

**POLITICAL IMAGERY AND SYMBOLISM IN DANIEL OWINO MISIANI'S BENGA  
SONGS**

**BY**

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## **DECLARATION**

### **Declaration by Candidate**

I declare that the work in this dissertation entitled, Political Imagery and Symbolism in Daniel Owino Misiani's Benga Songs, has been carried out by me in the Department of Literary Studies. The information derived from the literature has duly been acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this thesis was previously presented for another degree or diploma at this or any other institution.

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May I also thank Elisha Otieno of *Tipo-Tipo Classic Music Studio* for giving me free access to his studio of LP records thus allowing me to get into my hand some of Misiani's oldest records.

## **DEDICATION**

*I dedicate this work to the late Benga Maestro, the Grandfather of Benga, King of History, Daniel Owino Misiani who has inspired this study. I also dedicate this work to my mentor, my late sister, Pamela Atieno Onyor.*

## **ABSTRACT**

Misiani was a great musician and pioneer of benga music. He sang about almost about anything and everything, but people remember him for his political songs. He sang when Kenya was still under firm grip of despotic politics of both Kenyatta the first president of Kenya and later Moi and Kibaki the second and third presidents respectively. Fearlessly, Misiani confronts the politics of the day using his music. Despite the fact that his songs were/are loaded with imagery and symbolism, not many scholars have analysed this work from literary perspective. The messages in Misiani's political songs are figuratively packaged making him a master of political language; language that is full of metaphors, symbolisms, personification. This study therefore aimed at exploring the imagery and symbolism employed by Misiani in constructing politics in his songs. The objectives were to: determine the extent to which Misiani's socio-cultural background influences the choice and use of symbolism and imagery in his music; evaluate how the repressive and hegemonic Kenyan political past shaped the artistic nature of Misiani's music; to examine how imagery and symbolism construct the theme of politics in Misiani's songs. The study used concepts from reader response theory where the primary focus falls on the reader and the process of reading rather than on the author or the text. The study also used concepts taken from the political analysis of the Italian Marxists Antonio Gramsci, on the development of the theory of hegemony. It sees music as popular culture, which is a site of struggle between the forces of resistance of subordinate groups, and the forces of incorporation of dominant groups in the society. This study adopted the descriptive research design. The study used purposive sampling technique to select information rich texts among Misiani's songs. The study sampled out 35 songs. The lyrics of the songs were transcribed, translated into English and then analyzed using textual analysis approach in relation to the objectives of the study. This study found out and confirmed the literariness of Misiani's music. The study found that Misiani uses imagery and symbolism to address the politics of Kenya.

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## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Politics** is activities associated with governance, principals of power, status, influence and control over others and discourse involve in such.

**Hegemony** is seen as the supremacy of a state, social group or an individual over others. **Hegemon** is the supreme power, the social group or an individual over others.

A **symbol** is an object, animate or inanimate in which represents or stands for something else. It is a kind of comparison between the abstract and the concrete in which the terms of comparison is suggested.

**Imagery** as a general term cover the use of language to represent objects, actions, feelings, thought, ideas state of mind, or any sensory or extra sensory experience. Many images are conveyed by figurative language as in metaphors, simile, onomatopoeia, metonymy and synecdoche.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Since the study is about Benga music with focus on Misiani's songs, this background sheds light on the development of Benga music and the entry point of Daniel Owino Misiani and where he fits in the Kenyan politics. Part and parcel to the study and core to it is politics; this study highlights the center beacons in Kenya politics that forms Misiani's context. Finally, imagery and symbolism, the literary techniques harnessed by Misiani in the presentation of politics will also be discussed.

##### **1.1.1 D.O. Misiani and Benga Music**

Daniel Owino Misiani (22<sup>nd</sup> February 1940-17<sup>th</sup> May 2006) was a musician from Tanzania though he lived most of his life in Kenya. He was known as the King of History in Kenya because of the political narratives in his songs; overseas, he was also known as the Grandfather of Benga in recognition of his pioneering role in the development of Benga music as a genre, (Miles, 1989).

Misiani was born in Shiratti, Tanzania and grew up in northern Tanzania. His parents were singers, but opposed his choice of music as a career, on religious grounds. Nevertheless, he moved to Kenya in the 1960s to become a musician. He first recorded with the Victoria Boys Band in 1965. The band changed its name many times before becoming popular known as Shiratti Jazz. During his long career in music, he released numerous recordings; with some international releases.

Misiani, a Benga artist sang within Kenya's socio-political setting which gave impetus to the messages in his songs. Ngugi (1967) says that, a language of a literature cannot be discussed

meaningfully outside the context of those forces which have made it. Misiani's songs astride four decades and reverberates in the dark days of Kenya's 'political repression', then into the 'multipartism' then back to 'disillusionment', (Oloo, 2007: 185). Being a Luo by ethnic identity, Misiani sang in Dholuo and Kiswahili. Occasionally; however, he would sing in English.

Benga as a genre of music is said to be a product of evolution from Luo traditional music, eight stringed musical instruments, *Nyatiti*, (Bartz, 2009). Currently, Bartz claims that Benga is currently the authentic music of Kenya which is listened to by both the old and the young in Kenya, produced both as secular and gospel Benga.

Although it is generally agreed that the cradle of Benga music is the Lake Victoria Region, others claim that it came from outside Kenya probably Congo. The debate that has been raging over the past four decades, however, is over the actual origins of the word "Benga". A convincing argument is presented by Ochieng' Nelly Orwa, another Benga pioneer. He says that the word Benga was created Uganda. "The word Benga started in Uganda. We went to play our music there, which was then called *Ogara style*... As they danced, the women's clothes, called *busuti* in Uganda, billowed around them and we started saying, '*Lawu bengore*', which means, 'the clothes are loose,' in Luo. That is when we started using the word Benga." In fact, it is the late John Ogara Ondodi "Kaisa" who is regarded as the trail-blazing Benga pioneer, the one who spread it beyond village confines, ingeniously shaped its styles and nurtured a new crop of Benga artistes, (Musinguzi, 2009). Musinguzi, (2009) however says that the most controversial claim on the origin of the word Benga came from Misiani himself. He long maintained that it was a variation on his mother's name, Obengo.

In most instances, however, Benga as a music genre tends to refer specifically to the dominant Luo popular music, which, since the late 1960s, has reigned supreme around the Lake Victoria region. Though as the rhythm caught on, musicians from other parts of Kenya's linguistic regions borrowed elements of the genre to suit their own style. Each of these regional Benga dimensions has since developed distinctive flavors. Although the melodies, languages and rhythms vary, a common trait is weaved within each style by the distinctive solo guitars, (Mwendwa, 2008). We now have accomplished Benga maestros like D.K. Kamau and Kamaru from Central Kenya, Sukuma bin Ongaro from Western province, Ken *wa* Maria from Eastern among others.

Misiani was arrested on several occasions for lyrics that were perceived as crossing the line into political criticism (Oloo, 2007). He died in a tragic road accident on 17<sup>th</sup> may 2006 in Kisumu. At the time of his death, at the age of 66 years, he was still an active performer.

### **1.1.2 Symbolism and Imagery**

Misiani has been appreciated as popular artist, but more so as a social political commentator, conveying political messages. However, political texts are packaged uniquely, as Masolo (2000) would writes, that the brilliance of Misiani would be attributed to his use of proverbs and other types of cultural idioms to define and mentioning or giving illustrations of the proverbs and cultural idioms to define and frame responses to the political experience. Although Masolo falls short of mentioning or giving illustrations of the proverbs and cultural idioms in Misiani's political songs, he creates a pedestal on which this study can be based.

Misiani himself adds, "Sometimes I sing about lake, fish and other things and when in two or three years things begin to happen, people say I am a prophet." (Oloo, 2007:183). This means that Misiani seldom sings out his opinionated concerns bare but he clothes them artistically. Oloo's

(2007); Masolo's (2000), analyses reveal that Misiani's political messages depict animals to depict and conceal characters and unfolding events in Kenya's political arena. He has animals like lions, leopards, hyenas, and baboons among other large and small animals. While Oloo and Masolo are able to identify these animal images and symbols, this study takes it further to discuss what they portend politically from a theoretical point of view.

### **1.1.3 Music and Literature**

It is important to examine Misiani's song-texts vis-a-vis the traditional written texts in the literary context and popular literature world. Misiani's work is part of popular culture. Misiani's work is not literary but rather music. The entire work of Misiani is oral lyrics and is seemingly not written; the songs are neither written in a book nor a collection of poems (he may have just written them during the band's rehearsals). Since neither Misiani nor his producers recorded his songs in the orthographic sense (written form), the question then is: does his work stand, peer-wise to other literary texts? Are his texts (songs) worth analyzing, or quoting? The question therefore is then; can Misiani's oral lyrics share equal status with other literary works? These questions arise from the fact that there has been an over emphasis on the written text over the verbal text in literary circles, that is, written text over oral texts. Over time, the written text has been deemed superior to the verbal text as literature itself has been largely regarded as the study of written works of arts.

From a general perspective, Nord (2005) disputes this apparent superiority of the written over oral texts by observing that any utterance lacking semantic coherence as well as utterance without the necessary formal and syntactic properties of cohesion is considered text by their hearers. He says that such texts have communicative functions. Nord (2005) in a sense, therefore, draws Misiani's text into the literary picture. Based on this consideration, Misiani's songs are

analyzable texts. In Fairclough's words, a text refers to "the written or spoken language produced in a discursive event" (Fairclough, 1993, p. 138).

Rosenberg (2008) does a successful comparative study of literary works of Shaaban Robert and the songs of Samba Mapangala. Shaaban Robert is a literary giant in East Africa; he is a poet, a playwright, and a novelist while Samba Mapangala is a popular musician, also in East Africa. Rosenberg draws literary parallels on these two artists. Rosenberg does not see a literary gulf between the works of these two artists though one is an oral artist, while the other a literary artist. According to her, these works are part of the literary canons in East Africa (Rosenberg, 2008).

However, to canonize artists like Misiani is in itself controversial. Kwame (2003) in his study of Mobsy's work in Costa Rica's literature agrees that:

Within the broad parameters of literary discourse, a longstanding contentious debate rages on what constitutes a literary canon, its inclusions and exclusions, as well as when and where subjects enter recognized cultural "space" and how such points of entrance are crucial to textual interrogation (Kwame, 2003:95).

This debate is indeed central to works like that of Misiani as it is to Afro-Hispanic and other literary works. Can Misiani's work be canonized? Trevor Ross (1993) defines a canon as "a body of writing or other creative work that has been recognized as standard or authoritative" (Ross: 514). John Gilroy (1995) adds that the term canon has "suggested to its users principles of selection by which some authors or text were worthier of preservation than others" (Gilroy 1995:233). Therefore, according to Kwame, 'works that focus on and analyze critically...a cultural production are crucial because they intervene in culturally recognized space, and by doing so, reshape and reconstruct the imagery of ...a given people' (2003:96).

Critics would still want to find out; can Misiani's work stand out authoritatively? Is Misiani and

his texts worthier of preservation? Do his works focus on a cultural production? Is Misiani's music part of the literary canon as are Mapangala and Shabban Robert's works? Indeed Misiani is a literary canon worth literary analysis. In deed he is. In East African, Misiani's music stand tall as researchers like Barz, Douglas among others have used Misiani's music, though not directly as a standard scale upon which the *benganess* and history of Benga music can be judged.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

A lot has been said about popular music in Kenya and the role it plays or it has played in Kenya's politics either pro or anti the establishment, (Wekesa, 2004, Masolo, 2000, Parsitau, 2005). In the same breadth, fairly enough has been said about Benga as a form of popular culture and its role and potential in the political arena especially in the era of repression, dictatorship, economic sabotage and mismanagement; yet, no study has looked at benga songs from a literary perspective. Some few scholars (Oloo, 2007, Masolo, 2000 Ogude, 2007, among few others) have only looked at Owino Misaini as a popular musician and a political commentator who fearlessly confronted the establishment with his songs. These scholars agree that the messages in Misiani's political songs are figuratively packaged making him a master of political language. Despite the fact that Misiani's songs are loaded with imagery, symbolism and other features style, no scholar has analysed this work from this literary perspective. This study focusing on the literariness of Misiani's benga songs explores his use of political imagery and symbolism in the songs. This study therefore looks at the political imagery and symbolism in Daniel Owino Misiani Benga songs.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent does the socio-cultural background influence the choice and use of

symbols and images in Misiani's songs?

2. How does the repressive and hegemonic Kenyan political past shape the artist's nature of songs?
3. What are images and symbols construct the theme politics in Misiani's songs?

The aim of this study is to explore the imagery and symbolism employed by Misiani in constructing politics in his songs.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

1. To determine the extent to which Misiani's socio-cultural background influences the choice and use of symbols and images in his songs;
2. To evaluate how the repressive and hegemonic Kenyan political past shapes the artist's nature of Misiani's songs;
3. To examine how imagery and symbols construct the theme of politics in Misiani's songs.

#### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The study limits itself to Misiani's political songs with the exclusion of his other works that deal with other themes. Since Misiani's music covers a historical space of almost four decades, the study was not be limited to a historical slice of his career but looked at his entire career with Shiratti Jazz Band (1967 - 2006). Of the entire corpus of songs produced by Misiani, the study restricted itself to the available recorded music only. It is these recorded songs that formed the population from which a sample was drawn.

#### **1.6 Justification**

Misiani plays Benga form of music and sings songs that cover an array of themes, from love songs to political songs. On the surface, Misiani's music seems harmlessly talking about animals, forests, the lake among other images. The listeners, however, inquisitively look at these images

beyond their literal meaning. They say that Misiani is a politician; some say that he is a prophet. Misiani himself says that he merely sings about nature and nothing else. It is then necessary to explore Misiani's songs to ascertain the claims made by his listeners who are Benga enthusiasts. Benga is a common music genre in Kenya listened to and danced to by almost every Kenyan. Benga relies on the strength that each region in Kenya has been able to come up with their version of Benga and their dominant musician. Daniel Owino Misiani is one such a musician, respected and revered in Kenya.

### **1.7 Conceptual Framework**

It is worth noting that this study involves literary subjects like popular music, politics as a theme and literary techniques. It is imperative then that the core concepts of the theory must be aligned to addressing these subjects. The study makes use of concepts from Reader-Response theory as well as concepts from Hegemony of the Marxist theory. This study therefore, uses Hegemonic Reader Response Theory as its conceptual framework.

The first concept of the theory is from reader-response theory. In the Reader-Response critical approach; first major tenet that was applicable holds that readers are situated in a common cultural/historical setting and shaped by dominant discourses and ideologies. This is what Fish (1980) calls "interpretive community" (7). The readers' pre-text background like education, culture, sex, religion, occupation, all set a reader into a given interpretive community. Reader response theorists share a topic other than a set of assumptions. They all have a common conviction that the reader plays a vital role in shaping the literary experience and the desire to help explain that role. Reader response tends to take different viewpoints based on other theories. It attracts other major schools of thought. Different viewpoints come into view as we use reader response theory.

The second tenet propounds that the reader and the process of reading rather than the author or the text is the primary focus. Literature is considered a performative art and each reading is a performance. Reader-response theory holds that literature exists only when it is read, it is therefore an event. In Comparison, music exists only when listened to. This tenet is important to the study of Misiani's songs since meaning can only be derived from what the reader or music listener makes of the songs.

The third major tenet stipulates that the literary text possesses no fixed and final meaning or value; there is no one correct meaning. Literary meaning and value are transactional, dialogic, created by the interaction of the reader and the text. According to Rosenblatt (1978) a poem (in this case a song) is "what the reader lives through under the guidance of the text" (56).

Iser (1978) adds that the text in part controls the reader's responses but contains gaps that the reader creatively fills. There is a tension between "The implied reader," who is established by the "response-inviting structures" of the text; this type of reader is assumed and created by the work itself. "The actual reader," who brings his/her own experiences and preoccupations to the text (88). This 'tension' is likely to occur in the analysis of the songs: Misiani's text and the text created by the readers or listeners.

The second concept is from the political analysis of the Italian Marxists Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) on the development of the concept of hegemony. The first tenet is hegemony itself. It refers to the way in which dominant groups in the society, the hegemony, through a process of intellectual and moral leadership win the consent of the subordinate group in society, thus dominating it (Storey, 1992: 275). It is both social-cultural and political dominance.

The second tenet is anti-hegemony. Hegemonic theory sees popular culture like music as a site of

struggle between the forces of resistance of subordinate groups in society, and the forces of incorporation of dominant groups in society. Anti-hegemony is the resistance by social and sub-cultural groups or tribe against the domination by hegemonic socio-political forces. As has been observed that there is a 'connection between (popular) music and politics' (Wekesa, 2004), Misiani's songs is looked at as a site of political struggle or resistance against the forces of incorporation of the hegemony, (Storey, 2004) what Collins (1992) calls 'anti-hegemony of popular music in Africa '. Popular culture here is a terrain of exchange between the groups, marked by resistance and incorporation. The neo-Gramscian school also sees popular culture as a terrain of ideological struggle between dominant and subordinate classes, dominant and subordinate culture.

Counter-hegemony formed the third major tenet of the conceptual framework. Counter-hegemony may be defined as the organized social challenge that eventually replaces the hegemony. Pratt (2004) describes Counter-hegemony as the creation of alternative hegemony on the terrain of civil society preparing for political change. In the terrain of dominance, forces clash in resistance by the subject and the attempt to perpetuate a lasting control by the dominant forces. Soon the subject becomes the dominant force and therefore the new hegemony.

In the study, Reader response theory was used to give meaning to Misiani's songs. The meaning was done through analysis of imagery and symbolism in this song, and how they bring out politics from a reader point of view and from a common denominator of reader-artist social-cultural background. In reader response theory, what the reader brings into the text is situated within a common interpretive community which may include shared culture, social political background and viewpoints.

Hegemonic theory on the other hand was used to lay background to the political struggle in Kenya, posing Misiani as an antagonist in the struggle. The theory presents the government system and the power that goes with it as the hegemony, which use political maneuvers to incorporate the masses into the system. The attempt to win the consent of the subordinate group is met by resistance. Study attempts to establish the hegemony; the dominant group, and the subordinate group. This study established the nature of the struggle between forces of resistance and in corporation. This establishes the prime theme of the study; politics.

In this study, music is the site of this struggle; Misiani's songs become the focus of the study, in an attempt to establish the hegemony and the subordinate group. The study looks at how Misiani launches his anti-hegemonic moves against the hegemony to create a site for this struggle.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This section reviews literature that has so far handled political symbols and images in Misiani's work. Using the thematic funnel approach, the review looks at an overview of popular culture (music) in which Misiani's Benga music belongs. The review goes down to political songs, a case of Kenya and finally the symbolism and imagery in Misiani's Benga music. The review also looks at concepts employed in the conceptual framework of the study and how these concepts have been employed elsewhere.

As has been introduced, Misiani's music fits squarely within the stratum of popular culture. But what is popular culture? Popular culture is an aspect of culture. Culture is our way of life; its whole busy action, its values, its art and symbols, structures and institutions. Culture is the total mobile body of feelings and beliefs, intensions and reasons which forms that ceaseless action (Strunati, 1995) or that which is enough to condition perception, judgment, communication and behavior in a given society (Mazrui, 1990).

#### **2.2 Popular Culture, the Realm of Political Resistance**

Descriptively, when talking about popular culture, several aspects of the culture come to mind; film, music and songs, TV programs, modes of transport, fashion, slang and accent, among others. Of all these aspects of popular culture, popular music is the most visible carrier of popular culture, (Apondo, 2007). Popular music is inescapable in all aspects of life, in market places, restaurants, homes, offices, in public and private transport and even in learning institutions. People's lives, Strunati (1995) adds, appear now to be affected by the popular culture presented by the modern mass media. Popular culture is a vehicle then, through which people (the masses) seek to integrate their lives, particularly in dislocating moments such as post-colonial regimes in Kenya

(Barber and Young, 1997) by opening their eyes to their own objectives, historical situation, and their conditions of existence (Barber and Young, 1997). Popular music is as such, a tool in political expressions.

