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TERO BURU: THE LUO MUSICAL EXTRAVAGANZA AND A RITE IN A RITE

*Charles Nyakiti Orawo

Kenyatta University, Music and Dance Department, P.O Box 43844-00100, Nairobi

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ABSTRACT

Tero Buru was one of the Luo rites of passage performed at the funerals of adult members of the community. As a funeral rite, it was performed as the last rite before the body of the deceased is washed and taken to the grave for burial. It was similar to the requiem, the contemporary Church Service performed by Priests at funerals of the deceased Christian believers in the Luo territory. In *Tero Buru* the eldest son of the deceased played a leading role. As earlier observed, there were two types of *Tero Buru*; the first type being performed on the burial day and the second type performed later, after the burial. Irrespective of the type preferred, there had to be a mini *Tero Buru* to enable the buried to take place. *Tero Buru* was a rite in a rite. The main rite, the funeral ceremonies itself could not take place unless there was death in the community. If the dead was an adult member of the community, then, *Tero Buru* rite had also to be performed as per the custom. Since death begot funeral ceremonies, death of adult members of the Luo community also begot *Tero Buru*. In short, *Tero Buru* was a rite in a rite. *Tero Buru* was a rite in which music played a very significant role. It was nothing but song and dance. The participants of *Tero Buru* literally sang, recited, played sound producing resources and danced. The sounds produced to which they pegged their movements were as varied as the groups involved in the *Tero Buru* activities. Because of the diversity experienced, performances at *Tero Buru* qualified not to be considered as a music performance but rather, an extravaganza, a musical extravaganza. This was because no one group could claim the monopoly or a leading role. All the participants claimed to play equal roles. They were all equal partners in the extravaganza. All were joined in the quest of fighting death; an enemy that had caused havoc in the community.

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INTRODUCTION

Being invited to the 5th National Symposium on African Music and asked to present an Abstract was enough prompting to meet Mr Wanjohi along the street in Kahawa Sukari. I was not sure of what to present to the serious stakeholders and interested parties of the so called Kenya Music: A Living Treasure. I vividly told Mr Wanjohi of my uncertainty concerning my would-be title, thus suggesting a topic on the musics of the Maasai. Musingly, I thought of *Tero Buru*: A Luo rite that may not look so attractive to the general majority of Kenyans. I am not sure whether I'm underestimating the topic; for many Kenyans may remember once is the socio-cultural period in time there was a case in the Kenyan Law Courts of a S.M. Otieno Saga. The parties concerned brought in the public domain, how horrible they considered each other's cultures. Unfortunately, this was in total disregard to Ruth Benedict's Patterns of Culture conclusion that "anything one group of people is inclined toward doing is worthy of respect by another" (Geertz 1973:44). Much was revealed from the proceedings, as both parties argued their case. I would like to mention that the relevance stems from one of the issues that came up during the case of *Tero Buru* as an occasion within the Luo Funeral celebrations.

Tero Buru was one among the many issues that were derogatively referred to as repugnant by the widow's lawyer (plaintiff). From that time, quite a number of issues have been raised on *Tero Buru* some of which border distortion of the purpose and reasons for making it one of the leading and most cherished cultural practices during the Luo funeral ceremonies. The distortions are not limited to the general public. Especially as music scholars, when discussing different music categories of the Luo they usually end up with music categories such as *peke* music, *owalo* music, *bul* music, *Tero Buru* Music, etc. At this moment, some may wonder whether, these and many other music genres of the Luo qualify to be referred to that way. Do the Luo have the equivalent to the English words music? If we referred to the named genres songs what would be a miss? Song seems to be inseparable with dance and one could talk of *wend* or *miend peke* and may be one would be right! What of *wend* and *miend owalo*, would one still be right? What of *bul*? Is there *miend bul*? What of *wend* or *miend Tero Buru*? Is there *wend* or *miend Tero Buru*? The chances of a simple answer to the last question being misleading is quite high! Why so? *Wer* (song), *wen...* (song of...) will apply to a particular musical instrument or genre but not to an event which has so many musical genres; all going

*Corresponding author: cnyakiti@hotmail.com

on at the same time as in the case of *Tero Buru*. *Tero Buru* is a leading event within the Luo corpus of funeral celebrations in whose context song and dance play leading roles. *Tero Buru* is functional; functional and fundamental in the event of the funeral of an outstanding Luo adult. *Tero Buru* depends on the context of the Luo funeral.

