bia ne wamadho nyaka i pipa
gi nyi orema x 2
To Orema nyako otime newa
nyako ochoda nyaka Kanyabala x 2
Hondo wuod nyar Kochia akone nyar
Orema ni ber kendo itimo nade -
Itimo nade, itimo nade.....

ENGLISH: Recently I went to Gem Oremo,
a place inundated with beer x 2
We drank beer with Oremo girls
ending up right inside the beer-pot x 2
Oremo is brimming with women,
A woman courted me up to Kanyabala x 2
I, Hondo the son of the daughter of Kochia,
I told the Oremo girl "What is done with beauty,
What is done with beauty, what is done with
beauty.....

Then Hondo interjects as he plays the lyre that he "touched

and walked on the woman's beauty for years and now she is bony and shrivelled with my children". When he asks what is done with beauty he is actually alluding to the saying that beauty is not eaten. The question is commonplace in Kanyada and is put in a sing-song tone as if the people are imitating the late Hondo.

103. L: *Thoth ber.*

E: A large population is advantageous.

A large population of kinsmen is advantageous when, on a collective basis, they can pool their resources (physical and material) and build a communal school, hospital or social centre. At the same time this advantage is questioned when some members of the same community undermine the efforts.

A large population of kinsmen is advantageous because different ideas can be gathered and applied for the good of the community.

This expression is uttered in self-praise by a community after a successful project. It is also uttered to encourage kinsmen to remain united.

While there were wars amongst segments of the Luo, it was fashionable to use this expression in self-praise after a particular group had won a war. They would argue their victory arose from their numerical superiority.

A surprise gift from a relative is greeted with the

saying, backed by the argument that if it were not for the huge number of relatives the recipient would not have been so sweetly surprised. The fewer the people the slimmer and the rarer the chances of gifts.

It is further believed that nobody can possibly have enough children; the more the better, because people of various talents might be born or an epidemic might kill but still spare some.

104. L: *Ich ema ithogo.*

E: It is the belly that one dies with.

It is for food that people live, struggle and even die. Life on earth is for the satisfaction of the belly and therefore the body.

A person may resist an invitation to eat food he has bumped into. He will be urged to come off his refusal because it is his stomach that he will die with: this means he will die fighting to satisfy himself with food. He never knows if that is going to be his last meal.

A person is also told that it is the belly that one dies with to encourage him to exploit every single opportunity that comes his way to the maximum, amassing wealth and generally living well. Alternatively, this expression is used in praise of a person who successfully "stuffed his belly" when he got a chance. Here "stuffing" includes amassing wealth.

Sometimes the expression is applied in praise of a willing eater or grabber as it is believed many Luo died looking for food.

105. L. Amin'ga piny

E. The endurance of the world and time

The "world and time" are applied here as one. First the expression means the two will always remain together, alive, while human-inspired and made events will come and go. In the cited conversation a local chief is being blamed for delaying the economic and social development of an area by indulging in too many petty squabbles and personality clashes. The chief has supporters. But those blaming him say with resignation and hope that while these mistakes are being made they will come to pass unlike the world and time which are always there. Eventually better things will be done.

The conversation itself explains this expression which in itself is only an allusion, incomprehensible without a live reference. It alludes to anything that will hopefully pass away and be replaced: a tyranny, an epidemic, poverty and any other deviationist or abnormal activity.

Uttering this expression could also be a kind of cursing by simply wishing that one day something retributive will happen to a person.

Ostentation, arrogance and unkindness are dismissed as transient by alluding to this expression.

106. L. Giru giru, kata oledhore

E. Yours is yours however flimsy.

A young man just returned from Nairobi to his rural home is talking to elders who praise him because he has not been seduced away by urban sophistication. He is being advised to maintain the spirit because "home is home" and his "mother" however far below the city it is. The words in ^{COMMAS} : . . . , come after he has been told ^{ld} "yours is yours however flimsy".

He is also told that "you don't run away from your mother because she is a cripple" or deformed in other ^u ways. It is commonly said meru meru = your mother is your mother. The same is said of a father, brother, sister, any relative or any manner of property. For all it is said "yours is yours however flimsy".

Apart from praise, it is an expression of encouragement to retain connections with and attach value to what is one's own or closely connected.

107. L. Gima ber to ni bur ok riw ji

E. What is good and consoling is that people never share graves.

A community is being blamed for talking too much and doing very little. By the time they realise the futility of trading words it will be too late because the chance to act by building

themselves a communal project shall have passed away. The chance shall have "died," so to speak. The community that is working hard shall have accomplished something and therefore "lived" their chance. Even if they "die" anyway, the other community shall have left them behind; their graves will obviously be as different as their achievements.

The working community has in fact been encouraging the idling one but has finally given up with the expression that "after all we shall not share graves". They are saying that they may be committing mistakes in their practical endeavours and so they had better stick by them even if they die for them because they will not die and be buried in the same hole.

Likewise people accusing one another of laxity and idleness employ the expression.

It is indeed unethical for two or more to be buried in the same grave. In fact it does not and is not known to have happened.

108. L. Orucha loyo yie rombo.

E. Tomorrows are much more than sheep's wool.

Sheep's wool can be hidden but tomorrows will keep coming and repeating themselves until one of them (tomorrows) finally reveal it (the wool). Tomorrows are more powerful than secrets and so even

if a person thinks that he has concealed something today and tomorrow, more tomorrows are coming to expose it.

Some people embark on "trial" marriages in urban areas and try to keep them secret but eventually their parents and kinsmen get to know of it. When such people repeatedly reject the fact of their marriage they are told that the truth will one day come out because "tomorrows are much more than sheep's wool".

A person plants magic in somebody's home to kill. A diviner exposes him and yet he adamantly denies it. After several fruitless attempts to have him admit his offence he is told that the truth will come out one day because tomorrows are much more than sheep's wool. Suspicious denials of any other strong accusations are treated with the same expression.

109. L. An yamo be loko, an'go maok lokre.

E. The wind changes, what doesn't change.

This remark was made in connection with my research. Contrary to popular belief that Nairobi City is the centre of intellect and wisdom, here I was researching into Luo oral literature in an area reputed in the city as seething with rural idiocy. It was a surprise, an indication that "the wind changes" as was evidenced by the return of the city man to the rural people. After all, they asked " ... what doesn't change?".

The expression is applied whenever a person or group of people are being warned against ostentation, arrogance and complacency. The message is that one day the basis of their unpleasant behaviour will come to pass: nothing is everlasting except the wind of change. The wealth, political power or high education come and go.

110. L. Wach nyalo bedo makech.

E. A word can turn bitter.

A word or statement may appear harmless when uttered but sooner or later it might turn out to be the cause of somebody's disaster. When words turn so harmful, they are said to have turned "bitter". For instance in a conversation some people are being warned to be wary of what they say because it might turn out to be bitter.

If a person wishes his enemy death by word of mouth and the latter proceeds to die, then the utterer's words are said to be "bitter".

When hostility breaks out because of somebody's utterances, that person's words are said to be "bitter".

Certain people are known to chew magic whilst they are talking against somebody, wishing him ill luck or worse. The magic is known to increase the potency of such wishes and the target ends up deformed, with a disaster or simply dies. Whatever happens to him, his fate is attributed to the magician's medicine.

The expression is advocating caution in any kind of conversation because one never knows the consequences of one's utterances or of the person he is interacting with. Either way, certain words have harmful results and so one is being warned against the possibility of committing this crime.

In public meetings, elders may issue warnings and then proceed to qualify them by saying that if their words are not heeded, the future might be bitter.

111. Siasa ki^ondje adhanja.

E. Politics is never entered into tactlessly.

It is a conversation about the dangers inherent in politics. One of them is that state security intelligence is so elaborate, alert and geographically well-spread that any threat to the government is easily detected. Secondly, one never knows how one's words in a conversation may be interpreted in a group where a security agent may be lurking. The problem with these security agents is that they might land one in court.

As a result people are being advised to be cautious in a political world and the word adhanja is phonaesthetically and onomatopoeically the opposite of this: it means the ⁺factless embrace which is as indiscriminate as the huge steps of a hippo or elephant on the ground. The conversation says that political steps should be choosy like a "cat's".

A certain politician is often alluded to in conversations as having chosen to call himself the "elephant". Using this symbol he is said to have proceeded to declare his intention to crash all traditional leaders. In the attempt he was overwhelmingly voted out in a parliamentary election. He got into politics tactlessly like an elephant.

112 L. Obeto dhako kilen'g

E. A woman's hunting stick is never dodged.

Women do not hunt because tradition does not allow them. All the same they are known to "hunt" husbands, particularly in polygamous homesteads. Hunting in this respect entails employing various techniques to trap their husbands into their (women's) bedrooms every other evening. It is for employing these techniques that the women are said to be deploying undodgable "hunting sticks".

In a polygamous homestead the women (they may be two, three or even twenty) compete for their husband's attention, particularly at night. The commonest trick employed normally starts early evening. Each woman plants her most agile child by the door to watch out for her husband's arrival. As soon as he is sighted each child runs his fastest to meet him. Whoever gets at him first grabs his stick and bag and rushes it to his (the child's) mother's house. Naturally the man will follow his bag and when the woman detects that he wants to leave for another house, she will keep hopping from subject to subject to delay him until he surrenders to sleeping in her house. Because her chances of failure are very slim, it is believed her hunting stick is invincible.

There are other tricks: late at night when a woman is sure the husband has arrived and is certainly in another co-wife's house, she, for example, hits her goat or child very hard. Whichever is hit, a loud noise will certainly be made and the man alarmed into finding out himself what is happening to his wife. When he goes, further techniques are employed to keep him until it is so late he cannot return to the other woman: she will say that a hyena or snake has frightened the goat or child and that she is very scared of being in the house without the husband. Naturally the man will stay for the wife's security. The hunting stick shall have succeeded as is its reputation.

Other women pretend serious illness or exaggerate their sickness. Early or late in the evening, she sends a child to tell her husband how badly ^{ill} she is. When he comes she will do everything possible to make him stay the whole night.

Numerous other techniques are used to trap husbands but one of them is the attempt to cook the best possible or do any other outstanding thing that captures and retains the husband's admiration and therefore increases his frequency in the woman's house in the evening.

This expression is uttered in praise of women in polygamous homes. Alternatively it is used as an observation of what is believed characteristic of women. Furthermore it is ordinarily used when a man fails to honour an appointment with other men who know he instead went to meet one of his wives. The men say that "he must have been caught by the hunting stick". This can happen any time, with the woman simply

retaining and enjoying a husband's company. It is said that this style is common in monogamous families than in polygamous ones.

113. L. Pok ineno n'geyi.

E. You have not seen your back.

A person who has not had a child is told that he has not seen his back. The person has, of course, not had a child because he is unmarried but not out of medical problems or barrenness. The person is told this to prevent or stop him from admiring or caning other people's children unnecessarily. He may also be told this to prevent him from being brutal to other people's children. Furthermore he may be told this to instigate him into marrying, particularly if it is thought he is getting late and old.

The expression is also used as inquiry into whether one is married or not. One is asked whether one has seen one's back and one answers yes or no.

Seeing one's back means seeing one's child: the child resembles or is a replica of the father and therefore his (child's) back looks like his (the father's). And so the moment one has seen this back of one's child one is believed to have seen one's back. Furthermore it is believed nobody in human history has so far seen his own back and none ever will unless he has his own child.

This expression occurred exclusively ^{among} ~~between~~ men. No woman ever used it in my hearing.

114. L. Kiwacho kamano to inyono ^w ~~in~~ ^u thool.

E. If you say so then you shall have treaded on the snake's tail.

The moment you step on a snake's tail, it will stand upright, fangs bared in search of you. And if it gets you, you are sure of a furious poisonous bite as an eloquent expression of its anger.

There are certain people who behave like the snake if and when angered. There are certain sensitive things that they do not want to be talked about but any time such a mistake is made they physically hit back, even if to kill. Alternatively they will take to an effusion of irrepresible verbal bombardment with a high percentage of stinging invective.

When such behaviour is detected it is said allusively that the snake's tail has been stepped on.

Alternatively the expression is applied in a cautionary role: it is used to warn people against provoking certain individuals on certain issues. The moment a night-runner is talked about in a group where such a person is, the latter will react negatively. A conversation on fertility and children angers a person who is known to be childless after a long marriage. Laughing in the face of a cripple, a long-toothed or bald-man and any other kind of deformed person, is enough excuse for their stormy expression of anger. In all cases the anger results from the suspicion and belief that the person is being alluded to and looked-down-upon at the same time.

But the expression is also used to refer to people who react very violently when angered no matter the degree of the offence. This maybe in their presence or in absentia. In the former, the saying is being used in reference to the person's witnessed reaction and in the latter in anticipation of what he might do as soon as the offence is revealed to him.

Violence is not the only characteristic. There is a girl who used to arrange courting meetings for a man and a woman. The man was a friend of the girl's elder brother and it was by virtue of this that she played the go-between. Later on the man told his friends that his friend's sister was looking unhappy every time he met her because he was courting another girl than her. The latter heard of the allegation and was so put out that she remarked "the man has stepped on the snake's tail, now I won't talk to him and be a go-between".

115. L. So dhoga bor.

E. Insert fatty meat in my mouth.

A person is being asked to do something impressive in order for his request to be granted. Fatty meat is the most delicious and therefore impressive item of food. It impresses everybody as an expression of deep regard. It is a bribe for favour. Some big officials in key positions ask people in search of businesses, pieces of land, house, school or jobs to plant "fatty meat in my mouth" before the request can be granted.

If the bribe is small, he replies that "your meat has not filled my mouth". And so the searcher looks for more meat to cover up the empty spaces.

An old man once sent a son to a corporation manager for a job. The old man thought Sh.5,000/- was enough "fatty meat" but the manager waved away the son, telling him that his (son's) father was too big a person to leave him "yawning" with a meagre sum like that. And so to fill the gaps another Sh.5,000/- was offered, a sum the manager accepted reluctantly and employed the boy a year later. After this famous experience it is now popularly remarked that in the good old days a fat bull, goat, sheep, or cock used to be enough to entertain a guest or bribe a person for a favour but these days no amount of fat is good enough.

The expression is also often used as a joke, prior to offering one a favour. Whilst rummaging through certain items for a particular one the waiting recipient is jokingly told to insert fat in the mouth before that thing is got.

116. L. Dalani e^r e ow^u oyo?

E. Where is dung in this home ?

Such a question is asked when no children are seen in a home. Children are known to excrete anywhere before they are mature enough to go to the bush or pit-latrines. Any sane person will therefore not be angered to see various sizes of dung sitting all over the compound because this is a healthy sign that children are present as

evidence of fertility, progressive and marital happiness.

When there are no children, it is politely asked why and where dung is in the home. The question is investigating whether the children are hidden or very indirectly if they do not exist at all. Indirectly because the childless person may feel hurt as childlessness portends the demise of one's name and personality in social memory, particularly after death.

117. L. Ichami to ikodhi koyieyo.

E. You are being eaten and yet at the same time you are being cooled with the breath as does a rat when it is gnawing.

The conversation is about a man who looks friendly on the surface, welcomes people to his home and yet afterwards he secretly unleashes magic to kill them. For this double-behaviour he is said to be behaving like a rat.

At night a rat smoothly and silently makes its way through a sleeper's blanket and plants its teeth in the sole, palm, buttocks or occasionally the mouth in case of people who do not snore or breath loudly. The rat gnaws once and as the sleeper wriggles it cools the meat with its breath. When the pain is deadened, the rat gnaws again and then cools. Gradually it speeds up gnawing and cooling at the same time so that it ends up eating its fill undetected. At sunrise, the victim will find out the sore spot and automatically attribute the treachery to a rat. He cannot have known in his sleep because of the simultaneous eating and cooling. The

eating is a hostile exercise but its pain is veiled with the cooling breath. Likewise the man in the conversation cools his treachery with friendliness, smiles and sometimes exaggerated social-bility.

Policemen in plain clothes and detectives are also said to look friendly and behave talkative in a bid to coax out desired incriminating evidence. Ultimately they end up imprisoning a person who was initially being handled with a lot of enthusiastic interest and friendliness. In so behaving the policemen have acted like the rat. Anybody who looks friendly and yet underneath is a venomous serpent is a rat.

The expression is cautionary against over-trusting friends and getting too involved with new acquaintances.

When regretting betrayal by a friend or any person one was involved with, one will say that "I was being eaten and cooled at the same". He may add "like the rat" but even if he does not, his listeners know his allusion.

118. L. Laki ero tinde tar ...

E. Your teeth are sparkling white these days ...

The conversation is about a community which was once poor but is now arrogantly affluent and laughing at other people's poverty.

While they were poor they were equal to people with dirty teeth, teeth which were either red, reddish-black or reddish-white. But whatever colour, they were bad to look at and their smell hostile to the nose. All this horror was concealed behind the lips because its carriers tended to laugh with mouths closed. Now that they are rich the dirt has been ploughed out and the teeth are laughing with a golden flash.

The expression is rarely put in full. It is simply said: "Your teeth are sparkling white these days ...". In full it would have an additional "but they might dry up one day". In other words the laughing teeth might dry up one day in poverty. The utterer is saying that fate fluctuates between fortune and misfortune. There are also often possibilities that the utterer might have been the richer but the pendulum has since swung against him, hence the speculation about the others' fate. He is warning the other about this possibility but also wishing it happened.

It is commonplace to use this expression to warn braggarts and ostentatious people.

Ordinarily white teeth are the source of a lot of social praise and a spot of beauty on the body.

119. L. Piny ok go rude.

E. The world does not give birth to twins.

The utterance of this expression was made in the heat of an argument about a man who had decided to divorce his wife. Elders did not see any valid reason for the divorce. They went on to justify their stance by positing that luck comes only once in a life-time and that it is not possible to have it repeated. Consequently it was unwise of the man to divorce the woman because he might have been scattering his fountain of luck to the winds: the woman's children may make presidents, ministers and millionaires among other names of power. The elders said that after all the world does not give birth to twins, meaning the luck the man might have got that once in the woman could not be repeated.

I heard this expression only once and in the above context.

120. L. We chalo yie ma jatho 'kadhi gowo.

E. Don't be like the canoe that dies when about to anchor.

In the conversation a young man is being encouraged to go on studying instead of flagging or threatening to give up. After all he is just about to finish. He is being told not to behave like the canoe that capsizes (dies) when nearing the shore. He is approaching the end of his studies and need not (die) now.

This is a common expression of encouragement by chiding if and when one is involved in an arduous task like weeding, courting and others and yet one is flagging at the peak of one's struggle.

This utterance is also used as a judgement of an affair, task or project that flopped at the last minute just when success was literally in sight. It is said that "after all the canoe normally dies near the shore". On the other hand, the utterance is made in regretful anger when something or somebody fails at the last minute. But it is a belief that ^{canoes} ~~boats~~ normally capsize near the shore.

121. L. In e rapim gwen'g.

E. You are the clan's yardstick.

A youngman is being told that he is the clan's yardstick because of his high educational achievement. Everybody looks up to him as the paragon of academic excellence.

One can also be a clan's yardstick because of one's exceptional wealth, beautiful wife or house or car. Occasionally some people are called clan-yardsticks because they are too thin, short, tall or fat.

Depending on context, the utterance can be complimentary in the case of the wealthy and successful. But it depends on the disposition and discretion of the utterer in the case of human sizes: he may like or dislike certain sizes and so calling one a clan-yardstick maybe in a derogatory or complimentary sense.

122. L. Tinde gi pielo chieth madongo koro gi kak.

E. These days they are ^Cexreting big dung and are therefore arrogant and boastful.

A certain community used to be poor and socially despised but has, in the context of this conversation, grown affluent. Its members are now arrogant and oblivious of their obscure past. The fact that they are rich means they eat well and therefore when they go for long calls the results are massive hillocks as compared with the tiny things of the past. Not that these waste matter are seen, but it is only assumed that the sizes have increased since the arrival of plenty.

The utterance is thrown at anybody who has become powerfully rich and comfortable and arrogant to those who saw him swim in penury once.

123. L. Oturo chok

E. He is breaking chalk.

He is said to be breaking chalk because he is teaching. As a teacher he writes on the blackboard with chalk, using and breaking piece after piece. Sometimes he is endearingly referred to as "teacher, the one who breaks chalk".

Occasionally some people apply the expression as a praise-name in social gatherings by saying " I am so and so the breaker of chalk". He does not have to be a teacher to say this.

124. L. Waketo jadiemre.

E. We have placed the winking one on the watch.

In the one conversation the "winking one" has been put on the watchout as a once-poor clan goes on a bragging spree because it is now well-to-do. The "winking one" (the eye) of those who have been outstripped in wealth and therefore social standing, is watching closely if this much-vaunted achievement will really last for ever. The utterers of the expression do not believe the wealth and fame are everlasting.

In the second conversation, a public servant has embezzled public funds to build his wives mansions. The public have decided to put the "winking one" on the watchout to observe the arrival of the inevitable misfortune.

In both cases the person or groups being watched are deemed guilty of certain offences on which fate is one day going to pass judgement as the wronged look on. But the utterance is also made when against all persuasion somebody decides to embark on what is either doomed to fail or end in disaster; looker-on will simply tell him to proceed while the "winking one" watches.

125. L. Jela idendoni simba yaw^uoyi.

E. Prison is endearingly called the men's simba (cottage).

The conversation is about the abundance of unidentifiable detectives who can tape conversations and later select their subversive or other criminal content to use against the talkers to

land them in jail. Somebody, however, rounds off the fear of clandestine terrorism, by remarking that "prison is men's simba (cottage)". What he means is that it is a place where men are doomed to congregate as they do in traditional cottages. He is encouraging them not to fear imprisonment and be inhibited in expressing their thoughts because they will after all end up in a cottage.

126. L. Mago jokadhako.

E. Those are one woman's.

Clans are disagreeing very violently over land distribution and other real property, while they, in fact, are one woman's children. The utterer of the remark is alluding to this common ancestry when he says "... one woman's".

It is, however, believed that one woman's children should not be at variance because of this blood-relationship. The utterer is regretting that this is not the case.

The expression is also used in the context of kinsmen and women remaining united as "... one woman's". In this case they are being praised for showing respect to their past or achieving something great because of their unity.

In ^{re}ference to a man, the sex is not identified. It is simply said "Those are one person's". (Mago jogan'gato). There is preference for identifying the woman because in a polygamous family,

the grouping is according to mothers rather than fathers. Fathers are regarded as amorphous owners of children while mothers are specific and live with theirs constantly unto death. Fathers hop from house to house in fulfilment of polygamous obligations; the mothers are constantly with their children. These are the reasons adduced for the specificity in the case of mothers and the vagueness for fathers.

127. L. Yamb liech ero okudhonwa.

E. The elephant wind is blowing for us.

The utterance is in connection with clan-divisions and squabbles. The utterer regards this state of affairs as sick and unfortunate. His consolation, however, is that one day the "elephant wind will blow for us" and cure them of the sickness of disunity arising from ^{dis}putes and blood-letting over property.

The only other context in which I heard this expression was in connection with those sick in bed. Somebody uttered casually at about four in the afternoon that the "elephant wind" was blowing for the sick. The explanation was that in the evenings, beginning about 4, a cool wind blows and rouses the sick from bed for a while or heals them altogether.

These two are the only contexts in which I heard the expression applied.

128. L. Kiawa ...

E. Maybe ...

The first utterance was Kiawa, an kiawa, n'gama on'geyo ...! (Maybe, oh maybe, who knows ...!). In reply to this somebody said An ka kor nyambura (Like the cat's chest). Then it was only Kiawa...

The conversation was about a secondary school being constructed through the collective efforts of a community. In the quoted lines the utterer is expressing uncertainty and hope about the success of the project. The replier says "unlike the cat's chest", meaning that nobody knows what is snoring in the chest; there is a lot of uncertainty as well as hope in this hidden noise. It can mean anything.

In other contexts Kiawa is used to express absolute doubt, cynicism or complete rejection of the possibility of success.

In all cases it is the tone in which the word is used that determines its meaning.

129. L. Giterowa gi pi.

E. ^{They are} pushing us along with water.

Members of a clan are complaining that their clansmen in the urban centres have forgotten them and keep lying they are going to remit funds for a communal project under construction. They keep making promises they do not fulfil. These promises keep disappearing like an object dropped into and carried away by a river. The object cannot be reclaimed just as nothing is got from these urban clansmen.

Any other promises that ultimately emerge as lies are classified under "pushing ... along with water".

While a conversation is on a participant might detect flattery in somebody's tone and statements. He will warn the person to stop "pushing us along with water" because there is no truth in what is being told.

A person who treats people and subjects with levity and glibly is "pushing them along with water" because in the final

analysis he shall have done and achieved nothing for them.

130. L. Mago mbaka simba.

E. Those are simba conversations.

Simba is a special house a son owns and sleeps in, in his father's homestead. It is also the dormitory for all male sons in the home and adjoining ones who have not built themselves houses. It is in this dormitory that the young men learn the names of Luo language and culture during conversations. All that is discussed here has been gathered through conversation with elders, observation of and participation in social activities. It is during simba conversations that these experiences are shared, evaluated and resolutions or deadlocks reached.

It is also during simba conversations that friendships and alliances are hatched. Since most of the group is adolescent, such relationships revolve around ^{women} ~~g~~-hunting adventures, machinations to undermine others' romantic adventures and any other activities that brimming youthful energy blind them into. Most of this adolescent affair is socially regarded as cheap, childish, misleading and is therefore termed simba-talk.

Any cheap gossip that might lead one to beat, divorce or hate one's wife is called simba-talk. A man, for example, decides to cheat another man that his (the later's) wife is too ugly and socially despised or that the wife is not going to have children all her life. If the man divorces his wife, he is accused of bowing to simba-talk which is blindly indulgent, rash and irrational. In this respect, the expression is used as a cautionary statement.

: Any talk or utterance that is deemed cheap and narrow-minded is occasionally called simba-talk.

131. L. Ne mana gweno gaora.

E. Just look at the chicken and the river.

Somebody is being asked if he attends clan-meetings in Nairobi but before he answers he is told that perhaps his relationship with the meetings are like that of the chicken and the river.

In the other conversation somebody is being asked if he ever tried to smoke bhang and creep into nubile women's beds while they are asleep at night. He replies that the distance between him and both activities is like the distance between the chicken and the river.

Both people are confessing that they have not approached the cited activities. It is like the chicken has not been known to go as far as the river. It is far from it as it only eats and lives in the homestead.

132. L. Ma piny mar arambe.

E. This is arambe-country.

Arambe means push or pull together to build a house, school or any other project on a communal basis. But in the conversation an old man is complaining that the youth has subverted his original meaning so that arambe now means the act of shitting. Another elder remarks that interpretations of issues, slogans and theories change with time as attested to by the youth. .

The youth on the other hand say that to arambe when one is going for a long call is to be polite. They further argue that

this is the only arambe that everybody participates in as opposed to current fund-raising meetings where only the rich compete for praise, fame and political favours from the masses by making *massive* ~~large~~ contributions.

It is this collective biological exercise that the youth mean by arambe-country. The elders mean what the youth say is not collective and that is the arambe of the few rich.

133. L. Opuk be nyalo mana ruako sikat.

E. A tortoise can also wear a skirt.

An elder is wondering why university students are fond of clashing with the police. He is told that perhaps the students would like to institute their own type of government. The elder replies that if this were to happen, it would be like a tortoise wearing a skirt. Like it is unthinkable that a tortoise can wear a skirt so does the old man believe no government can be formed by students. This might for example be a girl swearing not to marry a man come what may.

When one wants to express how impossible something is, one says that if it were to happen then a tortoise would also easily wear a skirt.

The expression is also used to state complete rejection of a request. One can swear "I can't do it even if a tortoise were to wear a skirt".

134. L. Arujo olokore tieko yawa.

E. Arujo is finishing our people.

Arujo is a river in Kanyada. When rain falls heavily it overflows its banks and moves dangerously fast. Any person or animal that comes its way is sure to die. In fact nobody dare cross it during heavy rain. Moreover the river flows into Lake Victoria and so

whoever drowns is sure to disappear ^a for ever, probably as a long-term floating meal for some fish, hippopotamus or crocodiles.

There are certain ^{individuals} who are believed to be way-laying and actually killing people at night. When such a person surfaces in an area with his activities it is remarked that "Arujo is finishing our people."

When it is rumoured that a leader is behind mass and individual murders the same remark is used. Alternatively it is used as a reference to any known murderer or accomplice, particularly if he is murdering one after the other literally endlessly.

A person may decide to use magic to kill too many people in a row. If he is known he will be referred to as "Arujo".

Musicians also allude to murderers as "Arujo". An unrecorded musician has actually referred to President Amin as "Arujo" for his well-known murdering sprees. He also generalises that Africa is seething with Arujo leaders.

135. L. Mano n'gama on'geyo muko liel.

E. That person knows how to break the anthill.

A person who knows how to break the anthill digs it such that within a short time and distance he is at the queen. Once she is reached and killed, the anthill kingdom is killed and threats to people's roofs and walls eliminated.

Such a person is rare. Rare because hitting the point is difficult. Similarly a person is said to be adept at "breaking the hill" because he knows how to hit at the right point: he may know how to hurt others by touching on sore spots or he may be good at striking points that stimulate and enlarge the scope of conversations. For everybody with these gifts, the expression is applied in praise.

136. L. Sirikal ite duon'g.

E. The government's ear is big.

The conversation is about Kenyan politics. A participant remarks that care is essential in such discussions because the government is very sensitive to anything that touches politics. Consequently lots of secret agents have been deployed all over the country so that one never knows when one is being drawn into trouble. It is this massive deployment of secret agents that earns the government the title of the one with the big ear.

Sometimes it is simply said that the "government is an elephant", meaning its ears are as big as an elephant's.

137. L. Kwach bade dongo.

E. Leopard's arms are massive.

The conversation is about politics and a participant cautions on how dangerous it is to get into it (politics) tactlessly and carelessly because there is the Leopard with the massive arms that can pulverize such a person.

Later on it is clarified that the expression has been picked from a local musician who composed a song for an imaginary leopard who decided to crash any human being who questioned his superhuman powers as an autocratic despot. No human being challenged the big-armed one even once, but those who were caught or suspected never escaped death or painful detention. In the song, there is an allusion to the banana-country which in fact is Uganda. The song is about President Amin and other leaders with his characteristics. Clan leaders with similar behaviour are not spared. They too use their massive powers to oppress and stifle free expression.

138. L. Paka olokore rado gwendgi.

E. The cat has turned into a devourer of their own chicken.

It is a conversation on politics. Now the complaint is that the domestic cat has decided to kill and eat the chicken it lives with. Again this expression is taken from the local musician who composed a song for the leader who had decided to turn against his supporters and subjects, like the cat turning against chicken it shares a home with.

The expression is cautionary against falling prey to the cat. It is as well an observation that the leader has turned against his people who should henceforth be careful about their movements and talks lest they are crashed. The cat is the leader and the chicken the led.

Domestic cats are kept in many homes to keep rats at bay or kill them. In return they are well-fed and normally given milk which is of the choicest foods. The cats sleep in the same house as their owners as does the chicken (See no. 1). But the rule is that they should not eat the chicken or their eggs. When they do this they are either killed or banished.

139 L. Kore kech.

E. His (her) chest is bitter.

A woman's "chest" is said to be "bitter" if her babies are always dying.

A cow's "chest" is said to be "bitter" if its calves are always dying.

A woman's "chest" is said to be "bitter" if every man that marries her dies. Some women are said to have lost five husbands because of the "bitter chest" problem.

A man can also keep "killing" wives with his "bitter chest".

In all cases it is believed the killing is done with the chest.

For a man and a woman, the consequences are grim because marriage becomes a problem: people become scared of death through marrying them. Only those who do not know about their "bitter chests" can be deluded into marrying them.

The saying is used in conversations as an expression of what is believed to be a valid reason for infant mortality and widowing.

140. L. Ero an'gawo wuor.

E. I've hung my shoes.

If a person wants to bypass a home or place in order to reach his original destination first, he will tell the people there that he has "hung his shoes". What he means is that he has booked to call on his way back. He does not have to leave his shoes.

If a person wants to visit for supper somewhere, he politely tells the prospective host that he has "hung his shoes".

Hanging shoes started with people who liked calling in other homes while on safari. They removed their shoes on the pretext that the rest of their way was muddy. Whichever home the shoes were left to hang, the man was sure to return and collect them. And so when he finally called he would no doubt have enough time to thank everybody for keeping his shoes. He would go on and on prattling until finally he was fed. After a tiresome journey a plateful of food would not be a very bad turn of events. Society soon recognised that "hanging shoes" was an excuse for calling for food later. Spongers adopted the tactic.

Currently the expression is applied to any kind of appointment with another person in his house. When a person says he is going to call in another's house, he could mean the same thing by simply stating "I have hung my shoes in your place tonight." The appointment could be for a chat, a drink, food, or any other business.

141. L. Thuondi ariyo ok riw ei agulu achiel.

E. Two cocks are never cooked in one pot.

Literally, two cocks can be cooked in one pot. It is not taboo.

The expression is however about two men or more specifically two husbands and the rule that they must not be in one homestead.

Every homestead is owned by one man as the husband of wives and father of children. Even if and when the children (sons) marry within the home, they are all his. He makes all decisions and performs all the traditional rituals.

When ploughing, planting and harvesting seasons come he has to sleep in all his wives' houses in turns before any son does to his daughters-in-laws. The sons cannot have any sexual relations with their father. Moreover no other person could possibly carry out such an activity for the man. He is a cock in his home and cannot share his marital duties with anybody else. Moreover he does not expect any other "cock" to make decisions for him.

When a man is seen to be interfering in another man's home he is told that "two cocks don't cook in one pot".

When a conflict is seen brewing in a home between two men, it is said that the cause is the cooking of two cocks in one pot.

Another conflict whose consequence is called chira is connected with a mistake being made during the ploughing, planting or harvesting season. The son or father might confuse the order and if this is discovered then manyasi medicine has to be drunk. Yet in a case where nothing is revealed chira results: the son or his child might fall sick and gradually and perceptibly wear away until he (in most cases) dies. There are current arguments that chira may be kwashiokor in the case of children.

The cause of chira in the father-son context is attributed to sex. It is believed unnatural for a son to compete or collide with a father in love-making because this is the same as having them share the same woman, contrary to traditional belief. After all, it is said, the father's seed flowed before the son's and so should be the order in special seasons.

142. L. In be tinde i gar.

E. So these days you have grown branches.

A person is being told that he was once like a tiny tree with negligible or no branches but now he has swollen into a ^{huge} hunge thing. He has forgotten this past and is now being arrogant, provocative and belligerent. The utterer is referring to this past when he exclaims "So these days you have grown branches".

The person might have been childless for a long time but has now forgotten all this because his home is brimming with babies. He might have been a pauper walking in tatters and eating garbage but has now graduated into a fat-dripping chauffeured executive or businessman.

Whatever the origin of the person he is being warned that life is so full of fluctuations he might one day return to poverty, however well he is living now.

143 L. Tapwa mar se^u noserumo.

E. Our se^u-meal got finished.

Se^u is a fish from Lake Victoria. It has a lot of flesh. ~~It~~ ^{This} makes it very sumptuous. Eating it is therefore a rare and special privilege.

In conversations the fish is used as an image of exceptional joy. If a woman had a wonderful night with a boyfriend, the following day she will feel bored when asked for a repeat-performance. She will reply: "I think our se^u-meal got finished last night".

This is the commonest context in which the expression is used.

Otherwise, it is also applied in reference to past eras or occasions of joy and fun in order to suggest that the present is for seriousness, sacrifice and austerity and not repeat-performances.

144 L. Dhako chogo marodiene gir libamba jok modon'g to gweno.

E. A woman is the middle bone that the clan chews after her husbands's death.

A widowed woman has to be re-married to somebody in her deceased husband's clan or location. This she has to do whether she likes it or not and however old. There are, however, women who defy this rule and re-marry elsewhere. It is said a woman is haunted to death by the dead husband if she does not remarry.

The fact that a woman has to be re-married is the reason why she is called "the middle bone that the clan chews after her husband's death". She is the bone that people chew in turns. The reference is to sex and the property that the deceased husband has left her with. These are the things that the new husband has to "chew". Why she is called the middle bone is not clarified but it is known that the most-voluptuously chewed is chicken-bone. And so the widowed woman is said

to be most probably being likened to a chicken's bone.

I heard this expression in application only three times. On the first occasion, a primary-school teacher was dismissing all women as unworthy of men's love because they are always unfaithful and actually enjoy adultery in secret. He said that they are local bones anybody chews when the chance comes before and after their husbands' death.

On another instance it was said that women never live in misery when widowed because men will always scramble to re-marry them and therefore "chew" them. The utterer of the expression added that they are in fact "chewed" as much as they wish even before their husbands die. He was emphasizing that devotion to wives is misplaced because they are "naturally" incapable of reciprocating. On the third occasion, the expression was used to flatly argue that women's passion for sex is inexhaustible.

There were other occasions when women's commitment to adultery and passion for sex whatever their ages were enthusiastically talked about. No references were made to the "ever chewable bone"

145. L. Mano otimore gi lwet dhano.

E. That is a product of the activity of the human hand.

This expression is regretfully applied when a mishap that is attributable to human machinations occurs.

The machinations have to be connected with magic. When somebody dies mysteriously without being sick for a reasonably long time, it is said that somebody must have planted magic to cause the death. It is this planting by somebody that is called the "activity of the human hand". The death is the "product" of this activity.

When a rich man suddenly slumps into penury and if the cause is not immediately clear, it is said that his fate is attributable to the "activity of the human hand". In other words, somebody must have magically wished that he be poor.

If somebody's grains refuse to grow as well as his neighbours', then somebody else must have planted magic to facilitate this. The ruin of his crops is "a product of the activity of the human hand".

When one person's children die in a row, that cannot be anything but a "product of the activity of the human hand".

All mishaps are in fact believed to be products of the activity of the human hand. Nothing disasterous happens without a human being engineering it (see No. 148).