The conception of popular culture, in this case music, as a tool for political articulation of the oppressed has not been confined to a particular region of the world. Hobsbawm,(1990) and Hamm (1995) note that in general, the role of artists (whether categorized as popular or not) was not different in countries with communist and other forms of repressive regimes such as the Apartheid-regime in South Africa, because in these countries artists enjoyed the “sense of being needed by their public” as “... in the absence of real politics and a free press, practitioners of the arts were the only ones who spoke for their people” (Hobsbawm: 506; Englert: 2008). On the same breath, Nyairo and Ogude (2006) emphasize that "Popular music can be understood as a field of political discourse” (225), and Chirambo (2002) adds "as a platform for debate and action against the elite's dominant ideology” (103).

With regard to Africa, this perception of popular culture as an empowering counter-hegemonic force certainly shaped the perspective of many scholars, to the extent that the "resistant" character of popular culture was sometimes taken as a defining characteristic (Englert, 2008). However this is normally not the case, as shown by the example of the role of music during the era of apartheid in South Africa where music helped constitute apartheid just as it helped "take apartheid apart” (Olwage, 2008). Or in Kenya where groups such as the Muungano National Choir of Nairobi, Prisons Band Choir, Kenyatta University Choir and other mass choirs from public universities, primary and secondary schools responded in song and dance to support the ruling party, behind the facade of national celebration; this is what Lukalo (2006) calls 'a love-hate relationship'

between many of Africa's musicians and their governments. In former Zaire, there was a mutual relationship between the despot Mobutu Sese Seko and the late singer Lwambo Makiadi Franco (7).

Eaglert (2008) states that popular songs with political contents - expressed more or less explicitly - have certainly played a role in different moments in history in various African countries. However, a look at the contents of popular music shows that songs which are critical of political situations, especially in the countries of their writer's origin, are rather rare. Based on their case study of Cameroon, Nyamnjoh and Fokwang (2005) argue that songs which comment on social virtues or social ills, or songs which are in praise of the political regime are much more frequent than explicitly political songs as indicated above.

While for some time popular culture, in this case popular music has been relegated to the periphery of serious academic study (Street 2001, 1997; Marchart, 2008), Middleton (2008) argue that there is no division between folk and popular and art. He says that although art music is generally regarded as complex, difficult, demanding and popular music simple, accessible, he says such arguments hold no water since all text placed on their contexts are literary serious. Misiani's music is categorized under benga music, a genre that is basically popular music. It is easier then to discard Misiani as a mere benga artist who calls for no serious consideration. This study treats Misiani's music as serious as any poetic text.

On political songs, Wekesa (2004) summarizes their function as can be used 'to report, comment on current affair, for political pressure, for propaganda and to reflect and mould public opinion' (96), Finnegan (2011) says songs insult, challenges or satirize. These songs, she adds "have the advantage as political tools is their apparent innocuous nature' (286) It is this innocuous nature that accounts for the use of imagery and symbolism in Misiani's music.

Several writers, like Masolo, 2000; Ogude and Nyairo, 2006; Wekesa, 2004; Lukalo, 2006, while looking at politics and music from popular cultural point of view have appreciated the role played by musicians in Kenya. In Kenya, popular music has had a large share of its involvement with politics. Mutonya (2004) says that the overview of the relationship between music and politics in Kenya through the past half century reveals that indeed music has functioned as a primary site of compensation of power. During harsh politics climates, musicians have offered an alternative narrative because of their access to the platform.

In 2002 Kenya's general election campaign, GidiGidi MajiMaji song hit *I am unbwogable* became the sound track of National Rainbow Coalition (Narc) campaign (Ogude and Nyairo, 2006). The songs praised a number of Luo politicians who had struggled against Moi's regime (Wekesa, 2004). Its public airplay in the state owned electronic media was restricted. The same fate met Eric Wainina's song *nchi ya kitu kidogo*, 'A state controlled by bribery'; a song castigating corruption in Kenya (Lukalo, 2006) and Misiani's post Kenya's constitutional referendum song hit *Bim en Bim*, 'A baboon remains a baboon'.

Parsitau (2005) therefore writes that in Kenyan context, politicians sometimes pick appropriate gospel tune and add their words to suit political campaigns. She gives examples of 2002 general elections campaigns where popular hits like *yote yawezekana kwa imani* (All things are possible by faith) was changed to *yote yawezekana bila Moi* (all things are possible without Moi [the former president of Kenya]). In 2007 election, the main opposition party, the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), turned the gospel lyrics "brethren don't sleep yet for the battle is far from over" to "Kenyans don't sleep yet the battle of removing president Kibaki from power and the war for democratic space is far from over." (68)

Most writers on Misiani, Patterson especially, have looked at him not as a political commentator but fondly as Grand-Father of Benga music, having been among the surviving pioneers of the genre (Patterson, 1995), yet Misiani's impressive career spans four decades and the titles under his name run to hundreds of songs. Misiani's songs however, play vital role in political dispensation. He combines social, cultural themes and politics and still plays such a beautiful music (Oloo, 2007).

### **2.3 Song and Politics**

Politics has been known to have a long history of association with songs and music (Street, 2007, Segun, 2012). Dating back to the ancient African, the days of Plato in Greece, and, in fact, irrespective of how far back in history one wishes to go, song has always been a formidable instrument of political expression (Segun, 2015). Whereas it may appear that political songs are associated with modern party politics, the fact is that songs with political orientation have been there since time immemorial. There were many political songs right from oral tradition. Songs of insult, challenge or of satirical comments have all along been within the oral tradition. Political songs can be used to report and comment on current affairs, for political pressure, for propaganda and to reflect and mould public opinion (Finegan, 2012).

Song is a double edged sword: Music has the potentiality for developing consciousness amongst the oppressed class, while, on the other hand, for the class in dominance, it is an extra tool for concretizing hegemony (Segun, 2015). Therefore, political songs may not necessarily be a protest in nature, many political songs are praise songs that are pro the establishment. In Malawi, during the regime of President Kamuzu Banda dictatorship, women singers still adulated his leadership (Chirwa, 2001). Similarly, the mass choirs of schools and Universities, Prison Choir among other choirs in Kenya sang praises to president Moi's leadership irrespective of the prevailing oppression (Lukalo, 2006). This would explain why the hegemonic song '*Tawala Kenya Tawala – Rule*

Kenya Rule' composed by Wasonga, became the totem song of President Moi, being often played even at military passing out parades, thereby illustrating how hegemonic rule used music to penetrate the minds of many Kenyans (Lukalo, 2006). As said above, such political songs played the role of propaganda and as such molded a positive public opinion of otherwise failed regimes.

However, more concern to this study is the protest aspect of political songs and their role in a political environment. Although this study is confined to African political environment and specifically Kenya, it should be noted that political songs are not confined to Kenya and Africa alone. All over the world songs have been in use to challenge and ostracize authorities, mobilise and rally the masses against the ruling regimes or occupying forces. Songs have played significant roles in major protests of the world, ranging from the 1980s apartheid resistance in South Africa, to the 2010s Tunisian, Egyptian and Libyan Revolts of the Middle East (Segun, 2012). Nations world over are saturated with history of utilizing songs and music to challenge status quos.

Politics, especially the aspect of political protest and in the words of Auvinen (1996), "consists of demonstrations, riots and strikes which have an expressed political target and/or involve conflict behaviour against the political machinery" (p.78). Auvinen posits that bad economic situation, ethnic dominance, authoritarian political regime, and low level of economic development often lead to relative deprivation, especially amongst the urban middle classes and youths, who, as he claimed, are the direct victims of such socio-economic situations, so, this often lead to political protest. On the other hand, music (song) is the systematic combination of sounds and voices for creation of certain harmonious effect that may be tailored towards disseminating particular messages (Segun, 2015, Parry et al, 1992). "Music is all about meaning and purpose. When human beings are able to connect to a song in some way, there is a

flood of positive emotion” (Daniel 2003, p.11). Because music is often about purpose, and purposes are often related to emotion, and it is inevitable that music interacts with politics which has to do with the actions and emotions of man towards his survival. Music (song) is a carrier of political protest. *Sarafina*, the much celebrated South African film is micro-social depiction of how political protest, song and dance go hand in hand.

Onyango Oboo, (2016) in the Daily Nation Newspaper article, *How the whole of Africa came to love Cuba’s Fidel Castro*, demonstrates clearly how music played a pivotal role in the liberation of Africa when no help seemed to be coming forth towards the end of cold war. That is, how Music (song) and politics interact to one body of action. Across the political divide there crept in a widespread collective sense of failure, and even shame, among the elite in Africa. The continent at that time, he says, needed something hopeful and new to re-energise the then political struggle. Then it came surprisingly from the arts-music. He demonstrates how Bob Marley’s concerts in Zimbabwe re-energized Africa’s struggle against colonial rule and his music a rallying cry for progressive movements.

It is this politics in the songs that this study is of interest of. Misiani might not have had the influence of the likes of Bob Marley, but he provided an alternative voice at a time when people were silenced by the powers of the oppressive governments of one party dictatorship in Kenya. He was an incisive and fearless artist who composed satirical lyrics critical of the political class and was arrested on many occasions. He took an interest in pan-African and international issues including coups, assassinations, ethnic conflicts and traversed the entire world in his imagination. Misiani used various forms of symbols and images either to circumnavigate political censorship or to make his ideas clearer to his listeners. This is what Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 115) say when explaining imagery in a metaphor: ‘therefore, we always try to understand

these abstract concepts of which we do not fully make sense by comparing them to concepts that are more clear in our experience or thought.’

Oboo (2016) says that, collectively, a body of music, of Bob Marley, Mator Blater, Steve Wonder, Johnny Clegg, Miriam Makeba, Hugh Masekela, Ladysmith Black Mambazo among others, introduced an accessible new language to talk about liberation and freedom, shorn off the rigid and ideological structure of “proletariat”, “working class”, “revolutionary vanguard”, in which the anti-imperialist movement had steeped. Misiaini is a liberator, his songs puts him in the same level and other political protest musicians. Although this study talks about political liberation, it goes further to look at how this protest language is packed to reach the intended audience, how they are packaged in imagery and metaphors

#### **2.4 Misiani and Political Dispensation**

Masolo (2000) who has written about Misiani's music from ethno-music point of view says that music and dance have become an inseparable part of political visibility and dignitaries. Music is a discourse, a signifier of social and political hierarchization. He commends Misiani saying that his cultural definition of a political response has always been swift, eloquent and biting in its metaphorical representation. Although Masolo writes about Misiani, he does endeavor to look at images and symbols that describe the politics in Misiani's songs.

Ogude (2007) though writing on murder as a signifier of repression in Kenya, agrees that the popularity of Misiani's music for the last four decades can be attributed to his relentless engagement with the political spheres which has been defined by repression and political intolerance. While Ogude acknowledges Misiani sings political songs, he runs short of discussing the imagery and symbolism that carry this political themes.

One of the most insightful studies on Misiani is done by Adams Oloo a political scientist. He handles politics in Misiani's songs and his engagement with the three presidents of Kenya; Kenyatta, Moi and Kibaki. He incisively interprets the songs to what he calls the 'context that shape its creation' (Oloo, 2007). Oloo agrees that Misiani's music transmit political messages that could not be express in common political language and speech. This exceptional language exploit is what this study attempts to scrutinize in terms of symbols and images. While Oloo attempts to discuss some of these symbols and images but his study is from political science point of view. This study is literary and looks at politics from hegemonic perspective.

## **2.5 Kenya Politics and Luo Politics**

Misiani started his music career just after Kenya's independence in 1964. His music is a witness of post-independent politics in Kenya. His music interacted with the politics in the country's history. More notable is the politics of Kenya after the ban of multipartism in Kenya in the late 60s. This began with the perceived rivalry between Jomo Kenyatta, the founding president, and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, the Vice President. This rivalry climaxed at a party conference in Limuru in March 1966. Odinga was subsequently demoted (Badejo, 2006). On 14th April, 1966 Odinga resigned from KANU (Kenya African National Union) and announced the formation of Kenya People's Union (KPU), a week later (Oginga, 1967). Kenyatta banned KPU, and later detained its leader, Odinga and his associates, some for a very long time (Igham, 1990; Ahiuwalia, 1999).

The death of Kenyatta on August 21, 1978, marked the turning point in Kenya's history, (Miller and Yeager, 1994). This marked a second phase of leadership and politics in Kenya with the enthronement of Daniel Moi as the second President. Moi banned multi-party politics and enforced the ban after a coup attempt on his government, on 1st August, 1982, (Laako and

Cowen, 2002). In early 1990s, OgingaOdinga rose from political ashes to lead the country back to multi-partism.

During the single party rule of KANU government under the former presidents Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Moi, Kenya went into a political recession in a repressive and oppressive regime, (Gecau, 1999; Oyugi 1994). It was characterized by muzzling of freedom of speech, political detention and occasional assassination of perceived or real enemies of the government (Dianga, 2004).

The formation of KPU, its banning and detention of Odinga marked the beginning of Luo community dissidence in opposition politics, (Badejo, 2006; Igham, 1990; Ahiuwalia, 1999). The Luo community then constructed their own unique political identity. Thus even when it was perceived that the community was in government, several indicators convinced them that they were indeed in the opposition. Assassination and detention of some top Luo leaders was enough signals. For instance, Thomas Mboya was assassinated at a time when he was considered, both locally and internationally, astute and politically mature enough to challenge Kenyatta for the leadership in Kenya, (Mwakikagile, 2001). The Luo saw Mboya's assassination as a Kikuyu elite plot to shut them out of the centre of Kenya's political leadership. It was the same year that their other erstwhile leader, OgingaOdinga, had his opposition party banned and himself thrown into detention by Kenyatta. Since then, the Luo have consistently considered themselves 'outsiders' to the centre of Kenyan politics and have taken every opportunity to rally themselves in opposition against what may appear as a threat to them as a group (Masolo, 2000; Mwakikagile, 2001). They have then identified themselves with Odinga in what others call Odingaism, but which appear in this thesis as Odinga Hegemony.

It is from this viewpoint and background that Misiani sings. Misiani's influence on the Luo community's political direction and language, and vice versa, cannot be underrated. As Street (2001) has correctly observed that song makes us know who we are through the feelings and responses that it exposes us to, and which in turn shapes our expectations and preferences. This is reinforced by Frith and Horne (1987) who say that by knowing what we are, we develop a kind of identity, which is a founding aspect of politics. Accordingly, Wekesa (2004) says that people's sense of themselves always comes from the use of images, symbols and a whole series of responses which they come to identify with and which also distinguish them from others.

## **2.6 Mainstream Culture and Music**

Misiani's work is crucial in Kenya's political dispensation. He however does not sing in a vacuum, his listeners are found in a given socio-cultural context from which they create a point of view as they access the political themes in Misiani's songs.

Music was marked by use of the people's language and music instruments. The music sounded like their spoken language and creates an atmosphere depicting their natural habitat, their environment in which they live in (Kimani, 2007:30).

Kimani's assertion above is not far from the truth, music is language, yet language is the window to people's experiences depicting both social and historical issues. Music, like literature, is given impetus from such experiences. Misiani's music is indeed a kind of a sketch-map of the Luo people, their culture and experiences.

Oyayo (1976) looking at *Pakruok* says that *pakruok* is almost the epicenter of Luo music performances, especially the *nyatiti* music. A *nyatiti* musical session involves stopping/interrupting the music at intervals. The person who interrupts the music proceeds to present a string of self-praise phrases, known as *pakruok*. *Pakruok* is closely associated with

naming (Amuka, 2000). During *Pakruok*, an individual uses names to evoke some unique quality in himself. Ayayo (1976) says, *pakruok* takes us even deeper into translation of as an act of interpretation of what the surface conceals. This study however looks at *pakruok* in the context of Misiani's music and how construct itself into an imagery or symbolism that brings out politics in Misiani's songs.

According to Kokwaro and Johns (2006), the Luo is one of the leading African tribes with an excellent knowledge of ethnosystematics (the traditional system of naming and classifying plants and animals). Kokwaro and Johns (2006) illustrate that the cultural use of both plants and animals practiced by the Luo community for generations is to name their newborns after popular plants or animals. Examples of such names include Kwach (Leopard), Jowi (Buffalo), Raila (the stinging nettle leaves *Aila*), Oruka (Edible Mushroom), Orengo (Herb for Mental illness), Bonyo (Locust) and many others. While Kokwaro and Johns looks at naming from the biology, point of view this study looks at this cultural practice and its influence in Music and how artists manipulate naming to come up with imagery and symbolism to bring out the theme of politics

Miruka (2001) when talking about the effect of migration on the Luo, looks at specific word *Luwo*. He acknowledges the connection between the words *Luo* and *Luwo*. The word 'Luo' has implications of movement. Owing to their migratory instinct, the *Luwo*(to follow) concept remains a psychological fixation in the Luo mind. Being partly a pastoral people, the Luo constantly sought greener pastures as they drove their livestock southwards along the Nile until they reached the lush greenery of the Nyanza shoreline. Miruka looks at movement in the context of physical migration of the Luo, this study examines the political migratory instinct featuring in Misiani's songs and how they can be interpreted in terms of imagery and symbolism.

## **2.7 Exploitation of Imagery and Symbolism**

Penninck (2014) says that the sum of features of a metaphor results in its power to influence people's opinions or thoughts and alter their vision on the world. Since politics is closely connected with ideology, metaphors share a great deal in influencing people's political conviction (Lesz, 2011). Metaphor can also be very intricate and effective in affecting people's attitudes. In organizing a perception of a certain issue, metaphor suggests a point of view on an issue and thus creates a context for dealing with it. In this way, metaphor is able to affect the policy convictions of individuals, but also of complete nations (Burkholder & Henry 2009). Politics deals with complex materials that are sometimes difficult to grasp. That is why metaphor is an indispensable and frequently applied figure of speech in political discourse: it helps people to understand complex concepts and functions as a persuasive tool. Metaphor is thus a tool for understanding politics by comparing difficult political matters in the focus with easier and understandable things in the frame (Burkholder & Henry 2009). This is where Misiani seems to excel in; he picks political concepts like assassination and compare it to the thievery of a cat on family chicken, quite 'easier and understandable things '

Metaphor can also invigorate a message or make a speech more memorable as well as arouse emotional response. The way in which a metaphor transmits an emotional feeling can be illustrated by calling a political leader a messiah. The emotions aroused or exemplified by this allusion have an influence on how the national leader is perceived. The way in which a political leader can thus influence people's emotions is one of the principal reasons why they use metaphors in their discourses. Some of the most famous speeches based on inspiring potential followers through metaphorical use were the "I have a dream"-speech of Martin Luther

King Jr. and the “thousand points of light” speech of George W. Bush, as well as the “Iron Curtain” address of Winston Churchill (Mio et al. 2005: 288).

While talking about political speeches, Penninck (2014) says that, the higher the metaphor use in political speeches, the more they seem to inspire followers. Similarly, the high presence of images and symbols in Misiani’s songs has in itself created a mob of inspired followers. This is mainly because they arouse emotions that connect with the topic or rhetoric while at the same time communicating what measures need to be taken (Mio et al. 2005: 288). According to a study by Mio et al. (2005) on American presidents’ charisma, presidents that used twice as many metaphorical images in their inaugural speech were perceived as more charismatic.

Passages containing a lot of metaphors were experienced as more inspirational, from which can be deduced that metaphor serves as an inspirational figure of speech. Expressing emotion through body language, however, is also of great importance and can invigorate a political figure’s credibility.