The Luo Funeral

Nyakiti (1988) notes that “the funerals of the Luo were quite dignified and funeral arrangements for a deceased person indicated the person’s status in the community. A Luo elder was expected to die in the evening or early in the night; but if one died at mid-day, mourning was postponed until the cattle returned from grazing, around six o’clock in the evening. During the postponement, only the wives (for deceased males) and mothers (for deceased females) were allowed to mourn quietly.” Making the death public was the responsibility of the first wife and co-wives (for female elders). This is referred to as *golo ywak ng’a motho* (pronouncing the death of the deceased). At the time of making the death public, the first wife tore all clothes from her body, known as *chodruok*, literally meaning “tearing off clothes”, and covered herself with ashes, running here and there, wailing and pronouncing the name of the deceased. All her co-wives were expected to follow suit. After the death has been pronounced by those responsible for doing so, it becomes a free-for-all activity as those present join in the crying, wailing, chanting and behaving in all manners of expressing grief.

This went on for two or three hours. The tired ones stopped and grouped themselves to quietly talk about the horrors of death. New arrivals took over from the tired ones and continued with the process. The mourning then subsided after two or three hours and only the wives or very close female relatives would be heard reciting and wailing at intervals until dawn when the process would restart. As mourning continued, the village elders and the sons of the deceased carried out consultative meetings to decide on the date of burial, which depended on how soon all the relatives would receive the message and be present during the burial; and how to take care of guests (affines and other friends of the deceased) who would be attending the burial. Once the burial date had been deliberated on and the day for *Tero Buru* fixed: the symbolical taking of the dust of the deceased to the forest where he successfully fought his clan’s enemies while he was alive. Sometimes they went past the rivers and ponds where he used to take his animals for water.

Tero Buru

The deceased Luo elder had to lie in state for two days before burial. On the day of burial, at eight o’clock in the morning, the grave site was determined by clan elders who appointed one of the elders, a brother or cousin of the deceased to symbolically start the digging before handing it over to the male members of the clan who saw to it that it was brought to the required end under the guidance of the appointed elder. At nine o’clock in the morning, those who are to take part in *Tero Buru* assembled and set out to be joined by others as they slowly moved towards their planned destination in the forest, the river or the pond. On this day of *Tero Buru*, the eldest son of the deceased wore his father’s *ogut dol*, headgear, and

carried his *tong’ dindo*, big spear. Similar to the first born sons among the Tallensi of Ghana (Keesing 1981:105-6), the Luo first born sons took the lead in the funeral rites. The sons of the deceased were among those who symbolically went “to send the deceased’s dust,” *Tero Buru*. By the time they came back, the grave would be ready.

There were two types of *Tero Buru*. The usual one was that which took place or was performed on the burial day; and the next, generally referred to as *kuogo buch ng’a motho* (fermenting the symbolical taking of the deceased’s dust) took place a day, a week, or two weeks after the burial depending on the decision of the community elders. It was quite involving as it required a lot of consultations and heart searching for the community elders to arrive at such decisions to perform the second type of *Tero Buru* in honor of the deceased. A funeral celebration could only be awarded the second type of *Tero Buru* if the deceased was an outstanding personality not only within the clan but also across to the neighbouring clans. Such postponement would enable members of other clans to join in the extravaganza.

The deceased members whose funeral celebrations required the involvement of the second type of *Tero Buru* must have been outstanding members of the community. It should be noted that whether the elders’ decision was for the normal or for the second type of *Tero Buru*, still there must be a mini *Tero Buru* for the burial process to begin. This is because by the time those who went to *Tero Buru* came back, the grave would be ready; the corpse would be washed by the elderly sisters-in-law of the deceased and ready for burial. The corpse was lowered in silence, for they wished to escort the deceased in peace. It was the first son who led the burial ceremony; after which there followed a moment of bidding the deceased farewell known as *sewo ng’a motho*.