148. L. Ma koni gi koni pand Kisi.

E. This one is "both-sides" like the Kisii knife.

The Kisii are Bantu neighbours of the Luos. They live to the south east and while there have been cultural exchanges there have also been violent clashes resulting in death and cattle rustling.

It is said that in one of these exchanges the Luos got a knife with two cutting sides from the Kisii. Ever since then anybody who refuses to commit himself to one side in an issue and instead shows obedience to both sides is said to be both-sided like the Kisii knife.

Anybody who prostitutes himself, refusing to clarify his stance is behaving like the Kisii knife which willfully cuts with both sides. A woman who refuses to make up her mind whom she should marry is dual-sided. A person who refuses to offer or do something

and then proceeds later to do the opposite is behaving like the Kisii knife.

After a person has made up his mind on an issue, he is expected to follow the decision but if instead he proceeds to contradict that very decision he is both-sides like the Kisii knife.

The expression is being used in all cases as either descriptive of or admonitory against ambivalent behaviour.

147. L. Olemo ogalo magwar.

E. The fruit has deceived the zebra into complacency.

When a zebra finds something sweet to eat, it will forget everything else and concentrate on it. It is this sweet thing that is called the "fruit". In the eating spree it will forget that it may be attacked and killed. It also forgets that the food might get finished and usher in hunger. It becomes selfish. It becomes oblivious of everything but its joy and self. Man or other wild animals easily attack.

There are people who behave like the zebra. These are the people who, in the heat of joy in life, forget about everything else in life but particularly the possibility of misfortune arriving. The expression is commonly used in reference to the fact that although somebody maybe enjoying life he may be overlooking the reality that this state of affairs cannot be everlasting. At the same time as being descriptive, the saying is also admonitory against careless and egocentric complacency.

148 L. Ichamone nyawadu chira.

E. You have eaten chira for your brother or sister.

When younger brothers or sisters appear more precocious than their elders, then they are said to have "eaten chira" for their elders. They maybe making faster material progress in terms of real property when in fact their elders who have lived longer ought to have been far ahead. The expression is being used in recognition of the younger person's achievement at the same time as arguing that this has enabled him to stunt the other's (elder's) growth and development. It is this act of stunting that is called "chira". It is a belief simply explained via consequences.

The utterances can also be used as a light joke, teaser or goad in a conversation that concerns an elder boy or girl and a younger one. The elder could be told "ochamni chira" by your junior. The junior, on the other hand, maybe told "ichamone nyawadu chira". In the former the senior has been deprived of the powers and gifts of progress by the junior. In the latter, the same junior is being told of what he has done to his brother. The tone of the speaker determines whether the statements are serious, jokes or goads. In the case of goading, it is normally the elder who is being urged to try to catch up with his junior.

149. L. Mano tho ndagla.

E. That is ndagla death.

If a man decides to kill his enemy in a land dispute or other disputes, the safest and most indirect way is the use of ndagla. He might treat a headless wildcat, snake, a rotten egg or some queer-looking object with magic. He will pray that as soon as his enemy sees

either of these objects, he should feel frightened and by that very response seem to have fallen victim to the powers of the ndagla. With that, he should collapse and die. (After the wishes and prayers, the killing-bent man takes the ndagla-objects to a strategic point where his victim will hopefully see it. In the prayers it is also said and wished that he sees it first and no animal should eat it before and after this).

The instantaneous death is called ndagla-death. Any other deaths that resemble this and are as sudden without any long-illness are called ndagla-deaths.

Immediately a person dies ndagla-style, mourners and non-mourners will find a perpetrator or single out suspects. The accused might have been locked in a dispute with the deceased or "bitter" words might have been exchanged. (See No. 110). It is in fact a Luo belief there must be a living person behind every death.

150 L. Jajuok ohero akwacha kod chuny.

E. The night-runner likes the reticulum and liver.

The jajuok here is the night-runner. One of his side-activities is to tremble very hard in the heat of running or when he chooses to pause and dance. In the trembling spree he looks like a tree whose leaves are being shaken by a strong wind. A reticulum looks like the tree in such a situation, particularly if it is stretched to expose its branches. A night-runner is believed to rejoice in eating this reticulum because its structure is a miniature reflection of his behaviour. And so whenever a cow, goat or sheep is killed, he will rush for the reticulum. He also loves to eat the liver of any of these animals because it is as brownish-red as his eyes. (Red eyes are associated with night-running).

The late Aton Mito used this expression in a song dedicated to a friend. In this context it is a kind of praise, while ordinarily the expression reflects an observation of the behaviour and qualities of a night-runner. It is further clarified by informants that Mito did not mean to slander his friend because really nobody dare go round telling the whole world that his friend is a night-runner. Night-running is a social disgrace what with the usual activities like kicking people's doors, windows, pouring soil on their beds through the eaves while they are asleep and spiritedly dancing to oneself in the dark, let alone the fact that his tongue has to be on the fire throughout his nocturnal adventures. Because of these qualities, one is not expected to feel praised with a night-runner's name. But as it is, this is a light-hearted joke of a praise-name.

151 L. Waketho guok.

E. We have spoilt the dog.

"Spoiling the dog" is the same as "cutting manyinya" or "turning your back on me". In all cases they mean one thing: a complete breach of bonds between relatives, very intimate friends or husbands and wives.

Stories are told of dogs which have been cut into two halves by people whose relationships were getting severed for various reasons. These are said to have happened in the distant past. There are no reported or witnessed current cases of people severing relationships by cutting dogs.

But when one wants to express absolute breach of relationship, one remarks angrily that "we have cut the dog" or "we have cut manyinya".

I was told a story which could be summarised in any of the

expressions: Kanyada and Kagan people of South Nyanza used to be brothers by blood since their beginnings in Alego, Siaya District. Later on they moved at different times to where they are now. Then the swallowed-bead story occurred together with other conflicts. An everlasting disengagement occurred and it is often referred to as the spoiling of the dog/ (See the introduction) because the brothers actually cut a dog into two and swore at the same time never again to live as blood-relations.

152: L. Iori ka ajuoga moneno mand rombo.

E. You are ^{persistently} pestering like a medicineman who has seen a ram's testicles.

Anybody who is always in a hurry to be served with some item or go away is behaving like a medicineman who has seen a ram's testicles. Anybody who is impatient to get at something is behaving like a medicineman who has seen a ram's testicles.

Experiences have shown that whenever and wherever a ram is being skinned a medicineman will always rush for the testicles. He removes the balls and retains their skin-bag, which is a very convenient container for medicine. There are, reportedly, cases of brawls, fights and all manner of clashes which have been provoked by the mad rush for testicles by medicinemen.

Too much hurry is therefore considered unhealthy and unethical, particularly medicine-man style. This point is driven home to people thought to be misbehaving using the hurrying medicine-man expression. It is uttered as a reprimand as well as a request for restraint from over-indulgence and temeritous behaviour.

353. L. Mon ariyo ok riw e agulu achiel.

E. Two women are not put to share the same cooking-pot.

Women cannot share the same cooking-pot even if they are compelled by their husbands. In any case the compulsion never lasts because they are believed incapable of any kind of unity, particularly in the same kitchen.

On the other hand, tradition dictates that every woman must have her own house even if she is childless. This is the case for both monogamous and polygamous families. It is in her own house (built by the husband) that she meets her husband in their capacity as married people. Not in another woman's house (or rather in a co-wife's in a polygamous family), unless it is an emergency case and the woman in whose house she sleeps is her senior. To have these women sharing a house permanently is like making them share a cooking-pot.

A woman is buried directly by her house if and when she dies. She cannot just be buried by another woman's house. If she dies before she is built a house, then one has to be put up before she is buried, even if it is only a semblance of a house. This is more the reason why a husband should give every wife of his her own accommodation (kitchen included) as soon as she is married. This is also one reason why men are continuously reminded that two women cannot share one cooking-pot.

Another meaning essentially concerns polygamous families. A woman calls a co-wife "nyieke" which literally means "her jealousy". It is actually meant that co-wives are traditionally jealous of one another and cannot therefore share the same cooking-pot,

kitchen and sleeping place. But above all these, the jealousy revolves around the husband: every day and night that it is not a woman's turn to have the husband in her house, that woman feels jealous of the other co-wife in whose house he is (See case No. 112).

In addition all the women married to one man feel jealous of one another because each feels the other has deprived her of the amount of love and attention she deserves from the man. Because of this mesh of jealousies, women are said to be incapable of being united even if they have a common husband, hence "two women or more cannot share a cooking-pot".

This expression is used every time conflict arises between or among women. It is said with resignation that "after all, women have not been known to unite or share the same cooking-pot".

154. I. Wuoyi siro nyako to ogwan'g.

E. A male is a pole *but a girl is a wild-cat.*

In one conversation a young man is being commended for returning home from the city. He is reminded that he is the pole of the home and so his return is welcome.

In the other conversation, somebody remarks that children are told by their elders that a girl is a wild-cat and boy a pole. He further emphasizes that this categorization is very important among the Luo. A girl is doomed to get married in a far-distant land and therefore disappear like a wild-cat into the forest. But a boy always remains in his fatherland to be the pillar of his father's home.

In fact some people go as far as praising their brothers-in-law for relieving them of wild-cats. If a girl dies unmarried in her father's homestead, she has to be buried outside it or be

claimed by another man who will bury her as a wife. She might haunt her parents and immediate relatives if she were to be buried unmarried in the same home she was born.

When a man is putting up a new homestead, his first son must be present to witness the erection of the house(s). In fact it is this son who normally carries the axe for cutting poles. The axe is called le pacho (the axe of the home). If it gets lost or stolen it must be replaced immediately because a home cannot exist without its axe.

There is a story about the axe in connection with Luo migration along the Nile.

The southern Luo split from the northern and central Luo because one group among the latter two hurled their axe westwards across the Nile during a quarrel. In anger, the southern Luo crossed the river in pursuit of the axe and never looked back until they settled where they are today. Since then every time a man is putting up a new home he must have an axe for cutting poles.

155. L. Arito maneno min Omolo Kanyunja.

E. I waited so long until I saw the mother of Omolo Kanyunja.

The expression alternates with "I waited so long until I saw Oluanda of Rapogi."

What both expressions mean is that one has waited for too long for nothing.

Both are used to mean that one waited for so long, until instead of obtaining what one wanted, one met a negative outcome or a kind of misfortune. Whatever the magnitude of the mishap, the consequent result is that the person gets confused and totally diverted from his original intention and expectation.

The mother of Omolo Kanyunja was a woman from Seme who had run wild because of spirit-possession. She was known to appear at the most unexpected hour and shock and jolt people out of whatever activity or expectation. Her looks were hostile, wild and frightening and so people would bolt away from her but she always made sure she shouted her name: "I am the mother of Omolo Kanyunja". Aton Mito, the late accordian-player and singer, composed a song in her memory. She is said to have actually lived. There are elders in Kanyada and Kamagambo who say they saw her. They confess they had to run away from her more than once. On all occasions they were waiting for specific appointments but had to forget about them because of Min Omolo and the dreadlocks in which ^{she} was dressed. They had a similar experience with Oluanda. Why Oluanda's name has been submerged by the woman's is not known, but informants confess that the Omolo-Kanyunja expression gained popularity after she had wandered all over South Nyanza and disappeared nobody knows where.

156. L. Authra min Okendo Owaka.

E. Authra, Okendo Owaka's mother.

Any slovenly and sluggish behaviour earns one the abuse of "Authra min Okendo Owaka".

A woman cooks small or dirty food and serves it in an untidy plate only to be reprimanded as "Authra ...".

A man dithers, bungles or does a dirty job and he is abused as "Authra ..."

Authra was Okendo Owaka's mother. She was among many wives in a polygamous family but she never cooked her own food. She used to sponge from house to house. Naturally ^{her} ~~his~~ children too had to beg food from house to house. She always came up with an excuse to justify her not having cooked. Alternatively if the food

she was intent on eating was not ready when she arrived, she would wait, converse, hopping from subject to subject until a steaming dish was ready. She never did what a woman was supposed to do and that was cook her own food. For such a behaviour she was labelled Authra, a name which stuck until her death and after. Today it is known all over Kanyada because when she lived people were still few and therefore expressions could spread easily and fast. The more the settlements the greater the currency the expression gained.

Authra, however, did something great. She had a son called Okendo Owaka. He became the most outstanding medicineman and warrior Kanyada ever had. Because he was rich he also married very many wives and had numerous children. Although his mother was renowned for her negative character, it was never forgotten that he was her son and their names became inseparable.

With the fame and prominence of Okendo, people started to comment that even if a woman is "Authra" she is the one who might ultimately give birth to a great man. But this has not discouraged people from noting and making use of the negative history of Authra to reprimand and teach others.

157. L. Bunde kamnara.

E. Kamnara gun.

"You are carrying that thing like a Kamnara gun". This means the "thing" is being carried for no apparent reason. It could be a walking stick, a jembe, a hoe, a hat etc. A person is being jeered at, reprimanded or teased for carrying a useless thing when he is told he has a Kamnara gun.

"You are standing and staring like a Kamnara gun". A person is being told that he is idle.

The expression has historical origins. There was once a group of Luo called Kammara. They are said to have moved later into the area occupied by the Luo then and up to now. They had guns without triggers. They had therefore to be stirred with a stick before they could explode. Sometimes and in most cases they refused to explode. Useless things therefore came to be identified with Kammara guns.

It is said that Kammara people were absorbed and lost in the advance Luo communities. Originally, it is said, they were not Dholuo speakers. They ultimately lost their language and today nobody remembers a word of it.

Another story runs that late Luo arrivals brought the guns with them and that with time they ran short of gunpowder. Then people started poking into the guns, just in case the powder was stuck. When nothing happened the guns were dismissed as useless. Thereafter idleness, uselessness and impotence in people started being likened to the guns. How and why they came to be named Kammara guns is not unknown nor is an explanation available.

158. L. Lake thoth ka lak jamwa.

E. His teeth are as many as those of a non-Luo.

Luo/ people who do not remove their six lower teeth between the molars are said to be behaving like non-Luos known as jomwa (singular: jamwa).

There are certain people whose mouths look over full with teeth whether the six have been removed or not. Such people are abused or teased by reference to their mouths which are said to carry as many teeth as non-Luos.

It has been (and in some parts still ^{is}) a Luo custom to remove six lower teeth (nak), normally about puberty. The six are the canines and incisors. The practice is however totally absent in Kanyada and Kamagambo. Most people missing the six teeth are predominantly in their late thirties and above. Some of them have bought teeth from dentists in order to look "modern".

Euro-Christianisation and the concomitant "civilisation" have caused the end of lower-teeth-plucking. Some specialists in the art are still alive although they have virtually become irrelevant. Despite this they adduce facts as to the suitability of the practice. They say teeth-plucking helps distinguish between a Luo and a non-Luo. In their pre-settlement, pre-colonial and colonial battles, it helped them distinguish between a Kisii, Luhya, Nyoro, Kuria, Muganda etc. when they were rummaging for their dead. Secondly when a person fell ill it was very easy to force medicine down his throat if the six teeth had been removed. Now it is not so easy, it is argued. It is further claimed that eradicating the plucking custom was a British trick to get people to go to their hospitals as they (the Luo) could no longer pour medicine through teeth so tightly locked.

159. L. Kanyada noyako ^udiya.

E. Kanyada people scrambled for the you-are-squeezing me.

In what is called the Second World War, the British and Germans fought in East Africa. For some time the Germans had the edge and overran Kisii town in Nyanza, uprooting the flagpole and burning the union jack which they immediately replaced with Hitler's flag. All the White administrators (British) and the Indian commercial lackeys were either captured, killed or whipped out of the town. The news of this

state of affairs reached Homa Bay, then a market-place dominated by British-controlled Indians traders. Homa Bay is in Kanyada and so the news took the rest of the location by storm. The people of Kanyada knew the Indians were no longer protected by the British who had fled. The Indians too fled because their White masters were no more. But as the panic spread and the Indians prepared to quit, Kanyada people invaded, unrelentingly raiding the shops. Among the liberated property was an accordion, something that was then foreign to Kanyada people.

The accordion made a noise when it was held by one side. Then it stopped as soon as it reached the limit. Out of curiosity, somebody held the hanging side and pushed it towards the other side. The accordion then made what was taken to be a wailing noise of pain and complaint that it was being squeezed. The sides were pulled outwards again and a noise was made. Then once again they were pushed and the udiya (you-are-squeezing-me) complaint was repeated. It was done again and again and the same complaint was repeated until the accordion came to be known as udiya.

Now Kanyada people are still referred to by others in South Nyanza as the ones who scrambled for udiya. When a Kanyada person goes visiting in another location, elders there refer to him as one of the people who are famous for the udiya incident. On many occasions this reference is made as a veiled praise for a memorable feat.

On other occasions, the expression is used in the light of the fact that Kanyada people do not spare anything that comes their way, be it the strangest of objects or simply a beautiful woman. In the presence of beautiful women from other locations, Kanyada men are

famous for boasting that they do not spare anything on this earth. This is a veiled declaration that they are going to seduce the women to the very last atom of their (men's) strength. They are also clarifying that they never spare women, the same way they could not spare adiya.

160. L. Iriek kakuth odiwuor.

E. You are as clever as the midnight thorn.

Primary school teachers use this expression to praise their best pupils. Yet most of the teachers do not know what is meant by the "clever midnight thorn". Nor do the pupils. All they know is that the midnight thorn is a yard-stick for intelligence.

Elders, both male and female, use it but are reluctant to explain what is meant by the "midnight thorn". In a skirting style they all tell the "well" known story of the one thorn that spares one's enemies like night-runners, snakes, hyenas, thieves etc. and proceeds to prick only one's wife or wives". They say this thorn operates at night, does not have eyes and yet sees the wife. It sees the others (thieves at all) but is too blunt and actually avoids them. What it does not avoid and is sharp enough for is one's wife". This is the nocturnal thorn.

A mind that can rummage in the darkness and pick out the correct thing is behaving like the nocturnal thorn. That mind is intelligent. And the thorn that it is being compared with is the human penis. No elder dare call it this but they keep referring to "this thing that brought you into the world or this thing that made your mother get a son like you". No woman agrees to say a word about the expression. But a middle-aged primary-school teacher connected the skirting references and revealed that it was a sexual expression.

161. L. Ich lach nonego Okal Tako.

E. An insatiable stomach killed Okal Tako.

The expression is used to restrain people from eating too much. There are also certain people who are renowned for paying visits frequently in the hope of being well-fed as guests. Such people are often reminded that "an insatiable stomach killed Okal Tako". A big majority of the people who used this expression when asked what it meant later on, did not know.

But the few who could explain said that Okal Tako drowned in Lake Victoria in his quest for over-eating. He was just arriving back after a visit to the other side of the lake. It was said he had eaten so much nobody imagined he would demand or need more food for the following many days. Contrary to this, Okal Tako was told before the canoe came to a stop that the adjacent canoe was crossing the lake to another distant place where food would be galore. He did not wait for the canoe to reach the shore. He attempted to fly across the sky into the departing one and in the attempt splashed into the water and drowned. To date it is remembered that Okal Tako died because of his boundless mania for food and when children are told that too much eating can kill they limit themselves.

In addition to being reminded of Okal Tako, overeaters or would-be overeaters are also told that the sun will always rise for another eating session, so they do not have to eat as if they believed the following will never come Okal-Tako-style.

162. L. Kabar tinde olenyo.

E. Kabar people have prepared ghee today.*

There are certain sections of Luo society which are regarded doomed to be perpetually poor, wretched and therefore branded as having committed some felony to their great ancestors. Such people are believed

incapable of having as many children as should be. (Women who have the capacity to breed as many as sixteen or more children are known. For bringing into existence such huge families, the women are actually revered and socially respected.) On the other hand, those whose families have dwindling numbers are known and identifiable. One such group is known as Kabar. Some informants say their great grandfather was known as Bar, hence their being called Kabar (people of Bar). He is said to have disagreed with and actually mistreated some close and older relative and in consequence earned a lethal curse that his children should be scattered in tiny, poor groups all over the world and that their wives and all the other relatives should mostly be either barren or give birth to one or two children each. Indeed, Kabar people disagreed with their Kano brothers in Kisumu district and sailed across Lake Victoria up to the South Nyanza district. They arrived empty-handed and had to be treated like serfs by their hosts. Little by little they gained their independence and self-reliance and with time they could occasionally hold their own feasts, in which ghee naturally featured as the expression of plenty and delicacies. It is always emphasised that those occasions were rare and whenever they were noticed by non-Kabar people the remark was that "Kabar people have prepared ghee today". Whenever this happened billows of smoke would be seen and murmurs of merry-making would be heard behind the tight fences.

It is also said that they are the descendants of the man who insisted a girl's belly had to be torn to recover the bead she had swallowed. (See introduction). It is further argued that they are universally despised by the Luo.

On the ghee and merry-making story all informants are agreed. In addition, it has now become fashionable to refer to any occasional merry-making by the poor as just another type of "Kabar-people preparing ghee". Ghee does not have to be there, but as was the case in derision and with the awareness that after all the show of plenty is never everlasting.

163. L. N'geny Nyada nomono Nombi muodo nyim.

E. The big population of Kanyada made it impossible for Nombi to eat sim sim.

Kanyada people believe they are many and whenever and wherever they meet but particularly outside their area, they proudly remark that this numerical superiority once made it is impossible for Nombi to eat sim sim. Not all Kanyada people are known to one another and these observations are therefore commonly made when some of them meet for the first time in or outside their location. They furthermore use the expression as a regret-cum-pride that their huge numbers make it impossible for them to know one another.

Nombi, the focal point of this expression died in the early forties at the age of about sixty-seven. It is said that he was amiable, welcoming and kind-hearted and had no ill-will against anybody. When it was rumoured that he was ailing and had foreseen his death, all and sundry converged on his home to express their regret and hope that he would not die so young with the wealth of good-naturedness. But Nombi had openly declared that he was not going to recover from this attack. So people kept pouring every minute of the day and Nombi had to welcome them, talk to them with the sim sim he wanted to eat before he died untouched. Everytime he projected his arm to shovel the sim sim somebody knocked and interrupted him. This happened until he died

without tasting the sim sim. He left it lying by his side untouched. The sim sim was his youngest wife whom he wanted to make love ^{to} for the last time before he died but the big population of Kanyada never allowed him.

It is this huge population that makes it impossible for all Kanyada people to know one another and to occasionally collide without knowing they are brothers and sisters. To demonstrate their pride of numerical superiority they nostalgically refer to Nombi's story.

164. L. Katuma korido manorido pier guok gi tol.

E. Katuma people the tighteners who tightened the dog's anus with a rope.

A complaint arises during conversation about the jealousy of Katuma people of Kanyada. It is said that they are traditionally jealous and close-fisted and that an incident in their past epitomises this.

Katuma people are said to be the first group in Kanyada to own a dog. As pioneers they were determined to monopolise this ownership so that no other brother or sister of theirs in Kanyada could have the benefits of the dog. Contrary to their wishful determination, somehow and mysteriously the dog got pregnant and got them worried. They thought of ways and means by which they could kill the burgeoning puppies but to no avail because this would mean kill their only dog. So they waited. One day the dog showed signs of wanting to deliver and in panic Katuma people tied its anus tightly so that no puppy would come out. Every time the puppies threatened to come out they tightened further. Finally the dog died together with the puppies.

Whenever reference is made to Katuma people behaving jealously this incident is alluded to in various forms.

At other times the expression is used as a praise-name or a joke.

165: L. Abiro goyi michwer chak.

E. I'll beat you so hard you will bleed milk.

Somebody is very angry with another person. He is threatening to beat him and to express the magnitude of how hard he says he will beat him until milk pours out of his body.

The angry man is saying that he can beat the offender like a small breastfeeding baby.

166. L. Achuo lowo madhuolo.

E. I've ploughed into the earth and heaved it out.

Somebody is regretting total failure of an expectation, venture or appointment.

One says one has "ploughed into the earth and heaved it out" when one has looked for rescue out of pecuniary embarrassment and failed.

One has "ploughed into the earth and heaved it out" when one is stranded and unable to come out of a negative situation like inability to expedite the delivery of one's wife, help a sick or starving relative.

In a search for lost property or relative, one might fail and finally remark that one has "ploughed into the earth and heaved it out".

The expression is said to have been borne out of hunting as a game of marksmanship. When people went hunting, they carried spears and clubs. After they had sought out an animal the spears

would be hurled at it with the hunters swearing with their maternal uncle's names or other respected relatives and saying at the same time "let it (the animal) eat itself with my stick (either the club or the handle of the spear)" (Ochamre gi ludha). One or more spears would catch the animal but some would instead plough into the earth and heave out a lot of soil and rock. This obviously meant the target had been missed. It is from this that the expression came to be related to total failure by harvesting nothing like failing examinations, in a courting adventure and in the search for a lost object or person.

167. L. Otuono maro.

E. That which denies the mother-in-law.

"That which denies the mother-in-law" is the trouser-pocket that is directly next to the fly. In this pocket the son-in-law keeps the money that he would not like to give the mother-in-law.

Currently, however, the expression is used in reference to any such pocket seen in a man's trousers whether he is due to confront a mother-in-law or not.

The reason for calling it "that which denies the mother-in-law" is because it is rude and unethical for a son-in-law to touch any area close to his private parts in the presence and sight of a mother-in-law. In other words he dare not touch his private parts nor appear to be doing so.

On the other hand, he is allowed to be seen pulling money from his back and side pockets.

What is being said, however, is that whenever one wants to ~~heard~~ money one keeps it in "that which denies the mother-in-law".

Although originally the expression was confined to the woman, now

it embraces the whole society in the sense that it is preposterous for one to be seen to be touching around one's private parts in public. To avoid spending, money is kept in the pocket that denies the mother-in-law.

The pocket is also suitable in places where pickpockets abound because they dare not go so close to a man's private parts.

168. L. Awili tong ningu.

E. Awili the eggs of rhoe.

This expression is used in praise of a section of Kanyada called Kawili (meaning "people of Awili") for their huge numbers. In fact it is believed they are so many, they are as uncountable as the eggs of rhoe (also see introduction).

This numerical superiority is believed to be the most outstanding characteristic of Kawili people. And so most times a Kawili man is met by people from other parts of Kanyada, he is referred to proudly as having come from "Awili the eggs of rhoe".

It is used in public gatherings as a praise-name and the user does not have to come from Kawili.

It is also used in bragging and daring sessions (nyedho). A Kawili man or woman stands up in a public meeting like a chief's or in a quarrel between two people or a little more and starts daring a Kakdhungu man to touch or challenge his community on any matter because they are as many as the eggs of rhoe. The braggart proceeds to describe how big a place they occupy, how numerous and powerful their magicians are and therefore how seriously a Kakdhungu man will suffer if he plays around with them.

169. L. Mo ok mok ei ko.

E. Cream never sticks in the guord.

A guord of milk is churned to ready the cream and however long it dithers in the vessel this cream always ultimately comes out. It cannot stick in there for ever.

Similarly secrets cannot be kept forever. A young man living in town, for example, decides to marry secretly. His rural parents hear of it, but he dare not agree that he is hiding a wife in an estate somewhere in the city. After many fruitless attempts to get him to agree, the parents and close relatives finally tell him that "cream never sticks in the guord... it one day comes out with the milk." They tell him that one day what he is shielding will be revealed.

On many other instances, some people tend to deny knowledge of certain things (particularly secret activities) which their society know they are involved in. When persuasion has failed they are told that "cream never sticks in the guord".

People who are known to be using magic to kill others but deny it are cautioned with the expression.

Known adulterers are also told the same saying.

All this is after persuasion to confirm has flopped. And apart from cautioning it is also threatening should the truth be revealed.

170. L. Ogwan'g tho e gop wadgi (FD)

E. A wild-cat dies for another wildcat's debt.

Two people went on a safari and returned late at night. Unfortunately a theft had occurred in the village of Ondiri in Kanyada that same night and police had cordoned off the area. The

thieves had already escaped, but as the two entered they were spotted, torches flashed at them from numerous directions and as they attempted to run away, oblivious of who was threatening them, they were shot dead. They had not stolen, but they were killed on the assumption that they were the thieves. They had died for the debt the real thieves owed the village. After all, it was said "a wild-cat dies for another wildcat's debt". These two people had died for others.

When a wild-cat is being hunted, the hunters cannot distinguish whether the one they have cornered is the same as the one that had attacked and eaten some of their chicken. Whichever wildcat they come by dies because the distinguishing physical features do not matter as much as the crime of any wildcat.

In usage, this expression does not always refer to death but to any occurrence of suffering or misfortune to a person while the correct victim goes scotfree. A person is arrested in the vicinity of a murder ^{or} ~~on~~ theft, not because he committed either or both of the crimes but because he has been found in the area. Finally he is tortured into submission and jailed for what he did not have a hand in.

A person gets into trouble because he is helping a friend but not for courting that trouble. For example, two people agree to go to a market-place. One of them wants to elope with a girl who frequents that place. The other one helps him pull the girl by force to his house. But the girl does not want to be wived. And soon a court case on abduction is filed. ~~The other one helps him pull the girl by force to his house. But the girl does not want to be wived. And soon a court case on abduction is filed.~~ The

accomplice is jailed together with the protagonist although the former has absolutely nothing to gain in the deed.

The expression is used to underline regret over wrong victimisation.

171. L. Pien dhano kiyudi.

E. The human skin is impossible to find.

A singer called Obudo Kaleya has composed a praise-song for his great friend called Osoga.

He sings in the traditional style called dodo. Dodo is sung at beer-clubs or other parties where people have gathered to booze.

Like in this recorded song, Obudo is a soloist, with a troupe of six singers. Among other things that are said about Osoga, he is also described as "the human skin that is impossible to find". He is said to be a rare and impossible friend to find. He is the only one of his kind. To illustrate the point, the late Tom Mboya's memory is invoked and like the late Argwings Kodhek, we are told nobody ever removed their skins like is done with animals. Theirs were buried with them. The singers say they have carried out enquiries with surgical theatres and veterinary surgeons but have been told that at no time have they had occasion to remove the human skin. Osoga is this skin and Obudo is actually praising him with the expression for having medically rescued him (Obudo) from a vicious attack of gonorhea.

Obudo is a labourer in Homa Bay Hospital while Osoga was jailed a short while ago for handling and misusing antibiotics while he was not qualified to (Obudo was not his victim).

172. L. Dhano loyo guok.

E. A human being is better than a dog.

This remark is made in reference to a child less than two years old. Despite its mental and physical weaknesses, it is sent to pick a mug lying on the floor. It either crawls or totters towards it and finally brings it. On the other hand, a dog cannot do this. This is the reason why it is said, that a human being is better than a dog, no matter its age.

Mothers are particularly fond of this saying during their sentimental moments and even if the child only seems to be doing (and not actually doing) what she expects.

173. L.' Gode ok rom to dhano to romo.

E. Hills do not meet but human beings meet.

Friends or relatives have not met for a long time but finally they do. While they shake hands they remark that however long and far apart they have been, they were fated to meet, unlike mountains or hills which do not.

Two people are saying good-bye to one another. But they are not sure when next they will rejoin. To soften their anxiety, they finally say to one another: "hills do not meet but human beings do ...".

Friends or relatives have been living in the same area but avoiding one another. Or to be more exact one of them has been playing hide-and-seek from the others. When he is finally met, his friends or relatives tell him that "hills do not meet but human beings do".

Alternatively a person has decided that he is not interested in meeting a relative but one day they bump into one another. While they shake hands and talk, the relative remarks that "hills don't meet but human beings do even if you have refused to visit me".

174. L. Ogwan'g chamo to tho rome.

E. Although a wildcat eats it has dew to contend with in the process.

A wildcat hunts hard to get its food. It finally gets it, in most cases. But it has to contend with a lot of opposition. Human beings are there to fence off and defend their chicken and eggs and the comment likelihood is that the cat will be severely wounded, bruised or killed should it dare attack. This kind of opposition is part of the "dew" that it encounters.

As it goes hunting, normally at night, the wildcat has to contend with the cold breezes and the chilling dew on the grass and other plants. It has to bathe in a lot of discomfort to get its food or any other form of satisfaction.

People too, struggle to achieve their ends, mostly material ones. But it is a sweat of a struggle before any gains can be realised. When referring to this phenomenon, it is said that "although a wildcat eats, it has a lot of dew to contend with in the process".

The remark is normally made as a compliment after one has worked hard in the shamba, school or hunting expedition and achieved much by ploughing or harvesting a lot, passing examinations and bringing home a lot of meat. Such a person looks tired, sweaty and probably thin because of the ravages of the hard work. It is because of these signs of exhaustion that the person is referred to or described by this expression

175. L. Nyathi ma io^oo emayien'g.

E. The child who is sent on errands is the child who gets his stomach full with food.

This expression is used to encourage youngsters to be obedient to their elders.

When an elder requires cigarettes, paraffin or medical tablets, he normally sends a child. If an elder has an urgent business to attend to elsewhere, he sends a youngster to look after cattle, goats or sheep. For obeying elders in such circumstances, a child gets rewarded ultimately, with food, clothes or some other toy that would satisfy him. To obey elders is to gain a lot.

Mothers encourage their children to agree to be sent on errands by invoking this expression. They also use it to have them perform some household chores they may not like to.

176. L. ~~Apokni e pier apodo?~~
Apokni e pier apodo?

E. Shall I peel it off apodo's buttocks?

A request that is impossible to satisfy is as difficult as getting anything out of the apodo bird. The bird is simply impossible to catch and if one asks for money that cannot be provided, he is asked whether it can be obtained from apodo's buttocks. It is not only a question but is simultaneously an expression of a declaration that nothing is impossible; what is asked of can certainly not be provided even if it is there.

The expression is also used to keep off somebody after it is felt he has been provided with enough of something. When a child is deemed to have eaten enough, he is told that however desperately hungry he claims to be, nothing can be "even peeled off apodo's buttocks."

When a person is known to be mean and selfish, it is said that a time will come for him to beg for help. If the request is rejected, he will be told that whatever he wants cannot even be plucked from apodo's buttocks.

When mothers have business to do but their youngsters interrupt and start pestering for food, they will angrily spank them, tell them the food cannot even be obtained from apodo's buttocks and conclude by directing them (children) to go and take knives and slice their own buttocks for a meal.

177. L. Alot ma ichayo ematieko kuon .

E. It is the despised vegetable that finishes kuon.

However badly-cooked or bad tasting a vegetable is, it will always help diners drive down kuon (ugali). People will, no doubt, talk ill of its taste, but surprise comes at the end when the mound of kuon disappears into bellies.

A small man or woman, who may also be frail-looking, is not necessarily incapable of achieving something substantial. Whether negative things are said about him like the vegetable, he may very well still accomplish the most unexpected.

On the other hand, the vegetable may be small in amount but this does not mean that it cannot be eaten satisfactorily with a mound of kuon. Eaters may very well finish the huge kuon and not the vegetable.

A frail-looking midget of a woman is not incapable of giving birth to giants or geniuses. She might very well do either, despite disparaging remarks and ^{de} spite the prophets of doom like vegetable invariably does to kuon.

178. L. Jarikni jamuod nyoyo gi kuoyo.

E. He who hurries munches nyoyo with sand.

There are possibilities that nyoyo may very well contain sand or grit, although women normally attempt to remove them before cooking. It is therefore safe to munch nyoyo slowly, feeling by any means for any grit or sand that might harm the teeth.

People are also advised to be methodical and careful in any activity or venture lest they falter and to do this, the expression is applied. They are being told that they should not hurry too much because they may overlook pitfalls and plunge into them, when such a disaster is easily avoidable through care.

The saying is also applied as a reprobation for bungling and faltering because of temerity and carelessness.

Nyoyo is a boilded mixture of maize and beans or peas that is salted and eaten with porridge (nyuka), sour milk or tea. Increasingly, nyoyo is being boilded and fried with oil and onions before eating. Occasionally nyoyo also comprises millet and beans or peas.

179. L. Nyakore otuo.

E. The dry-chested one.

Women refer to men as the "dry-chested ones" because the latter do not have breasts but instead have a "net" of hard, strong bones. The expression surfaces in conversations where women are cautioning one another against trying to fight men because the dry-chested ones are very strong and can easily crash them.

180. L. Nyabondo moher ema oyiqyo chamo.

E. It is the treasured guitar that the rat eats.

A cow that provides a lot of milk is deeply loved by the owner. Yet despite this relationship, when sickness or some kind of epidemic strikes it is this cow that normally gets killed.

A kind-hearted person famed for helping others is the one death normally prefers to a notorious brute.

In other words, the most individually or socially treasured thing or person is what gets spoiled or destroyed. It is this treasure that is called nyabondo (guitar).

The guitar was constructed from the stalk of either maize or millet all over Luoland. The hard, outer layer of the stalk was split into pieces, more or less the thickness of current guitar-strings. Then the pieces were spaced and tied to a small piece of stalk or wood with a sisal string on the two ends, again in a manner resembling the current guitar. This guitar produced music. A few youngsters still use it although it is fast disappearing.

But the usage of the guitar in verbal communication still persists. People still remember that one could make as many as ten of these guitars and come off with only one, beautiful and sonorous enough. This would be hidden as the most treasured thing. Despite this cautionary measure, a rat, among other things would invade and secretly destroy the guitar. Alternatively it would be stolen or a string snap. In the meantime the ugly ones would be spared. With time it became apparent that only the most treasured were prone to destruction. Some informants referred to Tom Mboya's death as a typical example of the destruction of the treasured nyabondo. The most precocious children, it is said, in the light of this expression, are the ones who die prematurely.

Whenever a precious thing, child, person disappears, dies or is spoilt, the popular remark is that "it is after all the treasured guitar that the rat eats".

181. L. Maber ber ema imadhe kwesi dun'g iro.

E. A pipe is only smoked when a matter is moderately bad.

There are certain weighty matters which do not permit leisurely attention. A fight, quarrel or an illness are some typical examples. To express the magnitude of their gravity, it is said that "a pipe is only smoked when a matter is moderately bad".