This work attempted to assess the role of images and symbols in Misiani's presentation of politics. Ogden (1921) once wrote that images and symbols then are valuable in literature because they present truth from a more consciously, vividly, memorably and emotionally than literary work. The study believes that by investigating into the use of these devices, which, Eliade and Mairet (2006) say 'are not irresponsible creations of the psych', the study affirmed that, they (images and symbols) 'respond to a need and fulfills a function that of modalities of being (12).

Symbol according to Cuddon and Preston (1998) is an object, animate or inanimate, which represents or stands for something abstract. Actions and gestures are also symbolic. The

clenched fist symbolizes aggression. Beating of the breast may signify remorse. An arm raised may denote surrender. Symbols are the use of concrete imagery to express an emotion or abstract idea. There are two general types of symbols: universal symbols that embody universally recognizable meanings wherever used, such as light to symbolize knowledge, a skull to symbolize death, etc., and constructed symbols that are given symbolic meaning by the way an author uses them in a literary work as is discussed in the Reader Response Theory in this thesis.

Imagery on the other hand according to (Beckson and Ganz (1989) is any of the five senses (sight, touch, smell, hearing, and taste). Essentially, imagery is any series of words that create a picture in the mind. Such images can be created by using figures of speech such as similes, metaphors, personification and assonance.

This study focuses on these highlighted images and symbols but go deeper into exploiting how they bring out political meaning in songs thereby causing ripples and jitteriness among those in authority in Kenya. It is worth noting that some of these images are culturally imbedded that only by understanding cultural background can one explain them. Yet some of these images are religiously defined. Religious and culture meet in Misiani's music. It would therefore be in order to examine both cultural and religious symbol in Misiani's work. Literary analysis of a popular song has for so long been neglected.

## **2.8 Review of Conception Framework**

The study adopts concepts from the Reader Response Theory and the Hegemonic Theory as tools of analysis of political imagery and symbolism in Misiani's Benga music. Reader Response Theory as propounded by W. Iser, S. Fish and Rosenblatt Louise, among others identifies the reader as the hub to a text's interpretation. The reader's background and the inviting gaps in the text constitute part of the meaning of a text. According to Stanley Fish, every reader belongs to a given

'interpretive community'. Reader Response Theory has always found a ground in bible interpretation. Morgan & Barton, (1988) say that the theory 'clarifies the way the scriptures are actually heard in liturgical and devotional contexts' (257-259). They add that the bible makes sense to Christians of varied backgrounds; one, because Christians share set of assumptions and beliefs forming one interpretive community. Similarly, the very Christians also belong to other interpretive communities depending on their backgrounds; they read the bible as history, literature or religion. Their responses are therefore different. Dan Via (1985) also commenting on bible interpretation, says that the bible like any other text 'contains gaps that stimulate the reader to fill in with perfection from the imagination' based on their values, knowledge and experiences. The reader thus constructs meaning (4-5). In this thesis, the readers falls in the realm of Luo culture and the consequently the politics of Kenya. The songs sung by Misiani are appropriately read from the view point of Luo culture. Songs could as well be read from a different angle but that would be another interpretive community. Read from Kikuyu or Swahili culture point of view would nevertheless bring a meaning and interpretation but it would be different. Different because their shared culture would interpret cultural images and symbols differently. While hyena is derided in Luo culture as foolish, lazy and gullible animal, it is honored among the Kipsigis community because of its ability to eat dead bodies (Odaga and Akivaga, 1987)

On the same text's analysis, Marxist approach to literature focuses on the ideological content of a work-its explicit and implicit assumptions and values about matters such as culture, race, class, and power. Marxist criticism, based largely on the writings of Karl Marx, typically aims at not only revealing and clarifying ideological issues but also correcting social injustices. Marxist literary theories tend to focus on the representation of class conflicts as well as the reinforcement of class distinctions through the medium of literature (Eagleton, 1976).

Marxist model of the society is where by a stratum of the Base and the Superstructure exists. The base is the means of production, distribution and exchange. The superstructure is what is called culture; law, religion, ideas, music and literature. It is the base that determines the superstructure (Eagleton & Milne, 1999) Marxists argue that cultural elements like literature and music like Misiani's music, are essentially political because they either challenge or support economic oppression. Because of this strong emphasis on the political aspects of texts, Marxist criticism focuses more on the content and themes of literature than on its form. The concept of hegemony as developed by Italian Marxists Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) shifts focus from force in traditional Marxism to coercion and consent. According to Lears (1985) Gramsci's preoccupation with consent led him to recast the base- superstructure model. He narrowed the base to include only the material and technical instruments of production; he broadened the superstructure to include political society, civil society and the state. The hegemony is exercised through the so called private organization like the church, trade unions, or school. Superstructure includes music, art, police, literature, legal processes values i.e. the social-political and ideological systems and institutions (Eagleton & Milne, 1999). Most importantly, John Storey (2000) adds popular culture (music) saying that it is a site of struggle between the forces of resistance of subordinate groups in society, and the forces of incorporation of dominant groups in society. This is where Misiani's Benga music belongs.

## **2.9 Conclusion**

The above review reveals that Misiani's music contexted in Kenya political terrain is political in nature and that his ingenuity as political musician rests on his ability to pack his messages in salient images and symbols. It is therefore the analysis of these features of style that is yet to be exploited in a study; this study intends to fill up this gap.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Methodology**

This section dealt with the manner in which the study was carried out. It identified the research design that was most appropriate for this study and justified its suitability. This section also examined the mode of sampling, procedures employed and manner in which the data collected was analyzed and presented.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

Since the study is mainly quantitative, it was guided by analytical research design. According to Macmillan and Schumacher (1997), analytical research, as a style of quantitative inquiry, is a non-interactive document research which describes and interprets the past or the recent past from selected sources. Ogonya (2018) says that the source maybe documents preserved in collections or participants oral testimonies or in the case of this research, texts transcribed from Owino Misiani's songs. For the current study, it was helpful in exploring the extent to which Misiani's songs entails political images and symbols. This design was most appropriate for this study because this study was exploratory in nature.

#### **3.3 Study Population**

The study population comprised all songs ever recorded by Owino Misiani, whose years of release range from 1965 to 2006, that is, the time he started recording music up to the time of his death. It is difficult to know exactly how many songs Owino Misiani produced over the period when he started playing music in 1965 up to the time of his death in the year 2006. They must be running into hundreds. The study did not limit itself to specific year or political theme but looked at all the accessible songs recorded by Owino Misiani.

### **3.4 Sampling Strategy and Sample Size**

The study analyzed thirty songs sung by Owino Misiani that contained the political imagery and symbols. The songs were sampled from the period Misiani began recording his music in the 1965 to the time of his death in 2006. Purposive sampling (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) was used to select the songs that present political imagery and symbols. This method was chosen because it gave the researcher a free-hand will to pick on the songs and subject them to analysis. In purposive sampling the choice in the size of data is at the researcher's discretion and is dependent on his judgment. This method enabled the researcher to work with this number of songs and leave out other songs by the artist.

### **3.5 Data Collection Methods**

Primary data was collected through textual analysis of the songs. Primary data was derived directly by examining the texts of sampled songs. Data was collected by listening to the songs, transcribing the texts and taking notes by hand. A music player was very handy together with a note book and a pen. These songs were picked from music stores and in particular *Tipo-Tipo* music store in Kisumu which happens to have the very old music records of Owino Misiani. Transcription of each sampled song was done and translated into English. As a native speaker of Luo language, the researcher did the translation of the songs. The following bilingual dictionaries came in handy to help in translation of Luo songs into English: *Bilingual Dholuo-English dictionary* by Bob Capen, *The English-Dholuo dictionary* and *Dholuo-English dictionary* both by Bole Odaga. Guidance of what constitute politics, especially repressive politics, was through the guidance of book and journals that handle politics in Kenya as a topic; such materials included: *Politics and Administration in East Africa* by W.O. Oyugi, *Kenya's quest for democracy: taming the leviathan* by M. Mutua and *Ethnic Politics in Kenya and Nigeria* by G. Mwakikagile.

Secondary data included all supplementary information to be gathered from sources like journals, books and the internet. The key words that I used in the search included Misiani, imagery and symbolism, political songs and music.

### **3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation**

Information that conveys political imagery and symbolism in Misiani's songs was taken through analysis in line with the objectives and conceptual framework. The study employed textual analysis and ordinary prose was used to present the information gathered into the form which is concise and easy to understand (Korczykrisky, 2009). In the analysis, the excerpts of the songs are presented in Luo language together with their translations. The data was analysed within the tenets of reader response and hegemony framework. Since the study was analytical in nature, the discussions have been presented in analytical and discursive essays.

### **3.7 Ethical Consideration**

The candidate undertook this study at Maseno University. This study was done with the approval and knowledge of the Department of Literary studies, School of Art and Social Sciences, Maseno University. In addition, all sources of information used in this work have duly been acknowledged by means of references.

### **3.8 Summary**

This chapter has explained how the study was carried out. It has specified the design used, the type of population sampled, sampling technique employed to generate data needed, sampling and finally data analysis and its presentation. The method made use of analytical research design and purposive sampling technique. It has been said how complex it was to draw a sample size in the absence of a specific total number of Misiani's songs. It is believed that the data generated candidly reflected the objectives of the study.

## CHAPTERFOUR

### SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE SONGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

Culture dictates the kind of symbols or images used in a language. A competent speaker of any language must appreciate the symbols and images of the language they speak. It is from this understanding that both the speaker and the listener can claim the knowledge of the language they speak. This is what is called the interpretive community.

Luo culture has immense influence on Misiani's articulation of political symbols and images in his songs. Luo culture has been in turn shaped by various socio-cultural experiences that have had a clear effect on Misiani music. Migration, naming, oral literature features and religion can arguably be the prime movers in the creation, manipulation and interpretation of political symbols and images in Misiani's texts. There are many cultural aspects that glare prominently in Misiani's text. These cultural aspects come directly from the Luo culture and their social and psychological experiences.

#### 4.2 Migration

Misiani dedicates a number of his songs to a journey; a journey is a process in migration. In this song Misiani takes a journey akin to migration. Migration is a historic aspect that appears in a number of Misiani's songs.

##### **SafariyaMusoma**

...

*Simba yoro piny achiko yo Musoma Tanzania,*

*Waringo gi kachero e dier otieno*

*Odhiambo wuod Odipo okowowa Odira Okew gi Obanda koda Sam*

*Ochimbo wuod Omollo owega ji dhiyo*

*Ratego amuomo piny, Migori adhi achopo sirawende*

...

*Ogandawa makawuono makotieko yudo pesa*

*To oganda mane konye koro wiye owil oloko ka yugi*

...  
Wawuok Sirare, achiko yo Musoma Tanzania  
Wakalo Tarime, kawilo adhi akalo Mara Sibora,

...  
Jomoko budhowa alufe mane wayudo okalo kwano,  
Ikwano gi Mashari, jakwan komputa neni kanyo

### **A Journey to Musoma**

...  
The lion, I am wading through on a journey to Musoma Tanzania  
We took the journey with Kachero at mid night  
Odhiambo son of Odipo escorted us, Odira Okew, Obanda and Sam  
Ochimbo wuod Omollo is also with us  
The brave one I travelled on, reaching Migori in the morning

...  
These days when people get money  
They despise and forget those who assisted them

...  
We left Sirare heading to Musoma Tanzania  
We went passed Tarime. Kawili, I passed Mara Sibora

...  
We sat down with the rich people, we got uncountable amount of cash  
You count using money machines and computers

In this song, the reader who is based in Luo culture would interpret the song from migratory memory imprinted in the Luo interpretative community. In this song he is travelling from Kenya to Musoma in Tanzania, *Safari Ya Musoma*, A Journey to Musoma; he is in the process physically migrating. The journey is strenuous as he speaks of the journey-taking place at night, *waringo gi kachero e dier otieno*; we took the journey at mid-night. The journey takes a whole night that he only manages to reach Migori the following day in the morning, *Migori adhi achopo sirawende*. Journey may take such dimensions as social life journey or even political emancipation journey. He also talks the need of bravery in the undertaking the journey, he talks of *ratego mwomo piny*, the brave braving the night; *simba yoro*, the lion wading through the darkness, a depiction of bravery. The journey is never smooth, it is full of hazards that only brave do complete the journey.

Migration features in Misiani's song in two ways. Firstly, the Luo community tends to tread as one organism either socially or politically, in the oneness of migratory instinct towards the mythical cornucopia. Misiani adopts the plural of personal pronoun 'we' in his journey songs, referring to everybody and not just himself not as individual but as community, this is depicted by a long list of people in the journey; *Odhiambo wuod Odipo okowowa Odira Okew gi Obanda koda Sam, Ochimbo wuod Omollo owega ji dhiyo.*

In the song, when Misiani finally reach his destination, there is an expression of joy and happiness. This becomes a feature of a migrating community toward a Canaan factor where *Jomoko budhowa; alufe mane wayudo okalo kwano, the rich showered us with a lot of money, more that we could be able to count.* This is expressed in the money he received that could only be counted by money counting machine; he lauds the wonderful hosting he received. This is closely related to the Luo migration. Being partly a pastoral people, the Luo constantly sought greener pastures as they drove their livestock southwards along the Nile until they reached their destination, the lush greenery of the Nyanza shoreline (*Ogutu & Roscoe, 1974*).

Secondly, the Luo often make journeys as well as other physical movements captured in Misiani's songs. Misiani for instance travels to Migori in his track **Safari ya Migori** and to Tanzania in **Safari ya Tanzania**. There are other safaris seen in his songs; **Safari ya Dodoma**, **Safari ya Daresalam** among other safaris. It is notable that the journey is always towards a blissful life: a Canaan of sorts. This is particularly informed by the Luo migration, the movement motif.

#### **4.2.1 Naming: Ethnosystematics**

Ethnosystematics aspect of naming adopted by Misiani to reach out his political ideas. This is a

song Misiani sang in the mid-1980s when the government had strengthened its grip on the people under one party rule. Ironically a local football club Gor Mahia was also at its peak in football exploits taking the continental cup (Baraza, 2009). So ironically, while the fans of Gor Mahia were celebrating the club's dominance, Kenyans were also crying under the yoke of single party rule.

### **Gor Mahia PT2**

*Barua to ero odonjo ondik gi jowi*  
*Odanga be nyamaguru oting'o jowi rawaya*  
*Omuga karee ema oor kalori*  
...  
*Otoyo to ochung' e mesa, sano gimor ginyierowa anyiera:*  
*Ni ring'o mang'enygi, ni choke mang'enygi,*  
*Ni dhao to en maru, kuon to odong' e mesa Makata uringo wadong' kawachamo*

A letter has arrived; written by the buffalo  
The elephant, together with the raiding buffalo  
It is the rhino that has been sent  
...  
Hyena stands at a table  
The hyenas are happy and laughing at us  
That all these meat, all these bones, it is your conflict  
The *ugali* at the table, if you leave it, we will eat.

Naming is another cultural factor that the reader comes term with when listening to Misiani's songs. In the above song, Misiani sings claiming to have received a letter invitation to the world of animals, invited by the Buffalo, *Barua to ero odonjo ondik gi jowi*, 'an invitation letter has come sent by the Buffalo'. In this song, the mentioned animal included the rhino, *Omuga karee ema oor*, 'the Rhino is the sent one'; the elephant, *Odanga be nyamaguru...*, 'the Elephant the big one'; the leopard, *Ni kwach to otimo pesa to ohero fujo gi laro telo be*, 'that the leopard love violence and is greedy for power' and the hyena, *Otoyo to ochung' e mesa*, 'the hyena is standing on the table.'

Such kind of naming system enables Misiani to glide easily from the world of the animals to human beings world. The Luo have a deeply rooted culture and rich knowledge of plant and animal uses. According to Kokwaro and Johns (2006), the Luo is one of the leading African tribes with an excellent knowledge of ethnosystematics (the traditional system of naming and classifying plants and animals). Kokwaro and Johns (2006) illustrate that the cultural use of both plants and animals practiced by the Luo community for generations is to name their newborns after popular plants or animals. This kind of naming system allows Misiani to come up with any imaginable name. This song is typical of how Misiani harnesses ethno-systematics to come up with any imaginable name. This helps him is creation images from the environment. Because this naming system is embedded in the Luo culture, Misiani therefore finds it easy to come up with animal and plant symbol and images.

In the above song, the animals mentioned represent ideas and even individuals. In Misiani's songs, it is therefore common to hear names of plants and animal being mentioned. Misiani sings of the destructive and cunning invited by the nature of the Leopard in the savanna, the dominance of the Nile-perch fish in the lake, the greed associated with the Hyena, the majesty in size of the elephant or the ferocity of the rhino.

#### **4.2.2 Misiani as Story-Teller**

This song was sung to castigate president Kibaki's reign in Kenya during Kibaki's first term in office. In the following song Misiani moves slightly away from normal singing known in music to a merely narrating a story.

##### **Bim en Bim**

*Eseche makoro alos kodunie  
yie mondo uwinjae joka nyanam  
An malosso koduni yie mondo uwinja  
Aloso ne joka lee, jokawiny, kod joka rech  
Kod gik malak gi bund igi  
Kang'isou niya: molos gi lwet dhano*

*Obed meli, obed ndege, obed ot, obed pikipiki  
Gikone ni nyaka okethre makata nade*

...  
*Chieng' moro ne awuotho e bungu  
To oyudo bim moro kajoka ong'eche ogoyo  
Oturo bembene, ng'ute, tiendene kendo oseromo gi ng'at ma osetho  
To an kaka msamaria mwema, akao bim matero e od thieth  
Mathiedho bim mamiyo bim kar dak  
Mondo oritna dala*

### **A baboon is a baboon**

As I speak to you  
I beg that you listen to me people of the lake  
Within the moment, please listen to me  
I speak to the animals, the birds and the fish  
And those that crawl on their bellies  
Let me tell you this; whatever is man-made  
Whether it is a ship, whether a plane, whether a house, whether a motorcycle  
Finally it has to get spoiled

...  
Now, one day I was walking in the forest  
And I came across a baboon, seriously beaten by monkeys  
They broke his hipbone, neck, legs and was almost dead  
I as a good Samaritan, I took the baboon to hospital  
I cared for him and gave the baboon a place to stay  
So that he can take care of my homestead

The features of oral tradition provide a launching pad for Misiani as he crafts his political songs. Story telling is what Misiani share with the reader. Different communities might have different ways of starting or telling a story. The presentation of his works through legendary narratives affords Misiani the avenue to experiment with various symbols and images. He then weaves his song into a story complete with a beginning, middle and resolution. Story telling is a Luo cultural practice thus influences to the reader's interpretation.

In the above song, instead of singing, Misiani decides to tell us story of his encounter with the baboon. It gives the impression of Misiani sitting down with the people in a story telling session, he says, *Eseche makoro alos kodunie, yie mondo uwinjae joka nyanam...* 'Now that I wish to talk

to you, please give me your ears'. He then begins his story; *chieng' moro ne awuotho e bungu...* 'one day as I was walking in the bush.' Misiani adopts the conventional story telling mode of calling for attention by calling the listeners to prepare to listen to him. He adopts the oral narrative opening formulae used commonly in telling a story to express the timelessness of the story of 'once upon a time..., long time ago... or one day...', (Odaga & Akivaga, 1987). In this song Misiani takes as to *jokalee*, 'the world of fantasy of the animal world.' He says he wants to speak about the land animals, the birds in the air, the fishes in water and all the animals that crawl. This categorization of creature creates a pedestal from which Misiani comes up with various animal images. In this story, Misiani presents an animal world that is deeply in conflict; Misiani as one of the animals says that he found a one baboon badly beaten by the monkeys and left for dead. This exemplifies the conflict in the human world. This use of animals also creates the worlds of fantasy akin to the usual fables. While there a conflict among the animals, Misiani presents himself as a mediator or as he says, as a good samaritan, he rescues the injured baboon and gave him a home to take care of. It is worth noting that the baboon is injured and therefore one can easily predict that because of his injuries, the baboon will not be able to take of the homestead.