On the third day after burial, youths held festivals in honour of the deceased. The youth groups comprised *jokumba*, the owners of small shields and *jokuodi*, owners of big shields. The audience at these festivals were elderly men and women, and children who viewed with admiration the tactics and the skills of fighting. Young boys formed their own groups, with shields made of grass and spears made of *oboro* or *oleng’*, elephant grass. The women and girls formed their own groups singing and dancing. They played *sigudi* drums while singing praises of their warriors, and the strong men of their society. *Jotigo* and *Jodong oteke*, the beaded elders (Mboya, 1938), also formed their groups singing and dancing in an anti-clockwise semicircular manner, reproaching *onguru*, the bearded elders. At such festivals, villages demonstrated to one another the power of their warriors. Both *Jokuodi* and *Jokumba* also learnt war techniques from the more experienced warriors. The brave reproached the cowards. Children and girls cheered and encouraged their village contestants. It was also a day when lovers met. During the evening of the same day, all the young members of the village came to keep the bereaved company. Girls, young men and women played drums, sung, clapped and danced to the music. The singers became quite seductive in their singing.

Tero Buru Rite

Tero Buru was a functional prerequisite rite in the funeral ceremony of an adult Luo. It was functional in the sense that it

did not exist outside the context of the Luo funeral or could it take place without it! What happened if it were ignored? When and how did *Tero Buru* begin? At 9.00 o'clock, in the morning of the day of burial or the planned special day of *Tero Buru*, at the homestead of the deceased, a group of mourners (men, women and children) carried sticks, clubs, spears and shields; adorned in traditional regalia such as creepers, headgears of various types, body ornaments and all other forms of decorations befitting the dignity and status of the deceased. This marked their readiness to participate in one of the community's revered rites in a funeral ceremony. The members of the assembly played different roles; some played drums, some chanted, recited poems and sung songs praising community warriors, while others narrated the deeds and achievements of long departed medicine men, and all other outstanding personalities of the community. Others rebuked death for continually robbing them of most reliable and useful personalities.

The assembly set out to the destination at the forest or river or pond slowly and confidently gathering and swelling on its way as more and more joined from all corners of the clan. One could hear individual horn (*tung'*, *oporo*, and *lueru*) players, individual drummers and those with trained bulls performing and reciting as they moved to join the nucleus assembly. The assembly which was initially small gradually grew in size as more and more individuals and groups joined. Voices of individuals reciting could be heard above the accruing noise. Duet women performers of *nyono* and their songs mingled with *dhero* formed part of the confusion. The drummers joined to create the main rhythm upon which all other movements were pegged. The assembly was still heading towards the destination.

By the time it was nearing the destination, it would be a crowd, a confused crowd, in which everybody was actively doing their own things though all were meant to belong to the assembly. A general look revealed confusion yet an individualized look revealed order in the confusion. The assembly was a confused orderly venture reflecting what death was in the mind of the Luo. One would refer to *Tero Buru* as an operation. It was a cultural operation that tried to explain death; though such explanations like that of other cultural elements were not experimental sciences in search of law, but interpretive ones in search of meaning. It should be noted that it was not easy to define such subjective issues in terms of operations, but the point understood what a science was. In the first instance, it was not a look at its theories or findings and certainly not at what its apologists said about it; but, a look at what its practitioners did (Geertz 1973). May be that was the reason why looking at the activities of those who participated in *Tero Buru* was significant! As earlier observed, the confused orderly assembly was now heading towards the destination. In its confused state, the circus of literally all the existing traditional Luo musical genres except *thum* (whose performance requires sitting down), were participating in what they believed to be their culture. But, would the activities at *Tero Buru* befit the definition of culture! This might seem like it though there were a number of ways to obscure it. For example, if culture was imagined to be a self-contained "super-organic" reality with forces and purposes of its own; or claimed to consist in the brute pattern of behavioural events observed in some communities (Geertz, *ibid.*), then it would

be right to support a view held by Ward Goodenough that "culture [is located] in the minds and hearts of men."