When a person has struggled to achieve something through some of the most difficult conditions, he will resignedly say in the end that "a pipe is only smoked when a matter is moderately bad".

Women also use the expression in connection with their experiences of labour pains and child delivery.

When a person is seen to be treating a serious matter with levity and therefore heading for a fiasco, he is told to stop or change because "a pipe is only smoked when a matter is moderately bad".

182. L. Ywak ogwal ok mon dhian'g modho.

E. The croaking of a frog does not bar cattle from drinking.

When cattle, goats or sheep are driven to the river, the croaking of frogs in the water does not prevent them from drinking. A frog is too tiny to frighten any of these animals.

When a child tries to stand in the way of an elder in order to prevent him from achieving an aim, the child is told that "the croaking of a frog does not bar cattle from drinking".

When a wife tries to prevent a husband from doing something and if the husband is sure he is stronger than her, he can tell her that "a frog cannot stop a cow from drinking water when it wants". Alternatively the wife will tell him that there is nothing much she can do to stop him because the croaking of a frog has not been known to prevent any animal from drinking water.

183. L. Rabondo okuongo ne wadgi e bondo (E).

E. The bald-headed one has forestalled a nother bald-headed person at indicating and deriding the abnormality.

A bald-headed man does not see his deformed head. But another person's he does. And in most cases he is known to refer to this head in a derogatory manner, forgetting his. Moreover, he will always hurry to forestall his fellow baldman, in teasing or expressing disgust at bald heads. If he does, then his like does not get a chance to hit back because the audience laughs and drowns such a possibility. Finally somebody in the audience will remark that the "bald-headed one has forestalled another bald-headed person at indicating and deriding the abnormality".

This tendency to forestall also happens among the toothless or people missing some teeth. It also occurs with the lame, crippled, and those with "rotten" (non-white) teeth. In all these cases, the expression of "bald-headedness" is used and regarded as representative. In other words the person being provoked, teased or abused need not be bald-headed because the audience normally already knows where he is deformed.

184. L. Guok on'giyo kama omuodoe chogo.

E. A dog frequents the spot where it gets bones to chew.

Dogs are known to behave as said in the saying.

On the other hand, there are certain people who frequent places where they have been treated well, so much so that their entertainers or observers finally comment that "a dog frequents the spot where it gets bones to chew". The expression may be used to communicate disgust with such a behaviour or simply as a casual observation of such a characteristic in certain people.

Other "dogs" are adulterers, boozers and people who steal groundnuts while they are drying before they can be put into a granary.

Some people use it as a praise-name in social gatherings or to restrain and stop somebody from frequenting a place too much, particularly if he is being parasitic or going there illegally.

185. L. Guok jarawo.

E. Dog the caller.

Dogs are notorious for straying into other homes than their owners', particularly when they are released for walks. Then they invariably leave the owners and call in other homes they pass by in the hope of getting food or a dog to mate with.

People who love to call in other homes instead of having straight journeys are rudely and derisively referred to as "dog the caller".

When children are sent on errands, they are reminded to avoid behaving like dogs. On a number of occasions, I heard adults being warned by their elders not to behave like dog the caller.

The expression is also popular as a praise-name in social gatherings, although the users are in all cases not callers at all. Thus they may be joking or alluding to certain persons in the gathering who have a tendency to call like dogs.

186. L. Jasem piere onondo.

E. The marriage or courting spoiler has tiny buttocks.

Men who have a tendency to spoil marriages or prospective ones are said to have tiny buttocks. Sometimes it is remarked that the buttocks are non-existent. The smallness or absence altogether, is attributed to the fact that the spoilers sit for long hours trying to dissuade the women and in the process flatten or wear away their buttocks.

The saying is applied in reference to any marriage-spoiler without actually taking the size of his buttocks into consideration. In fact any marriage spoiler is said to have tiny buttocks even if the case is otherwise an expression used exclusively to refer to and describe marriage spoilers.

187. L. Yuoro law kwach.

E. A brother/sister-in-law is a leopard-dress.

Brothers or sisters-in-law are supposed to be very friendly.

A woman dare not send her husband on a feminine errand but she can send her husband's brother. In return the brother expects and in fact gets favours like hot water for bathing, special delicacies and the laundering of his clothes.

These kinds of relationship are so rare they can only be found between a brother and a sister-in-law. They are as rare as a leopard dress.

Because a leopard is a fierce animal, it is not common to kill it. This means the skin is rare to come by. This is the rarity the expression is alluding to.

The expression is most commonly applied in praise of a man or woman behaving well and nicely to one another as in-laws.

Occasionally it is used as a praise-name.

188. L. Awuor nya dhako.

E. Awuor the daughter of a woman.

Certain men like performing women's tasks. These include drawing water, gathering firewood, cooking and washing utensils. One such man is known as Awuor. Exactly when and where he became so committed to feminine tasks is not known. But currently any man that is seen to be behaving in these lines is known as "Awuor the daughter of a woman".

"Daughter of" in this respect means being too attached to some kind of behaviour or activity. In this case, the attachment is to feminine styles of life although one is a male.

The expression is used to blame males who intrude into feminine roles.

Certain males enjoy feminine company and in fact prefer it to their own fellow-men's. In most cases their attachments or fondness are purposeless. But whichever the case they are referred to as "Awuor nya dhako" in a contemptuous tone by both male and female observers.

189. L. Koro piero rego nyin.

E. His buttocks are grinding sim sim.

A person has committed himself to doing something. Then out of cowardice he decides to withdraw. Because of this negative turn, his buttocks are said to be grinding sim sim.

When a group of people decide to cross a forest and then one of them chickens out or chooses to withdraw because of cowardice, that person's buttocks are said to be grinding sim sim. His buttocks are slipping backwards out of fear and by so doing they are grinding sim sim.

When a person is seen to be beginning to show fear, he is jolted out of it by being told that his buttocks should not grind sim sim.

People's buttocks grind sim sim prior to football matches, examinations and precarious undertakings.

When a person's buttocks grind sim sim, he is receding in fear the way the quantity of sim sim decreases when it is being licked.

190. L. Pora pora yuom katalan'g.

E. The ant's sting is the yardstick.

This is a fat black ant that bites ferociously. It is believed there is nothing that beats it. Its bite is the measuring rod of pain.

Anybody who shows jealousy by trying to do what another person has accomplished is mildly or roundly blamed by being referred to as the "Pora pora yuom katalan'g". In other words he is trying to measure up to an ant; he is trying to bite deep into the matter the same way the other man did.

The expression is used to discourage jealousy and to teach small brothers and sisters that they should not compete unnecessarily among themselves. It is also expressing disapproval of jealousy.

191. L. Anyam nyothoche chiemo lone nindo.

E. Muncher the daughter of Othoche for whom food is better than sleep.

The utterance is used when chiding or deriding people who prefer eating to everything else on earth. They could forgo sleep provided they eat.

Somebody may be in danger or dieing somewhere and yet because of their profound love for food, these people would rather the person died if only to ensure their eating continued uninterrupted. The expression is uttered to discourage them from eating at the expense of other realities of life going on around them.

Children are discouraged from overeating with the saying. In this case the expression is most commonly applied in a laughing tone.

The expression is said to have originated from a woman called Anyam Nyothoche who could eat non-stop for twenty-four hours without falling asleep or thinking of anything else.

Another version is related and originates from a bird called onyinjo. This bird eats fish and other lake animals. To get these, it overflies the lakeshore for twenty-four hours everyday, meaning it does not go to sleep at all. The problem is that it builds itself a very large nest in which it has never been trapped. But you can watch onyinjo bird for a whole day and night angling for and actually killing small fish and never going to sleep. It wants to chew non-stop and is therefore christened "Anyam" which derives from "nyamo" = chewing. How the bird is connected with nyothoche is not explained, but great eaters are sometimes called onyinjo.

192. L. Osiep rumo to wat ok rum.

E. Friendship ends but kinsmanship does not.

Friendship is breakable but blood-relationships are impossible to erase.

Even if a person chooses to keep away from blood-relations for long, the next time he is met he is told that however much he tries kinmanship is unbreakable.

On the other hand, if a friendship ends it is commonly uttered that "after all it was not a case of relating through a kinsmanship ... it was only a friendship".

193. L. Ilokori koda tun'g mosuo.

E. You have turned against me like a burning horn.

When a flute is being made out of a cowhorn, fire is applied, about half-a-foot from the big open end. But as the required hole is being bored, the horn stinks and hits the face with splinters. Thus while one is negotiating one's way through the horn, the latter apparently turns into a kind of enemy.

Likewise when one tries to be friendly with another person and yet this person becomes hostile, the latter is said to have turned into a burning horn.

A person tries to be diplomatic to a friend but his style does not work as a result of which he withdraws saying "I was talking as if you were a friend but didn't know you would be so hostile as to behave like a burning horn".

The expression is also used in courting missions. A woman starts off very friendly and sociable with a man but then all of a sudden she explodes into acrimonious and inflammatory language, literally

spitting in the man's face. By so behaving, the woman is said to have turned into a burning horn.

The flute into which the horn turns after the burning, is customarily used during funeral ceremonies. One or more people blow it amidst drumming, bugling, weeping, wailing and dancing. Some mourners dance to the horn.

194. L. Ipoga gi nyaburi.

E. You have solved the problem I would have had to give my wife.

Nyaburi is the wife. When a man is offered food or anything that his wife is traditionally known to be the provider, he will remark that he has been saved from having to face his wife. However, instead of saying "wife", he says nyaburi.

I heard this expression uttered only thrice, all of the cases in which men had been fed outside their homes. All the men said they were referring to their wives as well as thanking their feeders.

Traditionally a husband has no right to turn down his wife's food. She does not even have to ask him if he wants to eat. As soon as he arrives he is given food be it lunch or supper and however late. Normally the man tastes the food even if he has already eaten elsewhere. Then by way of apology he will find an excuse like loss of appetite, stomach upset and rarely say he has eaten. Otherwise he is expected to eat a wife's food however full he already is.

It is taboo to reject a wife's food because of a quarrel. If a man does this, a special ritual has to be arranged before they reunite as husband and wife.

In a polygamous family, the husband makes sure every wife's dish is eaten or tasted wherever he may be in the home. Normally he has his young sons to help him eat.

195. L. Jakisuma ok tuomb kende.

E. A person in need is never allowed to dish out grain himself.

Whatever a person asks to get it himself because he might take everything.

If a person wants millet because he does not have any of his own, he is never allowed to take it from the granary himself because he might take everything or too much. It is the owner of the millet who should serve him.

The same goes for food items and any other thing that can be shared like sim sim. When a woman asks for milk, the owner does not let her get it from the guord herself. She has to be served lest she takes everything because she is in need.

Not that the person in need does not help himself to something on his own. Of course he can and does but the expression is applied either as a joke as he aproceeds or is the owner of the item being dished out feels that enough has been taken and there should be a stop.

Others use the saying as a praise-name in social gatherings or in allusion to a needy person known to have nearly emptied a whole granary. Its application for praise does not necessarily mean the user is poor in any way.

196. L. Ipor mana ka n'ga ma yand otho pi.

E. You have surfaced like a person who had drowned.

A man has not been seen at home for a long time because of employment in a faraway town. Suddenly he appears and on meeting an elder, the latter remarks that he has "surfaced like a person who had drowned".

The old man is expressing his pleasure that at long last the young one has arrived. It is believed a drowned body floats ashore and the next of kin are bound to find it.

In this connection it is also remarked that "dhano kwadhe ber" a human being's straying, unlike cattle's, is good. However far he strays he will always return home, unlike a cow.

197. L. Ja-Kamagambo oluoro liel.

E. Ja-Kamagambo fears funerals.

Kamagambo people are famed for their fear of funerals among the Luo.

First they never buried the dead in the house as the Luo used to do. The custom was strange to them as they claim they were conquered by the Luo but were reluctant to absorb certain characteristic traditions of their rulers. (See introduction).

When European Christianity arrived, Kamagambo people were used as pastors and catechists to force, or persuade, or trick other Luo of South Nyanza to be converted. They were also used as the best examples for the abolition of burial in the house.

The expression "Ja-Kamagambo fears funerals" is normally used as a praise-name or reference to a Kamagambo person as soon as he is introduced to Joluo from other locations.

198. L. Kuot ber gi yoka n'geye.

E. A shield is beautiful on the outside.

There are certain things which look beautiful on the outside but inside are horrendous. The shield is such a thing. A man will expose the exterior of his shield but keep the inside to himself, whether in a fight or in a funeral ceremony. In the latter he will be using this shield to tease those who do not have theirs, and among other things, calling them "cowards, women, etc."

Similarly there are certain people who look physically attractive but who are unproductive in the sense that they are rogues, barren or generally badly-behaved. There is nothing good they can produce.

Certain homes or houses look attractive but when one gets into them, the welcome, the food and the atmosphere are very bad. In fact food may not be there altogether.

In all these cases where nothing substantive is produced it is remarked that " a shield is only beautiful on the outside".

(Kuot) is said to be the "first wife" a man should have. If a young man dies before marrying he haunts his agemates and playmates and even younger brothers. If he dies unmarried but with a shield, he does not haunt because he has left behind a substitute. Hauntings are said to be numerous these days because most men do not care to have shields early enough.

199. L. Rombo ok we gondiek.

E. A sheep is never left alone with a hynena.

When this happens the sheep is bound to be killed and eaten by the hyena.

It is a common remark in connection with opposite sexes, particularly when they are not married. It is not safe to let a young man stay overnight in a house with a single woman. It will be like letting a fat ram stay in the same house with a hyena. Instead of saying that a sexual relationship is feared, it is indirectly expressed that a sheep is never left with a hyena. It might be said as a joke or in earnest. Others use it as a praise-name or in allusion to a person known to have behaved like a hyena left alone with a sheep.

200. L. Raṅ apala?

E. Is imbecility multicoloured?

There are so many ways by which a person could behave idiotically and like an imbecile, it is impossible to classify them. And so the question is often asked "Is imbecility multicoloured?" Wherever a person is seen to be behaving queerly and in most cases in proud expectation of applause when all he is doing is in fact a live show of stupidity. The question is asked at the same time as it is also assumed to be self-answering: imbecility does not have a single uniform characteristic but can be any colour. It can be the most unexpected kind of behaviour and what the perpetrator probably expects to be praiseworthy and inculpable.

A person decides to shout in a bus to draw the attention of a woman who probably has her man right in there. People will remark that he does not have sense enough to realise the woman has her man and that his behaviour maybe a form of "raṅ", much as he himself does not know.

A man is seen to be fond of scratching his balls publicly and without even seeming to be realising it at the same time as he is talking to others. Because he has behaved this way so many times and it seems to be his character, indecent as it is, it is said in resignation that "ram" has no colour and this is just another form". Many other forms of indecent behaviour are described and dismissed with this expression.

201. L. Ding miaha kital.

E. However protuberant it is, a newly-married's jaw is never talked about.

A newly-married woman (miaha) need not be seen in a negative light because she might easily change her mind and return to her parents. Her face may be unattractive and carry a protuberant jaw but nothing should be said about these until she is grounded as a wife for life.

A benefactor should not be angered because he might change his mind for the worse. However obscenely fat, ugly or physically deformed he might be, these qualities should not be pointed at in his hearing lest he withdraws his charity, the same way a newly-married woman might storm out if her protuberant jaw is talked about.

The expression is also used to tease or test the woman and as a praise-name in certain public gatherings by men or women.

202. L. Ji te on'geyo gunda.

E. Everybody knows the bush where to (shit).

Because everybody knows where to shit, it is expected that everybody should be allowed to eat. There are certain people who eat so much, it would appear they do not care that others would also like to eat. Such selfish eaters are normally told that "everybody knows the bush where to shit". This is said to discourage their egocentricity and direct their attention to their fellow human beings.

This expression is also common in connection with land disputes. When a person wants to emphasize that he too is entitled to land ownership, he will say that "everybody knows the bush where to shit" and thus he should be given his share.

203. L. Mudho okonyo ondiek.

E. Darkness has saved hyena.

A hyena is very ugly-looking but because it moves in darkness this physical aspect of its appearance is hidden. Darkness saves it from exposure. With its mass of ugliness, it can prowl as far as it wishes and kill animals it can overpower.

Similarly there are certain people who are so ugly, they tend to move and meet others only in darkness. This is particularly so with men. Such men do not court women at daytime. They normally go at night in the hope that most of their ugliness will be covered by the darkness. When ultimately such men get married, it is often remarked "darkness has saved hyena", otherwise he would not have married. The utterance is made more so if the man is seen to be bragging despite his ugliness.

Other people hide their ugliness in beautiful clothes and wealth. Engagements, friendships and marriages that disregard appearance but revolve around material power are described with the expression apart from its occasional application as a praise-name.

204. L. Wach ok tow.

E. Words never decay.

A very common expression. Whatever statement one makes in public, it will always pass on through the audience to another one and to posterity. At least if the wording of the statement changes, the meaning and essence do not.

Elders tell their juniors certain philosophical thoughts which they believe essential to their good social and individual lives. To round off whichever thought, they (elders) say that "words never decay". Often they add that "it is only human beings who rot ". The elders mean to warn that if a catastrophe, calamity or misfortune befalls the youth, they should not blame them but simply recall the words they had uttered in the past.

For example a young man is warned against boasting and told that the world changes and that his fortunes cannot necessarily be everlasting. Despite the warning the man proceeds to do as the old men would not like. When his ruin comes he is told that "words never decay" because what elders told him has come to be.

205. L. Koth rangero.

E. Rain is unpredictable and intractable.

Rain is unpredictable and intractable because much as it might be seen to be threatening to fall, it always disappoints at will by fizzling out suddenly or getting diverted to ^a most unexpected area.

On the other hand, rain falls when least expected.

Thus when one is going on a journey, one is always cautioned to carry a raincoat however dry it looks because rain might suddenly fall. The case is the same for one going to graze cattle, sheep or goats.

In the same way, one should not stop preparing the land for sowing just because the skies are clear and clean. Rain can fall anytime.

A tiny cloud might turn into torrential rainfall, hence people are urged to be close to shelter because of the unpredictability of what might seem harmless.

There are certain people who use the expression as a kind of praise-name. They may not be (and in all cases are not) unpredictable and intractable, but only use the expression to praise themselves and as a kind of joke.

206. L. Polo oweyo ji awaya.

E. Humanity is at thunder's and lightning's mercy.

This expression is commonest as a praise-name. Certain people like to say in social gatherings that "I am so and so, humanity is at thunder and lightning's mercy". Alternatively they might be called such praise-names by their friends or relatives in the gatherings.

More seriously, the expression is used to imply that death comes at any time and is only postponing when to strike its victims. The utterance is made in connection with any seen or heard incidence of killing by lightning or when a particularly frightening lightning is noticed. It is said in resignation that "humanity is at hunder's and lightning's mercy".

207. L. Ich mudho.

E. The stomach is darkness.

Nobody sees the inside of the stomach. Nor is it known the mechanism by which it works. ^{I know - simple Burzot.} It is a mystery of darkness.

People are discouraged from selective eating because after all "the stomach is darkness and anything will be consumed and dealt with" by whatever mysterious machine is there. Moreover the stomach does not select but swallows anything.

A person bumps into a meal is welcomed to eat but turns down the offer on the grounds that he has already eaten. In reply he is told that he should not be afraid to eat more because the stomach is a dark, insatiable forest.

Others use it as a praise-name.

208. L. ~~Tin tin ok en midekre.~~
Tin tin ok en midekre.

E. Dimunitiveness is not sickliness.

A young-looking, lightly-built woman is confessing that she is as knowledgeable about Luo culture as anybody else, age notwithstanding. She is saying that her small physical appearance is not a sign of sickness.

Whenever a youngster or smallish looking person performs a feat like beating elders in a competition, it is remarked with resignation and pride that "dimunitiveness is not sickliness".

Of course shot, smallish-looking people are often the victims of teasing and abuse: they are often called Kokuro (pygmies) or laughed at for remaining too close to the ground. Generally tall or averagely tall people are preferred, but mysteriously the most unexpected things can be done by dwarfs.

After a dwarf and midget of a person has performed a feat, he often praises himself when his audience expresses shock. In most cases he proudly says that "tin tin ok on midolme".

29. I. *Dhann ka nyasaya yin wiye ti gi oro.*

E. Humanity the child of God; humanity whose hair sprouts in drought.

This is uttered in praise of all human beings. They can do the most unexpected thing at any time. Right in the middle of a busy market-place, thieves break into a bank and run away with millions of pounds. In praise of such a feat it is said "humanity the child of God; humanity whose hair sprouts in drought".

There are many other striking occurrences but one incidence I remember is when a widowed woman re-married the same hour her husband died. It was unusual and unheard-of but people hitherto use this expression to portray the magnitude of the woman's unethical behaviour because she ought to have waited for traditional rituals to be performed.

This is an expression of shock and wonder at striking aspects of social behaviour, although some people use it as a praise-name on certain gatherings.

30. I. *Piny nan'go.*

E. The world is a licker.

An expression of resignation to the knowledge that everybody and everything have an end; that the world licks everybody and everything in turns.

A millionaire might boast but all he is told by his economic world is that "the world is a licker".

A person might be expressing his unhappiness with his poor

economic, political or social status but he is told that "the world is a licker". The rich, he is being told, come and go because the licker is there.

The expression is also used when observing the downfall of a person from a position of prominence to penury and social degradation. It is said with surprise: "So, the man could also crumble ... surely the world is a licker".

211. L. Jawanya pende kwar.

E. A sponger's navel is red.

A sponger normally rubs his navel against the pole next to the door where he can be clearly seen by the diners. It is taken that the navel turns red after a spate of rubbings by the sponger. And so a sponger has come to be identified with a red navel, often with derogatory overtones.

It is also used as a praise-name. A person comes up in a social gathering and calls himself "I am so and so ... a sponger's navel is red". Alternatively another person will praise him with the expression.

212. L. Duk jawiro.

E. Nakedness rebounds.

A person takes a sharp turn from poverty to affluence but it is known that "nakedness rebounds". This means that however great the turn, poverty can always return. The lucky person is being cautioned against boasting and illusions of permanence of status.

On the other hand, a person may be born rich but ultimately poverty will get hold of him. When this happens, it is said that "Nakedness always rebounds and hits when least expected".

Fops are also warned with this expression. They are being told that a time might come when they will have to walk with bare buttocks.

213. L. N'gat ma ode chwer jawuor koth gi liyo.

E. He whose roof is **leaking** expresses his dread of rain by whistling.

He has to whistle in fear of his property in the house being drenched and spoilt.

He has to whistle in disgust because he might not be able to sleep.

In all he whistles in disgust with rain because it makes his life uncomfortable.

This expression is applied whenever a person is seen to be opposed to rain. Such a person is normally asked if his roof is leaking.

Other people use it as a praise-name. A person, in a social gathering, can decide to call himself "I am so and so ... the person with a **leaking** roof who expresses his dread of rain by whistling". The self-praising person might also be praised in the same terms by a member of the gathering.

214. L. Bingo ꞑro to e tedo.

E. Too much smoke does not indicate a lot of cooking is going on.

The thickness of smoke does not necessarily mean a lot of food is being cooked. There might very well be a lot of smoke and a speck of food in the cooking-pot.

The expression is used to sting women to hurry up with their cooking and not impress only with a lot of smoke and fire. They are derisively told by waiting eaters that "too much smoke does not indicate a lot of cooking is going on".

Passers-by use it as a joke. If the cooking woman invites them to eat, they will tease her that there is certainly a lot of smoke but not necessarily a lot of food.

On the other hand, there are certain people who talk big and yet have nothing substantive to back their loud-mouthedness. When it is noticed that they are talking for nothing, it is rudely remarked that "too much smoke does not indicate a lot of cooking is going on". Likewise too many books in a bag does not mean one is reading hard and widely.

215. L. Miluma kia n'gama odhier.

E. The taste for delicacies does not care whether one is poor or not.

The expression is used as a praise-name in social gatherings in particular, but once in a while by drunk people.

Only on two occasions did I hear some people use it seriously in discussing various cases of filching and kleptomania. In both cases it was remarked that every human being on earth would like to eat and wear good food and clothes respectively and live in good houses. The taste for these titbits does not care whether one is a pauper or not.

216. L. Dhier kiyombi.

E. Poverty is never outran.

The expression is commonly used as a praise-name in social gatherings. A person can choose to call himself (or be called by another person) "I am so and so ... poverty is never outran".

Only very rarely is it seriously remarked that once poverty strikes one cannot run away from it.

217. L. Ikak kajadiewo.

E. You are as stubborn and brave as a person who is diarrhoeaing.

A stubborn person on any matter is likened to a person who is diarrhoeaing.

The latter is known to be brave enough to go into the night and diarrhoea, whatever hazards maybe crouching in the darkness. Secondly such a person simply cannot control himself So much so that when and wherever the sickness strikes he will relieve himself: this maybe in his trousers, at a bus-station or in a bus. He is so brave and his innards so stubborn, he can diarrhoea anywhere. A person who is impossibly stubborn is said to be behaving like one who is diarrhoeaing.

A person is also told the expression as a reprimand against stubbornness.

218. L. Arito piny modagru.

E. I waited like the waiting for the sunrise that never came.

An elder is complaining that a certain group of people in a town promised to donate money to some rural project, but for ages have not been able to fulfil anything. He is arguing that he has waited "like the waiting for the sunrise that never came".

Waiting for anything for so long that it would seem impossible to fulfil is normally referred to as "the waiting for the sunrise that never came". If for example, a boy is sent on an errand and he takes very long or does not return altogether, the father or mother will use the expression to convey their displeasure, anxiety and near-resignation.

219. L. Apam kisonga to awe ngure.

E. Should I clap my hip and leave my rectum or vice-versa?

This is a question and an exclamatory remark at the same time. It is very commonly used when a person is really annoyed or shocked or flabbergasted.

Normally the person claps his hips in wonderment and in the process asks "Shall I clap my hip and leave the rectum or vice-versa?"

There are numerous cases, however, where the expression is used without clapping the hips.

In all cases the utterance is made when a matter has gone beyond what would be considered normal limits. The utterer wants to convey this through the word "rectum".

220. L. Ti an awuo ma thirna nowuogi.

E. I shall talk until my rectum comes out.

The talker has pleaded or warned so repeatedly that now he thinks a time will soon come when his own rectum will jump out. His audience has refused to obey him and extreme anger has set in. He is in fact literally barking at them. The audience may be a group of schoolboys before a teacher; it may be a political rally or a group under the barker's direction and leadership. He is at the same time trying to plead with them not to make him talk so much.

A mother also pleads with her children politely to do certain things (e.g. household chores) but when she gets disgusted she blasts them with the expression.

221. L. Jachien isewo gi remo.

E. Jachien is escorted with blood.

After a cleansing ceremony, some of the blood of the animal that has been slaughtered is thrown into the bush behind the home of that cleansing. The animal is normally either a cock or a goat and the blood is thrown to appease the jachien for which the ceremony must have been held.

Similarly when a person calls and asks for something he must be given a piece at least, however small. A sponger is one example. When a child pesters for something and pierces the owner with a father-cut-me-a-piece (baba-chuta) look, the person will give it at least something to eat and remark that "jachien is escorted with blood". The desire in the child or other caller is the jachien that has to be quenched.

When a person has been pestering for something for too long, it is remarked that "jachien has to be escorted with blood" when he is given what he has been dieing for.

In other words it is remarked that oyuo isewo gi mogo, meaning the "caterpillar is escorted with flour". This is the same as saying that jachien is escorted with blood. Like a person is given what he asks (or seems to) for, so is a caterpillar powdered with flour as it leaves or is escorted out of the house.

222. L. Wendo ema inyiso i agwata to jodala to nan'go mana n'geye.

E. A guest is shown the inside of the calabash while the host only licks the outside.

When a guest comes, his hosts should endeavour to entertain him as well as possible, even if this means sacrificing their own comfort. It is this desired entertainment that is equal to showing the guest "the inside of the calabash". Whatever discomfort there is should be for the hosts. This discomfort is the "outside" that they should "lick".

This expression is uttered as a reminder that guests should be treated and hosts should behave in certain specific ways. Hosts who want to behave as if they are guests are also restrained with this saying.

223. L. Osiekoni ngen'y nyar kawuono.

E. She who has bumped into a conversation like the daughter of today.

A woman is being teased for bumping into and engaging into a conversation straightway like the "daughter of today".

The "daughter of today" is the woman with the peculiar behaviour hitherto unseen particularly in the presence of her father-in-law. She is the one woman who had the guts to ~~answer~~ answer him back and exchange words with him. Thus she came to be called the "daughter of today".

She is also called "oti katin nyar Kanyidoto, ~~chuora~~ denyo ated mar" = she who has grown old whilst still young, my-husband-is-starving-let-me-cook-mine. This is the woman who looked too young to be married and yet surprised everybody by doing everything herself, including cooking (see No. 207). Thereafter the expression has become popular in describing young children or smallish people who exhibit certain abilities and characteristics of elders like cooking, digging or expressing certain profound ideas.

224. L. Inena e pi rabuon.

E. You are viewing me in potato-water.

"You are treating me cheaply or with levity".

Potatoes are muddy after they have been uprooted. This automatically means they are dirty. Any water in which they are washed is being treated as if it is simple and despised. If a person

is treated as if he is simple-minded, uncreative and unenterprising, he will retort that "You are viewing me in potato-water". Girls who are being courted are particularly fond of this expression when reacting to men.

After they have been cooked some sticky, reddish and ugly looking jelly remains at the bottom of the pot. This liquid is not liked and to be "viewed in potato-water" is to be treated like this liquid which is normally thrown far and away in disgust.

This is an expression of anger although one can also use it as a joke and to spice a **conversation.**

225. L. Jaber jaula.

E. The charming one reveals herself.

The qualities of the beautiful ones reveal themselves very easily. This is what is meant by this saying.

But the expression has its origins in a story about "small" and "big" potatoes.

People had gone to uproot potatoes one day. They decided to concentrate on the ones with big leaves in the belief that these had the biggest potatoes. Unfortunately nothing but lifeless roots were harvested. The poverty of the beautiful had been revealed in their final appearance. It is therefore said within this expression that the last laugh is better than the first. It is the smallish-looking leaves that were belieing huge potatoes: they had the last laugh. The beautiful brag nothing, the ugly is modest with a lot that remains unseen.

People are normally warned not to behave like the big-eared potatoe because barrenness might strike them.

A related anecdote is about crooked and straight trees. Once upon a time these two types were owned by one person. One day he decided to go and fetch some of the wood. When the straight beautiful trees saw him, they started laughing and jeering at the crooked trees, looking forward to their imminent doom of being cut. But unfortunately for the beautiful trees, the man wanted straight trees with which to build a house. Their laughter stopped as soon as the man started cutting them. The crooked ones had the last laugh. The beautiful ones are easier to fall victim and be exploited than the ugly. Beauty is not a virtue in the absence of sensible restraint.

226. L. Chweya Rarek ja-Kochia wuod Oyu.

E. Chweya Rarek the son of Oyu of Kochia.

A derogatory description of a glutton originating from the story of a man from Kochia location known as Chweya the son of Oyu.

Chweya is said to have got lost on a journey because he had more than enough food to eat.

Another version has it that he went on a journey and took so long on an eating spree everything about him was forgotten.

If a person takes too long somewhere or if he is known to take too long in places for whatever reason he is either nicknamed, called or derisively described as Chweya.

Above everything else, Chweya is renowned as a great eater.

Another story says that whenever people went on a courting expedition, the hosts would boast that they had much more food than the guests would contain. To counter such threats, the people

always ensured that Chweya was among them. He would eat until the hosts had to swallow their pride. It is said that Chweya had eating medicine which enabled him to stuff himself limitlessly. He would eat and eat and then burp and feel as if he had not tasted the least.

Chweya's father was curiously known as Oyu, a name which means eating tearingly like a hyena tearing its food into shreds. Furthermore Chweya had the praise-name of Rarek, which may be construed to mean the peculiarity or outstanding nature of character, in this case, Chweya's.

The expression is very commonly uttered to restrain certain people from behaving like Chweya.

227. L. Kinda kiten'ga nomiyo opuk ogwaro nyar min Kirowo.

E. Persistent patience enabled the tortoise to scratch the public area of Kirowo's mother.

If a person insists too much on doing something or getting it, the consequence may be bad. Youngsters are discouraged from staying too long in school because they may die before they enjoy the fruits of their academic sweat. Any mishap that arises from too much persistence, is dismissed with this saying.

The saying has its origins in the story of the tortoise and Kirowo's mother. The woman had a date with the tortoise. And a tortoise being a man, could not disappoint a woman. When he arrived, unfortunately, the woman had her husband beside her. But tortoise did not know and proceeded to knock and bang the gate. Kirowo's mother heard and asked who was banging. The answer was "I am tortoise".

"What do you want?", the woman asked. "You are the one who invited me", he answered.

"Then you may enter", she replied. Tortoise went to the hind door known as nyakisiko and banged.

"Who is banging?" the woman asked. Tortoise did not hear and proceeded to bang and scratch the door. The woman asked again and the reply was " I am Tortoise".

"What do you want from my door even if you are Tortoise?", she asked.

"But you told me to come" he answered angrily.

"O.K. Mr. Tortoise, open and enter" the blanket Kirowo's mother was sharing with her husband. The woman then asked softly "Who is pulling my blanket?"

"It is me" Tortoise answered.

"So what?" she retorted.

"Please open for me", Tortoise implored in a watery, soft voice.

"Alright enter Mr. Tortoise". He surely entered and started scratching the **pubic**-hair-skin of the woman. The husband heard and instantly concluded that the woman knew of the Tortoise's coming. He was very angry about this but more so because his wife's private parts had been scratched in his presence.

He unilaterally divorced the woman and ordered her to go off with Tortoise. Tortoise's persistent patient endurance was the cause of this rupture.

228. L. Alokora ngero.

E. I've turned into a ngero.

A musician is praising himself whilst he is playing a lyre. He is called Ayany Jowi and he is saying that he has become the talk of the location and is therefore a ngero. A lot is being said about his artistic abilities, both instrumentally and verbally. While playing the lyre so well, he also talks and sings in very satirical language. He does not specify which songs, but there are plenty for his listeners to get evidence from. Because he believes he is the talk of the world, he sings that he has turned into a ngero.

Many people use the expression in self-praise, even if there is very little to be proud of. **Observers** can also comment that "so-and-so has turned into a ngero" because of a feat or peculiar behaviour.

229. L. Ere gima angulonigo olawo ?

E. Where is the price for which to spit for you ?

A woman is asking for the new arrival's gift from Nairobi. If he offers it, then she will spit him the "spit of luck". This means she wants a price to be paid for her blessings. Elders are known for this kind of request. The belief is that once the request is granted, the giver benefits for the rest of his life. Even if he does not become a millionaire, he will continue to earn a reasonable livelihood.

It is also believed that if the request be rejected, then the elder swallows it back with the symbolic implications of disaster, ill-luck or poor earnings in the future. Alternatively if he spits, he has showered the youngster with luck.

If a woman falls in love with a man, contrives a desire to marry him and goes to the most desperate limits to achieve this the man should requit. But if he does not, then the woman shall swallow her saliva in angry disappointment. And with that she shall have spelt a curse on the man. Thereafter he will probably never get a wife, marry a barren nightrunner or simply pair up with a whore.

230. L. Olo nono ndik Ogoma Kawanga.

E. Ogoma Kawanga's bicycle which is better than nothing.

Anything in Kanyada that is better than nothing, however ugly, is compared to Ogoma Kawanga's bicycle. An old dilapidated raincoat is better than none and is compared and in fact called Ogoma Kawanga's bicycle.

The story runs that Ogoma Kawanga's bicycle was better than human feet however slow it might have been. There are numerous cases when the bicycle was never ridden because of mechanical problems, but had all the same to be pushed along as the owner journeyed across and around Kanyada location of which the British Colonial administration made him chief in the late thirties. (see Introduction). It was a bicycle all the same and whether it was being pushed along the consolation was that it had the appearance and potential of moving faster than a human being.

Ogoma, the owner, still lives, does not ride a bicycle anymore. But he is still strong, can walk long distances and is a serious cash crop farmer.

People are known in Kanyada to keep radios, cars, bicycles and ploughs which are useless but which are loved by the owners because they are better than nothing. When told that these purposeless things should be thrown away they reply that "Remember Ogoma

Kawanga's bicycle that is better than nothing".

231. L. Warito lep nyakeno.

E. We have waited as if it is the cow's tongue that Nyakeno cooked.

Somebody is complaining that people in Nairobi are very bad because they keep promising money but never providing it.

This never-fulfilled promise is like Nyakeno's. It is said that this woman told elders to wait in the sitting-room while she cooked a cow's tongue for them. The elders waited and waited but nothing came. They even dozed and woke up and dozed again but nothing came. Finally they stood up and went because it seemed the tongue would never come. These days it is said that anything that is promised but never-fulfilled is like Nyakeno's tongue. It is simply remarked 'we have waited Nyakeno's tongue'(literal). Otherwise the expression can be freely translated as above.

There are certain people who utter the expression without caring what it means or meant originally. All they care about is the fact that they have heard it used in certain circumstances of too much waiting for the execution of certain promises.

But traditionally, whether it is a goat, sheep or a bull, the tongue is for elders' consumption. They can however eat other parts provided they do not interfere with the rights of other age-groups.

Another version says that Nyakenc was a man and that once upon a time his brother's wife promised to give the cow's tongue for supper.

He waited for a long time until his own wife's food (vegetables and ugali) was ready. He very politely told the woman to return the food because a delicious tongue was coming for that evening. The woman reluctantly kept her food and went to sleep. About midnight Nyakeno woke her up, violently asking for the food he had rejected. The tongue did not come. Since then "lep Nyakeno" (Nyakeno's tongue) is referred to as the symbol of what never materialises.

232. L. Isegoyo wiya lero.

E. You have wounded my head.

A person is going on a journey, an adventure, to the market or to look for something but before he leaves somebody discourages him, saying that there is little or nothing to gain and that most probably he will end up in trouble.