In the Luo oral tradition, animal stories occupy a central position owing to their level of creativity and applicability. The stories are often flexible and can be retold in unlimited ways.

#### **4.2.3 Pakruok**

*Pakruok* is like a game of words. One is praised or praises oneself in order to evoke response to initiate verbal drama. *Pakruok* is a form of identity, where one either separates himself from others based on some unique attributes or where another person is separated from others because of some peculiar attributes. This was a song Misiani sang in praise of Raila Odinga and the just

founded rainbow movement that eventually became a political party outfit of National Rainbow Coalition.

***RAINBOW PT1***

*A Jos Mak-Owiti Magunga  
Kili gi Chali  
Thuma koro atugo oluwo yamo  
Solo wacho mare  
Newa aa Mashirati Kabwana  
Waluoro gi Sirare  
Wachopo South Nyanza piny pek  
Ji ochung mosowa  
Ging'iso wuod Adongo magunga  
Mondo awer rainbow  
To Amollo Mak-Odinga jasadwa  
Chuma liet wengo  
Raila omin Akinyi chuma liet  
Okewu joka Oneya  
Koth joka Ngile gi ng'ong'a  
Raila liet kaka pas  
....*

**RAINBOW PT1**

A Jos son of Owiti Magunga  
Kili gi Chali  
My music is flowing with the breeze  
Solo (guitar) speaksown language  
We left Shiratti Kabwana  
We went via Sirare  
We reached South Nyanza  
As people greeted us  
They told son of Adongo Magunga  
That I sing about Rainbow  
Amolloson of Odinga a man from Sakwa  
A hot iron cannot be touched  
Raila brother of Oburu a hot iron  
Nephew of Oneya  
Of the lineage Ngile and Ng'ong'a  
Raila is as hot as iron box  
...

*Parkruok* is an oral literature feature that is only unique to Luo community (Amuka, 2000). Misiani presents *pakruok* a Luo cultural practice. This song starts with Misiani arriving from Shirati Kabwana in Tanzania. When he reached South Nyanza, the people there requested him to compose a song about Rainbow, a coalition, a political outfit that had just been formed. Instead, Misiani begins to sing about Rainbow from the point of view of Raila Odinga.

Misiani starts with self-praise name. He calls himself *magunga*. *Magunga* according to Masolo (2000) means the notorious or the mysterious one. His notoriety is evident in the fact that he is able to politically harsh climate without fear of reprisal (Oloo 2007)

In the song, Misiani sets out to praise-name Raila Odinga. He describes Raila as a hot burning iron, *chuma liet wang'oor*. The fact that Raila has been instrumental in political transformation

in Kenya, especially in the formation of Rainbow movement and trouncing of Kanu in election (Mutua, 2009), Raila could be a hot iron in Kenya political scene. The musician compares Raila to a 'hot iron that burns when touched', he conjures in our mind a feared character who other politicians or political parties or even the government would not want to lock horns with. He had just locked horns with Moi in KANU and rocked KANU's boat from within and left KANU a shell of its former self.

Misiani has called Raila with a nickname of 'hot iron box'; an iron box is used for straightening creased clothes, however, this straightening is only possible when the iron box is hot. By saying that Raila is a hot iron box, brings to our mind a person who is hot enough, qualified enough, to straighten the wrong things in the country. In that whenever he goes, things get straightened.

He refers to Raila as brother to Akinyi, *Raila omin Akinyi*; Oneya's nephew, *okew joka Oneya*; a descendant of Ng'ong'a Ngile, *koth joka Ng'iyie gi Ng'ong'a*; While the moment he said to be related to some characters in the Ng'ong'a gives the impression that those related to Ng'ong'a are of special pedigree. Above all, *pakruok* is metaphorical; it only bears meaning when one is able to associate the image and the quality and character.

*Pakruok* is often translated as praising oneself, praise poetry, praise work poetry or praise word game. Oyayo (1976) called it virtue boasting. *Pakruok* is another aspect of Luo oral tradition that lays a background to Misiani's political symbols and images.

#### **4.2.4 Ngero**

In his songs, Misiani admits that he speaks in *Ngeche* and introduces the first lines in **ODM** as follows:

*Ochako thume  
Thum ojok ywago pinywani  
Mudho marangongo lich gi nyithindo e lwedo*

*Yamo kelo  
To wendo yamo kelo  
Omiyo lolwe nam, nam okeyo ni jopiny tee  
Awacho ngeroni, Jakabwana opingo e lwete*

He has begun his music  
The music is bemoaning our country  
It is terrifying to have children in this pitch darkness;

It is being brought by the breeze  
My song is brought by the breeze  
The breeze gives it to the Lake Victoria; the lake spreads it to everyone in the country  
I have said that riddle; a man from Kabwana is handcuffed

In this song Misiani says he has begun his music, a music that bemoans the country, an country that is in pitch darkness. He says that is such a country, it can be terrifying if you are walking in this kind of darkness with your children. It is in this dark country that Misiani wants his messages packed in riddles to reach. He therefore

In the song, the musician is anticipates that his messages will be able to reach every corner of the country and will not be curtailed by the government's censorship, he says; 'the lake breeze spreads them out to everyone.' One cannot stop a breeze from reaching its destination. Misiani therefore believes his politically toned *ngeche* would reach everybody. Because he is critical of the establishment, Misiani foresees his possible detention as it had happened earlier (Masolo 2000). He says that because of being anti the hegemon, he faces arrest, *Jakabwana opingo e lwete* 'a man from Kabwana is handcuffed.'

*Ngero* is another aspect of oral tradition that sets the background to Misiani's political symbols and images are *ngero* (plural is *Ngeche*) which he shares with the community. *Ngeche* is an

inclusive word as it may imply proverbs; a person that expresses his ideas in form of proverbs is said to be talking in *Ngeche*. *Ngero* may even mean a riddle. *Ngero* may even mean a story whose applicability is relevant to a situation, an allegory. In this song, his messages are in the form of *ngeche*, being smoothly sent out. A clansman who uses a story to warn his fellow clansmen is said to be speaking in *Ngeche* and therefore a person is ‘*raNgeche*’. Now that *ngero* is a blanket word, epigrams, allegories and parables thus fall in this category of *Ngero (Ngeche)*.

Misiani is definitely aware of the broad definition of ‘*Ngero*’ in the Luo context and therefore presents his music in ‘*Ngeche*’.

In the song, paints a grim picture of Kenya, a country that can only be bemoaned. He paints a picture of a country that is in pitch darkness. In this kind of darkness, people have nowhere to go to. The pitch darkness has relevance in political darkness witnessed in Kenya where political misrule was the order of the day (Laako and Cowen, 2002). In this kind of environment, one can only sympathize with the state of things, in Misiani’s word, bemoaning. Misiani, critical enough, presents a government where the populace, here presented as children, are trapped in unending vicious circle of misrule. This is Misiani called a riddle; a message hidden in a web of words.

The *Ngeche*, symbols and images reveal themselves as Misiani presents political songs. In Dholuo, parables would be referred to as *Ngeche*, thus, Misiani is said to be *ra-Ngeche*-a man of *Ngeche*. For example, while trying to convince the Luo to reject other parties and join National Democratic Party (NDP) whose symbol was a Tractor, he said:

*Apimnue Ngero mokwongo ...*  
*Geche mawariembe e dier ndaragi gin gimakelo masiche*  
*Yande onego Okuku mak-Ounga rateng’ omin mbuya*

*Geche tieko yawa jok-Ajwang' gi yie ung'ieu Tinga*

Let me pose to you the first riddle...

These vehicles you see on the road are prone to accidents

These vehicles killed the dark one Mboya brother to Okuku brother to Ounga.

These vehicles are annihilating children of Ajwang' (the Luo); Let us instead buy a Tractor.

In the above lyrics, Misiani effectively uses the concept of vehicles as symbols for political parties. He also uses a tractor to symbolize NDP. He claims that other vehicles are not safe and are prone to accidents. These other vehicles, one being KANU, are blamed for the death of Mboya (Mwakikagile, 2001, Ajulu, 2000). The Luo are then called upon to come and join the political outfit, *yie ung'iew tinga*, 'let us instead buy a tractor.' This effective use of automobiles to represent political parties is what Misiani refers here to as riddling. In this song, it is his first riddle, *Apimmue Ngero mokwongo*, 'Let me pose to you the first riddle.' It is evident that, symbols are an integral ingredient in Misiani's *Ngeche* in his political songs.

#### 4.2.5 Religion

Misiani sang this song as a part two of **Kwach Rakido**. In this song, Misiani talks instead of singing. He offers a prayer to God.

*Eeeeeee*

*Eeeeeee*

*Nyasach oganda Obongo Ruoth wuon polo gi piny*

*Ago chonga kalemo kendo kawacho niya;*

*Winjie kwayo nani nikech in ma iloro kendo iyawo*

*Nikech niwacho ni ng'ama odwong'o ema en iyaone*

*In ema iloso kendo in ema iketho*

*Nyasachwa in ema ichweyo gimoro amora mae pinyni*

*Kendo in ema ing'eyo kaka gi dak*

*To kihero to inego-go*

*Baba loch nie pinyni mawang'owa*

*Mach ni e pinyni mabiwo tiekowa*

*To nikech niwacho niya;*

*Ndalo mar giko piny nobed machiegni*

*Ywagruok nobedie kod muodo lak*

*To pinyni richo nomedre kendo*

*Lweny nobedie e tunge piny ang'wen*  
*To ruodhwa osehopo wanene:*

Eeeee

Eeeee

Oh God, God of heaven and earth

I kneel down, I pray that: hear my prayer;

Listen to me, you are the one who opens doors and closes

Because you said: whoever knocks, the door shall be opened;

You alone make and you alone destroy

You created everything on earth;

Our God you create everything on earth

And it's you who knows how they live and when you wish, you kill them

Father, here is a government that is giving us raw deal

There is fire that is ready to consume us

Because you said: the is almost here

There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth

Sins will be on the increase in the country

Rumors of war will be heard on the four corners of the earth

Lord, it is already here, we are seeing it

In this song, Misiani offers along prayer. The prayer is akin to both prayers offered in both traditional setting and in Christian churches. The song strides both cultural and biblical allusion. Misiani uses Obongo wuon polo. Obongo is a Luo name for a child born alone in a family. Since Jesus was the only child of God, Misiani chooses to merge tradition plus Christian religion. This enables the readers to readily give interpretation to his songs. In this song Misiani kneels down to pray; he calls God to come to their rescue. Misiani then brings to fore the reason why he is painfully crying to God. He says that, *Baba lochnie pinyini mawang'owa, Mach ni e pinyini mabiro tiekowa*, Father, here is a government that is giving us raw deal, there is fire that is ready to consume us. *Mawang'owa* can be both literal and idiomatic. Literary it means that is 'burning us' while idiomatically it means 'failing to get the desired benefit or support.' While *loch* may mean, power, government, a hegemon or even a political era. Misiani is therefore beseeching God to come a rescue them from this government that has failed to fulfill its mandate. It may

also mean that the governance methods adopted by the ruling regime can be only be described by the citizens as ‘*mawang’owa*.’ No wonder Misiani in the next line says; *mach ni e pinyi ma biro tiekowa*, there is fire in this country that is going finish us. Misiani addresses the end of political regime when he talks about, *ndalo mag giko*, ‘the end time.’ End time is a bible motif that runs across a number is books in the bible, especially, the Gospels, the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation.

Another song that brings out the religion and religion as the social cultural background of Misiani is his track **Hon. Robert Ouko II**.

### **HON. ROBERT OUKO II**

*Uneno masiche medore  
Ndalo ru ochiegni chopo  
Hosana, unune malit  
Ndalo gi ogik kaka ondiki*

*Ooh Nyasach oganda Obong’o ruoth wuon polo  
Wagoyo chongwa piny. Wakulore enyimi wasayi  
Ruoth oganda, wakwayi ni ikonywa kaka  
Ne ikonyo Daniel ebur Sibuoche  
Konywa kaka ne ikonyo nyithi Israel  
Koa e piny misiri.*

....  
*Muma nyisowa niya: Ndalo biro malich  
Ma kanonwang’i etado to ok inilor kata piny  
Kaen onwang’i e puodho to ok iniduog  
Kata edala. En obed malich ni mon  
Man-gi-ie kata mon madhodho. Ywagruok  
nobedie kod muodo lak.  
Ruodhwa osehopo wanene*

### **HON. ROBERT OUKO II**

Tribulations are on the increase  
The end is near  
Hosanna, it will be painful  
The end has come as it is written

Oh, our God, Obong’o Lord of heavens

We kneel down, we bow before you beseeching  
Our King, we pray that you save us  
As you saved Daniel in the lion's den  
Deliver us as you delivered the children of Israel  
Out of Egypt

...

The bible tells us: terrible days are coming  
That if you would be up the roof, you would not come down  
If it would find you out in the field, you will not come back home  
It will be terrible for nursing mother  
There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth  
Lord the end has come, we are seeing it

In the above song, Misiani composes a dirge for the slain the then minister of foreign Affairs Dr. Robert Ouko. In the song Misiani goes back to the bible and offers a prayer of protection. He beseeches God to protect his people the way He protected Daniel in the den of lions; as he helped the Israelites in Egypt. Misiani occasionally uses religion as a pedestal to his political language or to use religion as a symbol of politics. The prayer is symbolic of the anticipation of every Kenya's has towards a political shift that would bring a new change in the government. Misiani also uses religion as a means to illustrate political ideas. In this song Misiani says there are signs that end time is near since 'you see tribulations are now abound,' *Uneno masiche medore*. This end time might have been not a religious bible end time but a political end time of the hegemon. Misiani's knowledge in the bible is evident as he quotes or alludes to Mathew's chapter twenty four verses seventeen to twenty. End time here then symbolize the end of the reign of a hegemon.

In fact Misiani finally says in the same song that the end he talks of in the first part of the song is finally here with us, *Ruodhwa osehopo wanene*, oh Lord, the end is already here, 'we are seeing it.'

#### 4.2.5.1 Prophetic Character

Misiani sang this song in the background of cooperation that was there between Raila Amolo Odinga then the leader of NDP party and the then President Moi and KANU the party that was then in power. Raila dissolved his Party NDP and joined kanu. This was euphoric and in the same note Misiani composes a song.

##### **AMOLLO PINY PAKO TE Pt.II**

*Pinyini kang'eye*  
*Pinyini karang'e mos*  
*Pinyini kang'eye*  
*Pinyini kasome mos*  
*Pinyini kang'eye to wabiro yudoe gima wadwaro*  
*Pinyini kasome to wabiro ringo ng'we lee*  
*Pinyini kang'eye to wabiro yudo gimawadwarono*

*KajoLybia kedo, to kik imor ahinya ni obor Liberia kedo,*  
*to ok obor gi in*  
*Sieraleon kedo tabu sana ji tho rumo*  
*Pinyini kasome to wabiro chalo pinje mamoko*  
*Pinyini kasome to wabiro yudo e gimawadwarono*  
*Pinyini kasome to wabiro chamo e jii kangima*

*Pinyini kang'eye*  
*Pinyini karange mos*  
*Pinyini kang'eye*  
*Pinyini kasome mos*  
*Pinyini kang'eye to wabiro yudo e gima wadwaro*  
*Pinyini kasome to wabiro ringo ng'we lee*  
*Pinyini kang'eye to wabiro yudo gimawadwarono*

...  
*Pinyini kasome to wabiro chamo e oyieyo*  
*Pinyini kasome to wabiro ikoe ji ka ngima*

##### **AMOLLO IS BEING PRAISED IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY Pt. II**

When I contemplate this country  
As I look at it carefully  
This country as I look at it  
This country as I study it  
This country as I look at it, we shall get that which we have been looking for  
This country as I look at it, we shall flee like wild animals  
This country the way I see it, we get that that which we have been looking for

When Libyans fight, don't rejoice

When Liberia is torn apart by war,  
Serra Leon is in war, people are dying, it is sad  
This country as a study it, we shall just be like these countries  
This country as I study it, we shall get what we have been looking for  
This country, we shall eat each other alive

This country as I see it  
This country as I look at it carefully/keenly  
This country as I see it  
This country as I look at it carefully  
This country as I look at  
This country as I study it, we shall eat even rats  
This country as I study it, we shall burry people alive

Prophecy refers to the religious prediction of the future. In this song Misiani refers to the future.

While this song, **Amolo Piny Pako Te pt II**, was sang in a euphoric mood that engulfed the entire country. Misiani repeats the word *pinyini* in the entire song. The word *piny* is a Luo referring to soil, land but it also to refer to the world or the country. Since in this song Misiani has mentioned Libya and Liberia in the same breath as *pinyini*, it can be deduced that he is referring to this country. The pronoun 'ni' in *pinyini* is a demonstrative pronoun 'this'; in this song, Misiani therefore refers to this country Kenya. Misiani also uses three words which may mean the same thing; *range*, *some*, *ng'iye*. These three words have the meaning of fore-telling and keen observation. He then says that when he keenly observes the country, *pinyini kang'iye*, he foretells that the country will eventually get what is has been looking for: that the citizens will flee like scare wild animals; they will eat each other alive; they will be buried alive; they will eat rats and the country will look like countries like Sierra Leon that are ravaged by war or like Libya that are crying under the weight of dictatorship. Misiani uses the auxiliary modal 'will', to show that all these things are things that are bound to happen in the near future. Misiani is thus adopts a prophetic tone. The song was sung in 1996 was Kenyans was agitating for political freedom from the grip of Moi's iron grip (Ndegwa (2003).

Sometimes Misiani would appear to be over relying on the Bible for his images and symbols. In this respect, one can compare Misiani to Ngugi wa Thiong'o who does not profess Christianity, yet is inseparable from the church and the Bible in his works. Ngugi (1969) agrees that the church is part and parcel of the social life in Kenya. For Misiani, the Bible is part of the background he shares with his audience and which he exploits to good effect.

#### 4.2.5.2 Time, Music, Religion and Politics

Misiani sang this song when Hezekiah Oyugi Ogango the then permanent secretary in the ministry of internal security died. While Misiani sings a dirge in part one of the song, he chooses to issue a warning to the Luo who according to him have failed to listen to his earlier warnings, in part two of the song.

##### **YWAK HEZEKIAH PT II**

...

Yawa ma joLuo-wa  
Nyikwa jowi, joka podho chieng'  
Aloso kodu matin  
Gima awachonu ok opogore gi kod nawachonu e  
*Jet* namba achiel  
kata *Jowi Jamwomo* namba achiel  
kata *jowi jamwomo* namba ariyo mane owero Nebuchadnezzar  
kata *Olith Jaganga* namba 24  
kod *Teng' Rarieya* namba achiel  
*Omen Yath Ragwanda* kod *Bwana Otiokoweche*

Please, fellow Luos  
Sons of the Jowi, people of the setting sun  
Give me your ears  
What I want to tell you is not different from what I told you in  
*Jet* number 1  
Or *Jowi Jamwomo* number 6  
Or *Jowi Jamwomo* number 2 where I sang about Nebuchadnezzar  
Or *Olith Jaganga* number 24  
And *Teng' Rarieya* number 6  
*Omen Yath Ragwanda* kod *Bwana Otioko Weche*

He begins by pleasingly summoning the Luo, *Yawa ma joLuo-wa Nyikwa jowi, joka podho*

*chieng'*, 'Please, fellow Luo, Sons of the Jowi, people of the setting sun.' He requests them to listen to him. He affectionately calls them people of the setting, meaning west, meaning the Luo who reside in the west part of Kenya. Misiani reminds his listeners that what he is about to tell them is not different from what had told them earlier in his previous songs. In this song, Misiani refers back to the songs he had and earlier pointing to the future. He says that what he is telling us today he had earlier talked about: *gima awachonu ok opogre gi gima ne awachonu...* 'what I am telling is not different from what I had told you earlier.' Misiani takes us back to his other songs that talked about the same topic.