The school of thought held that culture was composed of psychological structures by means of which individuals or groups of individuals guided their behaviour. That is, "a society's culture," to quote Goodenough in Geertz (*ibid.*), "consisted of whatever it was one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members." The definition above referred to what culture was; what about describing it? Was it the writing out of systematic rules, which if followed, would make it possible so to operate, to pass for a native? In such a way Geertz (1973:11) observed; Extreme subjectivism is married to extreme formalism, with the expected result: an explosion of debate as to whether particular analyses (which come in the form of taxonomies, paradigms, tables, trees, and other ingenuities) reflect what the natives "really" think or are merely clever simulations, logically equivalent but substantively different, of what they think.

So, the assembly reached the destination where the members stopped; to reorganize themselves ready for the final show. *Jo-bul*, the drummers; *Jo-tung'* (*Ja-tung'* sing.), the horn players; *Jo-nyono* (*Ja-nyono*, sing.) the duet trot dancers; *Ja abu*, the *abu* trumpet player; *Jo-thambo* (*Jago-thambo*, sing.), mock fighters; *jo-winyo*, the bird feather dancers; *Jo-miend* Ramogi, the Ramogi dancers; *Jo-kuodi* (*ja-kuot* sing.) and *Jo-ponde*, the owners of small and big shields; *Jodong Otekre*, the elders; *jo-sigudi*, the players of *sigudi* drums; *Jong'ol ruedhi*, those with trained bulls; and *Onguche*, (*Onguru*, sing.), the uncultured. The trained bulls were decorated with *mboha*, creepers and the warriors and maidens further decorated themselves with *pundo*, coloured ochre from the rivers. Those who did not own traditional regalia used twigs to undo those who were dressed in their traditional regalia. The preparations at the forest were to last long enough for the grave being dug back at home to be completed. This was based on estimating how long it was likely to take before they reached home. When all that was needed was put in place, the troupe started moving slowly on its way back home. As it approached home, they were met by those who were left behind and the sound of the varied musical activities became thunderously overwhelming as the performers went into a frenzy. The human part of the assembly wildly chased the animals (cattle) which also wildly galloped with their tails high. The assembly became a single mass of traditional music to which both the animals and human beings responded in unison. Both the animals and human beings got possessed. They were chasing death. They drummed the earth, the final destination of all that was sired by women. A group, singing within the assembly was heard rebuking *loo*, the earth, as being a witch. That of the warriors, adorned in their traditional war costumes, spears held in their right hands and small or big shields in their left hands, depending whether one was either right or left hander, wildly ran in chase of death. They mocked and fought death by spearing in the air here and there hoping to strike the unseen ogre (death) with their dangerous weapons. *Onguche* were also actively involved. Since they did not have the approved regalia, they were covered with *bwombwe*, creepers and twigs; trying their best to undo those who were traditionally dressed for the occasion. In their minds, they believed that by over dancing, they would attract attention. Through their initiative, a song-

dance genre *miend Ramogi* evolved. They were also later named *Jo-winyo*, a name based on bird feathers they adorned themselves with. Some of their members acquired *ogut dol*, headgears made of colobus monkey skins. They played *bunde, tung' oporo*, and *asili*; all of which were referred to as *bund Ramogi*. *Jo-gosira*, duet performers paired themselves as they trotted and recited the achievements of the community heroes.

The confused thunderous mob forced their way into the homestead of the deceased. On the entry, hell broke loose as the individuals, including those who remained at home, wildly ran in chase of death all over the compound. The warriors speared roofs of houses and granaries and those with *rungus* beat the roofs as they wildly ran around the homestead. Those with cattle tried to force their way into the houses of the deceased. Those with specially trained bulls took them into the house where the deceased was lying in state as they recited praise names of the previously fallen friends. This went on for about twenty to thirty minutes before the situation cooled down. With the emotional fire having burnt itself out or the storm that came from the forest having cooled down, the exhausted individuals had no option but to deposit the load they brought with them on their way from the forest on the roofs of the houses and granaries once held by the deceased. With the calm returned to the homestead, as was observed earlier, the body of the deceased was washed by the elderly sisters-in-law, then moved to the grave where it was lowered in silence. Mourning (crying and wailing) started once again as soon as they covered the grave with soil. This went on for about thirty minutes before calm returned to the homestead.