The discouraged person's reply will be "you have wounded my head and so I can't go". But if he goes and gets hurt he will be told that his head had been wounded but that he refused to take heed and has himself to blame. Such a person might choose to go to war when he has been warned that he is going to die. He might choose to go on a journey when he has been warned that his bus will crash and kill him. He might choose to swim when he has been told in advance that he will drown. Then, of course, it is said that he has himself to blame.

233. L. Kinda e n'gwech.

E. A successful race is patient endurance.

A student is being encouraged to endure his studies however excruciating and long because with patient endurance he is doomed to come to the end. However long or shot^y a race one will always come to the end, walking, running, tripping in turns. A person is told this as an encouragement to either proceed with a task he is undertaking or is threatening to give up.

On the other hand if a person has declared intent to undertake a project, he is encouraged to do so with this expression, particularly if it is huge and time-demanding.

There is a famous story about the hare and tortoise. It is a story people are told to encourage them to endure before achieving their aims. It is said that once upon a time hare and tortoise decided to compete by running. Of course hare knew he was much faster and would win the race. He ran very hard and burnt himself so much he had to take a rest with the consolation that he was far ahead of tortoise. But tortoise went on plodding until he came to the end of the race whilst hare was still resting and congratulating himself. Tortoise was slow but patient - and finally victorious.

234. L. Wuonⁿ gimoro olunde tut Otingo Koraye.

E. The owner's - anus -is-deep, Otingo Koraye.

Otingo Koraye adopted this saying for self-praise in public gatherings until it became his name. Now everytime a person in Kanyada is abused for being stingy or mean his anus is singled out as being deep. The description of the anus is the abuse. Otingo Koraye's name is certainly added to make the expression complete.

He was never stingy or mean and hitherto there are people who use the saying as a praise-name in public, never failing to include Otingo's name.

In serious circumstances, the expression is applied as a very serious abuse.

235. L. Mae tak thing.

E. This is a pot of beer-dregs.

It is not uncommon for elders to share the thick porridge-like beer (mbare) from one pot.

They pull the drink with straws (oseke), which every person has. After they have drunk, the dregs that are left in the pot are called thing. Now the pot becomes useless because it has nothing to be pulled from it. It is therefore called tak thing (the pot of beer-dregs).

A weakling is described as tak thing, when it is apparent there is nothing he can accomplish. He may be unable to dig, plough, sow, milk or heave and hold a small item which "even oyundi bird can carry". He is the kind of person who trips from contact with a tiny bird's dropping. The person is being abused and reprimanded for failing to measure up to social expectations.

236. L. Sembe bende iporo gi nyamin.

E. A ram's fat tail can be compared with another one.

A man was cut into small pieces by his neighbours and packed in a sack. Then his seven-month pregnant ^{wife} was also divided into small pieces, foetus included, and wedged into the same sack.

Ten hours later the sackful was found hidden in a nearby bush. After a brief identification problem, it was proved beyond doubt that the dead were Mr. and Mrs. Okoth Asara. The place was Kanyabala and the year was 1974 on the 31st of December. The dispute that led to the

killing was associated with land, cattle, goats, sheep and sisal. Okoth was poised to win the legal proceedings that were on at that time and the best way the complainants could satisfy themselves was to physically get rid of him. After all he was an orphan without a brother or sister and therefore nobody but the complainants to claim his property.

Up to now Kanyabala people keep wondering whether anything will ever come to pass that compare with the Okoth-atrocity. This was like a ram's fat tail and the worry is whether another one like this will ever be seen. The same is said of many other things which do not have to be atrocities, but which might recur all the same. The expression surfaces often in conversations, particularly when an attempt is being made to compare two or more things, people, behaviour or events.

237. L. Kata in ema iporo pi gi mogo.

E. Even if you equalise water to flour.

Somebody is angry and swearing that whatever happens he is going to fight or face the other person on equal terms.

It may be a land dispute, a contest for a woman or simply a warning that the other person should not set foot in his compound but that if he does then he will be fought to the hilt to ensure he is driven out of the home. By so doing he shall have equalised the daring (getting into the home uninvited).

This equalising is the same as the following process: a clean stick is dipped into water up to a required level. Then the same stick is planted in flour up to the wet level. By so doing

equal and marching quantities of water and flour have been measured out. When the time comes to cook ugali, it turns out an ideal dish because the water and flour equalise and coalesce. They neutralise one another the same way the contesters and fighters do.

This expression is applied to restrain provocation or behaviour that is bad and unwarranted and which might earn one regrettable reprisals.

238. L. Iwuoyo ka n'gat ma ogo lwedo eiye.

E. You are talking as if a hand has been planted inside you.

When a woman has medical problems in pregnancy, a traditional midwife plants her hand into the uterus to ascertain the source and cause of the trouble. Occasionally the expectant mother is left in worse trouble if the doctor's hand deranges the womb or some other related organ. In such a case it is said that chaos have been let loose by the planted hand.

And so when a person talks like a madman, he is said to be "talking as if a human hand has been planted inside him", the same way the pregnant woman complains, wails and talks if the midwife makes a mistake.


The expression is applied to stop verbal diarrhoea or undesirable talk which borders on the immoral.



239. L. Mano to ni e kind akuru gasumbi.

E. That is still between akuru bird and asumbi.

This expression originates from Luo architecture.

The Luo traditionally build round house with round cone-shaped grass-thatched roofs. Similarly they build granaries with round cone-shaped roofs.

Some of the roofs can be very steep (olisore) =  this is the asumbi roof). The other type looks like a flying akuru bird =

 (this is the asumbi roof). Then there is the in-between type of roof which looks like this: . This is the roof that is said to be between akuru and asumbi. And it is the ideal roof.

When a matter is between akuru and asumbi, it is neither bad nor good, it has not been resolved and is therefore in a state of suspense. The expression is increasingly getting detached from its architectural meaning and fitting into other usages like tenterhooks, irresolution and the unpredictability of the outcome of a race. There are even cases where the saying is used to mean mediocrity and "fifty-fifty".

The distancing from the original meaning is attributed to the fact that the Luo are increasingly getting to build square-houses and therefore square roofs and therefore creating room for new usages.

240. L. Jaraha kolwenda.

E. As hedonistic as a cockroach.

This expression is used to praise pleasure-lovers. They might have a predilection for dancing, womanising or some other types of easy-going life. Such people are as hedonistic as a cockroach because they love pleasure so much it is at their mercy, back and call.

Cockroaches are known to encroach on the sweetest household items including sugar, salt and other delicious dishes. The pleasure seekers go when and eat what they like. At no time do they go for the tasteless, hence the christening with hedonism.

The expression is also applied in merry-making public gatherings as a praise-name although the users do not necessarily have to be pleasure-lovers.

241. L. Maka ngita gi del.

E. Those are the waist-beads and the body.

When two people are referred to as ngita gi del, it is being said that they are as close to one another (in fact attached to one another) as the waist-beads are to the body. The reference is to the two people's friendship, a friendship that means they are always together or ideologically faithful to one another or if one of them is in the vicinity then the other must be coming soon or lurking by. The expression is uttered in praise of the friendship.

Ngita are the waist-beads and del is the body. The beads are about the size of cow-peas and consist of various colours, notably red, blue and white. The beads are closely threaded together with a string that is finally tied round a woman's waist. A woman can wear as many strings of beads as she can afford. But only a few women wear them these days and in any case under their dresses so that nobody can see. Otherwise, they used to expose them before European dressing style forced out Luo fashion. Currently, many Euro-Christianised people regard waist-beads as evil and scoff at those who are known to wear them. Yet the expression ngita gi del persists in reference to great friendship among Christians and non-Christians alike.

242. L. Mbaka jaramo.

E. A conversation has the tendency to endure with determination.

A conversation can persist for a long time despite variations of subject the flagging or fluctuations of interest, and interruptions. It is for this enduring tendency that mbaka (conversation) is praised and described as jaramo.

More than that, conversations have the tendency to dig into all sides of issues until eventually the participants agree to disagree or simply agree. Whatever happens, it is said that mbaka jaramo has endured and probed into an issue.

On the other hand, conversations are known to reach deadlocks and yet drag on and on until participants give up or doze off. The stalemate is known as ramo and in order to describe this behaviour of conversations, it is remarked "mbaka jaramo". In brief, it is so described because it (mbaka) has the capacity and unrelenting inclination to defy stalemates and to drag on even if they (the stalemates) have been recognised.

A participant utters the expression when he is disgusted with a conversation and wants to withdraw or is actually withdrawing.

The expression is also collectively used to call off a conversation or discussion.

Occasionally some people use the saying as a praise-name.

243. L. Iyi ogoyi buya.

E. Your stomach has converted you into weeds.

A person whose stomach has converted into weeds is a heavy and insatiable eater. This expression is uttered to the person in derogatory appreciation of his eating prowess or as a way of stopping him from eating too much. Alternatively, the person is being shamed out of over-eating. Children's eating is also checked with the expression.

Weeds are known as buya and they rejoice in the tendency to kill, stifle, or cover up crops. Ultimately, their aim is to prevent farmers from harvesting anything. In other words they want to and indeed do consume all the crops. This is the same way overeaters consume, such that it does not seem as if there are any food around nor would one even surmise from the flatness of their bellies whether they have eaten or not. Weeds do not look satisfied, the same way gluttons never are. It is said that ^{they} swallow and conceal food in a style that gives the impression they (the people) have not tasted a morsel.

244. L. Ibiro romo' gi makolwer.

E. You will meet that which has not been rid of its branches.

A person is being warned that he is bound to encounter danger if he goes on a journey, attempts an adventure, asks a question or attempts an unusual mission.

The person may attempt to ask an autocrat a question - a daring question. But before he does that he is warned by companions that "ibiro romo gi makolwer." He is being warned against the possible deadly reaction of the autocrat.

A teacher warns his pupils against bad behaviour by telling them "if you disobey my orders then you are bound to meet that which has not been rid of its branches". He is telling them how ruthless he will be.

A person chooses to cross a forest very late at night and he is warned against possible attacks by pythons, puff adders, hyaena, leopards, nocturnal bandits etc. Any of these or others are referred to as that which has not been rid of its branches.

Numerous other missions that are feared fraught with grave danger, are referred to as "that which has not been rid of its branches."

On the other hand a person who believes he is particularly strong and unbeatable, can warn provokers that the further they prod, the closer they are approaching that which has not been rid of its branches. He is announcing how dangerous he is.

"That which has not been rid of its branches" is describing a cane that is rough and full of spokes of branches. Such a cane inflicts a lot of pain. On the other hand a rough, thick forest is being described. Such a forest causes enormous pain to the body, apart from the fact that it might also be hiding lots of poisonous and dangerous animals.

245. L. Kama iluokorie ok ituoye.

E. Your body doesn't dry where you have had a bath.

After one has eaten one should hurry off to do another thing and not just remain seated to doze off. One should go on to work, sleep or fulfil an appointment. This is the same way one is expected to behave after having a bath. One should not wait to dry. Rather one ought to hurry off for some appointment elsewhere, or to do something else and more useful than waiting to dry in the sun.

Generally, after one has accomplished a task, one should not feel complacent and remain seated. One should proceed elsewhere to perform another thing.

This expression is most commonly uttered if and when a person wants to take his leave. He says that he has been for long enough, has eaten and done something else and should not wait to dry where he has had a bath.

A person is also reminded to continue being active if he is seen to be relaxing complacently. He is told "kama iluokorie ok ituoye".

The expression is also uttered in allusion to complacency and purposeless waiting.

246. L. Jachien kisiki.

E. Jachien is just a piece of wood.

Pieces of wood have been noticed to have a special behaviour at night. They are known to frighten people. A person sees a piece of wood while walking at night, bends at a distance to ascertain if it is really wood and alas the piece bends with him. When he stands up, it too stands up. When he starts walking, it too walks. And so the person expresses his consternation: "Jachien kisiki". Jachien can move and therefore a piece of wood that moves is behaving like it.

Whilst a person is walking at night, he sights what he believes is a human being only to realise on being attacked that it is actually a deadly animal. He will express shock by saying "Jachien kisiki".

After an agreement has been reached between two or more people, somebody suddenly turns wild in opposition and his behaviour is referred to as "Jachien kisiki".

Jachien is a vengeance-ghost (for some causes of vengeance see No. 1).

Anything that misleads one into danger, failure or disaster is called jachien. The thing could be a vengeance-ghost or one's own temerity and miscalculation. But even if the latter two are the causes, one still blames some jachien.

After an old man has lived for too long he might turn into a jachien, in the sense that his curses might be lethal or he might simply accumulate a lot of anger because of ill-treatment from his children and grand-children. When eventually he dies, he turns into a jachien by showering them with misfortune, disasters and haunting them where they are close to success in a task.

A murderer expects to be haunted by his victim. This victim is called jachien.

Unless successfully treated, one expects to be haunted by certain animals like the ant-bear if one sights it or the leopard, hyena and lion if one kills them. The animals turn into jochiende (plural of jachien). In the case of the ant-bear, the animal has to be tracked down and killed at all costs prior to treatment.

All jochiende seek revenge for the ill-treatment they received from their victims. While they can be appeased, cases are known where they refuse to relent.

247. L. Ka-Lan'go ok kunie.

E. Nothing is rejected in Lango-country.

A father or mother spansks and chides a child for bad behaviour. Then the child cries in pain and out of anger chooses to reject all the food the mother offers that day and night. Furthermore,

the child refuses to remain in the house and instead sobs in the dark. The greatest likelihood is that the parents ultimately forget the offence and persuade the child to get into the house and eat.

The child can afford to weep and reject the food because ^{all} after he is with his parents who definitely feel pained and uneasy eating while he is starving outside. It is said the child is in his own Luo country as opposed to Lan'go country where nobody would care to pamper and implore him to eat. He is not in Lan'go country where people proceed to eat and enjoy even if somebody else is writhing with pain outside. In other words, the child can afford to reject food or any other offer in his own country but does not expect to do the same in Lan'go country and be soothed into changing his mind.

The same thing happens with elders (i.e. people other than children). One rejects offers and sulks only when and where one expects sympathy and that is only in one's Luo rather than Lan'go country. The latter is the country of Jomwa (non-Luo).

Oral tradition puts it that the Luo used to visit their neighbours such as the Nandi, Luhya, Kisii and Kuria in pre-colonial times and that out of the kinds of treatment they received there the experience was born. Other Luo reached these societies and learnt their Lan'go-behaviour as prisoners of war. When released they would relay their experiences at home and word would spread that in Lan'go country, no sympathy and pampering is expected if one rejects an offer.

But currently the expression is applied in reference to cases where one does not expect sympathy because one does not have a friend, relative or anybody who has done one a favour in the past. One is therefore expected to take or leave.

It is also used in the context of current Kenya politics. It is argued that the country is striving for multi-ethnicity and that anybody who walks out on the government, para-statal organisations and other national associations does not expect sympathy and recalling as in Lan'go country you either participate by partaking of what is available or unsympathetically gain nothing whilst shouting in protest.

248. L.' Wendo juogi.

E. A visitor is spirit-possession.

A visitor does not have to make an appointment in order for him to be welcome and well-cared for. One never knows what luck the unknown and unexpected arrival has in store for the hosts. He is a spirit from whom anything is expected, including luck or ill-luck if badly treated. It is this spiritual potential that gets the visitor the description name of juogi.

Some people call juogi jamwa or ja-lan'go, normally in an endearing tone. This is done when a person gets possessed with juogi. Such a person might grow thin and whilst looking, belches when the spirit wishes, goes berserk, refuses to eat certain people and must undergo certain traditional treatments before they are normal. Incurable cases exist but some side benefits accrue from the ones under control: a person who has been affected might become a medicineman, a diviner and a doctor for people with spirit-possession.

The spirit is called jamwa or jalan'go because it is believed to come from distant foreign land. It can hail from across Lake Victoria, one's mother-land or the country of some other distant relative. One never knows what the spirit has and wants until it has been well-treated and responded. This is the same way a guest is expected to be treated because the side-benefits can be great. This is why there is the constant conversational reminder that a visitor is a spirit-possession.

249. L. Fulu bende oro mana ngege.

E. Even fulu fish can send tilapia on an errand.

A junior can send an elder on an errand the same way fulu fish can send tilapia (fulu is much smaller than ngege (tilapia). Both are fished from Lake Victoria.

A wife can send a husband to perform a function although the former is fulu and the latter ngege. Physical size and age notwithstanding, the husband is believed to be all-powerful, always at the command and the wife is therefore at his beck and call. All the same, a time of reversal comes and the woman asks for a helping hand using this expression in an imploring tone.

A child sends an elder brother or sister and makes an imploring statement using the expression. The elder is ngege and the youth is fulu.

Agemates also employ the expression when sending one another. One of them chooses to be fulu and then calls the other one ngege in order to implore him with the statement: "fulu bende oro mana ngege".

In brief the expression is saying that "if fulu can send ngege then surely why not me you".

But so far no evidence has been adduced to show that fulu and ngege have practically been seen to be sending one another. It is suggested that the sizes of the two fishes gave rise to the speculation that ngege is the more powerful and could send fulu although the reverse was also possible.

250. L. Iwuondi ka ja-Wasio.

E. You are being tricked like a person from Wasio.

Wasio people live in two different parts of South Nyanza district, in Suna and Gwasi locations. Both places are between fifty and sixty miles away from Kanyada and a little less from Kamagambo.

Yet in both Kanyada and Kamagambo those who are easily tricked are referred to as "Jo-Wasio" because it is Wasio people who are said to be renowned for succumbing to cheap lies.

The story runs that there used to be a time when cattle-rustlers enjoyed action in Wasio country. Indeed they got what they wanted in broad daylight. They went to the grazing grounds and offered sim sim to the Wasio shepherds. But first they (the shepherds) were told to wrap their arms around huge trees and then cap their hands in readiness for sim sim. After they received their share, the next problem would be how to unwrap their arms without losing the sweet and rare sim sim. They took special care not to waste this special delicacy which they loved and therefore spent a long time, holding the fingers together,

tightly-closing the hands and then gradually releasing themselves from the trees they were embracing. By the time the sim sim reached their mouths, the cattle were long gone and they did not even know because the sim sim had effectively made them forget everything else they owned.

Another version extends the story and says that instead of pouring the sim sim into the capped hands, the rustlers forked out ropes and tied the hands such that the shepherds could not get a chance to release themselves until marauding hyenas came or some people came to their rescue in good time, with all the cattle certainly gone.

CHAPTER SIX

ANALYSES AND INTERPRETATIONS OF TEXTUAL CONTENTS

There are two types of analyses and interpretations in this chapter. The first one comprises what are considered the general features of *ngero*. The second one touches on the contents of each text, by way of summarising and/or discussing their implications.

The analyses are based on the evidence available on each text. And rather than reproduce the texts, only their numbers as they are in Chapter Five are quoted for reference.

6.1 GENERAL

A big majority of the users of *ngeche* are adults. However, the most obvious feature of nearly all of the *ngeche* is their brevity, in a number of cases no more than three words. Examples are numbers 1, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12, 14, 18, 102, 103, 104, 105, 139, 225, 228 and 236 among others. The long ones are relatively few.

The meaning of practically every *ngero* is to be deduced from the conversations in which they occur. In most cases they (*ngeche*) are allusions to subjects the conversations are about. Put another way, they are mostly indirect references to the subjects.

Most ngeche and their contexts (conversations) seem inter-dependent in explaining and communicating the various messages. Nearly every ngero does not have to be explained to the participants in conversations unless one of them confesses ignorance, which is rare. This is not to say that all the users and listeners understand the expressions. Random interviews reveal that certain people (ranging from the youth to elders) have literally no clue about what many of the expressions mean. The irony is that some of the people who do not know a thing about some ngeche are the same people who fittingly use them in various contexts. This implies that the application of an expression is not necessarily determined by the user's knowledge of all that it means. In other words correct contextual applications of ngeche is itself a claim to a measure of knowledge of the genre, however, incomplete.

The users of ngeche do not deliberately set out to use them. Most of them come spontaneously so that after they have been applied, the users do not seem to notice them. Their coming is effortless and without design: they come as accidents in the heat of a talk, conversations, quarrels, heated exchange of words, jokes, palaver, social gatherings and as passing comments.

In many cases ngeche are only alluded to by one or two words. This means most are not complete sentences or statements.

The genre's occurrence is normally unpredictable: a deliberate attempt to fish for ngero is often disappointing. In this respect set-occasions offer better examples than informal ones. While nothing is really peculiar to either of the occasions, it is the general trend that set-occasions tend to be business-like and careless

about language-use except in so far as the set purpose is fulfilled. It is normally on such occasions that some speakers **talk**, in English before giving their explanations in Luo.

6.2. TEXT BY TEXT CONTENTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

1. Human life and death are revered. This means that human blood should not be purposelessly shed: the life should not be as carelessly handled as a chicken's in the throes of slaughter.

The dead have the power to return to torment the living if they have been poorly treated by the latter in life.

While the foregoing revolves around human life and death as the saying implies, it (the saying) does not account for the other cultural values of chicken: juogi rituals, a delicacy, home-erection, symbol of wealth and its multiplication. The saying as it is used could read "as cheap as chicken's death" without revealing the cultural implications of the death. An adequate understanding of the expression therefore requires a knowledge of Luo culture. Otherwise the expression on its own would only treat us to a simile.

2. Life must continue after the dead and past; yesterday should be left with yesterday. The central purpose of the life is material comfort. This material, in turn, dies in order to be replaced by others.

Furthermore the utterers of these opinions have confidence that they can either reproduce or acquire this material. The material includes art (e.g. music), food items, and even sex.

In other words life is not static, but grows and changes. And this is further corroborated by the cosmos: yesterday's rain does not stop more from falling today. "The rain that died on the ground yesterday should not stop another one from falling and dying today", the same way one would say that Aton's death the other year should not mean we cannot have a replacement this year.

3. There are things prayers can and cannot achieve. This is a belief which has apparently been employed to express the most impossible, so much so that even the supernatural cannot do anything.

The belief does not care whether chicken can urinate or not. As far as it is concerned chicken cannot possibly urinate. It is therefore a belief that has turned into a myth, and consequently a denial of possibilities.

The history of prayers among the Luo is not explained in the expression but can be gleaned from oral tradition by way of interviews.

4. Like in numbers three and one, this expression is based on chicken and its ordeal in the wildcat's anal grip. It is this image of the chicken in travail that is used to represent members of the Luo society in trouble, some of them contraventions of social morality. Some of the crimes are so bad they constitute abuses that provoke death-bringing curses.

The expression itself does not say what the moral code is, suggesting, in turn, that in order for its implications to be understood this code has to be learnt.

5. The belief is ~~not~~^{that} fate is individualistic. What this fate gives one depends on how much one exerts oneself and the response of the spiritual powers one is relying on.

Alternatively the belief implies that one's achievement depends on one's imagination and creativity. Every person has his own intellect to "rain" to achieve what he wants. Like rain is the source of fertility in number two, so is it here.

6. A high value is placed on blood-relationships and employed to justify providing shelter, food and other forms of kindness to relatives. The relationship is the reason for social mercy, implying furthermore that there are differences in the quality of the lives of the people, even if they refer to one another as Joluo. There are the poor and the rich, the physically deformed and the normal. The relationship excuse is therefore used to cover up these differences and to ease the conscience, so to speak.

"Your human being is your human being" as an expression, also implies that one can exercise and feel the sense of ownership of another human being. But one is redeemed from this incorrect interpretation by virtue of the attendant contextual and cultural explanations.

What is clear among the explanations, however, is social inequality. It is both explicit and implicit because mercy does and need not exist where equality thrives.

7. The central item is food and is classified according to delicacy.

Beyond the expression, history says that the Luo have been searching for and are where they are currently because of the need for the most delicious of foods.

When the two aspects of the expression are put together it clearly becomes socio-historical. But because the expression abounds in conversations, it can safely be termed conversation-alised history.

8. It is implied that there is a higher social regard for the physically well-built people.

In addition, son-in-law-mother-in-law relationship is indirectly revealed in the sense that the mother has to overfeed the son.

The expression is also a teaser, meaning that the social attitude to physical stature is not absolute. It could be a joke because after all the son-in-law does not have to be hefty to be welcome. The saying is therefore a humorous reference to the quality of hospitality that a son-in-law expects. No direct mention is made of food. Which means the expression is itself a style of talking about the food.

9. The concern for another person's work is shown through the encouraging remarks. The working person is imbued with an intrinsic capacity to accomplish the task. Furthermore the interest shown and expressed in the work by the observer is not disguised in any figurative image, but is actually seen in the person of the worker himself.

10. This is an anecdote condensed into the few words that are called ngero. It has a local flavour from the fact of its arising in Kanyabala.

The central aim seems to be to explain that personal cleanliness is a social rule because it determines certain social relationships. For example, nobody wants to share food with Lwal because he is unkempt.

Dirt is consequently anti-social and coming from Lwal, a symbolic act of hostility and a stinking blow to social expectations.

As -for the condensing of the anecdote into a short expression, it appears a deliberate style to enable Lwal's history to fit into whatever contexts the expression is being applied. This implies and actually means that distraction from what is being discussed and the direction it is taking is being avoided. The condensing is therefore, both a conversational style not only to sustain the subject but also squeeze in the anecdote.

The expression is also a teaser with the aim to communicate the need for cleanliness as a pre-requisite for social relationships. Whether it is a joke, the fact remains that it is a joke about a serious social issue. One aim in the joke is to convey the social message in a humorous fashion. An inference from this is that joking is a style of communication and that teasing is a way of kindling and re-kindling awareness because the greatest probability is that the person being teased would not possibly laugh or smile at what he is ignorant of meaning and purpose-wise.

11. An anecdote compressed into a few words and applied where previously doubted proficiency and ability have been practically proved.

The experience of the tortoise teaches that an intelligent use of the intellect keeps one safe from the teeth of death. Emotion has blinded the man to any possibilities but that the tortoise will inevitably drown in the water. His decision is not only emotional but irrational as the tortoise proves. What he thinks is not necessarily the reality. In fact it is not the truth. The truth is incomplete and incredible until it acquires an empirical dimension in the tortoise's achievement.

The tortoise and its behaviour are representative of certain people. The animal looks like a cartoon in the anecdote, much as it is true that it can swim. The anecdote has, however, made this ability look an impossible feat, apparently because of the moral that it (anecdote) is intended to convey. In other words the anecdote has precluded an aspect of reality, itself a style to communicate only the required material. Another technique of enhancing this communication is the condensing of the anecdote into a few words.

12. The distance between the mouth and nose is obviously a figurative representation of the nearness of distance on the ground. One can literally touch that very distance (between the nose and mouth) to express the ease with which an errand can be accomplished. The ease of the single touch is a persuasive gesture as to the cheapness of the task. As well as being descriptive, this expression has a very effective communicative quality in the image of the nose and mouth.

13. Once again this is an anecdote compressed into fewer words that constitute a laconic statement called ngero. This is apparently an expressive style to enable the expression to serve the contexts where it is applied.

Since Ondega resides in one place, the expression is actually local. After all it is rooted in her name. Yet this does not diminish the fact that her behaviour ^{is} anti-social because of her selfishness and parasitism.

Her "walking sideways" is a humorous style of conveying the social hostility. Although much mirth might result, it still remains that Ondega's behaviour is being derided. The humour is therefore not necessarily for fun. On the contrary, Ondega is being used as the teacher of the negative school in the heat of the laughter. This is, no doubt, purposive laughter.

14. The growth of wealth is as gradual and organic as the growth of the human body. This has been observed from the way a calf gradually matures into a bull. It does not mature overnight. In order to verbalise this observation, the bull must have been (and still is) a long-term companion as a symbol of wealth. The didactic tone in the expression is that the growth in wealth requires time, health and patient endurance. The implication is that nature is the fountain of wealth and has the power to decide as to when the secretion can be done. Thus whether one exerts oneself to acquire wealth on one's own initiative, the efforts and the products thereof are doomed to be attributed to fate as nature wishes. Nature is therefore, apparently imbued with religious powers superior to the efforts of man.

15. The sheep have achieved what it is apparently man's desire to avoid: they can play a game with death by lying under buses without being crashed.

The sheep are being acclaimed for knowledgeableability. But in the same breath, their behaviour is cause of fear as to how safe and far this knowledgeableability can go. It is the fear that incidentally leads to the belief that too much knowledge can be dangerous. By implication, the realisation that technology has the prerogative to destroy human life, is ⁱⁿ the sheep's behaviour. In other words it is human life rather than the sheep's that is feared for. The users of the expression are therefore seeing and verbalising their own fear and dictating as to what should be the limit of the indulgence of intellectual bravado.

16. An articulation of the social value of communalism and a revelation of the attitude to the dead: they should be buried by the next of kin and not strangers because this means the relatives would not know what happened.

There is also a historical revelation that the British conscripted some Luo men to fight for them in some of their imperial wars, leading to the fear that they would die and be buried untraditionally by jomwa.

17. History is conversationalised: the arrival of Indians and their cultural clash with the Luo have generated the humour of the earring that is planted on the nose. The expression is now a derisive reference to any culturally preposterous behaviour. It is also a pointer to the cultural expectations of the Luo.

18. Gerontocracy is a basis of social harmony between the youth and elders. The old have to be respected and to do otherwise is the same as extracting thorns with one's eyes as a threat that one can even do worse/without feeling the pain and magnitude of the social crime (disobeying gerontocracy).

19. Marriage is culturally a social institution rather than a monopoly of husband and wife.

20. An emotive description of the quality of contempt: the victim of poohpoohing is identified with abnormal excreta.

21. Individual acquisition of certain types of property is done through verbal claim in a group. The group approves, thus making grabbing impossible and unsocial.

There are other socially approved styles of acquisition but the above is the commonest in speech; probably because the rest is reserved and assumed special cultural activities for the occasions in which they are applied. Another fact about the styles is that the expression does not cater for them, and their inclusion is only an attempt to provide other modes of laying claims.

22. It is a traditional belief that the left is evil and a bringer of bad luck. The contradiction in the belief, however, is that the left limb of eaten animals is never spared.

Belief and practice are therefore poles apart and do not complement one another.

23. Although movable property can be shared, this depends on reciprocity both emotional and material. The sharing depends on friendship and mutual agreement.

24. A humorous scoff at the religious hypocrisy of Seventh Day Adventists: they are being asked the moral behind eating what ultimately transforms into alcohol and rejecting that very alcohol. They are certainly obeying doctrines established from their interpretations of the Jewish bible. The problem is that a doctrine like this anti-alcohol one is rude and blind to rigorous scientific analysis which reveals that it is a lie based on belief.

The expression is also conversationalised history: the confrontation between the Luo ways of life and the Protestant missions of the SDA. The history is not all told in the few words that constitute the ngero, but it is implied in the poohpoohing of the SDA by the Luo. This does not necessarily limit the purposes of the expression because the anti-alcohol tenet hitherto stands.

25. The meaning of the saying is embedded in the sound of the words "niaso aniasa". The two words represent the unhealthy, sluggish growth the way they are pronounced.

26. This is an emotive qualitative judgement of the behaviour of an individual to another and the way certain items are felt for. The fact that the feeling "bursts the appendix" of the person is a measure of the physical affect of the emotion. Moreover, the location of the organ testifies to the other fact that the quality is felt deep inside rather than verbalised.

27. Sweetness is proportional to height or length: the higher or longer the sweeter but the shorter is the reverse.

Material culture is revealed in an investigation into the background of the expression because we learn of the Luo styles of salting.

28. Traditional processes and sources for the acquisition of salt are revealed. Some people behave and operate insidiously like these processes and are being condemned.

While underground machinations are under attack, the expression also implies that people behaving this way are demeaning themselves to the level of non-human processes. Such people cease to be even objects; they turn into movements.

29. Qualitative judgement of individual ability to be secretive and reserved. Such a characteristic has its merits, veiled in the belly.

30. A distinction is drawn between leisureliness and seriousness. Sigana, meaning procrastinations and leisurely talk have their time and value like every other issue. What this means is that every issue is as special on its own as sigana may be.

31. For a matter or people to be stuck in mud, is a vivid image of the throes of indecisions, struggles and deadlocks and the attempts to get out of them.

32. The moment rain is said to be mourning it has been humanised. The Luo who have coined this expression therefore regard the cosmos as one of them by raining down on them, so to speak. It (the rain) comes down to earth to live with the people, by way of sympathetically nurturing life.

33. Cotton is implicitly exposed as a local economic commodity.

The same commodity is applied as a yardstick for quality control. How clean or dirty one is depends on how one compares with cotton.

In pakruok the yardstick-dimension and the commodity itself are used for bragging as fun. One aim of the exercise

is to provoke the audience, tease or allude to a person.

Pakruok appears a genre with its own aims and styles here.

34. This is another case of pakruok. It is for both fun and self-praise. Most probably the musician wants to brag that he is brave and daring and in order to do this he calls himself the train travelling through a thick forest. The locomotive and the vegetation are figurative representatives of the musician's self-proclaimed characteristics.

35. Special bridewealth is paid for marriage. The quality of the payment is believed to have a role in the quality of the marriage. Unstable and chaotic marriages are associated with rabala cattle.

Although the expression has gained currency in describing rebellious ~~personalities~~ ^{personalities}, it does not take note of the change of the items of bridewealth which is currently money. The question is what is now going to be responsible for rabala marriages in instances where cattle are not used. The answer is that this is the problem of a natural economy threatened by a monetary one.

36. This is an appeal for moderation in the face of challenging and insulting situations. Behaving as asked for entails snuffing the heat of reaction with a millet-husk. This implies a lifeless image because the grains have been removed. In the context of moderation, this means that the particular person is being requested not to over-indulge his being into the matter.

Millet also has a historical dimension that the expression does not cater for and in no way even implies. From this, it is apparent that the usage does not care about the history of migration and millet as a cultural artifact. What concerns it

is the application of the plant here and now.

37. An expression of the quantification of that which is actually uncountable. The word tandawuoya is itself a coinage for that which has exceeded numberable limits.

38. Moderation is once again advocated as the best way to avoid bloody conflicts. "Withdrawing one's blood" seems, therefore, to mean keeping one's life safe.

39. A socio-cultural role for women condensed into the three words. What the compression implies is that the society using the expression and those to whom it is addressed already know what is being alluded to. The knowledge in turn makes it possible for the brevity. Ngero of this type is therefore a style by which socio-cultural material is encapsulated in a few words.

40. This is clearly a verbal portrait of the processes of social factions and tensions.

41. A moving description of the pain of an occurrence as it affects social and individual expectations. The fact that the disappointment is so bad it is "bleeding blood" implies that the thwarting of the expectations is like draining sizeable life out of the affected people or person.

The quality and magnitude of the occurrence depends on the nature of the effects it has on people because the pain is being felt by those very people.

42. Like number 37, this is an expression of quantification in the case of that which is deemed uncountable. The word nawa as already explained, means roughly "just look and see if you can really count".

43. A phon~~a~~esthetic expression of fatigue with the attendant feeling of lifelessness, lack of vigour and the consequent slump also ringing.

44. Sinlessness is an aspect of cleanliness, as inherited from the British and the religious faiths they brought.

The history of religion among the Luo is implied. Thus a new connotation is added to the word ler among the people. As well as meaning other ^{things}, the word now means "religious cleanliness" too.

45. Nature in the name of light and darkness has control on the people's activities, determines what and when they have to do them. Nature is furthermore implied in the use of piny (the earth) as having the power to make seeing impossible.

There are implications of a rural countryside relying heavily on sunlight. Furthermore, the expression smacks of an era when the people are at the mercy of nature in a number of ways, one of which is that they do not exclusively have control over their movements. The other one is that their desires are subordinate to those of nature, meaning that the latter has to fulfil its desires before the people's.

46. A socio-cultural distinction of the role of the sexes. Femininity and masculinity are more than their biological dimension in value. They also comprise performances that win social acclaim, particularly contributions to communal welfare. And these are the only ways in which the show of femininity and masculinity is elicited in public. The biological aspect has always been private.

47. A person's or people's action that has the quality and magnitude of an elephant's hoofprint has a memorabilia. And it is that the action is peculiar and a challenge to other s.

48. From the physical structure of the fish, it is being confessed that the society recognises certain types of behaviour as peculiar.

49. The quality and styles of a person's behaviour are appreciated only if they are relevant. The appreciation is seasonal in fluctuating consonance with the needs, the same way a mortar becomes useless the moment there is no more grain to thresh. A person is useless if there is nothing of social value that he produces.

50. A vividly expressive description of rainfall.

51. Evidence of exogamy as a practice among the Luo.

The expression is also a diplomatic style of communication between the parents-in-law and their newly-acquired daughter. Apart from that value, there is also an undertone of affection on the part of the parents for the daughter-in-law.

The fact that the contents of this expression have evidence of exogamy imply that expressions can be exported from place to place. However this is only suggested as a possibility to justify the argument that some of the expressions with a local flavour have the potential, through exogamy, to reach other locations. That apart, the diplomatic aspect of this expression suggests that in-law-relationship under review is itself an art.

52. Material is being quantified using a cultural item with other purposes. The item is a musical instrument, much smaller than a cup of tea for example. Yet its measured music is transposed to delineate and point at that which is ideal.

53. There is a belief that a woman is intrinsically a talker, more so if she has eaten enough. But there is a humorous undertone in the repetitive play on the word buru with the purpose of deriding and checking the woman's prattling.

Granted that this expression implies overtalking is intolerable, there is also the explicit undercurrent of social prejudice. After all no woman was seen to be verbally diarrhoeing after eating, during the fieldwork. But the expression shows how artistically prejudiced belief can be put.

54. Social anti-parasitism, concretised by the image of the oyundi bird. Word-play on "sese-sese" shows the musical pleasure with which human parasites move. There is also an undertone of derision in the whole expression in general and the "sese-sese" part in particular.

55. Tantalizing without satisfying is inhuman. It is not only a question of tempting with food or sweets but also includes keeping one waiting endlessly for a final nothing.

56. A belief that an individual's fate rises with him at sunrise, that what happens to one first thing in the morning determines what happens to him the rest of the day.