The use of the future tense is characteristic of Misiani's political songs. The use of the future tense can be interpreted to aid the character of his prophetic message. The future tense accordingly creates anticipation in the listeners making them yearn to know whether the foretold messages would come to pass or not. The listeners therefore dig into Misiani's work to interpret them for future relevance. Indeed when the related event happens, as has been the case on several occasions, the listeners agree that the artist is indeed prophet (Oloo, 2007).

Misiani's work oscillates between future and past tenses just like the works of the biblical prophets. As a committed messenger, Misiani often warns the listeners based on the messages he had earlier foretold, either for people to re-think their stand or confirm a happening that he had foretold. He often tells the listeners in his songs, "I told you; I warned you; I sung about this but you took my words for granted..." This tense oscillation is a feature of the prophetic messages that Misiani subscribed to ardently.

### **4.3 Summary**

This chapter has attempted to address the context of Misiani's political symbols by looking at both socio-cultural and political contexts. The chapter has addressed the Luo cultural influence

on Misiani's music as an aid to the creation of the political images and symbols. The chapter has discussed migration, naming, oral literature features and religion as facets that a reader needs to examine as part and parcel of the socio-cultural context of Misiani's music. The conflicts in Misiani's texts oscillate around the political occurrences in Kenya.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### REPRESSIVE AND HEGEMONIC CONTEXT OF MISIANI BENGA SONGS

#### 5.1 Introduction

Anybody listening to Misiani would appreciate his profound knowledge of politics. Misiani's understanding of national politics is surprising, even more enchanting is his knowledge of continental and world politics. In **Wang'ni to Iringo**(This time you must flee), asong he sang to castigate Amin's leadership, Misiani warns:

#### *WANG'NI TO IRINGO*

*Ringi, jamadari yie iringi lweny*  
*Ringi, jamadari bol bunde piny*  
*Ringi, jamadari bol loch piny*  
*Sani Tanzania ojok makoi*

*Tem uru paro moko motieko tamou uloko sigana*  
*Uchayo gigo;*  
*Yawa wanyisou*  
*Ero apimonu yagi eyi Rabolo utang' ahinya*  
*Ng'wech wanoting'o jii cha*  
*Sani to oduogo*

*Dhier biro mangongo ya rabolo utang'*  
*Ero apimonu sigana yawa e Ethiopia kar loch*  
*Nene owit kanye?*  
*Haile Selasse nolal kure?*  
*Kata liende wapenjo*

*Uring aringa ukony rembu,*  
*Yawa anyisou; Par Vietnam lueny mokao higni*  
*Kata piny Ojukwu kacha...*

Flee, the General, please run away from this war  
Flee, the General drop down the gun  
Run, the General vacate the presidency  
Because this time, Tanzania is out to capture you

Try and remember some difficult past that have now become atale

You despise things;  
But be informed  
Let me tell you people of bananas, be very careful  
You remember people fleeing the other time  
A repeat is going to happen

People of the banana, be wary; tribulations are ahead of you  
Let me tell you about Ethiopia's monarchy  
Where was it thrown to?  
Where is Haile Selassie?  
We are still searching for his grave?

Run and save your dear lives  
Let me tell you; remember war in Vietnam that took many years  
Or even there at Ojukwu's home...

In this song sang at the height of Amin's misrule in Uganda and prospects of Tanzania toppling him, Misiani advises Amin to flee and vacate the presidency. He tells Amin to drop the gun, Amin's emblem of murder and to vacate the presidency because soon he would be toppled by Tanzania. Misiani takes his time to remind Ugandans that there could be a repeat of other conflicts and coups Uganda has always found itself in, *Ng'wech wanoting'o jii cha, Sani to oduogo*, 'You remember people fleeing the other time, A repeat is going to happen'. In the song, Misiani sang to reprimand Iddi Amin of Uganda and by extension other African leaders. Misiani uses this song to warn other African leaders of what would befall them should they follow means and ways of Iddi Amin. He tells Amin, that despite his arrogance, *wang'ni to iringo*, 'this time you must flee'. He tells the Ugandans to be cautious, because they are soon facing tribulations. In this text, he referred to the Ugandans as *ya rabolo*, translated as the people of the banana, this is because Uganda's staple food is banana, locally referred to as *matoke*. To make the Ugandans see the sense in his warning, Misiani refers them to countries that have faced same mayhem. He tells them about Ethiopian monarchy; the death and disappearance of Haile Selassie; he reminds them of war in Vietnam, and even sectarian Biafra war in Nigeria, exemplified here by Ojukwu.

When one leader is toppled, a hegemon is replaced in counter-hegemony, by another hegemony.

As seen above, Misioni was always there when heads rolled and wars erupted in various parts of Africa and the world and as a hegemony is replaced by another, when counter-hegemony and anti-hegemony forces were on the offing. He uses this political instability in Africa to warn Kenyan political elites and the masses. He warned Kenyan leaders using the death of famous leaders. In his list he had Iddi Amin of Uganda, Hail Selassie of Ethiopia, among other leadership and political consequences.

In the song that follows, was sang during Kenyatta's era, Misioni outlines the inevitability of counter-hegemony, where the dominating power eventually loses to the subjects.

### ***TO WAYUAKNE PINY***

*Yawa kawuono Owino woud Owiti kochako rumba  
Rateng' waloso kod thum adimba ka ikoro weche  
Pinywa masani en mar ogannda moyudo telo  
To un ka ung' iye to kara ochimo kanye go oganda moko?  
To an ka ing' iye to pinyin dum lweny modhiero wang' a*

*Oganda masani en odwaro mare mipingo onge,  
Jomoko ka puonje ng' ani chur achura ni loch owacho  
To gima danyisue ni gino lokore ka chieng' oloko  
To kendo kaluori to mwandu medore mokalo  
Ang' ee ok tell gino a-chien miwuoro*

*Ruodhwa Nyasaye ne ochweyo piny kokoro;  
Ni oganda malou en odog chien ka seche ochopo  
To unkuparie kata somo buge makoro weche  
Loch ema ung' eyo kod nego ogandawa  
Gigi chieng' nopenjue e kind loch moro ka yamo oloko*

*Nineteen sixtees ndalo ukoloni noriwoji  
Ogandagi duto nene oyudo chwat ka idwaro lock  
To wan kawacho to gino ikumo akuma ni loch okwedo  
Ruoth Nyasaye kod Yesu wuode notieko bura  
To un kuparies del mar sungu kochamo jii*

*Ngura kod Peter Oyawa nolal kure?  
Agwenge nin Luka bwana Ngala nolal kure?  
Kungu Karumba kod Tom Mboya be uparo?  
Yawa kue uru mondo waparie yawa motieko wuotho  
Rateng' waloso to en obed sigana migano e pinje!*

*Madongo pod biro, pod aa chien to oseko chopo  
Kendo nuywagi kod ng'wech abidha kularo telo  
To an kawuoyo to gino uchayo achaya ni weche jothum  
Jomoko be yanya ni ng'ani wacho ang'o jothum ofuwo  
Routh Nyasaye ne oketowa mar koro weche*

### **WE BEMOURN THIS COUNTRY**

People today, Owino son of Owiti begins his music  
The dark one, we talk openly in a prophesy  
That our country as it is now belongs to those who have taken over power  
Otherwise, as you see it, where are we the rest of the people headed?  
But as I see it, the country has a smell of war

Those in power only wants their way; they do not entertain any opposition  
If try teaching them they growl because of power  
But let me tell you, things change when the sun changes  
I wish knew do come as an afterthought

Lord God created the earth and predestined it  
The people ruling you will be overthrown at given time  
Think about it or read books that prophesy such things  
Lording over us and killing our people  
You will be asked about these things when another power takes overs

1960s days of colonialism, people came together  
All people suffered during the quests for independence  
When we say this, we are shut down because of power has said  
Don't you people remember how people were whipped by the white men?

Ngugu and Peter Oyawa, where did they disappear to;  
Argwings brother to Luka, Mr Ngala where are they?  
Kungu Karumba and Tom Mboya do you remember  
Please take a minute of silence; remember our people who have their completed journey  
The dark one, I sing such songs that will be retold all over the country

More horrible ones are yet to come and are already here  
You will weep and flee in power struggle  
When I tell you all these things, it is despised as mere musician's empty talk  
Some abuse me, that what can a musician say, mere foolishness

But Lord God predestined us to be seers

After introducing himself Misiani goes ahead to say that a country like Kenya belongs to those in power, whom we call here, the hegemon. That is aptly correct, but, in a democratic space, the government does not belong to those in power but to the entire electorate. But here Misiani is specific that the government belongs to those in power, *Pinywa masani en mar oganda moyudo telo*, 'that our country as it is now belongs to those who have taken over power.' At the time of singing this song in the early 1970s, it was Kenyatta and the Kikuyu elites in power. Misiani was therefore pointing a finger at the ruling class of Kenyatta to be the ones in power. He exposes the hegemonic nature in Kenyan politics especially how the presidential crown sways the political fortunes in the country, thus creating a hegemony. This is seen in a phenomenon referred to as neo-presidentialism; a near autocratic system represented by an all-powerful head of state (Khapoya, 1979). That is, post-independence African political elites taking the helm of dominion, creating hegemonies. Misiani asks a question which he eventually answers himself. He asks, with this kind of leadership, 'where are we headed, we the rest of the people?' That is, if the country belongs to those in power, then what about those outside the political circle, that is, the masses? In this stanza, Misiani has already divided the people in two categories: the rulers and the ruled. The ruler here is the hegemon. In the very stanza Misiani says that as it looks, the country is headed for war. Misiani uses the phrase, *pinyin dum lweny modhiero wang'a*, 'the smell of war in the country is so strong.' He therefore set the stage for anti-hegemony and counter-hegemony. 'The strong smell of war' are the agitations in the process of counter hegemony to replace the dominating hegemony.

In stanza two, Misiani emphasizes the entrenchment of the ruling political class, the hegemon. The ruling class entertains no divergent political opinion. This class only wants its way

of doing things only, *oganda masani en odwaro*, 'those in power only wants their way.' In Misiani's words in, *to kata kipuonje to ng'ani chur achura ni loch owacho*, 'when you advise him, he growls because he's been corrupted with power.' However, despite this confidence of the hegemon, Misiani issues a warning of a possible counter-hegemony. He says: '*ni gino lokore ka chieng' oloko*' things change when the sun changes. This change may be equated to change in power. Similarly, with the varying intensity agitation, there is bound to be a change of guard at the helm of power. Misiani observes that when change comes, it strikes and it becomes too late for the hegemon to rethink its position, in Misiani's word, *Ang'ee ok tell gino a-chien miwuoro*, 'I wish knew do come as an afterthought.'

In the next stanza, Misiani presents inevitability of a hegemon being replaced by another. He says God predestined it. Misiani was sure that Kenyatta and ruling class would eventually be replaced by another power. He says: *Ni oganda malou en odog chien ka seche ochopo*, 'those who lord over (conquer) you now will be in turn conquered.' This line explains that power is not permanent. It does not matter how firmly, a political elite, a hegemon, hold on to power, even through murder and other atrocities.

According to (Aina, 2008), this notion, political elitism, is often used to refer to a wide range of groups such as political leaders, top business men, cultural and traditional leaders, the middle classes and the more recent cadre of professional people. He adds that the elites refer to that more or less differentiated and often diverse group or collectivity located at the top of the structure of power, wealth and privilege of a society. That through their location in these favored positions, they command strategic resources across the three key elements of society, namely, politics, the economy and society and they deploy influence and control in the pursuit of their individual and collective interests and the interests of those they ally with (Akin, 2008).

In the transition to a contemporary post-colonial political dispensation in most parts of Africa like Kenya, these elites were made up initially of the nationalists like Jomo Kenyatta, Oginga Odinga, Daniel Moi, Thomas Mboya, Mwai Kibaki and the likes. These nationalist elites took over and used presidential crown to maintain and even perfected the use of colonial state structures and apparatuses in the building and consolidation of their own political power, wealth and legitimacy, setting the stage for hegemonies (Ainu, 2008). Kenya had had three presidents which form the three president-based political elitism hegemonies (by the time of Misiyani's death).

To illustrate the inevitability of a counter hegemony, Misiyani takes back to another hegemon that was eventually replaced. He takes us back to 1960s when the ruling hegemony was the colonial government that had put in place instruments of power in its attempt to remain in power. He sings that with all the powers that the colonial government had, it was brought eventually down. But Misiyani complains that when he says that the same fate awaits the current hegemon, his messages are proscribed. This is what he sings when he says:

*Nineteen sixtees ndalo ukoloni noriwoji  
Ogandagi duto nene oyudo chwat ka idwaro lock  
To wan kawacho to gino ikumo akuma ni loch okwedo  
Ruoth Nyasaye kod Yesu wuode notieko bura  
To un kuparie del mar sungu kochamo jii*

1960s days of colonialism, brought people together  
All people suffered during the quests for independence  
When we say this, our message is proscribed because the authority has said  
God and his son Jesus completed their judgment  
Don't you people remember how people were whipped by the white men?

That is, in the 1960s the reign of power was with the colonial government. People suffered as they tried to dislodge colonial government from power in the process of counter-hegemony. To express suffering, Misiyani uses words like *chwat and del* which means flogging. But finally, in

Misiani's the colonial was judged and the verdict was that it was replaced. To express this Misiani says, Ruoth Nyasaye kod Yesu wuode notieko bura, 'God and his son Jesus has passed their verdict.' The problem comes in when Misiani tell the current hegemon that indeed that the way of the hegemon. He says that because of that his messages *ikumo*, are proscribed.

Finally, Misiani putting himself at a vintage position of a seer says that more things are yet to come. Indeed, in any society, the hegemon will be against the masses or the anti-hegemonic forces. Misiani foresees power struggle which is a basic character of the hegemonic forces against the anti-hegemonic forces. Of course he takes the position of a mere musician who has no share in complex matters as power struggle, he say that people would look at him as a loud mouthed musician or his messages mere foolishness.

## 5.2 Kenyatta Hegemony

### 5.2.1 Ethno-Regional Political Coalition

A number of Misiani's songs sang in the early days of Kenyatta's reign were evidently influenced by ethnic power sharing deals that characterized Kenya's politics. Misiani, in **Ywak Ezekiel pt 1**, opts to tell us how the situation was as Kenyatta took over as the president of Kenya:

...  
*Ji oseneno makosa margi*  
*Anyisue kaka Kenya nene nechalo*  
*Ndalo ukoloni idwaro loch:*  
*Mbuya Kandiege nenitiere, yawa madongo odong' e thim*  
*Oginga Wuod Alogo oramo chuth KANU e chamawa*  
*Kwach omako gweno, nafasi ere*  
*Kuparie kakane waringo kisumo*  
*Lisasi mahuyo ka ndege kende waringo ng'we kede*  
*Yawa madongo kwach nego; Tom omin Akonzō ni kanye*  
*Agwenge min Luka nindo*

...  
People have seen their mistakes

Let me describe for you how Kenya was then;  
Those colonial days as we fought for independence:  
Mboya son of Ndiege was there; great leaders who remained in the wilderness  
Oginga son of Alogo swore that KANU is our only party  
The leopard has caught the hen, where is then the freedom  
Do you remember how we fled in Kisumu?  
The bullets were flying like aeroplane and we fled as in a relay race.  
Our honorable men have been killed by the leopard; where is Tom brother to Akonzo?  
Argwings brother to Luka is no more.

As said above Kenyatta's leadership was based on ethno-regional political coalition. At independence, instead of uniting all the ethnic groups in the country, Kenyatta however, opted for bringing together tribal elites in bid to unite the two big tribes: the Luo and Kikuyu; his way of ethnic power sharing deal(Oyugi, 1997). Misiani says in the same song that Tom Mboya and Odinga were the KANU kingpins:

*Mbuya Kandiege nene nitiere  
Yawa madongo Odinga wuod Alogo oramo chuth ni KANU e chamawa*

Mboya son of Ndiege was there  
Our leaders like Odinga son of Alogo, insisted that KANU is the party for all of us.

In the above lines, Mboya and Odinga are presented as firmly in KANU the then ruling party, with Kenyatta as the president. Kenyatta became president to unite the Kikuyu under him and Oginga Odinga vice president to bring the Luo under him (Corsi, 2008). Indeed Kenyatta was working towards ethno-regional political coalition. Aina (2008) confirms that in the transition in a contemporary post-colonial political dispensation in most parts of Africa, the tribal elites were made up initially of the nationalists.

Misiani sings passionately about Kenyatta hegemony, both in hegemonic terms and anti-hegemonic sense. Jomo Kenyatta the first president of Kenya was involved in politics early. Once in power therefore, Kenyatta, an astute leader used various instruments of power to keep the presidency, thus building both ethnic and elitist hegemony

At the beginning, just after independence, the central feature of Kenyatta's system consisted of ethno-regional based political coalitions. Bringing Odinga and Mboya on board assured Kenyatta the support of the major tribe of the Luo, accommodating their ethnic interest and thus achieving a smoother transition.

Consociational democracy as formulated by Arend Lijphart has been influential in this debate on sharing power among elites in order to reduce the levels of 'political immobilism' (Lijphart, 1969:208). Kenyatta became president of an already tribally polarized state earlier put in place by the colonial government (Gecau, 1999).

That is what Misiani partly addresses in **To Waywakne Piny**.

*Nineteen sixties ndalo ukoloni...  
Oganda gi duto nene uyudo chwat...*

Nineteen sixties days of colonialism...  
All these tribes suffered...

He is insinuating that Kenyans suffered not as a nation but as tribes in the colonial days. The word *oganda*, may mean a nation or a tribe. In this song Misiani sings of *ogandagi duto*, 'all these tribes', thus giving the word *oganda* a plural meaning. For this reason, *ogandagi* is translated as these tribes. The colonial control rested on the isolation of one tribe from the other and re-inventing the tribal structures within the district and provincial boundaries marked along ethnic lines. In fact, political activities were restricted at the district level (Gecau, 1999).

However, this arrangement, ethno-regional political coalition, was short-lived because in 1966, the Kikuyu-Luo ethno regional coalition collapsed. Oginga Odinga broke away from KANU and formed the Kenya People's Union (KPU); a new socialist party (Ajulu, 2000). This ended the first major ethno-regional political coalition in Kenyatta's time and it ushered in anti-hegemony songs by Misiani. Next, Kenyatta opted for ethno-regional hegemony which apart from being

Kikuyu hegemony narrowed to a few political players from Kiambu. Similarly, Misiani also churned out hits upon hits castigating Kenyatta's narrow brand of politics. Misiani assumed the voice of those politically exiled by the central government hegemony.

### 5.2.2 Ethno-Regional Hegemony

In same song, **Ywak Ezekiel pt 1**, Misiani contends that Kikuyu elites were firmly in charge and had taken over KANU which was by then the government;

*kwach omako gweno, nafasi ere?*

The leopard has caught the chicken, where is freedom?