Tero Buru Music

Tero Buru was a musical rite since all the members of the assembly did perform what would be referred to as song and dance. Members to the *Tero Buru* assembly as individuals or groups, either played musical instruments, recited poems or performed songs in praise of the deceased or their fallen heroes or rebuked death for having fearlessly robbed the community of her worthy members. Apart from the human voice, the main source of sounds was drums. Others belonged to the wind category of *tung'*, *abu* and *asili*. Songs performed by members of the assembly were as varied as the membership. Some of the songs included

Song One: Loo Ja-juok (Soil is a Witch)

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|-----|--|
| 1. | S: <i>Re re nyonuru loo</i> | ... | Re re you stamp on the soil |
| | C: <i>Loo</i> | ... | The soil |
| 2. | S: <i>To dak unyon loo</i> | ... | And why don't you stamp the soil |
| | C: <i>Loo jajuok</i> | ... | The soil is a witch |
| 3. | S: <i>Loo otero yawa</i> | ... | The soil sent kindreds <i>madongo adiera</i> who are truly great |
| | C: <i>Loo</i> | ... | The soil |
| 4. | S: <i>To dak unyon loo</i> | ... | And why don't you stamp the soil |
| | C: <i>Loo jajuok</i> | ... | The soil is a witch |
| 5. | S: <i>Loo otero Agwenge</i> | ... | The soil sent Argweng's <i>ma wuod</i> |
| | | | <i>Oremo</i> the son of Oremo |
| | C: <i>Loo jajuok</i> | ... | The soil is a witch |
| 6. | S: <i>To dak unyon loo</i> | ... | And why don't you stamp the soil |
| | C: <i>Loo jajuok</i> | ... | The soil is a witch |
| | | | Song Two:
Bolo |
| 7. | S: <i>Bolo moro nithurwa</i> | ... | There is a certain uncultured in our village <i>mapiere aredha</i> |
| | | | whose buttocks are very big |

C: <i>Bolo piere dongo</i>	...	The uncultured has very big buttocks
<i>Bolo bolo bolo</i>		the uncultured, the uncultured, the uncultured
<i>Bolo Kawere.</i>		Uncultured of the lineage of Were.
C: <i>Bolo moro nithurwa</i>	...	There is a certain uncultured in our village
<i>Bolo bolo bolo</i>		the uncultured, the uncultured, the uncultured
<i>Bolo Kawere.</i>		Uncultured of the lineage of Were.

7. S: <i>Ni kuot tiowe Natae</i>	...	The big shield he has left for the Tie to urinate on
<i>Ema laye</i>		On the fire side the sleeping room
C: <i>Kor ka mach kachiena...</i>		The big shield he has left for the Tie to urinate on, on the fire side the sleeping room
<i>Ni kuot tiowe Natae</i>		
<i>ema lae, kor ka mach kachiena</i>		

Sigweya (Recitative One):		
<i>Gimicham'emari</i>	—	Only that you've eaten is yours...
<i>Omera gimicham'emari</i>	...	Kindred, what you've eaten is yours
<i>Gimodong'ki'rigen</i>		what's left don't hope for

Sigweya (Recitative Two):

<i>Atho makanego dhano...</i>		I'll die before killing a human being...
<i>Atho makanego dhano...</i>		I'll die before killing a human being
<i>Atho marach</i>		I'll die a bad death.

Sigweya (Recitative Three):

<i>Gimitimo Otieno</i>	...	That which you do at night...
<i>Gimitimo otieno</i>	...	That which you do at night
<i>gimitimo otieno</i>		that which you do at night
<i>yawa ong'eyo</i>		our people know
<i>Owila owada</i>		Owila my brother
<i>gimitimo otieno</i>		that which you do at night
<i>yawa ong'eyo</i>		our people know

Tero Buru: A Reaction in Defense of Existence

Tero Buru was similar to the contemporary Church Service Traditions performed at the funeral ceremonies in the Luo territory. *Tero Buru* was a prerequisite rite performed by the Luo before they buried their deceased adult members. Similarly, there would be no *Tero Buru* without the musics performed by the participating individuals and groups in the rite. It was the musics that set the pace, that is, it was the music that helped the participants to acquire the required state of mind during the rite. But, was there music for *Tero Buru*? Unfortunately, the answer to the question would be no! There was no music genre known as *Tero Buru* music.