Predeterminism is clearly one aspect of the belief.

That the individual is a robot of nature is implied. At night he is helpless because he cannot do much in darkness but sleep and wait for nature to release the sun and therefore the slave of nature whom he regards as a religious all-powerful.

57. A belief that social equality is unattainable despite the understanding that material aspirations and desires are essentially the same for everybody.

This is tacit recognition of the fact that rivalries and inequalities exist in society but a failure to see the possibilities that the disparities can be bridged. This gives the expression the ring of a myth that the society is static and doomed to be qualitatively unchangeable for some people for ever.

58. The quality of intellectual perception is succinctly measured in terms of the depth of a dam.

59. The gerontocratic nature of the society dictates that the youth should not joke with their elders because this is the same as converting them into children. One criminal way of joking is to keep the elders expectant without satisfying them.

60. A social disapproval of jealousy. The discomfort that the shows of jealousy cause to members of the society is dramatised by the barren cow. This implies that jealousy is not only unsettling but is also uncreative. More than that, the argument seems to be that what another person has produced can be emulated but not necessarily reproduced. Jealousy seeks to reproduce, which furthermore implies that barrenness actually refers to misplaced jealousy.

Barrenness, in the case of the cow, means the actual inability to procreate. In the case of individuals, however, the comparison refers to misplaced jealousy rather than barrenness itself. This is a comparison of seemingly diverse issues, as opposed to what is expected of figurative language.

61. Acts of mercy are expected to be reciprocated by the recipients although this is not always the case. In fact the same recipients occasionally turn to oppress the benefactors. Whether this turn of events is being condemned does not matter as much as the fact that the presence of mercy presumes injustice, inequality and inevitably oppression and other forms of unfairness.

The expression certainly evinces doubt as to the suitability of benefaction. But where there is benefaction there is also the underprivileged, a fact which unavoidably inspires revenge should a chance arise. Consequently the doubt and the concomitant image of the haunting eye seem doomed to remain so long as the social fabric is not overhauled.

62. Procreation is purposive and not a mere biological function. It is for personal pride in the interests of the society. It is for economic returns from the children as well as physical defence. This is why pregnancy is so heavily valued; future returns are destined to be weighty.

63. Physical and behavioural characteristics of people are, as a matter of belief, inherited. The guinea-fowl is used to testify to this much as it is questionable whether this *kind* of inheritance is always the case.

64. In all endeavours, the most laborious and taxing is childbirth. The image of this exercise is consequently used as a yardstick against which the quality of miserliness and other close-fisted styles of behaviour are judged. What is being said is that when childbirth is so hard nothing else should be. This signifies the high premium placed on procreation.

65. Polygamy is being portrayed as a social virtue and a basis of power and prominence for men.

66. Chicken (this time a cock) is once again being used as a cultural symbol. In this respect it symbolises a home and the husband in-charge. He is the all-powerful and nobody need make conflicting decisions. The expression further explains that other men need not interfere, thus defining the limits of individual freedom. This implies that a cock should not interfere with another cock's freedom.

67. The quality of a person's behaviour is being measured in terms of the quality and quantity of the stench of the gourd. The same way the gourd and its products are only tolerated to a certain extent so is it that a person can only be tolerated in so far as he does not cause discomfort to others.

68. This expression defines what the society ^{expects} ~~opts~~ its members to be. And that is not to be walking placent but physically and mentally fit people. The image of the placent is being used here to taunt and jolt the person into fitness. It is as if he is being told he is as good as dead.

69. The very limits of a deadlock are being described. Utter refusal is symbolised by the fact that even the most stinking provocation will not move the refusing party. The act of touching faeces vividly draws the picture of the desperate limits which the situation has reached. The matter is actually a human reject that desperate efforts are being made to reclaim in vain.

70. When the quality of a person's behaviour is measured in terms of the toughness of the axe-handle, he is obviously an inflexible character. When the users of the expression so describe a person, it is also clearly implied that they have been attempting to make him flexible but have finally given up. This means the group expects moderation from him.

The image of the axe implies other things. It is the implement with which wood is split. From this, one would argue that it is being used to "moderate" the wood into manageable and useful sizes, because nobody wants to have a huge log between her cooking stones. The contradiction is that the handle itself is being portrayed as hard to break and yet is also being central in the act of moderation.

71. Work should not disfigure a person into looking untidy. In other words labour need not abuse social standards of cleanliness. The image of the "mother-of-the-gatherer-of-ants" implies that the dirty-looking person is bringing forth a strange style of dressing: in dirt.

72. Impotence is negative as far as social norms go. Procreation is expected of every normal person.

The expression is also used in pakruok. Another thing is implied: he should marry and not keep rejoicing in the destruction of bridewealth. The other aim is certainly to give the audience something to laugh about, much as the expression is known to be about a serious social matter. A possible reason for this kind of treatment maybe that the users have come to accept that impotence is there to stay and can freely be joked about.

73. Unproductive obesity is socially unwelcome. The negative spectacle is particularly enhanced if, despite the massiveness, the person cannot procreate. Once again human reproduction is being treated with reverence.

74. Qualitative description of an offer: it is the reality rather than the image that is useful; it is the grain and not the husk that is satisfying.

75. Individual accomplishments only absolute and secure with the watching approval of a second party. A fault, whilst one is success-bound, can only be corrected by the extra party. This implies that the users of the expression recognise the fact that success may be so blinding to the rolling victor, he might not be able to see a deadly "thorn", hence the rule that one should have an extricator of thorns, particularly during a difficult task.

76. Hospitality: a person is welcome to eat and chat anywhere provided he does not go on creating lies which breed social chaos.

77. The quality of certain types of behaviour can be so bad that they become taboo and necessitate rituals. This means that there are set standards of behaviour that are virtually sacred.

78. Age-grouping is a basis for social harmony. Once again gerontocracy is said to be deserving of a lot of respect.

79. Eating like an armyworm is reprehensible. That the person is being told to wipe his mouth in order to appe^a as if he has not eaten a thing, is a humorous way of referring to his insatiability and actually cautioning him to behave well. As well as the humour it is also a teaser for the same purpose.

On another level it is used in pakruok in allusion to gluttons, and therefore for serious ends.

The expression is therefore applied in many different art-forms, although for the same purpose.

The fact that eating is the target of the saying and the armyworm the image, means the users of the expression believe they are above the animals and should not eat like them for the sake of it. Their (people's) senses are far better developed for behaviour rather than the animalistic type.

80. Sleeping and sleeplessness are purposive. They also reflect on one's character, the same way gili has been recognised to be prone to insomnia. The question in the expression, however, seems to be asking why a person should be so averse to sleep. And the answer takes us back where we began: it is alright to be awake so long as there is a useful reason for it.

81. Belief: that the world provides material comfort when and if it so wishes.

The users of the expression therefore seem to believe that they are at the mercy of the world. The other implication is that whatever luck or ill-luck comes their way, is fated by the world. Despite its mysterious and undefined form, the world is being treated as a god.

82. Moderation: there is a limit to touching on individual and social affairs. When the indulgence becomes "painful" it is condemned.

83. Undesirable, busybody-intrusion into matters as if one is the jumping he-goat-on-heat, can have negative repercussions.

The image of jumping suggests emotional behaviour. Furthermore the behaviour is derived from a goat. Which means that

for a person to behave this way is the same as demeaning himself to the status of an animal. Busybody desires are therefore animalistic passions.

84. Hospitality: it is traditional to welcome guests, invited or not, and to treat them to the best of one's ability. But the expression alludes to parasitism and suggests that it should not be the guest's habit.

85. One can grab a lot of food if one's company comprises blind people. This means that most grabbers accomplish their mission unseen. A further implication is that grabbing is impossible unless some people are blinded. But to grab unseen is the same as saying one is stealing.

The expression is also used in pakruok and as a teaser. While the meaning remains unchanged, the purposes to which it is put means its form has now changed. It is now not serious about grabbing, but is having fun out of it.


86. The tonal dimension of the expression is saying that the son should avenge the mother's humiliation since it is also his. In terms of son-mother relationship, it is strongly suggested in the allusion to the broken pipe, that he is the woman's source of security. The reference is, therefore, to the fact that he should not let his mother be hurt.

87. A humorous allusion to the big bellies after a festivity. Although it is the drums that are literally being referred to, the surfeited bellies could also be implied.

The expression has cultural connotations about funeral festivities, but these can only be grasped if one knows the society

in which it is being applied or enquires why the drum should be heavy on the return journey. Unless these undertones are known, one would even suggest that the drums get stuffed with some kind of loot when this is not the case.

88. Individual diligence, self-reliance and resourcefulness are socially acclaimed and symbolically recognised in the person of the antbear. Anti-parasitism is suggested.

The use of the saying in pakruok implies, like in other cases, that the expression is fluid enough to fit other occasions which give it a different  purpose.

89. The quality of success depends on the quantity of material gathered and as assessed by the watchers of the gatherer.

90. Hospitality: eating alone is anti-social. Paternity entails sacrifice, even if token, to the children.

Ownership of property should not be at the expense of some members of the society. Although this type of ownership is alluded to in the negative, this implies that it has been noticed as practicable. The expression is therefore a verbal attempt to check the vice.

The image of adita acquires a number of meanings in the contexts of the foregoing. It stands for sharing what one owns. On another plane, it symbolises having the capacity to be selfish. What this means is that the image contains two opposites, meaning that the context in which it is applied determines its interpretation.

91. Sex is being alluded to by way of nyoyo having been eaten.

A clinical reference to sex is absent. The consequence is that the act has received artistic treatment. This implies that traditional aesthetics has a special way of describing sex. In this the description is live as evidenced by the munching of nyoyo.

92. Quality of behaviour: indecision, prostitution and divorce being condemned. Marriage is apparently being treated as the ultimate of all decisions and therefore criminal to break. It seems to be the yardstick for social stability.

93. Inhospitallity: giving one too little of something means quantities that are too little to make him live. It is as if he is being wished death. This is what is called juok. It suggests that a gift should be more than a person asks for.

The other meanings of juok arise in other contexts and are not suggested in the expression. Most of them are associated with traditional belief-system.

94. Friendship is mutual rather than imposed. Similarly sharing is a process of understanding rather than bullying. Allusions to these are made by the image of the cow that can only be skinned by people who are friends and agree without one of them physically imposing himself.

Apart from alluding to the principles, the expression's application in pakruok means it is fluid enough to serve leisurely ends.

95. A way of measuring stubbornness. The magnitude of the hard-headedness is vividly portrayed by the massive image of the elephant refusing to budge.

96. An efficient image: vivid description of the horriency of the mien.

97. Hospitality: how well one is treated as a guest depends on how long one stays. In other words, hospitality requires patience and time. The impatience is symbolised by the speed with which peas get roasted. The implication is that a guest does not have to behave like a plant but like a human being if he expects human treatment.

98. Marriage: the place and role of the go-between vividly defined in the "twin-mouth" coinage.

99. Marriage, it is implied, has the capacity to withstand strains. A further implication is that it is as hard to break as it is for a husband to protest to the wife by drowning. Thus marriage is regarded as a tight social relationship which easy emotional outbursts need not shake as witness the implied confidence of the woman in the expressive utterance.

But there is a difference between the man and fish in water. The man can drown while fish remains alive. The resultant question, then, is what the woman really means when she says the man cannot dive back to water.

She might mean he is not going to drown as already suggested in the above interpretation. On the other hand she might mean he is ^{not} ~~not~~ going to live in water. Finally it might be meant that he is not going to disappear elsewhere after all. The significance of all these interpretations is that the man, according to the woman, is not going to dehumanize himself, by yielding to emotion and killing himself or turning into a wild animal. The age of marriage is therefore the age of reason.

100. An apparent myth that the dark-brown cow spews milk. The mythical dimension, has, however, been transcended, because the expression is currently used for quantifying the source(s) of plenty by alluding to them.

101. The disfavoured and mentally deformed are never in a hurry to die. This is expressive of a wish that the world should be rid of certain people as undesirables. Much as the expression evinces social sympathy, the wish of death nullifies this because fitting sympathy is corrective rather than destructive.

102. Positive social attitudes and behaviour are superior

to physical looks. This is why beauty is dubbed inedible. A good-looking woman is therefore useless if she does not deliver children in obedience to her husband, and as a fountain for his sexual pleasure. This is the woman that is positive to her society. While the significance of procreation is recognized, it is also implied that the woman is simply and a mere sex symbol and baby factory, while her children are the producers of comfort for the patriarch.

103. The bigger the number of Kinsmen and blood relations the greater their accomplishments will be. The basic fact is that this is a belief in numbers rather than quality. Assessment is based on quantity, so that poor quality can possibly be made up for. A good example is on war: it is implied that a thousand people can be sacrificed to kill a thousand enemies so that two thousand others are preserved. Absence of military and other forms of advanced technology is being condoned. Faith is the produce of numbers; using manual technology is faith in communalism and feudalism.

104. A historical myth that the Luo have settled where they are because of the availability of food. The myth rationalises the immigration-story from the Sudan.

The expression also perceptively implies that the life-long aim of man is to live well and comfortably and

that this persists even in the throes of death.

105. An intellectual observation that the world and time are two infinite constants, as opposed to the human form and behaviour which are doomed to pass away. It is this observation that consoles people in the teeth of undesirables.

106. Certain types of ownership are irreplaceable. Some of these are mothers (there is no way one can claim another one), fathers, brothers and homes (as in the case of the mother). These are beliefs, apparently, employed to stop self-hate and the demise of kinship by claiming that one owns a mother, sister, brother and father. The fact of ownership means it is being emphasized that the relationship, whether to a person or property, is so close it is part of oneself.

107. Belief and custom: human beings never share graves. It is implied people are as different as their fates. It is furthermore being observed that there is only one life for every person with diverse timings for their termination as fate wishes.

108. Time is infinite; palpable material is not. Sheep's wool may look uncountable but with patience the numbers can be determined. But nobody can live as long as time to count it. No man-made material can possibly outlive time. One of these material are secrets; like the secret of the numbers of wool can be revealed so can they. This is a perspective

observation concretised by the image of wool.

109. The transience and impermanence of certain types of people's behaviour. Urban arrogance and idiocy is as short-lived and unpredictable as the same types of behaviour are among rural communities.

110. The power of the word: it can have disastrous effects depending on the will and wish of the utterer against the person at whom the word is directed.

111. Politics is a cat-and-mouse game, with the survival of every participant always hanging on a cliff. It is not a game of an elephant trying to crush a mouse because the former might easily sink and collapse.

The implicit information in this saying is that in the political system under reference there is a game of the hunter and the hunted people. Suspicion, fear and terror are therefore institutionalised, what with the police under cover.

112. The role of the woman in a polygamous family is to calculate and speculate as to how she can waylay the husband for the night. This role is believed intrinsic in the woman. Her mental trajectory, it is implied, is limited to sex-relations with her man. Nothing more. She is passionate in a basic biological function of man. In being viewed thus, she is being reduced to the status of an animal that knows nothing beyond the preservation and satisfaction of the basic senses of its body. In two words she has animalistic passions,

for which she is a hunter.

113. The pride of having a child as the mirror for viewing one's back is a product of the belief in marriage. The man is rejoicing in the knowledge that he has reproduced his own image. The problem is that a child's back might look like the mother's in which case the man's utterance becomes a mere figment of belief-borne imagination.

114. The quality of emotion and its consequences is symbolically measured in terms of the fury of the snake.

115. Bribery as a means for gaining favours: started with natural gifts like meat and now transformed into cash in the face of a monetary economy.

By way of bribery fat is still being added to a person who is already surfeited. In implying this, the expression alludes to social injustice.

116. Procreation: socially valued through the search for children's dung in the home.

Outside but in relation to the expression, it is said that children are valued for the perpetuation of a man's name in society. In the context of the expression it is as if the dung is fertilising his name to sprout into many other names.

117. Selfishness: the behaviour of the rat represents deceptive tactics employed by some members of the society to achieve selfish ends. The fact that the behaviour includes eating human flesh implies an egomania that borders on

cannibalism and symbolically portrays the inhuman dimensions selfishness can reach.

118. Fate can be angered by callous ostentation into reversing fortune(s). The ostentation itself, is symbolised by the flashing of white teeth in laughter.

A mysterious power is regarded as the source of material needs and is by implication, responsible for qualitative change of material conditions of people.

119. A belief that luck comes to a person only once. That the luck comes from the world, is further evidence of faith in fatalism.

What the image of the twins seems to mean however, is that luck cannot come in two pieces. Rather than that, it is only one piece. To say that the world does not give birth to twins suggests that the two may be born on different occasions and yet still claim twinhood. Unfortunately this is not the normal case. It is therefore the same as saying that literally the world cannot possibly give birth that way in the context of luck. But ~~it~~ is the luck that is paramount rather than the reality and truth. As a result this utterance holds true so long as the belief rather than the logic lasts.

120. Belief: a twist of fate comes unexpectedly even whilst victory is glaring a few millimetres off. The use of the last-minute sinking canoe as an image suggests belief in the power of the supernatural to control what is seemingly man-made and directed. The lakemen's wish is to anchor but nature and its mysterious powers have the better of it all.

In a word, it is a life of uncertainty.

121. Individual excellence is cause for emulation by other members of the society.

122. Emotional assessment of and warning against callous ostentation. The huge mounds of excreta vividly portray the picture of an atmosphere of display of plenitude.

123. The act of teaching is alluded^{to}, apparently to avoid mention of the obvious.

The expressions' application is [§] pakruok suggests its fluidity and ability to serve other art-forms.

124. Belief: fortune is fated and changes like the winking of the eye. This kind of observation attests to a belief that human ways of life are as transientⁿ and impermanent^a as the winking of the eye.

125. There is liberty for self-expression, come what may, be it imprisonment. Allusion to simba ^{yawuoyi} implies that free discussion goes on in this place. Its use in the context of imprisonment, further means that forced confinement cannot limit free self-expression. If traditional culture permits it, nothing else can stop it.

126. Relationships in the society are both matrilineal and patrilineal. Both are used as a basis for social justice and peace but are under strain because of the changing circumstances and nature of material relationships.

127. Belief: the mysterious elephant wind has curative effects. No rational basis is offered for the belief.

128. The meaning of the one-word expression is determined by the tonal inflexion of the user and the context in which a particular application is made. However, and among many possibilities, the expression is capable of mysterious and ambivalent connotations, suggesting its applicability in more than one art-form.

129. A bubbling of words is as divorced from reality and purposiveness as running water that is not damable for social use. This includes the futility of making promises and other verbal effusions of flattery. Words are a reflection of reality but cannot be the reality. They pass like the wind or water. When certain utterances are likened to passing water, therefore it is implied that the reality has been drowned in non-reality.

130. The quality and value of conversations is categorised according to the age-group in which a particular conversation occurs. Thus simba-talk is capable of a degree of irrationality that can wreck peace.

131. A picturesque representation of unsociability in the observation that chicken actually never goes to the river . This is the kind of unsociability that means a person has absolutely no need to visit a place and is as self-sufficient where he is as chicken.

132. Creativity: the word "arambe", for the youth, means much more than just the erection of buildings as their elders know and believe. In other circumstances, the word could mean, to the surprise of the elders, the act of defecating.

133. Belief in the unattainable: a tortoise cannot wear a skirt the same way a student cannot run a government. The expression is also used in swearing one's determination not to budge.

The things that are sworn and though unattainable are actually attainable. Both are outside the aim of the user of the expression because he simply wants to say that he cannot do a certain thing. He is using the expression to say the thing, the former's irrational assumptions notwithstanding. The quality of the meaning, therefore, does not matter; it is its application that does.

134. Politics: alluded to by the image of river Arujo. The river, though local, represents the creeping of state and local terrorism leaving in its wake, death and social insecurity. The flowing of the river into the lake, implies that the terrorism covers wider areas thus watering down the localism of the image.

135. Conversation is an art with aims, one of which is to strike useful points, the same way an ant-hill-smasher aims to arrive at the queen as the core of the hill's survival. The hill-breaking is an allusion to this art.

136. Politics: consciousness of state supremacy, is alluded to. The state is a thing to be feared because of its ruthless

tendencies closely supervised by underground intelligence networks. Like a huge elephant from nowhere it can come down on its victim and pulp it.

137. Politics: an allusion to the blood-curdling nature of terrorism as unleashed by certain political regimes in Africa. The awareness is continental and the preponderance of the leopard - rulers gains greater currency among the users because of the musician's inclusion of the expression in a song. In other words, the song has popularised the saying.

138. Politics: a bloody autocracy^t is wrecking social harmony in the thirst to consolidate his power at any cost. The people he is killing are his own brothers and sisters, the same way a cat turns to eat^{he} chicken eggs of its owner. The politician has dehumanized himself into an animal while reducing the masses into breakable shells of life. The breaking eggs imply skulls breaking and bloody brains flowing out. The claws cannot be anything but bullets because otherwise no cat would break the tough human skull.

Although it is not so elaborately worked out into the images, the expressions popularity and circulation is an achievement of the musician. One art-form has disseminated another.

139. Belief: that the causes of certain human and animal deficiencies are in-born. The seeming rationale for this belief is that if for certain people the deficiencies do not occur then they should not for everybody else. This type of syllogism presumes a uniformity without giving facts.

The responsibility for the deficiency is being imposed on the individual as if the society is perfectly unquestionable.

140. Hospitality: a humorous reference to the expectation of hospitality through the hanging shoes. It is as if the person has undressed and is expecting to be soothed later with shelter, refreshments and food. Because the shoes are not really ^{left} ..., it is clearly implied that hospitality is an established social practice about which indirect references are made.

141. Belief: a saying applied as a rationale for having men living separately (i.e. each man maintaining his own home in keeping with customary law and in order to maintain social harmony. The law, however, is only implied. Ignorance of it means one could easily conclude that the rule is as the saying goes. Its usage is consequently socio-cultural and has deeper values: the maintenance of rules associated with ploughing, sowing and harvesting, with love-making having a crucial role.

142. Prosperity is no cause for ostentation. This is the rule that is alluded to because it is apparently believed that fate is an unpredictable controller of everybody's fortune. The use of branching tree suggests this image of fate enabling one to grow mighty with wealth and children and then suddenly deciding to slash off the branches.

143. Sex: alluded to through the juiciness of seu. The gist of the expression is to indirectly state the rule that animalistic indulgence is undesirable.

144. Expressing suggestively that re-marriage is socially expected of a widowed woman.

The "chewed bone" represents love-making.

The re-marriage exercise is currently used as a leeway by men to material acquisition. Although this is not exactly stated, it is suggested that love-making to the widowed woman is itself a trick for the said material acquisition. Apart from the fact that culture supposedly determines certain relationships, it is apparent that sex is also a basis for some, as in this case the material one.

145.. Belief: that human death must be caused by human ill-will and machinations. The same is the cause of human misery and mishaps. Of course there is clear evidence that the malicious person executes his intentions mysteriously.

146. Suggestive of socio-historical and cultural interactions during which the knife was acquired by the Luo from the Kisii. The occurrence and the form of the new-found item has been turned into tools for assessing the quality of certain people's behaviour: such people's predilection for ambivalence and indecision is reprimanded. Its recurrence in conversations means it has now become conversationalised history.

147. Complacency that does not take care of the future may land one in disaster. The zebra may be enjoying the juiciness of a fruit and yet forgetting that another zebra or ^{Animal} animal is feeling extremely jealous and plotting to grab the fruit. Alternatively, the zebra is oblivious of the future which

will inevitably require another fruit. It is being said that time now should also be time future; people must always brace themselves for tomorrow.

148. Belief: that certain individuals have intrinsic qualities which enable them to be more resourceful, powerful and precocious than others. It is believed in the same breath that social mobility makes reversal of the tables possible. This is the one case of belief where possibilities are admitted.

149. Belief: much as it is believed that human death can be caused by ndagla, still man remains the originator and master-mind. This is further evidence that in whatever way death is referred to and even if the cause is glaring, man is believed central in the final analysis.

150. That what jajuok eats is possibly related to his nocturnal behaviour and physical appearance is an apt comparison and contrast because the food actually gets into his system and presumably influences him. It is also implied in the expression that the users are trying to find a cause for jajuok's behaviour.

That the expression has possibly been popularised through Aton's music suggests connections with its application in pakruok because dancing and the latter go together. There are therefore four art-forms at the same performance: ngero, pakruok, music and dancing.

151. Social harmony is desirable but destructible. Friendship and kinship are as enduring as they can be destructible. It is believed that the halving of the dog represents this destruction. This implies a counter-belief that the wholeness of the dog signifies unity, that any threat to the unity is effectively bayed off and that when the baying turns inwards to disrupt the friendly composition of peace then the dog dies.

152. The expression is a pointer to searching for what ajuga stands for so peculiarly in the society and why his ~~importance~~ ^{behaviour} should be the yardstick for impatience. The hurry for testicles is enough evidence that a lot is implied because after all the ram is so big he would go for other parts. That he wants to carve out a skin-bag for his medicine demonstrates that the expression has deep socio-cultural origins and that conversational usage is part of that culture.

153. A social belief that co-wives are perpetually dis-united and quarrelling. A house, a cooking-pot and kitchen are some of the cultural artifacts associated with a wife and which are explicit and implicit in the expression.

154. Belief: that a boy is a pole and a girl a wild-cat. Symbolically the latter gets married far and elsewhere. Apart from suggestions of exogamy, cultural artifacts (one of them historical) are remotely ^{associated} ~~associated~~ with the saying through informants.

155. An attempt to express mysterious occurrences using an anecdote. While the anecdote itself is explained in its own right, it is acknowledged as the origin of the expression. And while the occurrences do not have to be replicas of Kanyunja's, the saying has apparently compressed them into the few words, thus displaying its capability to be laconically expressive.

156. Another elaborate anecdote, compressed into the few words that are a purposive abuse and pointer to the need for cleanliness and diligence rather than slovenliness and parasitism.

But fatalism contradicts the need because it is incidentally believed that the slovenly have the potential to produce precocious offspring. This means fate is endowed with the ability to play games with social norms and create legendary heroes like Owaka.

Yet the word-playing on ^yathra (the-one-who-plays-
^{attachment}
slovenly) and its ~~interposition~~ to the legendary name means the norm and its ^ccontradiction are married in the expression. It is a marriage of bed-fellows who are opposed to one another at the same time as it is true that ^yathra gave birth to Owaka. The overall picture of all this is that the appearance of the words in the same statement does not mean harmony of meaning.

157. Idleness suggests the human body is unproductive as if it is a cold gun. More than that the gun has historical

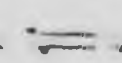
connotations which usage seems to ignore. This means history has been conversationalised and forgotten, incidentally because the current application is more usefully urgent than the past, much as that very past is implied.

158. The expression is a reference to a dying but purposive custom. Its current application is evidence of its flexibility, with the connivance of the users, to fit changing circumstances, although still essentially loaded with allusions to ^{the} cultural unity of the Luo.

159. History, pakruok and fun are all encapsulated in the expression.

The history of colonialism and its ups and downs were a source of fun in one respect for Jo-Kanyada: they got the accordion (the-you-are-squeezing-me). While this verbal coinage has expanded the meaning of the original (udiya), it also shows the agglutinative quality of the word in particular and Dholuo in general.

Pakruok, itself fun, is equally suggestive of reference to a proud, historic past of not only acquiring the musical instrument but also enjoying transient liberty in the humiliating defeat of the Indians and British by the Germans.

160. Sex: Skirting reference by way of the "thorn of darkness" as the cleverest and choosiest,  the sharp-point of the thorn represents sharpness of brains.

161. An anecdote condensed into a few words which do not exclude the protagonist in the occurrence. There is sadistic humour in the allusion to the anecdote to operate as a warning to overeaters. One should eat to live rather than die.

162. Ancestral curses believed responsible for the community's misery. A twist of fate, is however, not far-removed from social belief: ghee, the expression of plenty has been mysteriously frozen somewhere until unexpectedly it melts Kabar people into merry-making, unleashing the tongues of their prejudiced neighbours.

163. An elaborate anecdote compressed into the six words, with the image of sim-sim as an indirect reference to sex, whose sweetness is no different from the pride Kanyada people feel and show because they are many. That this numerical power enabled them to frustrate Nombi's sexual desires prior to death and that they derive pride from all this means their love and friendship were paramount.

164. Social anti-monopolymania and selfishness were once dramatically contradicted in the Katuma anecdote in the extreme daring to tie the anus of the dog so that it would not deliver the puppies. Serious as the incident was and compressed into the few words, it is also applied in the relaxed atmosphere of pakruok.

165. A straightforward emotive expression of anger and the limits to which it might take one.

166. A graphic description of failure of any form, with cultural origins in the art of hunting. A lot more about the art is absent in the expression both explicitly and implicitly but can only be reclaimed by extra-investigation, suggesting therefore, that hunting is on the wane. This furthermore means that the expressions' meaning might, change with time. All the same, hunting, as well as being a cultural

activity, is also an art-form to which the expression is an
Allusion
~~art-form~~

167. Cultural etiquette on brother-in-law mother-in-law relationship is alluded to. The ethics of survival in a ^y ~~mon~~ocracy is another subject the pocket deals with.

168. Belief in the value of huge numbers of people because it is a basis for success. The quality of success is therefore determined by the number of people involved, with the seeming rule that they should be as numerous as the eggs of hoe. This is the ngero aspect of the meaning. The expression is also applied in other genres: nyedho and pakruok.

169. A Social rule is being espoused that what an individual does, like the gourd churning milk for cream, is for his community's consumption. In other words selfish isolation is regarded as negative.

170. Through the mis-victimisation of the wild-cat it is learnt that justice can be unnatural, unjust and therefore unpopular. The use of the wild-cat image furthermore implies that there is uncertainty in the wilderness of justice because it can justify and execute the death of the innocent in the name of being supreme in decision-making.

171. Arising from a recorded praise-song for Osoga and popularised by that means, the expression not only vividly portrays Obudo's feeling that he is a rare friend but concretises this with the naked fact that human beings are never skinned. Though seemingly coined for Osoga, the total absence of the human skin is a very powerful way of expressing

172. Differentiating between the qualities of the child and the dog is the same as saying that a human being is mentally superior to every other animal. After all, in referring to the child, the mother calls it dhano (human being). The comparison between dhano and the dog already implies the woman recognises they both belong to nature. Yet the fact that she argues one is better than the other means she knows man has a commanding superiority in the world of nature and in fact controls it.

173. The ingenious observation that landforms like hills do not and cannot meet is a symbolic description of the inability of the inanimate to feel for one another and relate like human beings. Man's mobile existence can only be recognised by fellow human beings and this makes isolation impossible. Consequently a basis of relationship must be found or created; two of these are kinsmanship and friendship. They (the two) might be strained, but the contrast between them and unmeeting hills implies a belief that man must be social at all costs; they cannot afford to behave like the baser members of nature because they are superior to them.

174. Hard work is the only way food and material comfort can be obtained. The wild-cat braving the ravages of nature is symbolic of man trying to conquer and fashion out nature into a form (or forms) that quenches his material needs.

175. In this gerontocratic system, the youth's comfort depends on the mercy of the elders and must therefore be unquestioningly obedient. A part from gifts of food and other delicacies, it is implied that the youth might also gain ideas from the elders.

176. Emotive expression of the unattainable and unavailable.

Besides apodo's buttocks being inaccessible, a possible interpretation which does not contradict the intended one, is that the buttocks may be incapable of producing anything.

177. The quality of an item or person is only accurately assessed by the facts and results of practice rather than those of thought. What is seen does not necessarily reflect the exact value; the value consists in the product(s) of any process that attempts to transform the particular matter. In brief, it is being said that, despite their interdependence, practice is superior to theory, much as it is apparently realised that abstract conception is unavoidably essential.

178. Moderation in whatever performance is the best way to feel cautiously towards success. Sandy food spoils the teeth the same way one collapses should one take the wrong steps in a task. On another level, the expression suggests that sand does not hold the feet as firmly as finer soil does and is therefore unsafe as a way to success. Moreover water seeps through the sand the same way one's efforts are frittered away without care and ingenious caution.

179. A way of distinguishing between a man and a woman: the first is dry-chested and the second is, therefore by implication, wet-chested. Apart from meaning the man has a hard chest, it also implies the woman has a soft "breastful" chest while the former has a hard breastless one.

180. First in the expression is the suggestion that there are things and people who are treasured more than others. This information is obvious and straightforward.

What is not so obvious is why the rat chooses to eat away this treasured thing. While it is accepted that it is good, it is not a misplaced suggestion that the rat could very well eat it because it is bad and worth destroying. Whether it is ugly or beautiful is resolved by socio-aesthetics and the value placed on the particular item or person.

Overall, it is clear there is a sense of discrimination in quality but that the animal world as represented by the rat, does not understand this. On a different plane, it is suggested that nature does not know the people's aesthetic standards: it does not care about it and actually mixes the good and the bad as witness the rat's behaviour. Nature's sense of discrimination is still undeveloped and therefore inferior to man's.

181. The image of the circumstances in which a pipe cannot be smoked means, all the available air has been (and is being) consumed in handling the matter rather than puff away smokes of pleasure. Furthermore it is being suggested that so much energy, emotion and air have been consumed that it is virtually impossible to perform any leisurely task.

182. How physically big one is means one could easily crash the smaller person callously. The weak are at the mercy of the strong. This means a cow has a right to swallow a frog even if the water in which the latter lives is its (the frog) right by birth and inheritance. Alternatively, the suggestion is that the cow has more right to eat and live than the frog. The cow is the ruler and the frog the ruled as is the case with husband to wife and therefore the ruling exploiting class and the ruled and oppressed class.

183. Although used as an abuse and in pakruok, the commonest usage is in teasing.

As a teaser, the expression operates as a humorous game of the deformed (or in reference to them) to find comfort in the knowledge that one is not alone in being lame, toothless or bald-headed and so that if people laugh it is as if they are laughing at themselves. It is also a game by which social harmony is created through merry-making.

184. Visits recur where hospitality is constant. But too many visits become monotonous and parasitic and relegates a person to the status of a dog who exploits every situation without due regard that its visits are oppressing the host. A difference between human and animal behaviour is suggested and one is actually being taunted out of being referred to the fact in a light-hearted way through teasing and pakruok.

185. It is a virtue to follow a straight path to a destination and an objective rather than get distracted by transient match-flare-in-the-wind indulgences. A dog, apparently because it is mentally inferior to a human being, is for that very fact prone to this kind of behaviour. An easily distracted person is therefore dog-minded. The serious message herein is fluid enough to fit in pakruok, because it is after all the circumstances of application that are altered by virtue of the lighthearted atmosphere.

186. Jasem spends his time trying to destroy rather than construct a marriage and this is aptly reflected in the saying:

he gets physically wasted away the same way he is bent on eroding and spoiling the nuptial relationship.

187. Sister-brother-in-law relationship and the mechanics of its maintainance: the uncommonness of leopard-skin symbolises the rarity of the relationship. More than that, the skin suggestively stands for the intense physical and emotional defence that the two mutually provide one another with, what with the rare fierceness of the leopard.

188. Feminine and masculine roles are as different as they are well defined. Conflict and straying should be avoided, hence the use of the expression (some times tauntingly) to re-direct the breakers of the tradition.

189. An emotive expression of the fear of rivalry, challenge and adventure and general cowardice; the act of withdrawing fear is vividly represented by the image of the sim sim being ground into slippery oil. In other words, the coward is slipping into a hole of fear what with his buttocks actually doing the grinding.

190. A person's stinging into a matter as painfully as does the black ant is more than a deep measure of jealousy ; it is also a tongue-biting measure of how he feels hurt in the teeth of defeat and attempts to reverse the tables.

191. Anyam (the muncher) means the person is living to eat like the lakebird and therefore demeaning himself to the status of sheer indulgence to quench animalistic passion. A person eats to live and not vice-versa.

192. This is a straightforward expression of a belief in the stability of blood-relationships as opposed to friendship which circumstances can make and unmake. However much one attempts to dodge kinsmanship it remains unshaken.

193. Tung' mosuo burns as if incensed by the fire, the same way a person boils with fury when angered. The measure of a person's anger is therefore easily gauged if pitted against the intensity of the horn's burning. The cultural dimension of tung does not fit this context of emotion.

194. First this is an indirect reference to one's wife, her role as a cook to the husband and the taboo involved should he reject her food.

195. Benefaction should not entail the benefactor's starvation or death. In other words it should have a limit: kindness to a person should not be equal to simultaneous unkindness to oneself. With all this wisdom the expression also fits the fun-making atmosphere of pakruok.

196. A powerful expression of the emotion of sweet sorrow that the new arrival was so long away one would have thought he had drowned. The fact that the drowned re-surface for their relatives to bury them means that the feeling of love for the dead is equal to the one for the living.

197. Expresses in an implicit way, the cultural differences between Jo-Kamagambo and the rest of Joluo. The expression is also pregnant with historical connotations, including the famous "divide and rule" system. Jo-Kamagambo imply their pride of and faith in the system by the constant use of the expression in pakruok. In addition, the saying is used to identify Jo-Kamagambo,

this in itself further evidence that their history might have been different from that of their original Luo neighbours.

198. Appearance is not the substance; the substance is deeper than the covering layer of skin beyond which quality can be assessed. Although this interpretation is only in a general sense, it implies that Kuot has deeper cultural and personal meanings than its more obvious and practical ones which involve funeral ceremonies and festivities. One of these (and of which no direct reference is made) is the first-wife and jachien case. I say this is a possible implication because after all the expression says that appearances are deceptive, meaning they do not necessarily tell the truth. This implication is a possible segment of the hidden truth.

199. Sex: alluded to; the hyena voluptuously ploughs into the flesh, most probably the fat tail of the sheet.

200. The answer is that imbecility is not multi-coloured and in fact has no standard colour. How it is judged depends on what the beholder's standards are. This means that what another conceives of as a very powerful remark, thought or style of behaviour may be the perfect example of stupidity for another, person.

201. Like her protuberant jaw that is claiming extra space, the newly-married woman is an extra projection into the community and through teasing the people are feeling their ways around her in order to establish how best they can relate to her.