Misiani is able to recognize that, although, the party KANU began the period as a mass one in which a variety of ideological and ethno-regional interests coexisted, where Odinga could say that, *KANU e chamawa*, 'KANU is our only party', it ended as a highly factionalised organisation with no mass content, in which ideological differences had been forcibly suppressed and in which narrow ethno-regional grouping gained a dominant position with regard to powerful positions. This is what Misiani expresses in *kwach omako gweno nafasi ere*, 'the leopard has caught the chicken, where is freedom'. To express political suppression Misiani bring forth two images, the image of the leopard and the image of the chicken. The chicken is a symbol of freedom thus when caught freedom vanishes. It is worth noting that the symbol of KANU party was a cockerel, which fits in the broad definition of a chicken. KANU was then the government; therefore whoever controls KANU also controlled the government. At the helm of KANU leadership was Kenyatta himself and his close allies. So when Misiani sings of *kwach omako gweno*, 'the leopard had caught the chicken', he meant that eventually Kenyatta and his allies had edged out other player in KANU and taken tightly the reign of leadership. In this sense divergent opinions was suppressed and opposing forces eliminated. Misiani sings therefore of the Kisumu conflict of 1969 and the murder and death of Tom Mboya and Argwings Kodhek

respectively. He summarily blames the Leopard for these deaths.

After the exit of Odinga and Mboya, strong ethno-regional *Coalitions* was trashed and replaced by tribal hegemony, an Ethno-regional hegemony of the Kikuyu elites. Muhula (2009) says that Post independence political bargaining and coalition formation largely assumed regional (central province region) dimensions. Similarly, access to political power, by and large, determined the distribution of socio-economic and political benefits.

Left alone as the major player in KANU, Kenyatta and Kikuyu elites, coalesced into the first major tribal hegemony in the country. As Rogers, (1979) and Clough, (1990) assert, the old Anglo-Kikuyu alliance made sense, and it stood for continuity and stability. Ochieng and Karimi, (1981) are rather specific, that, during Kenyatta's time this ethno-regional hegemony was Kiambu-based. That, other Kikuyu constituencies of Nyeri, Murang'a and the larger GEMA (Gikuyu Embu Meru Association) were incorporated in a clearly subordinate role within the inner circle, while other allies of Kenyatta stood outside it completely. That even powers of the Vice President (Moi) for example, were steadily reduced (Ochieng & Karimi 1981). Looking at trends Misiani says in **Muungano pt I:**

*gigi duto biro bedo mag joka kwach, samba, yiedhi mag rech e nam...*

All these things will be taken by the leopards; farms, fishing boats in the lake...

In this song, alludes to the capitalistic greed and appetite of the leopard. As been discussed earlier, the leopard symbolized the tribal elite rulership under Kenyatta. Misiani's focus is on the capital in his immediate environment, the fishing boats, the lake and the farms, which he claim that soon will be grabbed or given to the Kenyatta and his Kikuyu elites. Laakso and Cowen (2002) also say that between 1963-1978 the indigenous capitalism and all it entailed was understood to be by, of and for the Kikuyu and more especially a Southern Kikuyu regime centered around Kenyatta family home of Gatundu and his district of Kiambu. According to

Oucho (2002) and Oyugi (2000), the allocation of government resources in post-colonial Kenya followed an ethnic pattern, in which important political and administrative individuals favoured the home region, own tribe or clan.

### 5.2.2.1 Kisumu Conflict

In 1969, Kenyatta visited Kisumu to preside over the opening ceremony of Nyanza Provincial Hospital funded by the Russian government, Odinga's ally. Misiani remembers the events that unfolded in **Safari ya Mzee Nyanza pt 1:**

*Paro diriyo bende pod iparo, higa piero 69 uyie uparie manene  
Yawa ne waringo kisumo, waringo gi tielo ka ndiga  
Watony ne bunde ka simba, to yawa bende bayo kite  
Kuparie sigana mokalo wiu wil nang'o?  
Tom omin Okuku nolal e higa majii oringeeno*

It is good to recall, please remember 1969.  
Our people, we fled in Kisumu on foot like bicycles  
We escaped from guns as though from lions, and our people were also throwing stones  
Please recall this history, why do you forget  
Tom brother to Okuku died the same year that we fled

In the above song, Misiani tell people to remember what happened in Kisumu in 1969. 1969 Kisumu conflict runs across a good number of Misiani's songs. The collapse of inter-regional coalition and the attempt by Kenyatta to emphasize on narrow ethnic hegemony had its negative effect as was witnessed in Kisumu in 1969. During his address, President Kenyatta criticized Odinga, his voice, leading to a public disagreement between the two leaders. The crowd present took sides with Odinga and become chaotic.

The musician records that there was a bloodletting confrontation between the police and the crowd; people threw stones at the president and the police responded by shooting into the crowd as they fled. He says, *watony ne bunde...yawa bayo kite*, 'people dodged the bullets...people three stones. The police opened fire on civilians killing nine people and injuring many others

(Oyugi, 1997). The events that follow Kenyatta's visit to Kisumu played pivotal role in shaping Misiani's political tone and the belief that Kenyatta was out to frustrate other regions politically.

### 5.2.3 Institutionalized Authoritarianism

As observed in Misiani's lyrics, in **Ywak Ezekiel pt 1**, when he says:

*kwach omako gweno nafasi ere,*  
The leopard has caught the cockerel (symbol of KANU), there is no freedom (space),

Kenyatta had left the democratic path and instead institutionalized authoritarianism (Kimani & Romero, 2008). Kanu was now being ruled as a captive, that is, *kwach omako gweno*, which in this context would mean, kanu was at the mercy of a narrow political group constituting of Kenyatta and Kikuyu elites. Being that there was no freedom, authoritarianism being the opposite of freedom, took over.

In **Gor Mahia Pt 2**, Misiani asserts that

*jotendwa machon oseruenyo*  
Our leadership has gone astray.

In this song Misiani addresses a given direction that the leadership of the country was supposed to take which in scenario had taken different direction. He therefore says that the leadership has lost its way, it has gone astray. Going astray has got an array of possibilities; it can be economic or political. Kenyatta's regime though presided over a growing economy also politically, presided over institutionalization of authoritarianism in bid to stay in power (Igham, 1990). In Misiani's words he had totally gone astray. This assured the lifeline of the hegemony because he gave not room for dissenting voices. At independence, Kenya inherited a combination of a highly authoritarian state, in which the centre could exercise detailed local control over all aspects of affairs through the system of provincial administration, partly counter-balanced by a fairly active civic and party realm (Igham, 1990).

Misiani also considered Kenyatta's government a political slavery. For this reason when in 1979 Moi took over power after Kenyatta's death, he composed a song, **Safari ya Mzee Nyanza II**, in which Moi is presented as a Moses-like savior delivering Kenyan from Egypt like-slavery:

*Ndalo bwana Musa gi yagi e piny Farao giwuode*

*Ne bwana Musa okonyo jii gitiyo ka punda piny kacha  
Gitiyo giminy kacha to yagi bende jowo chuodho*

*Mungu okonyogi ruok, bwana jatelo  
Nam nene ochwado gi ludhe*

*Israel nene ong'ado nam kendo  
Ema ochalo gi Moi thurwa*

In the days of Moses and his people in the land of the Pharaoh and his people

Moses saved the people when they were working like donkeys in that land  
They worked with straws as others kneading mud

He prayed for his people from the heart  
He struck the sea with his staff

The Israelites crossed the red – sea  
That is how it is with Moi in Nyanza

Just as the bible-Israelites lacked any political voice and were subjected to inhuman political environment so could be said of Kenya under Kenyatta as illustrated by the above song. To Nyanza people and the entire country, Moi came in as a savior from Kenyatta's misrule; no wonder Moi is compared to Moses the deliverer. Crossing the Red Sea here is used to show crossing over to a new political dispensation, a new hegemony.

#### **5.2.4 KPU Intimidation and Harassment**

KPU Intimidation and Harassment is another coercion tenet of hegemony exploited by Kenyatta elites thus directly influencing Misiani's political tone. Intimidation and harassment was both at individual and political party level. Misiani just like any other artists was constantly harassed

with threats of arrest and deportation (him being a Tanzanian). Misiani, in **Gor Mahia pt 2**, presents a picture of Kenyatta's government as a leopard with intimidating drawn political claws ready for political onslaught:

*Ni weche to ne ni tabu sana kawachopo kajowi,  
Timbegi wang'eyo to ni jowi ng'at mungu  
Ni kwach to otimo pesa to ohero fujo gi laro telo be.  
Kaae to giwa wapango wachako mbiyo wadhiyo kajowi  
Jokale rwaka giilo, Shirati udonjo  
Kwach to ochung' e mesa, Ogero to ochung' bute kofi kodiro to ogeng'o gi okumba  
Ni kare tone ging'eyo ni kwach tabu kichor gagoko  
Jokale ne kwede tetete; 'ni kite wang'eyo, ni pesa to engodo',  
Kog-no be en-godo ni kite rach oparo mayore*

There were problems when we arrived at jowi's place  
We know their character well that jowi is a godly person  
The leopard is however wealthy and violence and is power hungry  
We arranged our tools and took off to rush to jowi's place  
The animal people welcomed us warmly; shiratti you have arrived?  
But the leopard stood on the table, Ogero by his side and blocked every jab with his shield  
So they were aware that you don't confront the leopard tactlessly  
All the animals never liked him; 'that we him very well, he is wealthy.'  
He has claws, he is vile and plans vile.

In the above song, Misiani and his band Shirati personifies himself as the voice of the intimidated. He talks about being invited to play his music at a fantasy place which he calls *kajowi*, that is, the homestead of Jowi. He presents Jowi as a very hospitable person, *Jowi to ng'at mungu*, 'Jowi is a godly person'; in fact he is warmly welcomed by everyone. The problem begins with the arrival of the leopard. Misiani contrasts the leopard and Jowi. He present the leopard as curtly intimidating. Why other animals are receptive to the music, the leopard stood on the table ready to scuttle the planned party. Standing on the table refers to the political advantage that he has over other animal. It can be seen that the leopard's destructive plans are only minimized by the entry into the scene by *Ogero*. Misiani is addressing the fact that were it

not for some liberators who were ready to stand firm against Kenyatta's political elite, the sweetly independence, here symbolized by the Music party, would have been destroyed. Ogero is presented to block the jabs aimed at Misiani, *kofi kodiro to ogeng'o gi okumba*, 'he blocked every jab with his shield.' The leopard intimidating nature is present here in terms of claws. He has political machination to harass and intimidate, there whoever confronts the leopard, Misiani says, must be politically tactful.

Misiani laments in **Ywak Ezekiel pt 1:**

*Odinga wuod Alogo otelo mbele mtoka ema koro ringo  
Kwach oketho chuth*

...  
*Oginga wuod Alogo otelo mbele mtoka ema koro ringo  
Kwach oketho chuth, ochayo oganda mag Luo  
Anyisue kata ka wabam kamano, piny maneno osesudo*

Odinga son of Alogo is leading, the vehicle is doing well  
The leopard has destroyed that completely

...  
Oginga son of Alogo is leading us, his vehicle is moving  
The leopard has destroyed it completely, he despises the Luo community  
Let me tell you that even though we are not on the right path, the world has also changed

As Misiani mourns Ezekiel, the purpose for this song, he also mourns the harassment Oginga Odinga the first vice president of Kenya faced that led to his resignation from KANU and later after he went and formed his party Kenya People's Union (KPU). Misiani says that the leopard destroyed party and political fortunes, symbolized here by the vehicle.

It is recorded that during the brief phase of multiparty politics in Kenya 1966-1969, (that is, KANU versus KPU multiparty politics), Kenyatta's KANU and the ruling hegemony exercised strict control over political activities; coercion in Gramsci's hegemonic concept (Ajulu, 2000). The political claws were used effectively. The KANU regime did all it could to frustrate the activities of opposition activities (Ajulu, 2000). Earlier in the Limuru conference of 1966 Odinga was

demoted in a rigged election directed by his rival, Tom Mboya (Ajulu, 2000).

KPU candidates were harassed by KANU Youth wingers and had their license to hold meetings revoked by District Commissioners. Other KPU candidates and activists were detained without trial (Ajulu, 2000). Their ‘vehicle’, the Kenya People’s Union (KPU), was eventually banned in 1969, that is, destroyed. The contest in this song is literary between Kenyatta’s ruling elites, represented by the image of the leopard and the opposition. The song represents the wider hegemonic contest of Kenyatta and his cohorts against any means of opposition in Kenya. Misiani says that the leopard despises the Luo community; however, the mention of the Luo might just be a subset symbol representing the hegemony demeaning those that he is loading over. As usual, Misiani will also suggest the possibility of a counter hegemony, when he says that despite being taken for granted by the hegemon, change is round the corner.

### **5.2.5 Political Assassination and Murder**

The theme of political assassination as a strategy of Kenyatta hegemony to stay in power runs through Misiani’s music. Misiani eulogizes in the song **Ywak Ezekiel Pt 1**:

*...kwach onego Tom omin Ombugu ...*  
The leopard has killed Tom brother to Ombugu.

Misiani documents the deaths of politician from Thomas Mboya, Robert Ouko to the recent Odhiambo Mbai who died during 2005 constitutional review process.

In July, 1969, Thomas Mboya, minister for Economic Planning and Development and General-Secretary of KANU, was gunned down in broad daylight as he went to buy drugs in chemist along the then Government Road (Gimode, 1990); Misiani blames *kwach* for this assassination. The assassin, significantly, was of Kikuyu ethnic origin (Gimode, 1990).

In the dock, the assassin, a Kikuyu, laid the blame on some mysterious “Big man” who the

authorities did not bother to investigate. This apparent apathy by the government gave room for speculation regarding foul play in the Mboya murder. Kenyans felt that the Kenyatta administration had eliminated Mboya in an attempt to maintain their hegemony which was being threatened by Mboya's rising popularity (Gimode, 1990).

In a sarcastic tone Misiani continues and referring to the leopard (which represents the Kenyatta's elites), Misiani sums up this collective rage in **Ywak Ezekiel pt 2**:

*Motho odhi elowo to ber ahinya  
To mapod wuotho to ichung' mbali gi chien*

A very good one is one that is already dead and buried  
But one who is still walking, keep your distance.

Referring to the Kikuyu elites, Misiani says that that type of breed of elite is only good when dead but very dangerous when alive and he advises the listeners to keep their distance. Now that Misiani has pointed out that murder and assassination is part and parcel of the hegemon strategies, he therefore provides a parting shot warning for the masses not to associate with it.

In **Jowi Iye Jawang'**, Misiani addresses in-house murder and assassination. Misiani sings:

*Paka olokre rado guendgi  
Jajuok mathurwa, tinde inegowa warumo to ichako idogo  
E yawu ema inego...*

The cat has turned to eating the homestead's chicken  
The clan's witch, you have annihilated all of us  
You have now turned round to killing your own people.

Misiani in the word 'annihilate' sketches the hegemonic trend of wiping out any form of opposition. Misiani, though a Luo, casts Kenyatta's (our clan's witch) repressive politics far and wide. A cat can somehow be tolerated when preys on neighbours' chicken, but when its appetite and greed turns it to the homestead's chicken then it deserves nothing less than death or being driven out (Ogude, 2007). This song was released in the late 1970s roughly at the same period of

JM Kariuki's murder in 1975. In 1969 Tom Mboya and Argwings Kodhek were murdered, Kenyans, especially the Luo pointed accusing fingers at the government, so when JM Kariuki was also killed and the accusing finger went again to the government(Ogude, 2007), Misiani released this song blaming the government for the murder.No wonder he says that the cat that has been eating other people chicken has now turned home-word and has eaten the homestead's chicken. Misiani simplifies his hidden metaphor by then saying that: 'you have killed all of us now you have turned round to killing your own people.'

For that matter, J. M. Kariuki, member of parliament for Nyandarua, though himself a Kikuyu, was also seen in this light (entrenching Kenyatta elitism). Kariuki was perceived as a Kikuyu moderate and the poor man's sympathizer. He opposed the extreme capitalistic tendencies of the Kenyatta administration. He therefore condemned the exploitation and marginalization of ordinary people as evident in his famous saying that he did not want to see a Kenya of 10 millionaires and 10 million beggars (Gecau, 1999). Kariuki's mistake, just like Mboya, was that he was gaining intertribal appeal and popularity. Furthermore, he was gaining significant support even among the rural Central Province peasants yet he was a Diaspora Kikuyu. Indeed, he was becoming a threat to the inner core of Kenyatta hegemony. He was like Mboya attempting to kill the spirit of tribal hegemony. His unresolved murder was therefore blamed on the Kenyatta government.

In **ToWaywakne Piny**, Misiani sings:

*Rodhwa ma Ofafa kod Peter Oyawa nolal kure?  
Agwenge nin Luka bwana Ngala nolal kure?  
Gungu Karumba kod Tom Mboya be uparo?  
Yawa kue uru mondo waparie yawa motieko wuotho  
Rateng' waloso to en obed sigana migano e pinje!*

Where did our Lordship Ofafaand Peter Oyawa disappear to?  
Argwings brother to Luka;Mr. Ngala where are they?

Kungu Karumba and Tom Mboya do you remember?  
Please take a minute of silence and remember our people who have completed journey  
The dark one, what I say will be retold in tales in the whole world

The above are other politicians that are eulogized by Misiani to have been assassinated by the same hegemon because they possibly posed change to the future life of the hegemon. Kodhek and Ngala died in suspicious cases of road accidents which Kenyans believed to have been engineered by the system; Kodhek is said to have died in an accident along what is now Argwings Kodhek road (Ahiuwalia, 1996).while Ngala died when his driver supposedly lost control of the car (Amutabi, 2002).

### 5.3 Moi Hegemony

With the coming in of a new hegemony, Misiani shifted his focus to the new hegemony, though still suspicious of Kenyatta remnant elites. In **Gor Mahia pt 2** recorded in 1982, Misiani illustrates the entry point of the Kalenjin and Moi hegemony in Kenya politics:

*Otoyo to ochung' e mesa  
Sano gimor ginyierowa anyiera  
Ni ring'o mang'enygi, to ni choke mang'enygi  
Ni dhao to en maru  
Kuon to odong' e mesa makata uringo' wadong' wachamo.*

Hyena stands at a table  
They are happy and laughing at us,  
“That all this meat, all these bones,  
The conflict is yours  
The bread at the table, if you leave it, we will eat.”

Misiani, in the above song, alludes to the emergence Moi and Kalenjin elitism. Misiani presents Moi as having been the biggest beneficiary of the Kikuyu-Luo political fiasco in differences. The song symbolically tells of *ring'o mang'enygi* (this plentiful beef) being served to the Kikuyu-Luo coalition but before they could feast on it, conflict erupted between them. The feast was to be the benefits that accrue from being in plump positions in the government; both economic and

political benefits. Misiani takes one side of the conflicting forces by using the object personal pronoun 'us', to show that it was 'us' who was in the conflict. The conflict between the Luo and the Kikuyu is illustrated with the ideological war between Odinga and Kenyatta (Odinga, 1964). Moi and his Kalenjin elites, therefore, took advantage of the situation and started greedily gobbling up the meal. Daniel arap Moi, the second president of Kenya comes from the Kalenjin ethnic group. Because Moi hegemony gained from the spoils of war, scavenger kind character, Misiani equated it to the hyena. Moi and Kalenjin elite hegemony similarly used more or less strategies to remain dominant and relevant.