Drums were performed during *Tero Buru*, but, there was no *Tero Buru* drums. It would be right for one to observe that the musics performed during *Tero Buru* rite were the musics that the Luo performed or would perform during any other occasion other than during *Tero Buru*. Another would acknowledge the existence of the freedom of musical expression. This, the participants of *Tero Buru* have been aware of, and have taken the advantage of the scenario and fully made use of it. It would be to the contrary, for those who did not understand Luo culture to conclude and refer to the musics performed during the rite as *Tero Buru* music. It is a well known fact that there was music, in fact, a lot of it during *Tero Buru*; but it would not be proper to say that the musics were for the rite. That would be strange to a non Luo who considered the rite as nothing but song and dance! Yes, *Tero Buru* was nothing but sound and movements. The sounds expressed in such magnitude was known in Luo as *mahu*, a scary huge sound, intended to threaten and frighten away a similar or a more incomprehensible danger. Such type of

frightening sounds were witnessed during *nyawawa*; the beating of any sound producing source to scare evil spirits associated with the outbreak and spread of small pox. *Mahu* resulting from *Tero Buru* musical extravaganza was a means to an end. Death is frightening, it is a reality. It cannot be avoided nor whisked away, but something has to be done; not to console, but to justify man's existence and capability to react in defense of his existence.

The Concept of Culture

Capability to react in defense of man's existence was not unique to the Luo; it was the image, a constant human nature independent of time, place, and circumstances; and an illusion! What man is may be so entangled with where he is, and what he believes in. As Geertz (1973:35-6) observed, "It was precisely the consideration of such a possibility that led to the rise of the concept of culture and the decline of the uniformitarian view of man..." and this seemed to be firm

"in the conviction that men unmodified by the customs of particular places do not in fact exist, have never existed, and most important, could not in the very nature of the case exist. There is, there can be, no back stage where we can go to catch a glimpse ...actors as 'real persons' lounging about in street clothes, disengaged from their profession, displaying with artless candor their spontaneous desires and unprompted passions. They may change their roles, their styles of acting, even the dramas in which they play; but...they are always performing.

This makes it hard to draw a line between what is natural, universal, and constant and what is conventional, local and variable in man. In fact by drawing such a line, one would be falsifying the human situation. Similar to the Luo *Tero Buru* is the Balinese trance in which they "fall into extreme dissociated states where they perform all sorts of spectacular activities such as biting off the heads of living chickens, stabbing themselves with daggers, throwing themselves wildly about, speaking with tongues, performing miraculous feats of equilibration, mimicking sexual intercourse, eating feces and so on." It is important to note that "trance states are crucial part of every ceremony" (ibid.). In *Tero Buru*, for example, almost all the participating animals (human beings and cattle) acquired trance states, being totaling unaware of whatever they were doing. To ask with Geertz (ibid.), what does one learn about human nature? Is it that the Luo and the Balinese are special sorts of beings? Or are they just the same as others at base, but with some peculiar and really incidental, customs others do not happen to have gone for? Or are they innately gifted or even instinctively driven in certain directions rather than others? Or human nature does not exist and men are purely and simply what their culture does makes them?

Scholars, especially anthropologists, are aware that it is among such interpretations, though unsatisfactory, that attempts were made to find a more viable concept of man, one in which culture and the viability of it would be taken into account rather than written off. The governing principle, the basic unity of mankind considering the view of human nature, is to entertain the idea that the diversity of customs across time and over space is to entertain also the idea that humanity is as

various in its essence as it is in its expression. These results into notions that man could either be looked for "behind", "under", or "beyond" his customs or that man could be looked for in them. When this happens, the danger is the losing sight of man altogether.