As for benefaction, it is being said that the quality and character of the merciful is not as important as the mercy that

comes from them. It is this projection of themselves that should be seen and not any other perspective.

In the case of pakruok the fun-making implies that either or both or neither of the two applications are meant.

202. Everybody on earth wants to live and in order to do this they know and believe they must eat. It is to this truth that the saying alludes by suggesting that there are certain people who want to eat while others starve and work for them.

203. Ugliness is not a barrier to achievement because other tactics exist to camouflage it. One of these is the dark garb of wealth. After all, and despite its ugliness, a hyena invariably eats the choicest because it is tactical. Human beings are no exception to this ability.

204. The power of the word: the word is related to and in fact the springboard for certain social and individual actions and the results of those actions. Pre-conception is therefore a pre-requisite for execution. And although the actions come and go, the thoughts, it is believed remain to claim responsibility for whatever happened.

205. A joke, a pakruok and a ngero. That some people are as unpredictable and intractable as the rain and that the rain is outside the control of society, means that the people are occasionally mysterious beyond the sway and masterdom of social norms and expectations. This is the ngero meaning that there is no evidence the relaxed atmosphere of joking and pakruok modify or replace.

~~modify or replace.~~

206. Thunder and lightning have a limitless autonomy which creates and embeds fear in people, enabling them to know the bounds of their ability to survive in the face of the unconquered cosmos.

Perhaps in pakruok, the particular user of the expression wants to impress as the most powerful person in as much as it is true he is only joking.

207. The darkness of the stomach is apparently a verbal gimmick for justifying the eating of what is offered as a gesture (the eating) of appreciation of hospitality. The darkness, meaning the limitlessness of the stomach, also suggests that hospitality is boundless.

Since the expression is about eating, it seems particularly suitable for pakruok because the circumstances for this art-form normally include merry-making and feasting.

208. A person's ability to produce palpable results is not determined by his physical stature, hence the claim that diminutiveness is not sickness. In other words, the quality of what a person can do does not depend on his appearance. This is what the expression is alluding to.

209. A contrast between biological processes in nature and in man, is implied; hair grows on man like seedling but unwatered. In calling man, the child of God, it is being suggested that he inherits divine powers which enable him to grow anything even in drought. The ability of man to irrigate and enrich land for agriculture, is not far from the saying.

Since the expression is man's own self-praise it is not surprising that it occurs in sessions of pakruok.

210. An artistic expression of the fact that the world licks people in by swallowing them into its bowels when they are dead (they die and get buried). This means it is believed that the world is the killer and by implication the life-giver. Earth is therefore endowed with divine powers, giving evidence of a fatalism that man lives and dies when it (the earth) wishes.

211. Expressing anti-parasitism and giving a graphic picture of what that parasitism is. In pakruok, the expression is cause for laughter.

212. Instability of property-ownership is used as evidence that fate decides when to enrich and disenrich men. Fate is the supreme decision-maker to whom allegiance is perpetually owed and who clothes and unclothes man with comfort when it wishes.

213. A humorous comment about shelter as a basic and socially recognised human need. Whilst the man is whistling away his inability to conquer nature in this respect the group is regretting by

implication that he is no better than a wild-animal caught in the teeth of the ravages of nature. Even his music is different: he whistles while the group conventionally articulates his deficiency.

214. The purpose of cooking is not the art of cooking but the product of cooking. The suggestion is that the art should and need not cause discomfort to the prospective diners as their aim is not to swallow smoke and embers. The meaning remains intact even when the expression is applied as a teaser. All types of behaviour is an art and the central aim is utilitarian, whether it is a conversation or a joke. A joke presumably has a purpose because

it provides the treatment of life and the attendant circumstances with a light touch and therefore creates fun.

215. Everybody aspires for and needs the best food it does not matter whether the aspirations are achieved or not.

Miluma suggests knowledge, on the part of the aspirant, ^{that} ~~that~~ the required delicacy is close by but is being withheld by some monopolist. In other words, nobody remains poor because he wants to. He remains thus because certain people keep him away from the courses of comfort. Pakruok is another style by which this observation is treated with a light touch.

216. The expression's preponderance in pakruok suggests very strongly that the stark reality that poverty strikes relentlessly is being softened by the light-touch treatment. But poverty is incidentally implicitly regarded as natural and unconquerable, thus seeming to mean that it has divine and mysterious origins.

217. Stubbornness is as socially undesirable and nauseating as diarrhoea. Granted that this is a medical defect, the image of a person's character being equal to the disease reflects and suggests a recognized existence of exceptional deviance in the society. Moreover the fact that the diarrhoea person's characteristics have become a point of reference means they have come to be part of social behaviour in so far as they are regarded as the teachings of the negative school.

218. A way of expressing non-fulfilment of any expectation. It is implied that fulfilment is identified with and attributed to the sun. Thus if sunrise were to fail, life, it is suggested, would cease. Consequently, the sun clearly has divine powers.

219. An attempt to articulate helplessness, anger and bafflement as if they are one. Asking whether to hit the hip or rectum suggests oscillation between masses of emotion with the consequence that the person ends up torn between moderation and extremism. This means the utterance is an attempt to take the emotion so that what can be done is established.

220. Helplessness in frustration: the person is feeling so oppressed in this state he fears he might destroy himself under the stress.

221. The offer of food in the form of blood to jachien implies it is believed animate; he is the unseen but felt guest.

Jachien as a sponger is a source of mystery because what is portended is not known and must needs be propitiated. Even a caterpillar could be a jachien in another form. The suggestion is that other forms are possible. Jachien, therefore, has multifarious forms in the context of Luo belief and its practice.

222. Hospitality: austerity is essential for the sake of satisfying a guest. To symbolise this is the same as offering to lick the outside of a calabash, preserving the inside for the guest. This inside, apart from meaning deep and special hospitality, also imply deep feelings with which the guest is enveloped.

223. A verbal exercise in reprimanding the modern woman for showing disrespect to gerontocracy while at the same time commending the precocious in the compound word-play "chuora-denyo-ated-mara" (my-husband-is-starving-let-me-cook-mine).

224. Mis-viewing and under-rating a person to the extent of dissolving his character in slimy potato-water. It is as if he is a reject picked from water that has been thrown to the dogs. On the other hand, the person protesting this underestimation may actually

deserve it except for the fact that he is forcing recognition of a non-existent outstanding characteristic.

225. Modesty may be inverted pride as is the case with the potato-anecdote. The immodesty of sparkling beauty seemingly only camouflages inflation with nothing: the substance overrides the shadow however scintillating the latter might be. This ^{theory} ~~theory~~ of the potato-case, however contradicts the tree-one.

In the tree anecdote, it is the beautiful that is victimised and used while the ugly is spared. In this case the good-looking one has substance.

It is however self-proclamation that is common to both anecdotes: the self-centred show of the beautiful. It is this characteristic that the saying is about. What happens to the potato and tree seems common too: the beautiful potato is searched and thrown aside as a disappointing failure doomed with extinction, while the ugly one is bound for consumption and therefore association with life; the ugly tree is spared while the beautiful are cut and put to rot in the ground as the pillars of a house. The overall implication is that the ugly live longer than the beautiful.

The expression is another case of two anecdotes compressed into two words, in this case about the tendency of beauty to proclaim itself and thus open itself up for destructive probing. The contents of the anecdotes appear contradictory but analysis enables some kind of reconcilliation.

226. The name of Chweya, apart from being a style of identity, also suggests the case of one who never returns and in this case from eating. His eating capacity is a yardstick for

the quality of hospitality.

The father's name has even deeper suggestions of wolfish eating: Oyu comes from oyuyo which means he is greedily tearing off huge chunks of meat.

First and foremost are his names. They have connotations of a disgusting commitment to overeating. Second is the eating for the sake of it: his wolfishly interminable eating eloquently speaks his animalistic passion. The two are condensed into the few words of the expression for which background knowledge is essential.

227. Yet another anecdote laconically presented. Its (the expression's) background which is the anecdote, comprises a drama in which patience and impatience are the protagonists.

First is Tortoise. He is patient enough to go through all the hurdles the woman hopes will discourage him. In the heat of this patience he is also impatient to fulfil his date. His behaviour is therefore a combination of two opposites which propel one another forward.

Second is the woman. She is patient enough to hope the thing misfires. In this respect her patience is different from Tortoise's because he is looking forward to success. And so, although the word is seemingly common to both of them, there is a conflict of desires dramatically simmering for resolution. The woman's patience is therefore faced by two forces in the person of Tortoise: patience and impatience, both in the name of sexual desire.

Third is the man. His patience in waiting for the outcome of the drama is another force the woman has to reckon with.

There are possibilities that she hopes the man will stand up and arrogantly face and throw off the tortoise. He does not. His patient waiting agrees with the Tortoise's patience and impatience because it does not resist them. He too is making his silent contribution to the unravelling of the drama. It is therefore not surprising that at the end he explodes into unilateral divorce as if he has been patiently waiting for it.

228. Turning into a ngero is the event of being famous. The musician seems to be proclaiming what he has heard or been told by his advisers and friends. The fame is not necessarily an attribute of his good music but could also accrue from other qualities. On the other hand he may be praising himself as a number of Luo musicians are known to do.

229. Belief: that human saliva carries luck or ill-luck, whichever is wished by the giver of fortune or misfortune.

230. A narrative associated with Ogoma's name and probably personality but now condensed into the few words for the sake of conversational application. It is however a special Kanyada expression derived from the history of him who was once their administrative head (see introduction). Yet surprisingly, it is not Ogoma's name that is significant in the expression: it is the bicycle. Though a humorous reference to that which is better-than-nothing, in the bicycle's case the compound coinage is suggestive of a preference of this advanced item of technology to the drudgery of having to drag two feet on the ground.

231. A false expectation of what is traditionally a man's right to eat has been created by the woman. The condensing of the anecdote into the few words and the consequent popular usage testifies to social recognition of the fact that deviationism was possible even if by women.

232. The warning against proceeding with a task is itself a premonition. The originator of the warning is suggestively imbued with mysterious and causal divine powers, what with the saying that he has wounded the head without really doing so.

233. The hare-tortoise anecdote as compressed into the three words vouches for patient endurance as a gateway to success. Furthermore, self-conception is not a fulfilment; it is the execution of the conception that is. This is why the tortoise is the victor and hare the loser.

234. The deep anus and all it connotes suggests profound disgust with meanness. The use of the expression in pakruok further implies that this behaviour is cheap enough to be tossed around for fun and actually gets stuck on Otingo as a name.

235. Weaklings are rejects because they carry and produce nothing of social value like the pot of dregs. His brittleness is signified by his likeability to the breakable pot of dregs.

236 The question being asked is whether history can be repeated. If this be true, it is further being asked whether the form of events remains the same throughout history and whether the present is comparable to the past and future. The answer being suggested is that the ram's fat tail can be compared with another but that uniformity and similarity are impossible.

Yet lack of uniformity does not exclude comparability because the past, present and the future all have forms, possibilities of differences notwithstanding. Like the sheep's fat tail, these forms may have the same contents but not necessarily the quality and quantity.

237. This is an utterance of the measurement of reaction by giving dimension to emotion and making it concrete in the image of ugali-cooking.

238. The fact that the midwife's hand disrupts foetal life and peace suggests that the prattler disrupts the established social limits by saying those which are unrequired and misplaced. What is further implied is that talking is an art, a purposive one and therefore with socially defined limits, just the same way traditional midwifery is a professional art with bounds.

239. Traditional architecture is in the background of the expression, though not necessarily always known to all users. The commonest meaning is the expression's association with uncertainty. But this does not seem to contradict the architectural dimension. Rather it reinforces it by suggesting that thought itself is a picture with dimensions hankering for answers preferably ideal ones.

240. A person's choosy hedonism is vividly drawn by the image of a cockroach seeking the very best from nooks and corners.

241. In the background of this utterance are cultural and historical connotations which users do not care about nor seem to know because what matters to them is its exceptional ability to express the high quality friendship and the concomitant attachment.

In other words, the expression is used to articulate impeccably profound love.

242. The abilities and potential of conversation as an art are humanised in being praised as capable of patient endurance. The art is therefore the users' palpable, though verbal, companion. It is further recognized that conversation is a type of art that facilitates the probing of social issues. Participants' withdrawal, even if in disgust, demonstrates the inexhaustibility of the art in purposive action. And seemingly those who use the expression in pakruok are attempting to impress their audiences that they are inexhaustible endurers.

243. The drama of unceiled voluptuous eating is eloquently drawn in the act of weed consuming and enveloping with its unseen mouth, everything around him. Clearly inherent in this is a reprimand for people who debase their human dignity by eating for the sake of it as if they are wild plants. In other words passionate eating is different from purposive eating: the latter is human while the former is non-human.

244. The image of that whose branches have not been removed portends a quality of danger with unforgiving bloody bone-crunching grips.

245. Complacency is static, impedes and murders creativity. In keeping with this observation, the image of the body drying as it moves implies transformation and possibly the production of a qualitatively better and different thing.

246. Other shades of meaning not necessarily known and considered by the users of the expression. As well as being an expression of shock, it also carries huge chunks of belief-

systems worth a special study.

247. History and the myth that the ethnic neighbours of the Luo are not as kind-hearted as they are: these aspects have apparently receded from the knowledge of the users of the expression. This is probably attributable to historical changes and their effects on the Luo worldview.

In current usage, the expression alludes to the fact that hospitality involves a lot of tolerance and endurance on the part of the host or giver who easily withdraws if response to and embrace of the act of kindness is sluggish, reluctant or proudly snailing.

248. Belief as a basis for being hospitable to any visitor: the rationale is that one never knows what treatment or mistreatment portends. Fear - superstitious fear - is therefore behind some kinds of hospitality. The implication is that the spirit of the stranger is unknown and unestimated. On the other hand, this suggests there are identifiable spirits whom the people know how to treat. In fact this is corroborated by the few details on juogi. Juogi itself is a traditional system with cultural values which merit separate investigation.

249. The bigger person, like the bigger fish is the boss and can, by virtue of his size use and exploit the energies of the smaller person or fish. But this order of relating is not irreversible. The two contrasting sizes have designed and can consequently unmake it. What is being suggested is that social relationships are created by man who can also uncreate and re-design them in the interests of social justice.

250. A dramatically presented narrative on deception and the need for mental alertness.

Thieving is no doubt reprehensible but the trickery involved in this narrative has a magnitude of genius only comparable with the "midnight thorn". The thieves and the robbed are participants in the clever drama: there is humour in the act of the herders licking the sim sim with hands around the trees while the thieves are fast but quietly licking away the cattle.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS FROM CHAPTER SIX

This chapter is a general discussion of the previous one and chapter four. It attempts a classification of ngeche and draws certain conclusions.

The expressions can generally be classified in two ways. The first of these is according to the purposes to which they are put. The second one is on the basis of their most outstanding characteristics. It is impossible to have one standard mode of classification because the two ways appear equally important at the same time as they complement one another.

7.1. There are basically seven purposes which ngeche serve by way of expression:

1. Feelings and emotions: their various intensities are verbally portrayed. ~~in a manner that ordinary long-winded expressions would not.~~

2. Reason: even humour is often a vehicle of reason. Laughing, for example, is not a mere biological exercise to show that the Luo is a child of nature. Rather than that it expresses certain attitudes to social norms and unsocial behaviour.

3. Concepts about life: life is essentially composed of artistic exercises like conversation, hunting, politics and numerous other ways of eking out survival. The exercises are an attempt to achieve the best and most desired mode of living. Ngero is an artistic way of referring to the various qualities of life as they are socially conceived. The aim and style of utterance are therefore coterminous.

4. General world-view: this is by far the largest. Loosely put, it comprises the Luo belief-system. This includes established attitudes to nature (including the cosmos), history change, the dead and the living; social morality and property-relationships; behavioural patterns like ostentation, hypocrisy and inhumanity and the concepts of fate and the individual, the world, time and life. These attitudes are connected with number 3 and together crystallize into one thing: the search for the ideal life and social fabric.

Most of the values contained in the expressions are as reactionary as they are progressive. One expression has it that the social belief-system does not see possibilities of qualitative change and only focuses on the fatalistic tragedy of man, while another one clearly sees possibilities which contradict the first one. This means that the belief-system has the capacity to encapsulate two opposites and therefore contradictions. Another example is the view of history which is simultaneously static and progressive.

The coexistence of the reactionary and progressive ideas and values means two things. The first is that a historical moment with all its standing and topical components are reflected. This is the moment when the society appears ideologically stagnant. Yet this is not really the case because in the second case progressive change is alluded to: the values in the first case are regarded as transformable, disposable or enrichable. Contradiction is thus a style for portraying change. The belief-system is a crucible of change, qualitative or otherwise. Myths that the Luo are the kindest people in their part of the world have, for example, been battered and pulped by changing historical circumstances.

5. Sex: used as a basis for social relationships through marriage, patriarchalism and kinsmanship. These institutions are, in turn, tied to social property and labour-relations which smack heavily of communalism and elements of feudalism. Erotic love exists, but is never clinically mentioned nor is it animalistic. The basic purpose is human reproduction while the attendant pleasure is only incidental.

6. Hospitality: a social practice, in some cases divine although parasitism is criminal. This aspect (hospitality) of ngero is tied to number 4 above, but recurs in so many expressions that it merits special treatment.

The question is why it is so talked-about. While one implication of the popularity is obviously that hospitality is of high social value, the other one is that inhospitality is so feared it must be talked about without being mentioned and that the only way to do this is to talk about its opposite most often. As a matter of fact, there is only one direct expression of inhospitality. But overall, the further and general implication is that the principles and practice of hospitality are not everlasting, just like many others never are. Once again the marriage of opposites is an in-built style of the expressions.

7. Some, but not all the expressions, are didactic in the interests of social norms. But this service does not exclude other purposes. In addition, some of the talked-about norms are out-dated much as it is common practice to update them to fit current circumstances. Like with the expressions of the other aspects, they are capable of being topicalised. In other words, a form of didacticism is not everlasting;

communalism can no longer restrain ostentation because capitalism and capitalistic aspirations and the accompanying religions have arrived with viable possessive individualism.

The foregoing is an attempt to summarise the basic things that ngeche talk about. The following is a summary of the basic characteristic styles in which the talking is done. It has already been remarked that this is the second and possible way of classifying ngeche.

7. 2. The styles, which are a way of summarising the general features, are basically five in number:

1. Allusiveness is the most outstanding feature and style of ngero, whether generally or in the contexts of individual texts. This aspect of the genre embraces all the seven purposes already discussed and has several functions.

First and foremost, it has the tendency to refer to certain established forms of cultural activities, some of them artistic and known to the users. The details of the activities are never dwelt on because the allusion is inherently a presumption that the speakers know them. Allusiveness is therefore an artistic way of skipping mention of the obvious and known; it makes culture, history and social aspirations condensable into a few words. Put briefly, it enables laconic communication.

Second is its connections with the incomplete statements and sentences. It is already clear that allusiveness presumes a knowledge of Luo culture. It is this presumption that is behind the incompleteness. More than that this is an abuse of

the syntactic structure. But the abuse does not mean that the new form is not a communicative structure. What is clearly demonstrated is the fact that allusiveness is in its own way self-sufficient with a purposeful and socially recognized syntactic structure. It is a technique of communication within Dholuo.

The third feature of allusion arises from the first one in which the key-word is "laconic". To state the obvious, this means a few words, which literally remain the same every time they are uttered. This laconic uniformity belies a pregnancy with numerous and diverse meanings which necessitates the connotations and contexts. The one problem is that other contexts keep arising, some of them unknown before and yet the brevity of the allusions still accommodate them. This ability to incorporate what has not been known before imbues ngero with the capacity of an art-form that can bend to changing circumstances.

Fourthly, allusiveness also abounds in pakruok and teasers. The talking is done with an indirectness which nevertheless communicates the intention of the utterer. Implicit in this, is erudite diplomacy. This characteristic of the two art-forms also exists in ngero, not only in the sense that allusiveness is diplomatic in its own way but that the diplomatic expressions used in the other forms are also ngeche. Where the sayings arose with all their characteristics is not as significant as the fact that they have glaring similarities.

2. Associated with and in fact part of the fourth aspect of allusion is the broader question of intergeneric relationships. It is already known in what ways pakruok and

teasers have connections with ngero.

It is also elaborately shown by the texts and the ensuing analyses that some of the expressions are originally anecdotic, historical, legendary and kinds of folktales. Furthermore, these forms have now contracted into the few words called ngeche. There are many other art-forms which suffer the same fate in the hands of ngeche. All the same ngero is, in this respect, many art-forms masquerading as a single one. While some of the art-forms have the same contents as ngero applied in different circumstances, styles and for varying purposes, others are in fact allusions to ngero. The inter-relatedness is elaborate and underlines the immensity of the concepts of ngero. This is initially attested to by the various attributes of the genre in chapter four. The texts and their contents justify naming the attributes, ramifications because of the clear interrelatedness. It is, for example, possible to call a three-word expression ngero mabor the moment an elaborate anecdote arises from it and ultimately turns out to be its (the expressions) root, internal contradictions notwithstanding.

3. Most, if not all, of the expressions are obviously figurative, some of them riddled with the co-existence of contradictions in meaning.

The most notable image is the chicken. It is not only a cultural symbol, but also represents certain types of individual and social behaviour and occurrences. As is the case of the chicken, most of the images employed are local. The lake,

rivers, forests, hills and their inhabitants recur in many of the expressions. That the characteristic behaviour of some of this imagery is a cartoonic representation of various aspects of social behaviour has already been said. Nonetheless, it is essential to add that some of this flora-fauna behaviour is blasted as naturalistic and below the standards of the people. Once again, this is an internal contradiction and a reflection of social contradictions, theoretically and practically. This is more clearly and dramatically portrayed in the myths, anecdotes, tales and nyedho above.

4. Ngero is clearly agglutinative. Foreign words and cultural items are easily incorporated. Some of them are modified to fit Iuo orthography. The surprise, however, is that the incorporations and modifications do not necessarily mean mealy-mouthed and uncritical acceptance. The kisii knife is, for example, culturally converted and used in daily chores. Yet this does not stop the usage of the artifact as a symbol of the socially unpopular ambivalent and vacillating behaviour of certain people. Another example is the Indian carrying turned-nose-ring and its portrayal of perversion. The ring and knife are being humorously talked about in the heat of being contradicted.

5. The last general characteristic is the exploitation of sound-patterns to convey certain meanings and enable certain usages. This aspect receives its own attention in chapter eight. Suffice it to say here that ngero^{is} spoken is one more special style.

7.3 Granted that these classifications are general though complementary it is not far-fetched to argue that they are basically riddled with contradictions, and that a major problem is to find out why this is so.

First and foremost the contradictions are in themselves, not only the content, but also the performances and styles. They are a social creation and therefore cultural. Needless to say then, they are part of everyday life.

The utterances are essentially theoretical and it is only the actions and the results that prove their practical dimensions. In the proof the dimensions do not have to be as originally theoretically conceived. They could take various forms and even be opposites. This is in complete agreement with the elaborate and multifarious nature of ngero. The genre's appearance is carefully trimmed into a few words when this is apparently only one dimension of its form. There are other forms in the form. When they are exposed, the trimming is torn asunder because practice is bigger than it. The expressions are, therefore, the tips of icebergs.

Apart from the contradictions between theory and practice on the one hand and within form on the other, there are others. There is social snobbery over nature and yet there is also glaring fear of it. Fatalism literally lives with the people and yet possibilities are also seen. Social norms exist but abuse and deviationisms abound. The overall implication of all this is that an ideological and practical struggle ~~is~~

is permanently in progress in an attempt to resolve personal, social and environmental contradictions. A struggle because contradictions do not exist without friction, and friction is impossible without action between opposites. The expressions assembled in this dissertation are a way of articulating the struggle and all that it entails. Like the conversations in which they occur, they are a convenient marriage of opposites struggling for resolution and ultimately and hopefully the ideal and best. This is seemingly the hope of the society from which the expressions were picked. And although the aim was not to study the hope(s), it is clear that artistic contradictions and struggles are at the same time mirrors of social contradictions and struggles. This is why it is inadequate for Paul Mboya and Ayayo to treat us to ngeche as if they have established, never-to-change uniform characteristics. Before a general conclusion is drawn language^u-use is briefly discussed.

*The riddle is excluded from the ramifications because, though part of ngero, it is restricted to children from whom not much of the other forms of ngero was obtained.

CHAPTER EIGHT

LANGUAGE - USE

8.1. An introduction to Dholuo has already been made and the purpose defined (Chapter One).

Rather than traverse the same ground, this chapter aims to explore in what ways and for what ends ngero possibly exploits the language.

But the question of tonality has to be re-touched. That Dholuo is tonal and that this determines various meanings needs to be repeated as a fact. Ngero, being part of the language, is no exception to the tonality.

Tonality is evidence that there are many styles in which the language is spoken. This means speaking Dholuo is an art. Thus, even before ngero is categorized as a special style of expression, the implication that it is an art is already clear.

The following are therefore randomly selected artistic expressions from chapter five with their corresponding numbers of reference.

The selection is random because the aim is to show the potential (if any) of a general linguistic examination of ngero rather than delve into a detailed one for every text. The latter exercise is beyond the scope of this study.

1.L. Notho Kagweno.

E. He died like chicken.

Notho can read ne otho. However, the vowel e in ne is elided and replaced by the vowel o from otho. The result is notho: it is disyllabic with equal stress on no and tho in a low tone.

The second word is a compound of ka and gwenno which means "like chicken". Ka is a preposition and gwenno a noun. Both combine to create an adjective that describes the death. The word is trisyllabic with the stress and high tone on ka, and then a descent on gwe and no.

Apart from creating one word out of two, the elision in the first word also facilitates the change in tone from the high one on ne and the low on otho to the low tone on notho. Thus, in being tonal, the elision is also being artistic in the creative exercise. The compounding done is in the second word creates a tool for, not only describing the death, but also for designating its nature. This is different from simply saying notho: Somebody has certainly died but the kind of death is unknown. This implies that the language has a design by which death can either be ordinary or extraordinary. Notho belongs to the former, while notho kagwenno is for the latter.

6.L. Dhandi en dhandi.

E. Your human being is your human being.

Dhandi is disyllabic with a low falling tone and implicit stress on dha and a stress and upsweep on ndi. The pronunciation pattern is the same for the third and last word. The middle word means "is".

Reference may be made to the first table (page 21)

The pronunciation guide for dhadi are available in the character dh and nd, while for vowel a reference can be made to the second table (page 22). As it is, there is no difference between the normal pronunciation of Dholuo and the ngero. This means the special qualities of this expression have to be sought elsewhere. And this can be nowhere but the implied meanings and the contexts. Be that as it may, the two sources do not contradict the language pattern. This is based on the understanding that the language sounds are employed as a means of expressing social meanings in whatever number of contexts. If the sounds were to be made for the sake of it, then humanity would be no different from the wild animal world.

Although the word chandi is repeated, there is no evidence that the speakers want to have rhymes for the sake of it. The rhymes arise from the way the language is normally spoken. But the repetition of the word is significant in the sense that it is emphasising and making special the meaning of chandi. Thus, the rhyme is a byproduct of meaning. It is therefore only utilitarian in so far as it is viewed from the perspective of the meaning and not on its own.

14. L. Ru ruath e miyo ruath.

E. Everyday it wakes up, a bull increases in quality.

A high rising tone for the monosyllabic ru.

Ru means the world coming to light or better still sunrise.

Ruath is a bull. The word is disyllabic. The tone is low and there is a lack of stress on the first syllable ru; then there is a low falling tone with a stress on ath.

Miyo means growth and change in quality. The word is disyllabic. There is a stressed low rising tone on mi and a veering into a fall on the second syllable yo. With the same stress patterns the word also means "mother", while pronounced differently it means "to give", "because" and "fertile". The fact of different tones giving the same word different meanings is evidence that tone has a role to play in determining the way this ngero is to be understood.

The word "ruath" comes at the beginning and end of the statement. It is the subject and pivot of the expression because it is its growth that is being talked about. Because of this, its recurrence is not misplaced and may be for special stress and social attention. The word, of course, stands for a person. This reference and the desired stress are clearly the purposes which the word serves. If because of the recurrence a rhyme is created, it is no doubt a by-product of services. This, however, does not diminish the fact that the recurrence is a stylistic device to make the emphasis possible.

Alliteration is the other seeming feature. Ru recurs thrice. For the word ruath, it is obviously a feature of the same

word with certainly no addition to the original meaning. For ru, the two letters are of course the word. This means the alliteration could be reduced to r, thus leaving a consonant sound. But the sound requires the vowel u in order for it to have a useful and intended meaning. The alliteration is therefore a discovery of analysis rather than a deliberate exercise on the part of the users of the expression. It is not even contributing to the meaning. Rather than that, the whole statement articulates what is intended as a whole and without special attention to certain segments of words.

28. L. Ochuer mos mos ka n'yaduon'g

E. It is dripping bit by bit like nyanduon'g.

Ochuer is trisyllabic and means "it is dripping". O is the first syllable and is stressed in a high tone, followed by a lack of stress and low tone on chu which terminates in a low rising tone and an in-built stress on er.

The next two words, mos mos, are each monosyllabic and literally mean "slowly by slowly". In the context of the expression, they mean an insidious slow dripping. Both words are accented in a uniformly low tone in two slow beats meant to portray the degree of the insidious slowness of the kind of dripping. The two words are obviously the same and therefore a repetition.

But the repetition is the face value. In order for the social meaning to be conveyed, the word has to be repeated. Inherent in them is their ability to be phonaesthetically competent

to describe the process, nature and rate of movement. In fact the very words are these three.

In the last word, nyaduong, the first syllable nya is stressed; then the tone rises with a stress on du and finally comes a low falling tone on cn'g. A slightly different tone means another thing or more. The patterns of stress have, therefore, to be retained and stuck to if the intended meaning of the expression is to be maintained.

112. L. Obeto dhako kilen'g.

E. A woman's hunting-stick is never dodged.

The first word is trisyllabic with a stress and implicit high tone on o. The tone falls on be with an implied stress. In the last syllable, the tone rises with a stress. A different pronunciation brings a different meaning.

The third word is a compound of two words, ok len'g. The o is elided from ok. Then the solitary k is affixed to len'g by introducing the vowel i. The new word is kilen'g. In this form, the word is emphatic and exclamatory not only in this expression but even if applied in other contexts. This means that in making the expression special, there is a deliberate discrimination to explore what it connotes, what with the knowledge that women do not go hunting and should therefore not have hunting-sticks. Consequently, the social meaning of the expression is primary to the literal.

25. L. Gigo to niaso aniasa dongo.

E. Those things have a niaso-aniasa growth.

The key-words are niaso aniasa. Their phonaesthetic quality is mentioned on page 87.

Niaso is trisyllabic. The first syllable, ni, is pronounced with a high rising tone and a stress; the second syllable is a which enjoys a stress and a low falling tone that is prolonged before the third syllable so. This last syllable has an in-built stress and an attendant low tone. The whole sound communicates the process of poor, sluggish and unhealthy growth.

The second word arises from the first one but is transformed for emphasis and with a finality on the quality of growth.

Also detectable are the rhymes in the words. One obvious reason for this is that they are actually the same word. But this need not inhibit this detection. First is nia, then there is so, both common to the two words. The rhythmic effect of these similarities endow the words with a musical dimension that smacks of the unhealthy gradualism in the growth. Yet one has to know what they mean before the nuances of their form is appreciated.

What is significant in the brief analysis, however, is that sound and meaning can be coterminous and that in the case of this expression, the total meaning would be missed if the quality of sound were to be underestimated.

37. L. Gin ka tandawuoya.

E. They are more than plenty here.

As already said on page 95, the key-word ~~is~~ is tandawuoya. The word is further divisible into two, with wuoya stealing the limelight of significance meaning-wise. Wuoya or wuoyo have various meanings determined by contexts and the tones of the users. But in this particular case, it means that which has attained the limits of countability. The soul of the word wuoya means things have gone haywire and splashing all over in plenty. Translation and explanation fall short of what live performance and tone entail.

42. L. Gigo otimo newa.

E. Those things are very many.

The use of "those" is demonstrative and clearly shows drama in progress. It could also be referring to a past case of plenty. The fact of the matter is that the incidence of "those" is sufficient evidence that the utterer is talking in the active form be it in the context of the present, future or the past.

The demonstration is associated with the presence of plenty and therefore the keyword "newa". As already explained (p.98) the word literally means "just look at the myriads of plenty". Thus the word is, itself, actively demonstrative.

In brief, the expression has an in-built dramatic quality. This implies that knowledge of the mechanics of Dholuo can facilitate a deeper understanding of the expression.

53. L. Nyaburu dhako oyien'g burone chuore wach.

E. Woman, the daughter of pouring, pours words to her husband when she is full with food.

The syllabic bits of nyaburu are indicated on page 104. The meaning of buru and its implications are also provided. It should however be stressed that buru, apart from just meaning an effusion of words is also a phonaesthetic description of the actual process of pouring.

It is also apparent that after appearing in the first word of the statement, the word recurs, only now pre-fixed to -ne (meaning him). In the first case it is her nature to overtalk that is being described while in the second one it is not only describing but also indicating that somebody is on the receiving end of this effusion. The repetition is rhythmic and the meanings also rhyme except for the fact that in the first case rhyme is attached to the woman while in the second one it is to the man.

Essentially the significance of the word under discussion is its meaning. The rhythm arises, first and foremost, from the fact that this meaning is being communicated in a repetitions style. The centrality of the meaning does not, however, mean the exclusion of the style. It is a by-product as well as part of the meaning because without articulation, nothing would be known of the woman's behaviour.

54. L. Oyundi ni bi chien oyundi ni sese sese to oyundi ni dhi puodho oyundi ni tienda lit.

E. When oyundi bird is invited to eat oyundi moves sese sese but when oyundi is asked to go and till the land oyundi complains about a sore leg.

Details of the sing-song style of uttering this expression and the meaning of sese sese are covered on page 104. The onomatopoeic and phonaesthetic quality of the latter two is already explained, but even in the reading these are self-evident.

The word oyundi is also repeated, creating an accidental rhyme whose purpose of reference to the bird is not overridden. All the same, the fact that it is at the centre of the drama would seem to justify this repetition. The dramatic dimension is, of course, inherent in the language used: sese sese stands for movement as much as "sore legs" show the deliberate attempt to limp or walk as if it is sick.

34. L. Gari ochayo thim.

E. Train defies forests.

The use of the word gari is the reason for citing this expression. The word is originally Kiswahili, but has been incorporated into Dholuo so deeply that it even has a plural geche.

The implication is that the language has ^{the}ability to absorb the foreign, some times even without corrupting the original.

8.2. CONCLUSION

The figurative nature of ngero has received enough attention in the previous chapter. It has also been said that ngero is part of Dholuo. The inference from this is that the figurative usages are part of the language, special as they are.

In the foregoing analysis, various expressive styles have been revealed. However, not every expression has been examined. The implication is that many other styles exist. One common style is tonality: it is part and parcel of every usage of Dholuo, hence no ngero is an exception.

There are other styles than tonality. Language use in certain ngeche make it possible to differentiate between the ordinary and the extraordinary. This seems to assume that normal everyday usage is ordinary while ngero is the extraordinary.

Another style is the use of ordinary language that has extraordinary implications (No. 6). This implies the availability of contexts to provide the extra dimension. There is dual social activity: making the ordinary speech and either being involved in other activities than talking or making utterances that are related to the ordinary saying.

The third style is the purposive use of sounds. First and foremost it is a truism that all language sounds are purposive in every case that they are applied. And this is the case whether they convey sense or nonsense.

Secondly, literary designs like rhyme and alliteration are only incidental to the meanings of the sounds they make. The designs are of course unearthed by way of analysis, but this does not downgrade their quality as stylistic features. Nor is their origin to be disregarded: they arise from language-use and are therefore social products. Needless, to say then, they are social

activities designed and executed by the users. Other examples are the sound-types that breathe meanings in the way they are vocalised. These are the cases of the onomatopoeic and phonaesthetic. In some of these, the sound is live and dramatic. This means that certain sound-patterns are also meaning-patterns and can be read in *ngero*.

But more can be said about alliteration and rhyme. Essentially the two are aspects of repetition. A good example is expression No. 25. Here it is clear that alliteration contributes to the ease with which the utterance is made; the word-play makes the utterance an inexhaustible source of pleasure for the tongue and ear. A natural consequence is that the saying becomes memorable, thus making the sound-system an asset for oral transmission. Expressions no. 6, 28, 54 and 53 are no exception to this characteristic with the best illustration in 54. The repetition in the saying makes it as memorable as a sweet song can be. Repetition and the consequent memorability are special features which make this kind of literature stick so that it is applied when occasion demands.

CHAPTER VIII

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

9. This chapter makes a general response to all that has been said and discussed in the previous chapters. It reconsiders the original aims of the study, the cardinal points in chapter two, the results and implications of the fieldwork in order to draw general conclusions and suggest possibilities for further research on ngero.

9.1 Certain major findings and conclusions can be stated right away in summary form. On the whole they validate the general assumption and overriding thesis that ngero is a social object:

1. Study Approach: As originally assumed, deriving ngero from live situations and social contexts, particularly conversations, is the most fruitful study approach because it easily helps prove that the genre is a verbal social activity.

Conversations are therefore social exercises about social affairs and the genre being part of these processes is a social object. Above all, the approach yields material for analyses and interpretations, showing ample evidence ngero is an important social concept and object communication among the Luo and not mere short texts without the contexts. Hitherto scholars have preferred the former (i.e. texts without the contexts), thus dismembering and distorting the social conception of the genre.

2. Research Material and Information are natural results of the study-approach. Analyses of the material has helped rectify and clarify reigning misconceptions about the genre. Brevity and dedacticism for example, have been mistakenly regarded as the chief and sometimes the only and universal characteristics of ngero.

The nature and form of ngero, in many ways, prove these assumptions wrong and inadequate. It is in fact the misconceptions about what the qualities of the genre are that had bred its defensive claims of its scantiness among the Nilotes.