### **5.3.1 Regional Networks of Cooperation and Solidarity**

Misiani agrees with others like Ajulu (2000) that Moi came to power as a leader of an anti-hegemony coalition opposed to the continual dominance of the major tribes being a former member of KADU. In the song, **Safari ya Mzee Nyanza II** points to the fact that he was a popular leader to those disillusioned by the Kenyatta hegemony. He attempted to emphasize on the regional networks, maybe to break Kenyatta's close circuit hegemony (Ajulu, 2000). Moi's reign was a welcome relief as evident in Moi's 1978 visit to Nyanza, *ka jo Nyanza oluongogo*, 'at the invitation of the Nyanza people leaders'. In **Safari ya Mzee Nyanza pt 1**, Misiani heaps lavish praises on the new president. The song describes the jubilant mood that engulfed the country with Moi's ascent to the top:

*Wang'ni to hawi, yawa wayudo wuowi ndii,  
Wuoyi mang'ongo, Moi mapinje oyiero pep  
Jo-Kenya awinjo pamo ni Moi, pachgi ochung' kuom ng'ani*

This time round we are lucky; we have got a wonderful son,  
A great man, Moi the overwhelmingly elected one  
I hear Kenyans applauding for him; their hearts are settled in this man

In the song, there is element of luck, people who by chance have escaped from untold suffering. According to Misiani, Kenyan owned Moi and called him ‘our son’ collectively possessing him. The looked at him as hero, that is a great man whose acceptability was euphoric, *mapinje oyiero pep*, ‘voted in or elected by everyone.’ Misiani presented a character of the person Moi who was accepted by everyone. He say that kenyans applauded for him and thus their heart had settled on Moi. Kenyans here are presented as people whole heart were troubled and finally found a consolation in Moi.

This song above effectively conveys the optimism that ensued after Moi took over power from Kenyatta. This optimism could well be illustrated by the political euphoria that gripped Nyanza upon Moi’s visit. In another stanza of **Safari ya Mzee Nyanza 2**, he sings:

*Jii nigisiso, yawa ne wamor gi ilo  
Jii opong’o ndara, Awasi nyaka Ahero Kisumu  
Kata kama inyon tamoi, jii ne ogombo mulo bade*

People were expectant, we were happy and excited  
The roadside was crowded, from Awasi, Ahero to Kisumu  
There was no space for movement; people yearned to shake his hand

The excitement of the Luo at Moi’s visit was understandable since they were a people ‘abandoned’ or politically exiled by the late president Kenyatta for years before his death. The musician described Moi landing on Luo Nyanza soil in a very ecstatic tone: people thronged the roadside from Awasi, the boundary of Rift Valley and Nyanza up to Kisumu the headquarter of Nyanza. There was hope written on people’s faces. After the 1969 Kisumu massacre, Misiani says in **Safari ya Mzee Nyanza pt I** that Kenyatta never came to Nyanza again, he intentionally snubbed Nyanza till his death.

*Jatelo okuno pinyawni,*  
The president has intentionally snubbed our land

In **Safari ya Mzee Nyanza pt II**, Misiani says:

*mwaka apar osekalo to pok waneno kata jatelo*

It is now ten years and we have not seen the president.

Actually after the 1969, Kisumu massacre incident, Kenyatta never ventured Nyanza-wards till his death in 1978 and that was ten year of marked absence(Oyugi, 1994).The singer sings that Nyanza people did not *nenno kata jatel*, ‘see their president’for *mwaka apar*, ‘ten years.’

The excitement of Moi’s presidency, however, was short-lived and later turned out to have been the lull before the storm(Kapoya, 1979). Moi never maintained this regional cooperation.

In **Pedo Wuod Alogopt 1** Misiani celebrates the dismantling of Kikuyu hegemony, he says:

*kwach rakido mayande ndhogo yawa e pinyka  
tii waloko tak-thing’, jii mor tee wapako*

The spotted leopard that has been betraying the country  
Has been reduced to a dish of wastes; everybody is happy, we celebrate.

This song points to the fact that soon Moi began dismantling regional networks of cooperation and solidarity cobbled by Kenyatta in bid to build his own hegemony. Misiani says that the former hegemony, *kwach rakido*, ‘the spotted leopard’, that had betrayed the country has been reduced to not a valuable object, but ‘a dish of wastes.’ While Kenyatta elites were symbolically valuable utensils in the ‘a kitchen’ called Kenya, with the entry of Moi into power, the Kikuyu elites were then valueless utensil; adish of waste materials. It means that the Kikuyu elites lost their positions in prime places and other lucrative deal in the government (*who said*).The betrayal that Misiani could be referring to include, authoritarianism and dictatorship, murder and assassinations, uneven distribution of resources among other political vices. Misiani concludes cut-down of the former hegemony by a cry of celebration, *jii mor tee*, ‘everybody is happy’.

Just like Kenyatta, Moi now began to rule from a narrow political base. Kenyatta could tolerate and co-opt powerful regional leaders as long as they did not challenge his authority. After the

coup attempt in 1982, Moi found a reason to dismantle Kenyatta's networks. Opposition politics having suffered in the hands of Kenyatta, Misiani celebrated each time Kenyatta's kingpin elites were uprooted from the government. Expressions like *kwach olok tak-thing*, 'the leopard is now a waste-dish', among other expressions found their way into Misiani's music.

### **5.3.1.1 2002 KANU-NDP Co-operation**

KANU-NDP co-operation is another area that influences Misiani's political lyrics. Misiani similarly released a number of hits in support of and in praise of Raila and Moi hegemony.

**Amolo Jasakwa, Amolo Piny Pako Te Pt 1** and **Muungano Pt 1** all were sang in praise of 2002 KANU-NDP merger. Misiani, chronicles it in **Amolo Piny Pako Te:**

*Piny en mano giriwo chama  
KANU wuoyo to tinga wuoyo*

Things are like that they merged the parties,  
KANU talks and Tinga (NDP) talks.

In this song Moi is presented to have invited Raila Odinga and his party NDP, to join ranks with KANU into the formation of New KANU (Mara, 2009). Misiani says that they merged the parties as with an assumption of equals partnership with KANU presenting its ideologies same to NDP, presented here as *Tinga* (tinga being a Luo word for a tractor which was the symbol of NDP). But it was a political strategy by KANU, a strategy which can be called political cannibalism, where either politicians were bought into defection or political parties were dissolved to join the main party KANU (Mara, 2009). Mara (2009) says between March-October 2002 Raila's party National Development Party (NDP) was dissolved and merged with KANU in what was commonly referred to as 'co-operation'. The quest was to create a new KANU with rejuvenated force.

### 5.3.1.2 1982 Coup Attempt

On 1<sup>st</sup> August 1982, rank and file members of the Air Force staged an attempted coup d'état on Moi's government. In **Gor Mahia Pt 2**, Misiani seems to allude to the many rumours doing the rounds then regarding a possible coup. He warns Moi:

*iyie itang' ahinya in gi lweny,*  
Be very careful! You have a battle ahead.

The coup becomes the main subject in a good number of Misiani's songs. In **Piny Owacho pt 2**

**Misiani sings:**

*dineonge ndek joka Oguta dine kwach oketho ngao maruani,*  
*Nyakach okonyo pinje,*

Were it not for the jet fighter from k'Oguta, the leopard would have destroyed our country.  
Nyakach has saved the country

Misiani insinuates that the coup plotters saved Kenya from the harm the remnants of Kenyatta's elites would have done to Kenyans. To refer to Kenya Misiani used a symbol of ngao, a Swahili word for a shield. A shield is weapon not for offence but for defense, therefore when a weapon for defense is destroyed, the enemies' offensive missiles find it easier to find it target. Misiani is therefore insinuating that the coup Ochuka staged helped blocked the assailant's weapons from damaging Kenya's political defense mechanisms. It could have been worse were the leopard to take over the presidency. Hezekiah Ochuka who led the Air Force, *ndek joka Oguta*, 'jet fighter from k'Oguta' that stage the coup hailed from Nyakach-k'Oguta clan. According to Misiani, his air force team saved Kenya from the greedy Kenyatta elites still remaining in Moi's government. Misiani hails them for the good service they did by saving Kenya, *Nyakach okonyo pinje*, 'Nyakach has saved the country'.

### 5.3.2 Authoritarianism

In the track **Njao Par Ng'ato**, Misiani points out Moi's excesses symbolically and issues a warning of imminent consequences:

*Idonjo piny Farao injao  
Ichakori gi Musa iduwo  
Iniyud alama mak yudi*

You have invaded and profaned Pharaoh's land  
Again you have turned to messing up Moses  
You will get a regrettable mark!

By using the symbolic phrases “invaded and profaned” and “messing up”, the artist expresses his candid opinion on Moi's perceived misrule upon the hitherto relatively progressive country of Kenya. The “regrettable mark” was probably a reference to the military coup that Moi's government experienced in 1982.

Conversely, in Moi's hands, Kenya's freedom rapidly diminished. Misiani laments the shrinking democratic space in **To Waywakne Piny** in the same manner that he did during Kenyatta's time:

*Oganda masani en odwaro mare mipingo onge,  
Today's people want only their way and not opposition.*

Under Moi's patronage, the state became authoritarian, dissent was stifled and political power became unceasingly concentrated in the hands of the few elites. The opposition was met with full might even when it appeared so small (Oyugi, 1994).

Misiani bemoaned in **Njao par Ng'ato** that, *loch gweno tek*; the authoritarianism of ‘the cockerel’ is tough. The cockerel’ was the symbol of KANU the then ruling party. A case in point was the *Muungano wa Wazalendo wa Kukomboa Kenya* (Mwakenya) movement in the 1980s (Ajulu, 2000). Ajulu (2000) observes that the force that the state unleashed on this tiny underground movement was out of proportion to the threat it posed.

### 5.3.3 Detention and Arbitrary Arrests

Detention and arbitrary arrests were used by Moi's government to entrench his hegemony firmly in power. However, as in the days of Kenyatta, political detentions became the order of the day for those who dared challenge the hegemony.

Misiani himself faced the same predicament either through detention or deportation. He appeared to be ruffling political feathers warranting detention. In **Ywak Ezekiel pt 1**, Misiani says how he was always at risk of deportation:

*Jomoko bewacho ni Owino Makawili wiye tek duoke uru korgi*  
Some people say that Owino son of Willy is too stubborn; deport him to his country

Owino Misiani was not a Kenya, therefore anytime the government felt rubbed in the wrong way, they would threaten to arrest him and deport him back to his country Tanzania. In this song, he is the victim of Moi's arbitrary arrests. He would be reported to the authority that he is stubborn and he would summarily be arrested.

In the song **Aduma Okil Kamaloka**, dedicated to his advocate Aduma Owuor, Misiani recounts how he was arrested and *nindo e jela*, spent nights in police cell, for singing songs with anti-government themes.

*Yawuot Luo mae Kenya duto, nofum sana ni Owino kili onindo e jela*  
*Ji te nokwedo wachno*  
*Ni mano chafu, gitimokosa e thurwaka*  
*Polise noringo duto, giringo Amollo gi Aduma Jos kalo*  
*Sano magunga oko*

All Luo sons were shocked that Owino Kili has spent a night in jail  
People condemned that incident strongly  
That that is sad, a big mistake in our country  
The police took off when they saw Aduma and Amolo  
Immediately, Magunga was released.

As in the days of Kenyatta, any dissenting voice was crushed heavily. This applied to Misiani: in this song he says how all the Luo sons were shocked that he was arrested and spent a night in jail.

He had the firsthand experience with the ruling hegemony. It was sad, shocking and he called it a big mistake in the country. Misiani was only able to get out of jail upon the intervention of his advocate Aduma Owuor and Raila Amolo Odinga. Even in such a humiliating situation, Misiani still calls himself with praise name of Magunga, meaning the notorious or the mysterious one (Masolo, 2000). It important to note that such arrests were not restricted to Misiani alone. The fact that his arrest was condemned country-wide, it means that arrest was not only applied to Misiani alone but it was a nation-wide and none selectively arbitrary. Several politicians fled the country for fear of their safety. Musicians and other artists were not spared the noose either. For instance, Ngugi wa Thiong'o soon fled the country for the USA (Oyugi, 1994). Moi hegemony lasted till multiparty wave removed KANU from power (Barka, 2008).

#### **5.4 Kibaki Hegemony**

Unlike the Moi hegemony, Misiani never seem to welcome Kibaki's hegemony. Misiani's tone did not seem euphoric as it was euphoric nationwide.

During the 2002 general elections, the Kenyan opposition seemed to have learnt their lesson, and went into the ballot as a united force that eventually dislodged KANU from its thirty six years dominion of the Kenyan political scene. Ndegwa (2003) argues that in December 2002, the people of Kenya broke new political ground and brought a measure of progress to what has been one of the Africa's stalled democratic transitions. In the race, Kibaki trounced Uhuru Kenyatta 61 to 31 percent. Kibaki hegemony was ushered in.

##### **5.4.1 Inter-Party Coalition**

The 2002 historic election set the stage for a new hegemony in Kenya. This election was based on a broad inter-part coalition. The coalition formation forms the bulk of post-Moi Misiani's political songs. According to Misiani in **Grace pt 2:**

*kara omin Akinyi oloso rainbow okano e dala,*

Yet the brother to Akinyi (Raila) had fashioned a rainbow and kept it at home.

Rainbow is a multicolor feature. It has all the colors. It was also the symbol NARC the party Kibaki used to ride on to power. Its multicolour features symbolized collectivity and acceptance of everybody in the country. It was a sense of inclusivity.

Even the Luo, otherwise perceived as the arch rivals of the Kikuyu, voted for Kibaki almost to the last man.

#### **5.4.2 Constitution Amendments**

Unlike Kenyatta and Moi who used Constitution amendments to entrench themselves in power, Kibaki method was to evade any attempt to change the constitution that could cut down his powers. Indeed, during the pre-2005 constitution making process, the Kibaki inner circle could not accept the downsizing of the presidential executive powers (Mutua, 2009).

**ODM** song, describes the Wako draft constitution symbolized by a banana as rotten and full of maggots not fit for national consumption:... *rabolo otow jii wito awita piny/Otimo kute...*(...bananas is rotten, is being discarded, is full of maggots...)

#### **5.4.3 Centrality of Administration**

However, the Kikuyu political elites the nostalgic Kenyatta men took advantage of the Kibaki reign to consolidate the second level of hegemony. Misiani says in **Bim en Bim**, that:

*gikao piny, chal pinygi tinde oyudo ouru*

They have taken over the country; it is, like their country has just got independence.

Kibaki won his election on rainbow structures where everybody felt represented, however as Misiani points out, soon after assuming presidency there grew a discontent that Kibaki and Kikuyu elites hegemony were taking over everything and that resources were not evenly

distributed(Oyugi, 1994).Misiani then adds his voice that, *gikao piny*, ‘they have taken over the country.’ ‘They’ here point towards Kibaki and Kikuyu elites. Therefore, weeks after the elections, the MOU that brought Kibaki to power was trashed (Chege, 2008).

Kibaki therefore essentially created in himself a ‘Kenyatta II’ regime (Barkan, 2004). Misiani observes this skewed appointment in his track **ODM** where he poses several rhetoric questions:

*Ujenzi ere, barabara uwito kanye? Skunde ere...?*

*Osiptal ere...?*

Where are the constructions? Where are the roads? Where are the schools?

Where are the hospitals?

The musician can be viewed to be raising serious questions here regarding the uneven distribution of resources in the country with the insinuation that a significant portion of development projects have been re-directed to but politically favoured areas.

According to Misiani, The death of Kenyatta marked the first era and the end of Kenyatta led Kikuyu elite hegemony. It would later be resuscitated by Kibaki’s enthronement as the third president of Kenya. Misiani’s music also recognizes the case of Kibaki led Kikuyu hegemony, which he describes in **ODM** as:

*Koth joka ogwenge...*

*...koth joka lee*

Offsprings of wild cats ...

...offsprings of wild animals.

The word ‘offspring of the world cat’ insinuates that Kibaki led hegemony is not an independent bud but a scion from another mother plant, the leopards; Kenyatta’s elites. Therefore, the Kikuyu hegemony during President Kibaki’s reign can be interpreted against the backdrop of the fear of the Kikuyu political elites, right from the days of Kenyatta.

## **5.5 Summary**

This chapter has discussed the hegemonic political context from which Misiani brings out his political music. The context begins with Kenyatta's regime through Moi up to Kibakis's era. Political sign posts that punctuate the political landscape of the three presidents, as explained above, have a lot of influence on Misiani and his music. The repressive nature of these regimes makes it necessary for criticism to be camouflaged in images and symbols. The next chapter will look at political symbols and images in Misiani's music.

## CHAPTER SIX

### POLITICAL SYMBOLS AND IMAGERY IN MISANI'S BENGA SONGS

#### 6.1 Introduction

Misiani uses several kinds of images and symbols in his political rendition this thesis interrogates the use of animal, journey and religious as symbols and imagery in political rendition of the songs.

#### 6.2 Hegemony in Context

**To Waywakne Piny** (We Bemoan This Country) sang during Kenyatta and Kikuyu elite hegemony set the stage for the evaluation of political symbols and images in Misiani's songs.

##### *TO WAYWAKNE PINY*

*Yawa kawuono Owino woud Owiti kochako rumba  
Rateng' waloso kod thum adimba ka ikoro weche  
Pinywa masani en mar ogannda moyudo telo  
To un ka ung' iye to kara ochimo kanye go oganda moko?  
To an ka ing' iye to pinyin dum lweny modhiero wang' a*

*Oganda masani en odwaro mare mipingo onge,  
Jomoko ka puonje ng' ani chur achura ni loch owacho  
To gima danyisue ni gino lokore ka chieng' oloko  
To kendo kaluori to mwandu medore mokalo  
Ang' ee ok tell gino a-chien miwuoro*

*Ruodhwa Nyasaye ne ochweyo piny kokoro;  
Ni oganda malou en odog chien ka seche ochopo  
To unkuparie kata somo buge makoro weche  
Loch ema ung' eyo kod nego ogandawa  
Gigi chieng' nopenjue e kind loch moro ka yamo oloko*

*Nineteen sixtees ndalo ukoloni noriwoji  
Ogandagi duto nene oyudo chwat ka idwaro lock  
To wan kawacho to gino ikumo akuma ni loch okwedo  
Ruoth Nyasaye kod Yesu wuode notieko bura  
To un kuparies del mar sungu kochamo jii*

*Ngura kod Peter Oyawa nolal kure?  
Agwenge nin Luka bwana Ngala nolal kure?  
Kungu Karumba kod Tom Mboya be uparo?  
Yawa kue uru mondo waparie yawa motieko wuotho*

*Rateng' waloso to en obed sigana migano e pinje!*

*Madongo pod biro, pod aa chien to oseko chopo  
Kendo nuywagi kod ngwech abidha kularo telo  
To an kawuoyo to gino uchayo achaya ni weche jothum  
Jomoko be yanya ni ng'ani wacho ang'o jothum ofuwo  
Routh Nyasaye ne oketowa mar koro weche*

### **WE BEMOURN THIS COUNTRY**

People today, Owino son of Owiti begins his music  
The dark one, we talk openly in a prophesy  
That our country as it is now belongs to those who have taken over power  
Otherwise, as you see it, where are we the rest of the people headed?  
But as I see it, the country has a smell of war

Those in power only wants their way; they do not entertain any opposition  
If try teaching them they growl because of power  
But let me tell you, things change when the sun changes  
I wish knew do come as an afterthought

Lord God created the earth and predestined it  
The people ruling you will be overthrown at given time  
Think about it or read books that prophesy such things  
Lording over us and killing our people  
You will be asked about these things when another power takes overs

1960s days of colonialism, people came together  
All people suffered during the quests for independence  
When we say this, we are shut down because of power has said  
Don't you people remember how people were whipped by the white men

Ngugu and Peter Oyawa, where did they disappear to;  
Argwings brother to Luka, Mr Ngala where are they?  
Kungu Karumba and Tom Mboya do you remember  
Please take a minute of silence; remember our people who have their completed journey  
The dark one, I sing such songs that will be retold all over the country

More horrible ones are yet to come and are already here  
You will weep and flee in power struggle  
When I tell you all these things, it is despised as mere musician's empty talk  
Some abuse me, that what can a musician say, mere foolishness  
But Lord God predestined us to be seers

From the early 60s and 70s, Misiani was able to read the politics of Kenya and clearly decipher its hegemonic trends. The artist would often study the patterns in the leadership of the day and make certain observations on the ruling class. Misiani says:

*Pinywa masani en mar ogannda moyudo telo  
To un ka ung'iyе to kara ochimo kanye go oganda moko?*

This country belongs to the community in power  
Otherwise, as you see it, what will happen to the rest of the communities?