There has been and to some extent still is, in the social sciences cultural relativism and cultural revolution which have been avoided through seeking in culture patterns the defining elements of human existence which though not constant in expression are distinctive in character. Geertz (ibid.) acknowledges the fact that attempts to locate man amid the body of his customs as having taken several directions and adopted diverse tactics, though they have all or virtually all proceeded in terms of a single overall intellectual strategy known as stratigraphic conception of the relations between biological, psychological, social and cultural factors in human life. In this conception, as Geertz (ibid.: 37) narrates:

Man is a composite of "levels", each superimposed upon those beneath it and underpinning those above it. As one analyses man, one peels off layer after layer, each such layer being complete and irreducible in itself, revealing another, quite different sort of layer underneath. Strip off motley forms of culture and one finds the structural and functional regularities of social organization. Peel of these in turn and one finds the underlying psychological factors – "basic needs" or what-have-you – that support and make them possible. Peel off psychological factors and one is left with the biological foundations – anatomical, physiological, and neurological – of the whole edifice of the human life.

The attraction of this sort of conceptualization is that it did not have to assert that man's culture was all there to him in order to claim that it was; nonetheless, an essential and irreducible, even a paramount ingredient in his nature, as cultural facts could be interpreted against the background of noncultural facts without dissolving them into that background or dissolving that background into them. This is because (ibid.: 38):

Man is a hierarchically stratified animal, a kind of evolutionary deposit, in whose definition each level – organic, psychological, social, and cultural- had an assigned and incontestable place.

The concept of culture has its impact on the concept of man. When culture is seen as a set of symbolic devices for controlling behaviour and extrasomatic sources of information, it provides the link between what men are intrinsically capable of becoming and what they actually, one by one become. Geertz (ibid.: 52) notes that;

Becoming human is becoming individual, and we become individual under the guidance of cultural patterns, historically created systems of meaning in terms of which we give form, order, point, and direction to our lives. And the cultural patterns involved are not general but specific – not just "marriage" but a particular set of notions about what men and women are like, how spouses should treat

one another, or who should properly marry whom; not just "religion" but belief in the wheel of karma, the observance of a month of fasting, or the practice of cattle sacrifice. Man is to be defined neither by his innate capabilities alone..., nor by his actual behaviours alone but rather by the link between them, in the way in which the first is transformed into the second, his generic potentialities focused into his specific performances.

Tero Buru: A Prerequisite Burial Rite to an Adult Luo

This was how *Tero Buru* guided Luo individuals to be human. On the same note, the cultural patterns were specific and required of an individual to possess some specific attributes befitting a Luo adult. A normal Luo adult was expected to be married and capable of acting in an elaborate system of etiquette. That was why performance of *Tero Buru* as a rite in the Luo funeral rites was limited to only those of adult members of the Luo community. The term "adult" was guided by marital status of an individual in society. Unmarried people could not be accorded *Tero Buru* since they were regarded as children. *Tero Buru* was a prerequisite rite to funeral ceremonies of adult members and it gauged the popularity of the deceased on account of the size of the participants.. Such comparisons were always handy whenever the Luo reflected on or compared which of the funerals had the greatest attendance.

Conclusion

Tero Buru was one of the Luo rites of passage performed at the funerals of adult members of the community before they are buried. It was similar to the requiem, the contemporary Church Service performed by Priests at funerals of the deceased Christian believers in the Luo territory. In *Tero Buru*, the eldest son of the deceased played a leading role. There were two types of *Tero Buru*; one performed on the burial day and another after burial.

Irrespectively, there had to be a mini *Tero Buru* during burial. *Tero Buru* was a rite in a rite. Since death begot funeral ceremonies; similarly, death of adult members of the Luo community begot *Tero Buru*. Music and dance played a very significant role in the administration of *Tero Buru*. The movements of the participants were as varied and echoed *Tero Buru* activities. Because of the diversity experienced, *Tero Buru* is an extravaganza, a musical extravaganza. This was because no one group could claim the monopoly or a leading role. All the participants recognized or unrecognized in the appearance or grooming, claimed to play equal roles in the quest of fighting death; an enemy that had caused havoc in the community.

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