3. Nature and form: are easily the most important findings because they show exactly what ngero is and what its unique qualities are. It can be brief or long, has many varying and interrelated definitions and can carry as much content as the society that uses it desires. A long folktale of about two hundred words is called ngero. Yet the same tale can be compressed into as few as only ten words, comprehensibly retaining its original meaning for its users and still being called ngero. That kind of relationship is definitely unique. Another case is pakruok, which, for lack of a better word, we have called praise word-game. It is a genre in its own right, yet is both a source and form of ngero, relateable to a Luo folktale, riddle etc. Thus ngero is a term for many interconnected genres, which perform social functions ranging from the communication of emotions, feelings, hopes, history to didactic roles, among others.

4. Intergeneric Relationships: It has already been emphasised that ngero means many things and functions: it is a folktale, a brief striking utterance, a riddle, pakruok, circumlocution, verbosity etc. In their social applications, these seemingly different forms collaborate, underlining a smooth intergeneric relationship. The relationships are therefore probably paramount among the factors of uniqueness because of their unique quality: to distil into one generic title, showing an organic relationship and social functioning.

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5. Generic Conception: The social network of intergeneric relationships illustrate that generic meaning-system is an internal cultural conception peculiar to a given community. Thus before proclaiming universals, particularities for them can only be obtained from specific cultural contexts. Once obtained, comparisons can be made between ethnic groups.

6. Comparisons: If other societies can have their genres researched like ngero, then comparative studies may ensue to determine similarities and differences. A good example are the Luo neighbours, the Luyia. A comparative study will facilitate an understanding of the degree of cultural and linguistic contacts between the two groups. The overall result of this approach is that generic concepts will be clarified, making it possible to logically formulate general theories about the oral literature of Kenya in particular and ultimately ^{the} rest of the world in general.

7. Creativity: Despite the lack of comparative studies, there are clues of cultural and linguistic contacts between the Luo and the Kisii, for example. This, perforce, means ngero is not conservative and ahistorical. It simultaneously accommodates opposites which set history in motion and creates new themes and content. The utterance about the strange accordion is a good example. It is an accommodation of a new cultural material, the accordion, at the same time as it creates a new dimension to the meaning of ndiya (see texts page 189, No.159). This is because ngero has another unique quality: ambiguity. This characteristic enables the genres' users to verbally incorporate contradictory situations like cataclysmic cultural and political occurrences. The genre is therefore responsive to all forms of on-going social developments and their opposites. This is to say that the genre responds to and is an indicator of social change, past, present and coming. It is therefore not static but dynamically creative.

This was pointed at the beginning of the study, but it can now be emphatically restated that ngero is basically encyclopaedic literary.

3. Utilitarian Art: We have thus far proved that ngero is a socio-cultural tool. It is an art-form, socially conceived for social functions and not art for art's sake. The genre, has for example, many didactic utterances. Others serve many purposes at a single moment of application: they entertain, restrain, warn, threaten and advise. With all these multiple purposes and more, this research has therefore exposed an important literary tradition of the Luo.

After this summary, an elaboration by way of discussion, will perhaps suffice.

Calling ngero a short art-form is a misnomer because the few words are not the complete genre. It is big and has wide-ranging interrelationships. The details of the inter-relationships are beyond the scope of this study, but a number of things can be suggested about them.

First is the possibility that ngero can complement each of the other genres for certain social ends. One of the genres is pakruok where ngero is not only used for amusement but also for certain moral ends.

The second possibility arises from the first one and it is that if all the genres of ngero and the related ones are studied as complements, then a greater scope would be available for investigating all the artistic forms and the social contents. This way it would be known in total how expressive Luo oral literature is. The understanding here is that ngero is a focal point through which other literary rays could be trapped and investigated.

The above suggestion can, at first, be contradicted by the third possibility that the genres are examinable separately. This, indeed, is what has been done in the study. But, as already implied, this leaves loopholes in respect to the other artforms. Such an argument is easily defeated because it can be said that these many forms are part of ngero and that it is the genre's tendency to have loopholes. This is the same as saying that it has a characteristic of keeping weaknesses untouched and unquestioned. It is being suggested that if these interrelated genres cannot be studied at the same time, then a separate one need not impede considering them as a family of genres with areas of co-operation in themes, analyses and stylistics. In other words the genres can be treated separately but as segments of the same study.

The fourth possibility is connected with ngero's definitions which embrace a wide area. This is certainly attributed to the fact that the Luo oral dictionary is the starting point and proves Ben-Amos's thesis that generic naming is the cultural right of the language and the society in which that genre is applied (87). The suggestion is that a collective study on the basis of the definition would be in agreement with the social form intact and untampered with. The assumption in this case is that original conception of the form has its values which generic dismembering distorts and overlooks. A case in point is the short and long ngero. This study has no doubt concentrated on a type of the short aspect (although it is not necessarily short). But what is significant is the fact that the short and the long are opposites, implying at the same time that they started off as ngero and then split as social values and world outlooks changed.

A search for the original would not exclude the changes because it is after all already a truism that ngero has split into many branches. The splitting process would be branches with a common root.

The root may be dead but the possibilities of its nature, form and content can be sought through the modern forms backwards only if they (forms of ngeche) are viewed collectively. Moreover and within the limitations of this study, it is both clear that ngeru is socio-cultural, historical and not only embodies on and coming social experiences but has the power and capacity to absorb more with the changing times. Historical occurrences are therefore a possible background for investigating the changing and multiplying forms of ngeru assuming that history has a starting point as ngeru presumably has. An earlier illustration is in chapter three: the history of the Ijaw is known to have been unearthed through their proverbial lore (88). The lore is related to ngeru and though not necessarily the same it makes the latter seem pregnant with literary history. Another answer to Hugh Trevor-Roper could be found here (89).

The logic of historical movements shakes the pride of live situations as the best possible sources of ngeche - because they (the situations) are occurrences of particular moments in history and not the whole history. The circumstances which necessitated the use of an expression a hundred years ago is not the same as the ones occurring in the current electronic age. Changing material circumstances have their role in influencing not only the creation of new expressions but also the use and form of old ones. It is, consequently, apparent that technology cannot outdate ngeru.

There is no attempt to underestimate the value of live situations in the foregoing. What is being avoided is treating them as if they are the eternal and universal because this can easily crowd out the consideration of other possibilities. Some of these are the past and the future of the situations which this study has seen some of the expressions to be fond of. This is further evidence that ngero is a huge capsule of historicity and that live situations are a starting-point for unravelling this reality. Thus the importance of the present is that it enables us to see the past.

Before this historical background of the expressions is adequately exposed, it is unsafe to rummage all over the world for their equivalents. It is an easy way out because it enables one to seek cheap ready-made solutions in available published works without due regard to the fact that these expressions have backgrounds which might contradict or be mightier than what they are deemed similar to. This is why the study has attempted to provide a socio-historico-cultural background to some of the expressions. Comparative study or speculation is only logical after this background is considered together with the attendant intergeneric relationships and elements.

This is far from parochial nationalism (90) because in deciding that the study be first concentrated among the Luo, it has been recognized that they are a linguistic nationality.

To begin with the basic, whenever the words "human" and "social" have been used it has been on the basis of what they mean in Dholuo. The principle of universalism has thus been the prime object of avoidance.

Secondly, in making the Luo the centre of gravity, the concept of diffusionism (which in oral literature is being set aside) as impracticable because the Luo do not seem aware and remotely concerned that their literature might have had fossil origins in the eutherian heights of the icy northern pole and hemisphere. As the expressions testify, the sun is perpetually shining from the Jordan to the shores of Lake Victoria. If this is not enough then there is the local flora and fauna in the imagery to put everything beyond doubt.

Thirdly, the Luo studied through the expressions, inhabit only Luo locations and yet remain ever aware not only of their Dhevo-speaking neighbours but far beyond. They are not perpetually grinning at their natural environment and behaving like zombies. This is not to ignore the fact that they have to conceive of themselves first and foremost and this they do by regarding their human body and life as divine (a number of expressions illustrate this). Yet self-conception does not stop them noticing the Kikuyu and the invading Europeans and Indians. Such an awareness is unambivalent but must logically include their own nationality, hence the study of ngero from their perspective.

A related question is how ngero is analysed in connection with the Luo. Once again, purposive nationalism is in play. The genre is an artistic vehicle of the Luo world-view, ways of life and a tool for expressing certain emotions and feelings. How and why the vehicle is manipulated can therefore only be usefully understood from them. What other styles of analyses are employed from outside the community will definitely have their own biases and priorities and not those of the Luo.

Such an approach has already been suggested by Balanda et al (92). Suffice it to say that such approaches, be they multidimensional (93) or otherwise, have not been conceived by studying and taking into account the oral literature of all groups of people in general, the Luo in particular and other Kenyan linguistic communities for that matter.

It is Lord who seems to agree with the particularistic style of study (94). He argues that genres might have formulas but that they are not necessarily constant. It can be deduced from this that the formulas cannot necessarily be constant and the same for every community of people on earth. This does not mean a generalisation cannot be made that "repeated phrases" (95) are a feature and therefore common formula-for ng'che. But that is where the similarity with the Yugoslavs ends, although it is not the case for all ng'che. It has already been proved that multifarious forms of the genre exist among the Luo. Flexibility and variability (96) of content and have also been implied and more can be said.

The two characteristics seem to have a role to play in oral transmission because changing historical circumstances require that the past be flexible, accommodating and probably subservient to their demands. This consideration includes shifting situations within a historical moment. The life, continuity and endless transmission of ng'che among the Luo is an apparent attribute of these characteristics.

When historical variability is so clear then the mother of the multidimensional approach to understanding oral literature is static and conservative (97). In so saying, she is confessing without realising it that she has chosen to make the literature immobile to serve her momentary and static critical tools. What is important is the fact that it is her approach that makes

the literature static because otherwise the self-reflective approach would be fruitless. It is without some pre-determined ends, unrelated to the objects of analysis, that Finnegan compiles the heavily-footnoted mass of a book on African Oral literature (if the collection is really continental), although she later says that oral literature is not so oral(98). Finnegan refuses to recognize that the tools for analysing the literature are available within that very literature. She is particularly dishonest in this respect because she seems unshakeably convinced that hers is the only and ultimate approach. This is different from Jason who unashamedly but honestly and clearly admits that her approach is ^{her own} invention. In my analysis I have assumed that one can only be true to the form and content of oral literature if one sticks to and seeks the social purposes and significance of the literature within the specific community. This kind of honesty has made it necessary to treat ngero as a social object content and formwise.

The implication so far is that content and form are inseparable. A further general argument clarifies the stance. First the obvious. Ngero comprises certain words purposively uttered. In other words they are "patterns of speech and ideas" (99). Patterning is already a form but the fact that this form arises from the complementary arrangement of the words which have a meaning, means that content and form are one and the same thing. This clearly proves that ngero is part of language-use among the Luo because essentially language is for the communication of certain ideas, thoughts, norms, desires, feelings and emotions, to which the genre is no exception. For the sake of emphasis it is worth repeating that language is a social tool.

Such a social dimension proves that the form of ngero in particular and Dholuo in general serves social functions. Form cannot logically have its own autonomy because without the society it cannot exist. They are its creators who test and determine its viability and suitability. But having admitted that only one form of ngero has been studied and that others only rear their heads as ramifications, it is further conceded that not all the expressions can be collected as this would be assuming that the language is static and has reached the dead-end of all possibilities and contacts. Creativity is bound to continue in a world fraught with antagonisms "between the rich and the poor, the mortal and superhuman, the powerful and the weak"(100). This is assuming that the oral literature of the Luo reflects a culture not only with the potential for change but with the ability to keep changing and that it is not a static mirror of a way of life as Hauge implies (101).

This role of culture is raised last for the sake of prominence. That the short, ideologically pregnant utterance is the speciality of adults who root most of its origins in the Luo folktale and that both the utterance and the tale are generically called ngero, are already clear. But whether folktale or the brief-looking form, the genre is a medium for learning the culture. Viewed as a whole, the genre is therefore a traditional school; the child initiated through the folktales in readiness for the application of their distilled cultural messages and nuances in adulthood. Childhood and adulthood are obviously separate stages of growth at the same time as they are interdependent. The dependence does not make separate generic study misplaced, but an awareness of the interrelationship helps establish

that the creation, learning and use of ngero are life-time exercises in traditional Luo.

Culture is a "a man-made part of the environment"(102) or better still an unsatisfactory and unsettled environment about which more is bound to be verbally expressed and therefore necessitate the use of ngero as an artistic social object and not a source of backward and purposeless antiquity (103).

9.2. Recommendations for Further Research.

1. Interrelationship between ngero and its component genres.

Further investigation of the component genres not covered by this theses, but which make up ngero, is necessary to give a complete picture of this literary tradition of the Luo. This should be done through further field research.

(a) Perhaps the most important components worth further research are the following:

- (i) Pakruok - the praise word-game.
- (ii) The folktale-aspect - sigana or ngero.
- (iii) Riddles - the ngero play-game among children.

2. Characteristics of the Ngero.

Also worth further investigation are the following characteristics :

- (i) Ngero's historicity.
- (ii) Ngero's linguistic attributes.
- (iii) Ngero's ambiguity

3. Extension of Geographical Coverage.

(a) This study has only covered two locations in South Nyanza district ; Kanyada and Kamagambo. There are many other Luo regions to which it could be extended to do justice to the possible variations

and similarities and to attempt to test the extent to which the research findings and conclusions may be universally valid for the Luo people as a whole. The areas to be covered would include the following :

(i) The rest of South Nyanza, including the Luoised Abasuba.

(ii) Siaya and Kisumu districts.

(b) As indicated in the introduction, the Luo have neighbours speaking diverse languages. But despite the differences, these communities have interacted with them (the Luo). An extension of this study into them would indicate the nature and forms of interaction in the fields of oral literature and linguistics and facilitate comparative analysis. The particular communities are the Luyia, Kuria, Gusii, Kipsigis and the Nandi.

(c) A further extension, for comparative purposes, would include similar studies by other scholars on genres similar to ngero among the other communities of Kenya and the rest of Africa and the world.

Most of the existing studies of the corresponding genres of ngero consist of short texts, certainly based on the misconception that the genre is universally brief, as already stated in the previous chapters. On the strength of my findings, these studies should be revised and rewritten employing the contextual ^{approach} in order to obtain the whole value of the texts. When this methodological approach has been adequately exploited, the final task will essentially comprise the use of library material to make comparative studies with the Kenyan situation.

9.3. National relevance.

Ngero clearly performs various social functions : these include the encapsulation of past and current social attitudes. It is also a

indicator of social change, embodies crucial social problems, the people's responses and their attitudes to and concepts of development and status quo. The genre indicates the interaction of the old and new impulses in the society and how and why they come. Thus ngero is not just a literary tool but has qualities applicable in designing policy-decisions and political strategy. Specific studies of ngero forms could be made in areas where major development programmes have been launched in order to assess both people's attitudes to such programmes and also how they have reacted to change their economic life. Such studies could stand side by side in a complementary manner, with sociological or economic evaluations. One good example is the ngero which expresses the belief that large numbers of people is an economic and military virtue, that the more the people the greater their wealth and economic might. The ministries of economic planning, defence, health, etc., may, therefore, adopt better developmental approaches if they clearly understand such population and family-planning concepts of all Kenyans.

If published, this study will provide reading texts for the general public and schools. Of particular interest are the adult literacy classes. They will be reading a literature with material derived from their own traditions and at the same time combining what is stylistically orally transmitted with a writing tradition, thus probably endearing them to what is being communicated. This will furthermore enhance the role of indigenous languages in education, particularly if this study is consolidated with similar or corresponding ones in a suitable book.

The publication of these ngече should not imply that the study of the genre is complete. It is not and its complexity explains that Kenyan oral literature is rich with material begging for further research.

FOOTNOTES :

1. R. Finnegan, Oral Literature in Africa,
(Oxford : OUP, 1970) pp.389
2. R. Finnegan, Limba Stories and Story-telling
(Oxford: OUP, 1967) p.vi
3. J.B. Christensen, "The Role of Proverbs in
Fante Culture", in AFRICA, Journal of
International African Institute, London, 1958
p.239.
4. R.S. Rattray, Ashanti Proverbs, (Oxford, 1916)p.5
5. Sankan, The Maasai (Nairobi: EALB, 1973)
pp85-102. All the expressions are given in
English without the remotest suggestion that they
have Maasai originals.
6. Paul Mboya, Luo Kitgi qi Timbegi (Kendu Bay:
Advent Press, Gendia, 1938) p.207. X

7. A.B.C. Dcholla-Ayayo, Traditional Ideology and Ethics Among the Southern Luo, (Uppsala, Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1976,) pp. 239 - 245.
8. Melville Herskovits and Sie Tagbwe, "Kru Provers" in Journal of American Folklore, Vol. 43, No.169, 1930, p.225.
9. Rattray, loc cit
10. Okot p'Bitek, The Social and Cultural Background to Acoli and Lango Oral Literature (Unpublished thesis for Bachelor of Letters, Oxford, 1963)p.317.
11. B.W. Andrzejewski, "Reflections on the Nature and Social Function of Somali Proverbs" in African Language Review, Vol. 7 1968 (London) p. 74.
12. G. Barra, 1,000 Kikuyu Proverbs, (EALB, 1939, Nairobi (foreword)
13. Herskovits, op cit p. 226

14. R.S. Rattray, Hausa Folklore, Customs and Proverbs, Vol. II, (Oxford, 1913) p.v
15. A. Ol'Oloisolo Massek and J.O. Sidai, Wisdom of the Maasai, (Transafrica Publishers, Nairobi, 1974) p.274.
16. J.C. Messenger, "Anan'g Proverb-Riddles" in Journal of American Folklore, Vol. 73, 1960 pp225-235
17. S.S. Farsi, Swahili Sayings, Vol. I, (Nairobi: EALB, 1958) pp.1-52. In volume two he parades riddles and superstitions without a single reason for the categorization.
18. A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, Hausa Ba Dabo Ba Ne, (Ibadan : OUP., 1966) p.xii.
19. Babalola, "The Expressiveness of African Languages: The Case of Yoruba," 2nd World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture : Lagos, unpublished article, 1977) p.6.

14. R.S. Rattray, Hausa Folklore, Customs and Proverbs, Vol. II, (Oxford, 1913) p.v
15. A. Ol'Oloisolo Masek and J.O. Sidai, Wisdom of the Maasai, (Transafrika Publishers, Nairobi, 1974) p.274.
16. J.C. Messenger, "Anan'g Proverb-Riddles" in Journal of American Folklore, Vol. 73, 1960 pp225-235
17. S.S. Farsi, Swahili Sayings, Vol. I, (Nairobi: EALB, 1958) pp.1-52. In volume two he parades riddles and superstitions without a single reason for the categorization.
18. A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, Hausa Ba Dabo Ba Ne, (Ibadan : OUP., 1966) p.xii.
19. Babalola, "The Expressiveness of African Languages: The Case of Yoruba," 2nd World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture : Lagos, unpublished article, 1977) p.6.

20. Kirk-Greene, loc cit.
21. Andrzejewski, loc cit.
22. C. Nyembezi, Zulu Proverbs, (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1954) pp11 - 23.
23. Masek and Sidai, loc cit
24. I. Delano, Owe L'esin ORO (Yoruba Proverbs) (Ibadan : OUP, 1966) p.ix.
25. L.A. Boadi, "The Language of the Proverb in Akan", in African Folklore, ed. Dorson (New York: Doubleday, 1970) p.183.
26. Nyembezi, op cit, p.25
27. Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart, (London: Heinemann, 1958) p.6. We are told that proverbs are the palm-wine with which Ibo words are eaten.
28. Herskovits, loc cit.

29. Andrzejewski, loc cit.
30. Okot, op cit p. 320.
31. Nyembezi, op cit p.5
32. N. Njururi, Gikuyu Proverbs, (Macmillan, 1969)pvi
33. Ajaloo, "The Use of Oral Literary Data for History",
Journal of American Folklore 81, 1968, pp.235-242
34. Herskovits, loc cit.
35. D.W. Arnott, "Proverbial Lore and Word-play of
the Fulani" in AFRICA, Vol. xxvi, 1957, No.1 p383
36. Nyembezi, op cit p.44
37. C.M. Doke, "Bantu Wisdom-lore" in African Studies
Vol.6, No. 3, Sept. 1947 (Johannesburg:Witwatersrand
University Press) p.117.
38. Christensen, loc cit.

39. Okot, op cit, pp317 - 382.
40. Okot, op cit, p.340.
41. Njururi, op cit, p.126.
42. A.C. Hollis, The Masai, their Language and Folklore (Negroes University Press, 1905) pp.238 - 251.
43. A.C. Hollis, The Nandi, Their Language and Folklore, (Oxford : 1909) p.ii.
44. Hollis, op cit, p.xiii (Masai)
45. Rattray, Ashanti, loc cit.
46. Ocholla-Ayayo, loc cit.
47. Njururi, op cit, p.vii.
48. Okot, op cit p.317.

49. J. Nandwa, The Oral Literature Among the Abaluyia, (M.A. Thesis, Nairobi University, 1976, unpublished) p.302.
50. Finnegan, op cit (Oral Lit. in Africa).
51. Lindblom, Kamba Folklore, Riddles, Proverbs and Notes, (Applebergs Boktryckeriaktiebolag, Uppsala, 1934) p.28
52. Makila, "The Usage and Meaning of Bukusu Proverbs" in Pan-African Journal, Vol. ix, No.3, 1976) EALB : Nairobi) pp.295 - 352.
53. J.P. Ocitti, African Indigenous Education, (EALB, 1973) pp. 63 - 79.
54. Okot, op cit p. 382.
55. Nandwa, op cit, p.341.

56. Lindblom, op cit, p.28
57. Farsi, loc cit.
58. Berry, Spoken Art in West Africa,
(London : 1961) p.4
59. Kayombo Ka Chinyeki, Vihandyeka Vya Mana,
(Series Africana : Wien 1973).
60. Delano, loc cit .
61. Dake, loc cit.
62. Messenger , loc cit.
63. Berry, op cit. p. 24
64. Merlo Pick, Ndai na Gicandi, (Bologna,
Italy 1973) pll.

65. Dan Ben-Amos, "Folklore in African Society"
in Researches in African Literature, ed.
Lindfors (Texas) p166.
66. Mboya, loc cit.
67. Ocholla-Ayayo, loc cit
68. Onyango-Ogutu, Keep My Words, (EAPH, 1974) p26
69. Nyembezi, op cit, pp.45 -50
70. Okot, op cit, p.325
71. Okot, Ibid p. 318
72. Doke, loc cit.
73. Christensen, loc cit.
74. Merriams and Armstrong, "Banyaruanda Provers"
in Journal of American Folklore, Vol. 67, 1954, p267.
75. Nyembezi, op cit pp.xi - xii
76. Babalola, op cit p.30

77. Hollis, loc cit, (Nandi and Maasai).
78. Rattray, Ashanti, op cit, p.8
- 79 Makila, loc cit.
80. C.M. Eastman, "The Proverb in Modern Written Swahili Literature: An aid to Proverb elicitation" in 'African Folklore, ed. Dorson (New York, 1970) pp. 201 - 2.
81. Okot, op cit, p.317
82. Babalola, op cit p. 36
83. Rattray, loc cit, (Ashanti).
84. Rattray, loc cit (Hausa).
85. Hollis, op cit, p (iv) (Nandi).

86. Abrahams and Babcock, "The Literary Use of Proverbs", Journal of American Folklore 90, 1977, pp.415 - 429.
87. Ben-Amos, loc cit.
88. Ajaloo, loc cit.
89. Hugh Treror-Roper, "The Rise of Christian Europe ", (London : Thames and Hudson, 1965) p.9. He contends that pre-colonial African History is "darkness" and that darkness is not a subject for history. As far as he believes, historical movements were absent in Africa before the arrival of the white enslaver.
90. Richard Dorson, African Folklore, (New York: Doubleday, 1970) p.4
91. Richard Dorson, "Current Folklore Theories", Current Anthropology, Vol. 4 -No.1., Feb 1963, p.94.

92. Abrahams and Babcock, loc cit.
93. Heda Jason, "A Multidimensional Approach to Oral Literature." in Current Anthropology, Vol. 10, No.4, 1969, p.421.
94. A.B. Lord, The Singer of Tales, (Cambridge, Harvard) p. 36.
95. Lord, op cit, p.30
96. Linda Degh, Folktales and Society, (Indiana University Press, London, 1969) p. 168.
97. Heda Jason, loc cit.
98. Ruth Finnegan, "How Oral is Oral Literature?", SOAS. London, 1974) pp52 - 64.
99. Lord, op cit, p. 32.

100. Degh, op cit, p.182.

101. Hans-Egil Hauge, Luo Religion and Folklore,
(Norway, Universitetsforlagets trykningsentral
1969) p. 135.

102. W. Bascom, "Four Functions of Folklore",
The Study of Folklore, ed. A. Dundes
(Prentice-Hall, 1965) p. 284.

103. L. Heron, "East Afrian Folklore Studies:
Past and Present", in JDLISO(Nairobi:EALB)
Vol. 2. No.1, 1974 p.98.

GENERAL TEXTS

ABE, Toshiharu, "A Preliminary Report on Jachien

Among the Luo of South Nyanza", Discussion

Paper No.92 at the Institute of African

Studies, University of Nairobi, February, 1978.

The paper attempts to investigate the concept

of jachien among the Luo.

ANYUMBA, Henry Owuor, "Spirit Possession among the Luo

of Central Nyanza," Makerere, 1954. - "The

Historical Dimensions of Life-crisis Rituals;

Change and the mechanism of juogi experience,"

Seminar Paper, Institute of African Studies,

University of Nairobi, 1973. Although

the second paper is essentially historical,

the author seems to have taken the Luo naming-

systems more seriously thus calling spirit-

possession (1954) juogi about twenty years later.

AXMED, Shire Jaamac

Mahmaah Soomali, (Somali Proverbs),

Muqdishow, 1967, It is said that the proverbs are essentially educational. This is a departure from Andrzejewski, who generalizes that they are the juice of the language, implying in the process that they embrace every aspect⁴ of traditional Somali-life. This means that Axmed's bias is essentially an understatement.

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BEECH, M.W.H., The Suk, their Language and Folklore
(Clarendon, Oxford, 1911). Folktales and riddles occupy eight pages, with the latter numbering eighteen. It seems the research was more anthropological than it was folkloristic.

BASCOM, William, "The forms of folklore: Prose
Narratives", Journal of American Folklore,
Vol. 78, No. 307, 1965, pp.3 - 20.

The narratives are categorized into myths,
legends and folktales. Myths are said
to be truthful accounts of what happened
in the remote past but is currently
socially accepted on faith. Legends are
described as true according to what the
narrator and the audience think; they are
also said to be less remote than myths.
Folktales are simply fiction. The
evidence for the various conclusions are
probably obtained from the societies he
studied, but the categorization is
definitely not universal for the whole
of Africa. There is no doubt that generic
divisions vary from society to society.

BEN-AMOS, Dan, "Two Benin Story-Tellers" in AFRICAN FOLKLORE, (New York, Doubleday, 1970) ed.

Dorson. One contention here is that traditional story-telling styles have the potential to change in keeping with the changing circumstances and their demands.

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KABETU, Mathew Njoroge,

Kagurarn na Waithira, (London, Nelson, 1961). All the expressions are in Kikuyu but the University of Nairobi seems to have found out that they are proverbs.

K'OKIRI, Oguda L.G.

So they say (Luo Folktales) (Nairobi:EALB, 1970). Written in verses, Oguda's retelling of the tales is a boring attempt to imitate and wedge English poetics into an essentially Luo genre.

LEWIS, I M. and B.W. Andrzejewski,

Somali Poetry (an Introduction)

(OUP, 1964).

LO LIYONG, Taban, Popular Culture in East

Africa, (Longman) 1970

METEENE, K.C. and Daniel Biebuyck,

The Mwindo Epic from the Banyanga

(University of California Press,

Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969).

Many Banyanga genres and belief-systems coexist in the epic.

MORRIS, H.F., The Heroic Recitations of the

Bahima of Ankole, (OUP, 1964).

MAYOR, Thuond Luo (Eagle Press, 19??).

Written in Dholuo, this book deals with legendary Luo heroes.

MOHAMED, S. Vito vya hekima, Simo na maneno
ya mshangao (Nairobi, Longman
1974). Their educational value
is highlighted.

OMARI, C.K., Kezilahabi E., Kamera, Wahariri
(Editors), Misemo na Methali
toka Tanzania (Nairobi:EALB,
1975). Every detail is in
Kiswahili including the
annotations and the expressions.

OKOT, p'bitek, Horn of My Love, (Heinemann,
1974). A lot of space is left
blank when useful and relevant
details and annotations would
have followed each of the songs.

OKOLA,
Weche Moko Mag Luo, (Nairobi,
W. Boyd and Co. Ltd., 1936).
The book does not deal with
ngeche and is written in Dholuo
as the title suggests.

OLUDHE, Tucker and Jones

DHAKO E PACHO (Woman the Home;

An ethnomusical study of marriage
rites among the Luo of Kenya)

School of Oriental and African

Studies, London, 1975, unpublished.

PERISTIANY, Jean G., The Social Institutions

of the Kipsigis (London: Routledge and
Paul, 1964). Myths, stories and songs

are provided in Kipsigis and English
translations (pp.230-282), but little
or nothing is said of the other

possible artistic expressions.

Mrs. Odaga, has confessed, from field
experience, that the Kipsigis have what
can be called a proverbial lore, for
lack of the exact Kipsigis name.

SCHAPERA, I. Praise Poems of Tswana Chiefs

(OUP, 1965).

SOYINKA, W., Myth, Literature and the African

World (Cambridge University Press, 1976)

TAYLOR, W.E., African aphorisms or Saws from Swahililand (London, Sheldon Press, 1891). Swahililand is not the whole of Africa, therefore its aphorisms and saws cannot be "African". Secondly the author is confused as to whether the expressions are aphorisms or saws. He does not know (nor do we know) what he is giving us. Nearly all the expressions have biblical equivalents, meaning the author is more interested in his own ends rather than the expressions.

WHITELEY, H.W. A Selection of African Prose
(OUP, 1964).

ZIRIMU P. and A. Bukenya, "Oracy as A Skill
and tool for African Development"
article contributed to the Second
World Black and African Festival
of Arts and Culture, Lagos, 1977,
unpublished photocopy in Nairobi
University Library Reserve Section.

The central theme of the article
is essentially belated negritudism,
because it has, after all, been
overemphasized before that all
Africans should speak in their
different and varying African
styles.

NOTES ON THE APPENDICES (I A, B, C, D, E)

I. The following appendices are assumed representative of the twenty-one tape-recorded or noted conversations and songs. They are here intelligibly transcribed or reconstructed in Dholuo without any translations. The notes on each expression is enough explanation of the contexts and possible meanings. (Chapter 5)

However, a few more things should be added in the light of the appendices:

Appendix A: is a short gossip about interclan rivalries. The following expressions appear in the conversation as they do in Chapter five. In addition, they recur in many other conversations. As is the case with the other appendices, their lines in the conversations and the numbers and pages in the chapter are quoted rather than a reproduction of the whole expression.

Lines 3 and 4; No. 54, p. 104

Lines 26 and 27; No. 120, p. 159

Lines 27 and 28; No. 121, p. 160

Line 39; No. 122, p. 161

Lines 44 and 25; No. 117, p. 156

Line 45; No. 43, p. 98

Line 51; No. 193; p. 215

Line 52; No. 118; p. 157

Line 52; No. 124; p. 162

Appendix B: is about the building of a school. The conversation takes place before a committee meeting to discuss the issue. Communal commitment, interclan politics and rivalries are among the incidental subjects of reference.

Lines 6 and 98, No. 128, p. 164

Line 25, No. 129, p. 165

Lines 30 and 31, No. 218, p. 230

Line 31, No. 59, p. 108

Line 51, No. 60, p. 109

Line 53, No. 237, p. 244

Lines 59 and 60, No. 124, p. 162

Line 28, No. 103, p. 142

Line 62, No. 41, p. 97

Line 63, No. 61 p. 109

Line 79, No. 123, p. 161

Line 95, No. 55, p. 106

Lines 93/4, No. 42, p. 97

Lines 119/120, No. 53, p. 104

Lines 131/2, No. 107, p. 145

Appendix C: is essentially a conversation about local, national and international politics, with particular emphasis on the ways a musician sings about a bloody autocrat.

Lines 19/20, No. 136, p. 170

Line 23, No. 111, p. 149

Line 23, No. 137, p. 170

Line 26, No. 138, p. 171

Lines 44/45, No. 58, p. 108

Line 58, No. 103, p. 142

Line 59, No. 168, p. 198

Line 80, No. 135, p. 169

Lines 101/102, No. 130, p. 166

Lines 112/13, No. 242, p. 247

Line 108, No. 154, p. 184

Line 123, No. 131, p. 167

Line 143, No. 132, p. 167

Lines 160/1, No. 104, p. 143

Line 175, No. 133, p. 168

Line 186, No. 126, p. 163

Line 190, No. 164, p. 195

Line 207, No. 105, p. 144

Line 208, No. 127, p. 164

Appendix D: is a praise-song for Osoga as composed by Obudo. The central expression is "Pien dhano kiyudi" which^{is}/No. 171 on page 201 in Chapter five.

Appendix E: is a self-praising song by Ayany Jowi about himself. The expression used in Chapter five appears on the first line of the song.

APPENDIX A

CONVERSATION THREE

A tape-recorded conversation between me and Joseph Ooko at Lala, Kanyada on 3/6/77.

Ooko's Age: about 59 years.

Occupation: formerly Agriculture Officer in Lambwe, South Nyanza, Retired November, 1977.

Our meeting was accidental but I had a tape-recorder. Ooko is fond of calling me Sumba so S is me and JO him. (It was a short meeting). He has addressed many official meetings in dhoLuo and is renowned for his oratory and persuasive powers.

J.O.: Jaduong' kare isewiro.

S: Aduogo keyo kata neok apuro kamano.

J.O.: An e un jo-Nairobi to ne mana oyundi ni bi chiem oyundi ni sese sese to oyundi ni dhi puodho oyundi ni tienda lit adhi Nairobi. Ndalo keyo ni to upong'o dala du ni ~~ka~~ rusa yudore. An kiny imondie ikonya ng'ado niangagi adhi greggo nguru fis wachne ochiek sani.

S: An kiny anabet mana maga a sel ayudgo bus-fare.

J.O.: To Sumba ma bus-fare ema iwacho

kani somo ok aweni di tinde rum
wachak ndonge sukari moidho OTC?

S: An be odwa tamo wang'a. An kata uyudna
tich moro acham pesa athogo. Kon
higni be rumo, ati.

J.O.: Omera an ema aduong'ni to pod adich mana
ni an nyathi manyoro. Kayuochigi atuo mana
ni an wuoyi ndhiria. 20
De mana nyuok Ineno
gweng' ma iayeno. Jogo ok dwar wa, to mano
emomiyo ka ginano to ginano ma yawuotgi
moko ti mana e sikul, to kamaka gilowa.
Omiyo in nan anana, kik ichal yie kon ichiegni
gowo. Koyie be ilande mondo ibed rapim e
gweng'. Yawa maneno iherorigo ia limogi
ochawa matek to wan ema wapidho kuargi
ma Obegi. Koso bin ikiani Owano ne
ja-kwadhua? To Obegi ni ema wachue
wanyombone. Kaaye to onyuolo mana Kiragi
lilo. Kiyegi oromowa omera, an matiyo kodgi
an ema ang'eyogi...

S: An kon ne use hongogi, gin jowa.

J.O.: A omera, hongo to wahongo to tinde
to ee gigawowa, kiyegi. Joluo nowachoni
kich yieng' moloyo jok maok kiye
mapidhogi, to magi ee ose ying' tinde
gi pielo chieth madongo dongo. To rachne

ni ipielo mana e umwa, e utwa, 40
kuom mondwa gi nyithindo.

S: Kata mana e dhou.

J.O.: An omera jogi kata ilimori kodgi
anto adaggi. Kaminenono koro ichami achama
to ikudhi. Chieng' ma iredhori piny to
ipoyo apoya.

S: To ng'ama gigoyo piny machiegni.

J.O.: An dalawa ka to odhuro. Kata an awuon
gilawa maok kuma gi dware tunde koda.
An wuod wuona ne wahongo to tinde ne mana
tung' mosno. Ma nyocha gi mayowa tich
ruothni to lakgi tinde tar te ginyiero gite.

S: Kon awinjo Jo-Luo wachoni lak chogo kendo
inyiero kode to chieng' moro bende gituo.

J.O.: An wanto waketo jadiemre.

APPENDIX B

CONVERSATION FOUR (tape-recorded and transcribed)

O.C.: Ochuka is about 35 years. Committee Member Lala Secondary School, Kanyada

M.N.: Mira Noah, about 39 years, Chairman of the Committee.

A.M.: Amuka.

Y.G.: Yona Gode, Vice Chairman.

O.C.: Omera e ichopo neno kaka wayware gi gero sikundwani?

A.M.: An e abiro anee sekondachwa achielni ken giru giru kata olengore. An Matin Matin. kama e machieng' wana ger go university.

M.N.: Kiawa an kiawa ng'ama ong'eyo....?

Y.G.: An ka kor nyambura...

A.M.: Aaa an tinde agwaro ka. To be nyocha apusora matin adhi Kamagambo koni, to eka aduogo sani. Kaaye to 10 aparoni amos sikul kapok achwe pachu.

O.C.: To wayu emane idhi limo Kamagambo koso ne in mana e wuodhi moro?

- A.M.: An waya be to weche bende ni
bathe kanyo?
- M.N.: To weche ang'o ok aweni tinde itieko
sikul itiyu bwore kabwana.
- A.M.: Aaa an pod anenoni atim pondo e sikul
matin eka achwad lam.
- O.C.: To ok ibi ipuonjna nyithindo ka. Waloso 20
mana yore gi tiesi to ka ema ikelie.
- A.M.: An kiloso to an ok da tamra.
- O.C.: Lakini omera jou ma nuada ma
Nairobi kuro ema terowa gi pi to ok
gi miwa kony mar Harambee
wathagore mana kendwa. To nyithindegi to
biro puonjore. Yande waweni thoth
ber to kare kalagwena.
- M.N.: An ne gi riamboni gi biro choko
kaaye to gikowo to tinde warito
piny modagry. Gilokowa nyithindo.
- Y.G.: To wuod Amuka in be ichope
buchegigo koso imbe in mana
gwenno ga ora?
- A.M.: Adhi kadichiel to mag harambee to
pok adhiye. An tholo be thin ka
ngato ni ei sikul.
- Y.G.: To siasa ma kor gweng' be
oromowa. Yawu ma magare bende
ema ywa kodwa to/mine? An gi 40

- temo thirowa ndi. To we wandong'
matin tin nyaka chieng' wachopi.
O.C.: Kinda e ngwech.
M.N.: Eee kinda loyo ngwech.
O.C.: An gondra dend rapur ma ja katumani
ngane..ngane...Nyadera...an gondore
kodwa ma pesa moro amora mabiro to
ose dhi oketore ni en e ja-kansila
en ema ong'eyo kuma iterogie. To kare
oterogi mana e sikundgi mararacha
ka chieth cha.
Y.G.: An Nyadera oketo kore e sikundwani
ne gine...
O.C.: Dhiang' malur.
Y.G.: Ento wang'ni oyudie bot to ng'ou.
O.C.: An kata en ema oporo pi gi mogo
to wangni waneye. Korka parieni
pesa moko to onyuayo onyombogo
kaaye to ogeronego mondene
go udi mag kidi... 60
M.N.: Adieri! E gima timore gi Nyadera
To wan to wathagore kama! Nito
ng'ato to gedone mon. Kagima wan
to wakia nyombo. An we waket
jadiemre. To Nyadera to a kampenne
makata paro!

- Y.G.: An lit machwer remo!
- M.N.: Kon chiero miongo ema gawi.
- O.C.: To wuodwa un kung'eyo yore madi
wayud go konyruok ne sikundani
kata orach kamano. Kon dalau
en dalau kata orach. En e monyuolo...
meru ok iringe kata en mana
puth?
- A.M.: An wanto pod wan nyithi sikul.
Kachieng' wayudo kamoro to be wiwa
ok nyal wil gi pachho.
- O.C.: To nyameru man Kenyatta College
ni nade, be inene?
- A.M.: Enti agwaro ema tinde agwarone
To mapok uwinjo wach moroni
aparoni odhi maber.
- M.N.: To ento osomo ang'o?
- A.M.: Puonj.
- M.N.: Oo odwaro turo chok.
- Y.G.: An nyi nyada dwaro puonjo piny.
- O.C.: To apenji peter be un gi riwruok
mar nyithi Luo kata Kanyada e
sikundu. Kanyo? Nikech aparoni
mano yo achiel ma unyalo loso
go yore mag yudo ma inyalo
kony go weche mag dongruok
madala.

A.M.: E riwruok to wan godo. To ok otegnō
ahinya, mar location to gi mar
nyithi Luo, to duto gi onge gi pesa
kata plan malong'o mar loso pesa.

O.C.: To yau majo-rabuon go to?

A.M.: Aaa gin to gimako piny. Onge
thagruok moro magin go. Pesa otimo
newa.

M.N.: To unto olawo ema ^{uma} wonyo kakiye?

Y.G.: An kich be emabedo mariek...

M.N.: Kendo emayieng'.

O.C.: Kiawa. Wangi ok wanatho kapok
wayieng' - kiawa. dipo ka nyiero
machien okonyowa.

Y.G.: An mago to be mana wach.
Rach joluo ni wach ema urengo
mathooth to timo. Kata gima onego
uum to usiko pieru liet, alieta ok
uling'.

M.N.: An Nyaburu. To niriambo?

O.C.: Eee mano to owenwa. Yoro
wach tomarwa. Kata yawa mane
owachni loko teloka ok
mana rengo wach ema omiyo ne
ofwenygi.

- A.M.: Eee wach to marwa.
- Y.G.: Ayany jowi ema ongeyoni jela
mariwa kiyombo wach to ochom
mana kod kuro.
- O.C.: Eee kuma ng'ich kata Joluo
luongoni simba yawuoyi kamano.
- Y.G.: Ooyo wuod Gari anto jela ok
iwuondani simba...ato simba
ang'o ma in omwasi ng'ato ^{it} siyo
tijene.
- O.C.: An en ema yawuoyi romoe...
- M.N. Ee kagi Sebuo wach kadhako
moyieng' to kata gima gigero to
onge.
- O.C.: An larruok e kor gweng' ema gi
ngeyo. Dhandani wange osiko sokore
asoka ne fuong'o wach.
- A.M.: To sikunduni be gi dwaro ketho
koso?
- O.C.: An e Jo-kawili ok dware. To
yawuot Bala otimo siro maok dhir sudi.
- Y.G.: An lit ahinya. Ne manā gi
wang'i gimatimore sani koro wadwa
choko buchwa moro matin wang] go
mbele.
- M.N.: Eee kawili to we ogo koko
kuro. Fuwo olal kodgi kata Harambe
achiel. Berne ni bur to ok riwji.
Gin e ma gihinyore. An e
yawa osechopo wadonjuru e bura.

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APPENDIX C

CONVERSATION (not tape-recorded)

Date: 20/10/72

Place: Kanyada Kanyabala ()

<u>Participants:</u>		<u>Initials</u>
	(about 40 years)	(J.O.)
	(about 65 years)	(E.N.)
	(about 65 years)	(A.O.)
	(about 54 years)	(N.J.)

Method:

I wanted to tape-record as all these people were familiar with me but I could not because all of them in general and Nyamburi in particular could not stand their voices being taped. Nyamburi believes he is a very dangerous politician being followed by policemen everywhere. (He has however not held a single administrative responsibility in Kanyabala nor has he contested a political seat at any level). He insisted that I tell him my intentions first before proceeding to tape-record because I might have been a plain-clothes policeman. I did not explain to him beyond the fact that I was studying Luo conversation. The chief said I had a permit. Nyamburi demanded to see it although he could not read (nor can he write). Nyamburi went further after seeing the DC's stamp (or what he thought was the DC's stamp) and asked me to verify whether I was also licenced to use a tape-recorder. Eventually I could not use the tape-recorder. I reverted to using their initials and attempting to write down

as much as possible of what everyone of them said. Nyamburi did not object because he argued handwritten evidence is not necessarily always legal.

I did not set out to interview these people but simply wanted to record whatever they said. My aim was to examine the material and find out the significance and any other aspect of ngeche. I knew (as I had always known before) that this group would be together at about 4 p.m. in the chief's home to talk locational and clan politics and other matters. I thought the group was ideal for my intentions because the age-group was more or less the same and so I expected them to communicate on the same wavelength, i.e. their Luo language proficiency would be averagely the same. I guessed that if this was the case then there would not be any interruptions for the explanation of certain expressions since everything would be understood. I decided I would only comment if I had to but not if I could avoid it because I wanted them to give full rein to all their hopes, bias, interests and all emotions that go with these and of course the unavoidable manipulation of language.

My recording does not pretend to have been perfect in capturing every bit of the discussion but I tried my best to take note of practically every word uttered. Where I could not I picked a few words that could be joined to produce some intelligible meanings that I have here reconstructed into complete sentences without distorting, modifying or mystifying the original meaning.

We had tea in between the conversation. There were times when it was literally a monologue by Nyamburi.

E.N.:

Omera kandiko to ndik andika nikech
mano tang'eyoni okil nyalo kino wiye kapok
oyie kata onyalo dagi. Siasa wachne kech ok
ober gi masin, nikech masin ok riamb.

A.M.:

To apenji wuon Orida, ok be wanyalo
chuado mana mbaka moro amora maok
siasa to be pod wang'iyi mana mbele.

E.N.:

Wuod omera pod utindo. Pinyini wan
ma waseyware kode wang'eye. Siasa en
gimoro amora. Kata mana muya ma waywayono
en mana siasa. Kon ing'eyo Ojijo Koteko
Piny Owacho mano ne jiasiasa machielo
maok ji par sani. En nokwero mana wach
peyo dhok kiterone jolweny, to mano notamo
jarachar e chiemo. Bas wach tame e
chiemono neen mana siasa. Jarachar
okwereni o we goyo siasa.. Emomiyo siasa
en chiemo. Nyaka wawache.

J.O.:

To iwache gi riekio Elisaphan, nikech Sirikal ite
duong' samoro inyalo we mana ni en gi nyakalondo 20
Ginyalo luwi katond rabuon. Emomiyo ayie gi nyathini
kowachoni wanyalo go mbekni mamoko.

A.O.:

Siasa kidonje adhanja to kwach bade dongo
otoyi matindo tindo, koso donge. Owino Ja-Sirati owacho
kamano ethum moro.

- N.J.: An samoro oluongoni Paka olokore rado
gwendgi, Owino to be minene gige to ji. An
Owino goyi ngero maka ok iriek to otieki.
- A.O.: Samoro oluongo jo siasa ma tieko jowadgi
ni kuja.
- A.M.: Oooh e kuja matieko yawa mawinjo ji.
- J.O.: An yand omake ochwade kangnone okwere ni
kik oriethre kendo. An Sirikal ok geti. Oting'o
ji mariek.
- E.N.: An Owino to pok awinjo. To an thum awinjo?
Wan ne wawe ye gi gramafon. Lakini gik
mawinjo uwachogo to onge kiawa no-Owino wacho
adieri, eeh engi point*. Ee kuja to tieko
yawa adieri mano to ung'eyo mabe onge ng'ama
dong' penja ka ng'a gini ma kuja otieko. To 40
Owino to ayiego nikech oriek. To gima omiyo
oriek to e ma. Ogoyo jotelo, kata gibe e sirikal kata oko
sirikal kata oko, ogoyogi ngero. Ka ithanyori
athanya ka yap Akech kodongo ni miel to
kare ikiani igeti ka gi riek, ijajuok to
ikia ni osefwenyi iuli gi riek. Gimomiyo
Owinduno riek to be en kama, yawa moketo
ni dhenyo adhenya wach donge uneno kuma
gin tie, moko ni e bur to moko to Kapenguria,
to Owino to? En ka. Nikech ang'o? Nikech 50
omulo ka malit gi riek. To yawa matuomo
tulo ka JM to ong'e mana ka magoyi.

* E.N. occasionally speaks English without actually noticing he is doing so. It is as if the words are part of Luo.

J.O.: Elisaphan into onego iwinjie Owino kara
ekadiwachi malich molooyo.

E.N.: An e. To ndalo emosekalo. Yawa kawuoda
masomo Narobi biro winjo to ulona. Kon emomiyo
Jaluo wachoni thoth ber. An ng'eny Nyada omiyo
jowa loungore ni Awili tong ningu. To kaka
wang'enyno be e kaka riekowa thoth. Koso aŋambo
wuod Amuka?

A.M.: Mise iwacho adieri. Rieko to hi dware
wene jowadgi.

N.J.: An @kapiny dongo.

A.O.: To adieri Owino to bed jaigni adi?

J.O.: Encha ok en mana kar piero ang'wengi, koso
piero adek giwiye. En mbesewa encha.

E.N.: An iga to ok kete siasa kata rieko.
Gigi duto gin mana wich. Kata nyathi telo
atela. Mbuya waiko to waneno.

A.N.: Kata Owino.

E.N.: A e kata jathum telo atela. To be
kik uweni gik ma Owino wachogo ji kiagi
ooyo. Ging'egi. Owino wacho mana adieri
ma ji ong'eyo, rieko ema oowe. Ombetowa.
Rieko Owino chalo mana mar Mbuya. Owino
ema ong'eyo muko liel. Osiyenye matindo tindo
gi wach. Kor Joluo wachoni liel ok rum 80
gi dho kwer achiel to nyaka jakunyo nwore
anwoya, oonge maua gi emiethe matin tin
nyaka chieng' orum. Owino to japuonj jite.

Chief ang' igorago awinje.

J.O.: E Jaduong' ang' nogoni satoro.

A.O.: To Nyamburi nyithinde mag'eny gi Amuka,
pek iwinje Owino?

E.N.: An wan tinde ukalo dhi e simba
winjo thum. Ing'eni sibi kadhi e sibi
nyathina to en aena nyasi maduong' machalo
liswa. Koso wuod Amuka, ikiani chiong' ma wuod
odonjo odi to en nyasi maduong'?

A.M.: Ok ang'eyo?

N.J.: Ang'eni wat desturi mag' Joluo machalo
kamano ema idwaro, koso?

A.M.: To Jaduong' ok ei mbaka to be ema
wach wuche, weche man gi tiendgi, koso?

A.O.: An ema ikunyoe e tie weche.

J.O.: E kaka nar ruako wuoruno.

E.N.: Kata kaka ngero. Kon ung'eni ei mbaka 100
simba emane wang'eye dholuo. Kata nyiri
kanepok nindo otero, pile pile e simindhe to
nyaka gi go ngero mati olokni kitanda wili.

To kane gi segoyo ni i to bang'e dayo
kohero to puonjegi ngeche Luo madongo
mag' jok madongo. Kanyo ema inyisogieni
Nyako ogwang' to wuoyi siro. Mago ngeche
Luo madongo kendo moluwore gi desturigi. To
e simba kучо be yawuoyi puonjore ngeche,
yawuoyi matindo winjo kuwa madongo, to

madongo go giwegi be puonjore. To mana
ei mbaka; mbaka na jaramono oramo mana
ne puonjruok.

A.O.: Nyamburi into ichalo ng'at mane jadhi
ong'ora into siwindhe ne iwinjo gik matimoree
nade?

E.N.: E tong'amane ong'ora obayo ei waka?
Wuoyi mapon be ong'ora gi njaga ne nyalo
bayo? Ng'ama gigo nobayo ne ok wuoyi ngang'.

J.O.: Peter unbe ung'eyo gik ma jodongogi
wacho, be utemogi?

A.M.: An awinjogi awinja mana kaka gweno
winjo aora.

E.N.: An sikul olal kodu otamou pon, ukia
tim Luo. Un mwache.

N.J.: Ee to omera nyithindo moko aseneno
mong'eyo kit Luo to gi timbegi te. Nyithindo
ok omemore te. To moloyo toma
oyie goyo mbaka gi Jodongo kawuod
Amuka. Ilani ng'eyo gik mang'eny. 130

J.O.: Tinde to nyithindo odhiera. Inyalo romogi
nyathi ka okaso jaduong' manyaka nene gi
kisungu.

A.O.: To ng'eyo be ong'eyo ang'eya ni
jaduung'no ok odhi sikul.

A.M.: Jodongo be ema kata ok odhi sikul
to kisungu kata oswayoni gituro gino maok
ber ber. Jodongo be e jodongo.

- E.N.: An winji kaka oolo jodongo. Kon
wan be kaka piny dongo e kaka wadongo.
Ng'ato wuondi ni di wadog chien to
piny dhi nyime. An ma piny aramba². Ji
ywayo dongo te.
- N.J.: Arambe to be ematinde nyithi sikul
oloko ngero mararacha kachieth. Ni tinde
ka nyathi dhi e cho to owachoni odhi
e Arambe.
- A.M.: To cho to gi time arambe nag'o?
- N.J.: An nyathina matin moro manyako
manie kilas abich emane kona ni arambe 150
mar cho en ma ithagorie kendi, onge
ngama konyi.
- J.O.: Jowa nyithindo okethore e pinywani.
To be ging'eyoni mano oromo tweyogi.
Mano rach.
- E.N.: An e kaka. Nyithindo nene kendo
winje mopogore kodwa. Ung'eni gin ejotendwa
to wakia. Moro giseneno nyime.
- A.O.: Kon joluo be wachoni ich
ema ithogo.
- N.J.: An ng'ato gi iye.
- J.O.: Ooh e gima nyithindogi wacho.
E yawa kare kata an asemana ti
to akia. Nyithindo oseyomba, kech wanto
wanegore mana ni Arambe madala

kata magare go ni ema nyithindo
ong'eyo, kare to gimoro nono

A.O.: An nyithindo olokore kalagwāna
kor awinjoni Peter gini be osiko yawa
man lweny gi polis, ni gin ema 170
ging'eyo sirikal maber. Odong' ubiro
winjo mana ni nyithindo oloko sirikal.

E.N.: An piny wiore di timre atima.
To puk be nyalo mana ruako sikat!

A.O.: Nyithindo be e oruake.

J.O.: To Peter Narobi kuro be Jo-Kanyada
riwore.

A.M.: An giriwore to be en mana luerruok
ep^mopong'go it ji, onge gima long'o ma
jiwachi kata tim.

E.N.: Kata kakdhungu wagi ok riwre. Gin ki
giywanae e arambe ne sikundewagi?

A.M.: An siasa oketho piny, wach awacha to
gima tim to onge.

E.N.: An kakdhungu to jokadhako achiel onego
giwinjre.

N.J.: Kon awinjoni katuma, yorgi, to kotieno
yorgi, to kanyabala be yorgi.

A.O.: E katuma korido manorido iw guok
to awinjo ni emakethoji, gin ema gitamo
riwruok.

A.M.: To adieri katumagi to uluongogi ni
korido nang'o? Wachni awinje kendo awache
to ok ayango tiende.

E.N.: An jo katuma iye gi lit, girgi ok
gidwar mondo gi cham gowetegi. E momiyo
ne girido olund guok mondo kik nyuol
nikech jine biro kawo guogi gi. Mano
tim ich kwar. To be emathago kanyada
te emomiyo un Peter, un jok matindo 200
waweu ni we uru mageogeo mang'eny,
riwreuru ji owe lowa. An Kenya piny
arambe.

A.O.: Tim jo-koridono to onego chief konywa
weyo kata mana kanyada ka. Odwokowa chien.

J.O.: An anminga piny biro puonjowa. Chieng'
moro yamb liech enokudhnwa kaaye to tuo
larruokni be norum. Kon yamb liech emachiero
jok matuo, kanyatwa to tuo, tuo dok chien
gi ich lit, omiyo ka uromo Narobi kuro
Peter to tem uru riwruok moloyo wach
mar pogruok.

APPENDIX D

SONG 1 OSOGA by Obudo (tape-recorded and transcribed)

- Solo - Obudo kom Kamolo
- All - Pod ago solo gi nyasi
- Solo - Nyamin Odiko
- All - Pod ago solo gi nyasi
- Solo - Obudo kom Kamolo
- All - Pod ago solo gi nyasi - nyamin Odiko pod ago solo
gi nyasi
- Solo - Orich sitima
- All - Tond mach odwa twoya milambo
Orich sitima tond mach odwa twoya milambo
- Solo - Kong'o mar chupa
- All - Orich sitima tond mach odwa twoya milambo
- Solo - Kong chupa kimadho to twoyi ta
- All - Tond mach odwa twoya milambo
- Solo - Joma nomadhe to ne tek
- All - Tond mach odwa twoya milambo
- Solo - Kong chupa kimadho to ne ta
- All - Tond mach odwa twoya milambo
- Solo - Orich sitima
- All - Tond mach odwa twoya milambo 20
- Solo - Obudo Kamolo
- All - Pod ago solo gi nyasi

- Solo - Nyamin Odiko
- All - Pod ago solo gi nyasi
- Solo - Aram ti ago na dala
- All - Obudo ago pacho gi kiru
- Solo - Koth bende
- All - E koth odwa nega ligala
- Solo - Owang
- All - Owang winyo majasunga ka dhano
- Solo - Mati
- All - Mati adoko nyak sure gi dodo
- Solo - An ni
- All - An ma kong'o ose runda ka riwa
- Solo - Oura ni an ni?
- All - An ma kong'o ose runda ka riwa
- Solo - Ilunga ni lolwe 27
- All - Lolwe bus oyomba ratanga
- Solo - Magi - 35
- All - Oyomba obudo kapod aywa chang'aa magunga x 2 40
- Solo - Matoka no-rembe be
- All - Orembe araka be oweya nyahera
- Solo - Kisumo
- ✓ All - Orembe araka be oweya nyaheri magi
- oweyo Obudo ka pod oywa chang'aa nyalenda x 2
- Solo - Ngat moro ni Asman
- All - Asman odwa nyona gi ndiga
- Solo - Wuod odong' Babu
- All - Asman odwa nyona gi ndiga

- Solo - Obudo onindo endara
- All - Asman odwa nyona gi ndiga
- Solo - Kendo polis bende
- All - Polis odwa maka gi njaga
- Solo - Ayua na njaga
- All - Polis odwa maka gi njaga
- Solo - Ogul mama olweny meja
- All - Polis odwa maka gi njaga x 2
- Solo - Nyieno
- All - Ogul mama olweny meja Polis odwa
maka gi njaga
- Solo - Obudo kucho to ikabondo
- All - E nyach odwa nega Kabondo
- Solo - Aduora malich
- All - Nyach odwa nega Kabondo
- Solo - To nyamin Odiko oinyore sidang'
- All - Nyach odwa nega Kabondo
- All - Ja Medical Osoga ema oresa gi riwi x 2
- Solo - Daktari wuod Karachuonyo
- All - Osoga ema oresa gi riwi
- Solo - Yawae nitera anee 70
- All - Tera anee odi kanyasoro
- Solo - Awach Kanyadhiang'
- All - Tera anee odi kanyasoro
- Solo - Osogae pien dhano
- All - Osoga pien dhano kiyudi ✓

- Solo - Ok yudi
- All - Osoga pien dhano kiyudi
- Solo - Ok yudi kwer Misiro
- All - Osoga pien dhano kiyudi
- Solo - Kata idhi e piata
- All - Osoga pien dhano kiyudi
- Solo - Kata idhi e banda
- All - Osoga pien dhano kiyudi
- Solo - Mano jobanda kweri wan waguro
dhok, kendo waguro diek
- All - Pok waguro pien dhano kiyudi
- Solo - Mano jo piata kweri wan wayang'o
ji kendo wakuoyo ji
- All - Pok waguro pien dhano kiyudi
- Solo - Mboya ka ndiege okuny gi piene
- All - Osoga pien dhano kiyudi
- Solo - Oruko maka sembo okuny gi piene
- All - Osoga pien dhano kiyudi
- Solo - Agwenge Kodhek okuny gi piene
- All - Osoga pien dhano kiyudi
- Solo - Unge Gor mahono okuny gi piene
- All - Osoga pien dhano kiyudi
- Solo - Agone dodo rech kanyagoro
- All - Osoga pien dhano kiyudi
- Solo - Omera ogone dodo rech kanyagoro 100
- All - Osoga pien dhano kiyudi

- Solo - Mariwa - thum yuak ne rech kanyagoro
All - Osoga pien dhano kiyudi
Solo - Kendo olona Riaga
All - Osoga olo Riaga gi wuoyi
Solo - Kata gi mwandu
All - Osoga olo Riaga gi mwandu
Solo - Obudo owacho kata gi kwinyo
All - Osoga olo Riaga gi kwinyo
Solo - Bende kata gi ng'uono
All - Osoga olo Riaga gi ng'uono
- Janam Gendia osoga to Riaga gi
- ng'uono x 2
Solo - Auma ayuo ne wer
All - Magret nyar loka milambo
Solo - Auma ayuo ne wer
All - Magret nyar loka milambo
Solo - Auma wang'e lando
All - Magret nyar loka milambo
Solo - Wang'e chalo mirabu
All - Magret nyar loka milambo
Solo - Auma wang'e chalo mirabu
All - Magret nyar loka milambo
Solo - Obudo ogeng'o gi buibui
All - Magret nyar loka milambo
Solo - Diburoo ogeng'o wang'e gi buibui
All - Magret nyar loka milambo

- Solo - Diburo nyar Kilion Auma
- All - Auma notera yo dede, Nyar Kilion Auma
- notera yo Dede 130
- Solo - Anuo ne dodo
- All - Magret nyar loka milambo
- Solo - Auma anuo ne dodo
- All - Magret nyar loka milambo
- Solo - Auma wang'e lando
- All - Magret nyar loka milambo
- Solo - Wang'e chalo mirabu
- All - Magret nyar loka milambo
- Solo - Diburo ogeng'o wang'e gi buibui x 2
- All - Magret nyar loka milambo
- +
Solo - Wang'ni nyar Kilion Auma notera
yo dede, nyar Kilion Auma notera
yo dede
- Solo - Obudo Kamolo
- All - Pod ago solo gi nyasi
- Solo - Nyamin Odiko
- All - Pod ago solo gi nyasi
- Solo - Anuoyo orich sitima
- All - Tond mach odwa twoya milambo
- Solo - Obudo onyuoyo orich sitima
- All - Tond mach odwa tuoya milambo
- Solo - Kong chupa kimadho to tuoyi ta
- All - Orich sitima tond mach odwa
twoya milambo

- Solo - Joma no madhe to ne tek
- All - Tond mach odwa twoya milambo
- Solo - Kong chupa kimadho to ne ta
- All - Orich sitima tond mach odwa
- twoya milambo
- Solo - Kom wuod Amolo koth go jo dodo
- Obudo nam wuod kamwalo no
- All - Ayaye kom wuod Amolo koth go jo
dodo Obudo nam wuod kamwalo no -
ayaye wuololo jomoko kia
- Solo - Kom wuod Amolo koth go jo
dodo tipo wuod obure no
- All - Ayaye kom wuod Amolo koth
- go jo dodo tipo wuod Obure
ayaye wuololo jomoko kia
- Solo - Josi ja Ugenya wuod thurwa
Trafik mako direpe
- All - Ayaye Josi ja Ugenya wuod thurwa
- Trafik mako direpe - Ayaye wuololo
- jomoko kia
- Solo - Odhi oluwore e kona wuod umina
trafik ma ja Ugunja
- All - Ayaye oluwore ekona wuod umina
trafik ma ja Ugunja. Ayaye wuololo
jomoko kia
- Solo - Odhi oluwore e kona wuod Ugunja
trafik gi chong rombo
- All - Ayaye odhi oluwore e kona wuod

- Ugunja trafik gi chong rombo, Ayaye
wuololo jomoko kia
- Solo - Direpe ma Kendu be ungeyo obudho
trafik ma wuod umina na
- All - Ayaye direpe ma Kendu ungeyo
obudho trafik wuod umina - Ayaye
wuololo jomoko kia
- Solo - Kom wuod Amolo koth go jododo
obudho nam wuod kamwalo no
- All - Ayaye kom wuod Amolo koth go jo-dodo
obudho nam wuod kamwalo - Ayaye wuololo
jomoko kia
- Solo - Kom wuod ochuonyo Rose yuor
katweng'a min jogi mero kobure ndi
- All - Ayaye Rosy nyo - chuonyo yuor
katweng's min jogi mero kobure ndi
Ayaye wuololo jomoko kia
- Solo - Rose luore gi kongo nyar jorawe
Min jogi mero kobure ndi
- All * - Ayaye oluwore gi kongo nyar
jo-rawe min jogi mero kobure ndi
Ayaye wuololo jomoki kia
- Solo - Math koro otingo otenga
- All - Ochodoroche walewo
- Solo - Otenga gi madh koro tingo otenga
math
- All - Ochodoroche walewo

- Solo - Otenga gi math koro otingo ongee 230
- All - Polis e ongoe - ongoe gi math
koro otingo ongoe math
- Solo - Polis e ongoe gi
- All - Ani math koro otingo olidhe
- Solo - Jakuoge eolidhe
- All - Math koro otingo olidhe math
- Solo - Jakuoge eolithe
- All - Olidhe gi math koro itingo
chuthe
- Solo - Jokongo e achudhe
- All - Achudhe gi math koro otingo
achudhe math koro
- Solo - Jokongo e achudhe
- All - Achudhe gi
- Solo - Kom wuod Amolo koth go jododo
- Obudho nam wuod kamwalo
- All - Ayaye kom wuod Amolo koth go jo
dodo obudho nam wuod kamwalo -
Ayaye wuololo jomoko kia
- Solo - Kobure chung malo wach nika 250
- All - Kobure chung malo wach nika
kom wuod Amolo obudho chung'
malo wach nika
- Solo - Obudo gir min Odiko
- All - A ram chung malo wach nika

- Solo - Awero wuod Atieno
- All - Obudho chung malo wach nika
- Solo - Obel wuod Adiedo
- All - Kara chung malo wach nika
- Solo - Artha wuod Karachuonyo
- All - Chung malo wach nika
- Solo - Obel Artha nokwero Obudo
- All - Chung malo wach nika
- Solo - Obudo ogul - mama odonjo
- All - Chung malo wach nika
- Solo - Kendo giwuotho gi guok
- All - Chung malo wach nika
- Solo - Kendo gi wuotho gi "dog"
- All - Chung malo wach nika
- Solo - Kare
- All - Artha onge kama pegi otime nam
- Math wamadho gi Artha nyaka ii
- pipa - Obel wuod Atieno chung
malo wach nika
- Solo - Kare
- All - Artha onge kama pegi 280
otimo nam - math wamadho gi Artha
nyaka ii pipa Obel wuod Atieno chung
malo wach nika
- Solo - Wang'ni A kerry dogibed piny wach
nika. A kery nyar go Ouko
- All - Dogi bed piny wach nika

- Solo - Karen Ajwang nyamin odunyo
- All - Dogi bed piny wach nika
- Solo - A kery mar ga puoyo
- All - Dogi bed piny wach nika
- Solo - Aram kalo kaleya
- All - Dog ibed piny wach nika
- Solo - Obudo ose kalo kodiko
- All - Dog ibed piny wach nika
- Solo - Caren Ajwang ema okwero obudo
- All - Dog ibed piny wach nika
- Solo - Kare
- All - Kerry onge kama pegi otime
 nam - math wamadho gi kery 300
 nyaka ii pipa a kery nyar goduko
 dogi bed piny wach nika
- Solo - Kare
- All - Kery onge kama pegi otime
 nam - madh wamadho gi kery nyaka
 ii pipa a kery nyar goduko dogi
 bed piny wach nika
- Solo - Wang'ni a kery dog ibed
 +
- All - Piny wach nika x 2
- Solo - A kery nyar go Ouko
- All - Dog ibed piny wach nika
- Solo - A ram kalo kaleya
- All - Dog ibed piny wach nika

- Solo - Obudo Okalo Kodiko
- All - Dogi bed piny wach nika
- Solo - Sama akalo kongere
- All - Dog ibed piny wach nika
- Solo - Karen Ajwang ema okwero
Obudo
- All - Dog ibed piny wach nika
- Solo - Kare
- All - Kery onge kama pegi otime nam
- Math wamadho gi kery nyaka ii
pipa A kery nyar go Ouko
dogi bed piny wach nika
- Solo - Kare
- All - Kery onge kama pegi otime nam
Math wamadho gi kery nyaka ii
pipa A kery nyar go Ouko
dogi bed piny wach nika
- Solo - Obel Asha okwa maro kongo
- All - Maro pamore ne
- Solo - Obel Asha okwa maro kongo
- All - Maro pamore ne
- Solo - Obel wuod Atieno okwa maro
- kongo
- All - Maro pamore ne
- Solo - Ja nam ma wuod Adiedo okwa
maro kongo
- All - Maro pamore ne
- 340

- Solo - Obei wuod tubuo-ye okwa
maro kongo
- All - Maro pamore ne
- Solo - Mang'o?
- All - Ma, Ma, Manachiwo cha manachiwo
cha
- Solo - Artha
- All - Artha thuru ni kanye chieng' nathoni
- Solo - hab wer
- All - Ma, Ma, manachiwo cha manachiwo
cha Artha thuru ni kanye chieng'
pocho ni
- Solo - Obel na wuod Odido okwa maro
kongo
- All - Maro pamore ne
- Solo - Obel wuod ochuonyo okwa maro
kongo
- All - Maro pamore ne
- Solo - Aa na wuod Adiedo okwa maro
kongo
- All - Maro pamore ne
- Solo - Obel wuod Atieno okwa maro
kongo
- All - Maro pamore ne
- Solo - Mang'o
- All - Ma, ma, manachiwocha manachiwo
cha,
Artha thuru nikanye chieng' nathoni

APPENDIX E

SONG 2 "NYAGWALA ALEK" by Ayany Jowi (Orutu)
 Registration No. LLW 7-1005 AIT Records
 (tape-recorded)

- Solo - An Ayany omin Onyango alokora ngero,
 Alokora ngero ma nyithindo goyo.
 Rakula okew go Onyango alokora ngero,
 Jowa alokora ngero ma nyithindo goyo.
- All - Ayany omin Onyango alokora ngero,
 Alokora ngero ma nyithindo goyo,
 Rakula okew go Onyango alokora ngero.
- Solo - An Ayany omin Onyango alokora ngero,
 Alokora ngero ma nyithindo goyo,
 Rakul okew go Onyango alokora ngero,
 Jowa alokora ngero ma nyithindo goyo.
- All - Ayany okew Onyango alokora ngero
 Alokora ngero ma nyithindo goyo,
 Omin Onyango alokora ngero,
 Rakula okew go Onyango,
 Jowa alokora ngero ma nyithindo goyo.
- Solo - Nyagwala wuod nyar Owuor yombi ayombi
 yombi ayomba,
 Ragwel, Alek wuod Omolo oyombi
 ayomba, 20
 Eee ayombi ayomba
 Ragwel ayomb chwo ayomba,
 Kagweyo nyuoge

- All - Nyagwala wuod Omolo ayomb chwo ayomba,
ayomb chwo ayomba,
Kogwe nyuoge,
Alek wuod Omolo ayomb chuo ayomba,
Rateng' wuod Omolo ayomb chuo ayomba,
Kogweyo nyuoge.
- Solo - Nyagwala wuod Omolo ne puonja,
ne puonja ma na gike liare,
Alek wuod Omolo ne puonja,
Jayoro yande ipuonja kadonjo e liare.
- All - Nyagwala wuod Omolo ne puonja,
ne puonja kadonjo e liare,
Alek wuod Omolo ne puonja,
Jayoro ne puonja kadonjo e liare.
- Solo - Nyagwala wuod Omolo chiwona Asoya,
chiwona asoya kadonjoe dala,
Alek wuod Omolo chiwona asoya,
Jayoro ichiwona asoya kadonjo e dala.
- All - Nyagwala wuod Omolo ichiwona asoya,
ichiwona asoya kadonjoe dala,
Alek wuod Omolo ichiwona asoya,
Jayoro ichiwona asoya kadonjo e dala.
- Solo - Nyagwala wuod Omolo jok dwa yombo,
jok dwa yombo kogwe nyuoge,
Alek wuod Omolo jok dwa yombi,
jok dwa yombo kogwe nyuoge.

- All - Nyagwala wuod Omolo jok dwa yombi,
e jok dwa yombo kogweyo nyuoge,
Alek wuod Omolo jok dwa yombo,
Jayoro jok dwa yombo kogweyo nyuoge.
- Solo - Nyagwala wuod Omolo chiwona asoya,
chiwona asoya kogik e liare,
Alek wuod Omolo chiwona asoya,
Jayoro chiwona asoya katonjo e liare.
- All - Nyagwala wuod Omolo chiwona katonjo e liare,
Alek wuod Omolo chiwona asoya,
Jayoro chiwona asoya katonjoe e liare. 60
- Solo - Achak akonu chungna joringino
- All - Ng'ano rom gi ng'a?
- Solo - Ayany omin Onyango chungna ja oringino
- All - Ng'ano romgi ng'ana onge gweyo ndara.
- Solo - Kweli
- All - Ng'ano rom ging'a?
- Solo - Okew joka ocham chungna joringino
- All - Ng'ano rom gi ng'a?
- Solo - Ayany owadgi Ojika chungna joringino
- All - Ng'ano romgi ng'a?,
ng'ana ongeyong'we ndara
- Solo - Adieri
- All - Ng'ano romgi ng'a
- Solo - Ayany omin Onyango chungna joringino
- All - Ng'ano rom gi ng'a?
- Solo - Nyaka min Ong'ondo chungna joringino
- All - Ng'ano rom gi ng'a ng'ama ong'eyo

ndara.

Solo - Kweli

Achak apimue ng'at moro obiro ka

80

Alli - Iye romgi bul

Solo - Achak apimue ng'at moro obiro ka

Alli - Iye romgi bul kendo piero rom gi ondong'

tiende tindo chal gi oleng'

Solo - Kweli

Alli - Iye rom gi bul

Solo - Achak akonue ng'at moro obiro ka

Alli - Iye rom gi bul

Solo - Uedgi Ogola ee ng'at moro obiro ka

Alli - Iye rom gi bul kendo piero romo gi

ondong' tiende tindo rom goleng'

Solo - Kweli

Alli - Iye rom gi bul

APPENDIX 2: Most of the expressions occur in numerous other conversational situations, meetings and songs.

But the words are not always the same. They are either alluded to or one or two words may keep being repeated.

APPENDIX 3: Nearly all informants are reluctant to explain the expressions. Most contend that they cannot be explained except by their contexts. It is furthermore argued that the expressions will continue to acquire new meanings with the changing times. New expressions are also bound to be created.

APPENDIX 4: Exogamy is said to facilitate the spread of certain expressions. Thus a woman from Kanyada is bound to export typical Kanyada expressions to wherever she gets married. Similarly, when she returns, once in a while, to her parents, she is likely to impart expressions from her place of marriage. It is therefore argued that most of the expressions are common to all Dholuo speakers. But it is stressed that certain ngeche are peculiar to specific locations and that this is universally recognized in Luoland.

APPENDIX 5: Some of the expressions have the same meaning all over Luoland despite the fact that they are normally worded differently in the different locations.

APPENDIX 6: Many adults contend that the expressions were acquired as a natural consequence of childhood

experiences including listening to tales and participation in cultural activities as well as talking about them.

APPENDIX 7: Some of the expressions are very rarely used (one was spoken only once in three months). Further investigation reveals that they have been in circulation for a long time but are gradually being discarded. (But it is not safe to believe this because the claim was only made by a section of Dholuo speakers).