In these lines, Misiani implies that once political elites take power, the masses suffer under the weight of their dominion.

Misiani demonstrates an understanding of the ways of the hegemony. He portrays the hegemony as ruling by coercion and not consent and visiting untold suffering to those who dare raise a voice against their rule. However, Misiani also understands that the hegemony eventually faces challenges in the form of anti-hegemony and counter hegemony initiatives. Misiani sings:

*To gima danyisue ni gino luorore ka chieng' oloko,  
Ni oganda malou en odog chien ka seche ochopo,*

May I tell you that things may go round...  
The people lording over you, will be brought down at the appointed time.

Misiani warns the hegemony “You will be put to justice when another power takes over”. The artist is cognizant of the origins of hegemony in the Kenyan political history. Misiani knows that the colonial government established the first major hegemony in Kenya. He says that in the 1960s, all Kenyan people suffered under the colonial yoke. He reminds us of how Kenyans were ‘whipped’ by the Whiteman. Misiani accordingly seeks to rewrite Kenya’s history which he feels has been inaccurately presented. He argues that all Kenyans suffered in the quest for Uhuru and therefore no single group should lay absolute claims to participation in the liberation struggle as a justification for the domination of others.

### 6.2.1 Misiani the Symbol

Misiani presents himself as a symbol of the dissenting voices in Kenya. He refers to himself severally in his songs as *Magunga*. *Magunga* is both a form of *Pakruok* (praise name) as well as *Ngero* (parable). As form of *Pakruok*, According to Masolo (2000), the word *Magunga* means the notorious or mysterious one. This *Pakruok* elevates Misiani above the other contemporary musicians hence giving him a new identity. The praise name *Magunga* therefore captures Misiani's notoriety in composing songs that do not shy away from the controversies that bedevil the Kenyan political arena. In fact, Misiani in his song **Amolo Piny PakoTe 1** admits his notorious ways:

*Magunga Jakabwana dinenyuola e K,  
Datheko sana, dawacho adiera  
De ok adewo miumo, dine atho ne pinywa*

The notorious one from Kabwana, were I born in K  
I would have been very stubborn; I would have spoken the truth  
I would not have covered up things; I would have died for my country.

In this case, Misiani owns up to his controversial nature and says he would have been more critical were he a Kenyan. Misiani seems to criticize players in the Kenyan political scene as not being forthright in pointing out the flaws of the government of the day. He openly frowns upon this level of insincerity and lauds his own abrasive approach. Misiani presents himself as symbol of defiance. He tells the government, makes the government hear what it may not want to hear. As he says, he is ready to die for the country, *dine atho ne pinywa*, 'I would have died for my country.'

Misiani also refers to himself symbolically in **Njao Par Ng'ato** as *Gari*, The Train.

*Owina wuod Adongo wuod gi Mbache  
Gari nyono gima oyudo e reru  
Magunga gari ochayo thim*

Owino son of Adongoson Mbache  
The train crushes whatever it finds on its rail  
Magunga the train is not scared of the wilderness

In this *Pakruok*, Misiani asserts that, he does not fear daring where others would fear venturing into. During the one party rule in Kenya, facing the government head-on was considered as suicidal. The era was characterized by political detentions, assassinations among a host of other stringent measures. Interestingly, Misiani does the reverse by moving from Tanzania into Kenya at a time when political repression was commonplace in the country(Masolo,2000). His daring move therefore accordingly earns him the praise name *Gari Ochayo Thim*.

The train symbol should be understood in the concept of the Kenyan railway system that is largely a relic of the colonial era. The country's railway network has been criticized as poorly maintained and the trains known to navigate dangerous terrains and jungles in an effort to fulfill their mandates. These hardships are what informed the christening of the first train on the colonial Kenya-Uganda Railway as the *Lunatic Express*(Tamura, 2017) By calling himself *Gari Ochayo Thim*, a train is not afraid of the wilderness; therefore, Misiani acknowledges the dangers that await him as an artist with the audacity to question the autocratic government of the day. He in fact equates the prevailing political situation with a jungle; a wilderness where the faint hearted do not dare venture. *Gari nyono gima oyudo e reru*, the train crashes whatever it finds on the rail, that is, the image his band members and fans thought of Misiani. Misiani here says that he does mince his words; when it the hegemon veers off the line launches his attack. It may not matter whether it is a friend or a foe. A mistake worth condemned is duly condemned by the artist.

In his song **Thuond Luo**, 'Luo Heroes', Misiani further constructs for himself a unique identity by calling himself *Jowi* (the buffalo).

He sings:

*Beng' jak Owiti okew Wagasi kOlando*  
*Bwana Jashirati Owino; bwana ochako weche mage*  
*Magunga jowi oluwo aora*  
*Piny dhi nyime malong'o; to nyaka uparie yawa mathuondi*  
*Mokedo lweny adimba ung'eyo, thuondi ber ahinya kuparo*

Beng' son of Owiti nephew of Olando  
Mister Shiratti Owino; mister has begun giving his speech  
Magunga buffalo is upstream  
Things are going on well; but we must remember our heroes  
That fought great battle; it's good to remember our heroes

A buffalo is a strong and powerful animal and therefore carries connotations of bravery. This is indeed a symbolically befitting name considering the dangers the artist had to contend with as he took the government of the day to task. In this song Misiani calls himself a buffalo alongside other Luo heroes. This song was sung as an honour to *thuondi Luo*, Luo heroes who fought territorial battles with neighboring communities. Here, Misiani puts himself in the same scale he put these heroes of old. Indeed Misiani is a hero; in many of his songs, he faces the hegemon that most people would not dare to face.

However, the buffalo image can also be seen in a culturally significant way in the context of the Luo community. The Luo revere the buffalo because its hide is special for making high quality battle shield (Ogude, 2007). The chant *Jowi, jowi* in Luo cultural events is a warning about imminent danger. Therefore, by adopting the buffalo identity, Misiani appropriates himself the role of a sentinel. He owns up to his significant duty of looking out for trouble in the country's political scene and promptly warning the members of the society.

He does not stop at that but appends, *Magunga, Jowi oluwo aora*, the notorious one, a buffalo is upstream. The proverbial 'jowi is upstream' is symbolic of war cry. Misiani picks this symbol from a known war chant. The chant was used as an announcement that an enemy is advancing or

a call to the worriers to take up arms in defense to the community(Oloo, 2007). Misiani himself is the Jowi upstream; a warning to the enemy camp that he is advancing, the enemy being the hegemony. Misiani is always at a vantage position watching keenly the ways of the hegemony ready condemn their political excesses. His being in such position always put the hegemony on spot, he equates that to being upstream.

### **6.3 Animal Images**

Ogude (2000) contends that Misiani works through fabulization, that is, through the making of narratives that attribute human motives and social conduct to the conduct of animals. He says that animal fables allow Misiani to counter jump the repressive barriers created by both Kenyatta and Moi to bar dissenting views. Fabulization becomes an instrument of creating a space for truth telling under the guise of a narrative façade.

#### **6.3.1 The Leopard Image**

In Misiani songs, the image of the leopard is used to represent Kenyatta hegemony and its repressive politics. In the song deceptively entitled **Piny Osemer**, Misiani describes the political disagreements between Kenyatta and Odinga in 1960s and 1970s symbolically put in context but concealed in the personalities of animals (Oloo 2007).

*Simba ne ruto to kwach chur achura gi chunye,  
To thuol ne nyise ni ter mos mondi waloso,*

The Lion was roaring but the Leopard growling inwardly,  
And the Snake was telling them, “Be patient, we are working things out.”

Three animals are presented in this song: the leopard, the lion and the snake. The Leopard is portrayed as being in confrontation with the Lion. The lion is roaring while the leopard is growling internally. There is already a conflict between the leopard and the lion. It is worth noting that in this 1968 track, the leopard had not attacked yet but, was growling, is showing

signs of causing harm soon. This almost pictorial presentation of the Leopard in a face-off with the Lion represents the disagreement between Odinga and Kenyatta (Oloo 2007). Significantly, the arbitration between the two opposing sides is being offered by the snake. The snake in this case seems to represent Mboya who appears to walk the middle ground in this political duel (Oloo 2007). It is a picture of the Kenyatta-Odinga political duel. Kenyatta being the hegemony, the group in power while Odinga's represent the anti-hegemony innuendoes. The leopard then later on appears in Misiani's songs as to represent Kenyatta and Kikuyu elites, the ruling hegemony.

In **Kwach Rakido**, literary meaning that a leopard had spots but also conjuring a connotative meaning of sly, cunning and crafty, character.

*Ben jaka bwana mak-Owiti gi sega  
Rumbna ochako ywak rumbna ridore wawacho  
En wach mane ekt yawa jogwengwani kuparo  
Kwach oluwo aora yie umak okumba wangi lweny*

*Kwach japondo dipoka onego wuodu wayuoro  
Mach oyuoro kuome dipoka owango thurwaka en-gi chung'  
Chako chon ber yie uluor aluora konindo*

*Somokwachtekyandeamowuoyonmo ling ling  
Yadh ragwanda thuondi luoro apoya kiwuotho  
Kwach oidho yath, diel biro abira to ingiyo  
Thuol mako tek gimatinde oparo be uneno*

*Bwana wuon diek iyie e tang ainya in gi lweny  
Kwachiyeowangkwachluro ling lingkainindo  
Kata mana sigu kik inyore ahinya to ineno  
Chako chon ber yie iwinjie magwagti kwawacho*

*Ben jaka bwana Owino mak Owiti gi sega  
Ji ochayo pile makata gima oneno to upingo  
Kwach osedonjo yie uchwoye achwoya gi kanyo  
Diel iye opong' gikone unutho to uneno*

*Bwana wuon diek iwek timo nguono kamano  
Kodhino to rach en ngama emo opwoyo*

*Nego ngato bende kwach negi anega to ineno  
Tang chon ber yiegi ngama koro kata otim*

*Aora obaa wange to tinde  
Oula mangongo en kama udino no ema omomo  
Joka aoragi kik uweno thuolo kwach rach  
Kwach rakido kendo gima pondo wange riek*

Misiani from Kabwana of Owiti and Seka  
Music comes to you, it says  
What is it amongst people?  
The leopard is upstream, arm yourself with shields it is war

A leopard is a sly animal; it might kill one of your sons  
He has fire with him, he can burn our region  
It is better to time early when it is still asleep

Understanding ways of leopard is difficult; recently he secretly studied our son  
Crooked tree, a snake slithered sudden as you watch  
The leopard is up a tree, a goat approaches as he looks  
Catching a snake is not easy; you may not know its ways

The goat – man, be careful, you are facing war  
The leopard agitated, it approaches quietly when you are asleep  
Do not face the enemy blindly  
An early beginning is good, listen to me

Misiani, from Kibwana, Owino son of Owiti and Seka  
I am despised, you despise even what I see glaring  
The leopard is here, just spear him right away to death  
Your goat is pregnant, let the leopard not kill it as you watch

The goat – man don't be so kind  
The breed, is evil we can only praise a dead one  
To a leopard, killing a human being is no big deal  
It is good to be careful, listen to a seer even if he is small

The river has broken the banks  
A heavy flood breaks through where you blocked  
People of river, don't give this leopard a chance, he is bad  
A leopard is spotted, it camouflages and is spiteful.

This song starts by Misiani addressing his clansmen and warning them of the impending attack from the leopard. The musician says the leopard is up stream and he tells his clansmen to take up

their shield and offer a defense. The leopard is here presented as an enemy of the community. Since the artist has adopted the responsibility of a sentinel and the people's mouth piece, the clan in the picture is the country. Misiani is thus warning the entire Kenya against the leopard, that is, Kenyatta and Kikuyu elite hegemony. This song gives an apt description of the leopard; he is presented as sneaky and murderous. The Kenyatta hegemony, leopard, is presented as one who can kill: *Kwach japondo dipoka onego wuodu wayuoro* leopard might sneak in, he might kill your son. In most Misiani's songs, murder is a prevailing theme. To the leopard killing one is no big deal. The leopard is presented as armed when Misiani says that he has inflammables and is 'likely to burn our country'. This could mean both the economic and military might that Kenyatta hegemony had. The dangers Misiani read in the hegemony motivates him into issuing a warning to others to be wary of the hegemony. The listener is told to be careful of the ways of the hegemony: 'don't underrate the ways of the leopard; that the breed is dangerous; that killing a human being is not a big deal to a leopard. The hegemony is also presented as destructive; he is said he can kill because he hides and sneaks and it could be difficult to know his intentions. Before and after the death of Kenyatta, Njonjo had become the face and the image of the Kenyatta political elite (Oloo 2007). With the Kikuyu elites out-maneuvering the rest in political schemes, Kenyatta and Njonjo came to be regarded as the architects of Kenya's political problems. Misiani's choice for the leopard has cultural, religious and political significance. Kwach therefore became the symbol of the Kenyatta elites represented by Charles Njonjo. Misiani treats the Leopard as *rakido* (spotted). The Leopard is spotted for proper adaptability in the Savannah grassland which forms its habitat. Its spots often camouflage it conveniently as it awaits the prey. *Rakido* is therefore a multi-layered term laden with both cultural and political

innuendoes. The multi-coloured nature of the Leopard implies that it is untrustworthy, unpredictable, cunning and sly among other negative possibilities of symbolic meaning.

Misiani thus saw the Kenyatta elites in this light as insincere people who were always hiding their true intentions while secretly scheming and positioning themselves ready to make smart political moves. The Leopard symbol perfectly suited Njonjo, the representation of the Kenyatta's political maneuvers as he had the reputation of always adorning trade mark stripped suits described in Dholuo as *rakido*. The Leopard symbol in Misiani's political songs is however not static but rather fluid. After the death of Tom Mboya and detention of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Kenyatta's then Vice President, the Luo lost faith in Kenyatta and the entire government. The Leopard symbol therefore accordingly evolved to encompass the hegemony headed by Kenyatta and Njonjo.

In the track **Upime Nadi**, Misiani captures the events surrounding the abortive 1982 military coup in Kenya:

*Dwar nyocha udhiye nyithiwa to kendo bende unego lee  
Kwech bende umako moko ma mier okwe duto  
Udi ne wagero e kor oboke midhier orumo kuomwa  
Josi kawili, anie kind dwe achiel kende  
Koko moro awionjo Kiseru ni kwech owuok ong'enge bayo*

You went hunting my people, and you killed some animals  
You even trapped leopards, and peace returned in our villages  
You even built new home, and misery ended  
But Josy son of Wili, within just one month  
I heard some noise in Kiseru that the leopard is out of the cage and is roaming about!

In the excerpt above, The artist laments that people had rejoiced prematurely thinking that the Leopard was finally caged only for it break lose to everybody's surprise. This song seems to register the disappointment of the pro-coup agents at the successful containment of the situation by the pro-government forces. The Leopard symbol may be viewed as alluding to Njonjo and his

exoneration over claims linking him to the attempted coup (Oloo, 2007). The hunting Misiani is talking about refers to the hunting down the coup plotters, *dwar nyocha udhiye nyithiwa to kendo bendeumako lee*, you went hunting and you killed some animals (Oloo 2007). Indeed some coup plotters were killed. However Misiani goes further and says that some leopards were also trapped, and only after this did peace return to the villages. It was that only after the pointing fingers at Njonjo during the Njonjo Commission of Inquiry was peace assured.

Having been released in 1983, Misiani's **Gor Mahia PT 2** also discusses the events surrounding the 1982 coup. The Leopard is still being used to symbolically depict the remnants of Kenyatta hegemony anti-hegemonic struggle against Moi hegemony. The song is based on the widely talked about Njonjo's planned coup vis-à-vis Ochuka's abortive counter coup. The politically spotted nature of the leopard comes to the fore in this song. The investigations revealed that Ochuka's attempted coup was motivated by a possible coup by the Kenyatta remnant elites(Oloo, 2007). The 1982 coup was therefore seen by the Kikuyu elites as a spoiler move. In **Upime Nadi** Misiani says:

*Kwach moro sieme ni dhao to pod podi  
Dhaoni badoiko tarehe tano watimo kamano*

One leopard warns him that war is not yet over  
War is still on, on 5<sup>th</sup> we will do as planned

Misiani captures counter hegemonic disappointment at their preempted move to remove Moi from power and their resolve to root out the regime. In, the above song he says, 'the battle is still on and on 5<sup>th</sup> we shall do as planned; and in **Gor Mahia PT 2**, he says: *kwach to ochung' owachoni telo to pod marwa makata nadi towatelo diriyo*, that one leopard says that whatever the circumstances the presidency is still theirs and that they must lead a second time. The 5<sup>th</sup> of August was the day allegedly scheduled for the so called Kikuyu coup (Oloo, 2007). The

determination by the Kenyatta elites popularly referred to as Mount Kenya Mafia then, to remove Moi from power confirms the notion that they had put Moi in office only in a caretaker position; a passing cloud meant to give room for them soon. Interestingly, Moi ended up holding on to the reins of power for two a half decades. In **Kwach Rakido**, Misiani sings;

*Mach oyuoro kuome dipoka owango thurwaka engi chuny  
Chako chon ber yie uluor aluora konindo  
Somo kwach tek yande asomo wuoyonmo ling' ling'*

*Kwach iye owang' kwach luro ling' ling' ka inindo  
Kwach osedonjo yie uchwoye achwoya gi kanyo*

He has fire with him, he can burn our country  
It is better to deal with him early enough when it is still asleep  
Understanding ways of leopard is difficult; recently he secretly studied our son  
The leopard approaches quietly when you are sleep  
The leopard is here; just spear him right away to death

In the above song, **Kwach Rakido**, the artist advocates for the need to take advantage of the prevailing political events to totally dismantle the Kenyatta hegemony symbolized by the leopard. He proposes that since the hegemony, personified by Kenyatta and Njonjo, were out of power, their wings should be clipped, that is, 'spear him right away- when it is still asleep,' in order to prevent them from doing any further harm to the country and its people. Misiani says, that 'the leopard has fire power, he may burn up our country as he has inflammables'. The artist seems to appreciate the immense power, referred to as fire by the artist, wielded by the Kenyatta hegemony represented by Njonjo and argues that they should be contained now that they are in the political cold or else they will get time to regroup, stage a counter-hegemony and return with a vengeance to visit destruction upon the people. This line also alludes to the financial dominance and domineering presence of the members of the Kenyatta sympathizers in the armed forces at that time. This therefore would make it easy for them to organize and execute another coup.

*Bwana wuon diek iwek timo ng'uono kamano  
Kodhino to rach en ngama oiki emo opwoyo  
Nego ng'ato bende yot kwach negi anega to ineno*

*Aora obaa wange to tinde  
Oula mangongo en kama udino no ema omomo  
Joka aoragi kik uwene thuolo kwach rach*

The goat – man stop being lenient  
That breed is evil; we can only praise a dead one  
To a leopard, killing a human being is no big deal

The river has broken the banks  
A heavy flood breaks through where you blocked  
People from River Kuja, don't give this leopard a chance, he is bad

In this song, Moi , the goat-man, appeared to be lenient with Njonjo despite several accounts pointing at Njonjo's culpability during the commission of inquiry set up to investigate him. Misiani then takes it upon himself to condemn Moi for his leniency. He says that among the Leopard breed, none is good except a dead one, (one out of power, maybe) and with time they will mount a major political come back. Misiani clothes this in the image of a flood. He says that a flood always breaks the very dyke that has been built to contain it. Misiani seemingly felt that the leniency shown to Njonjo and the Kenyatta elites implicated in the abortive 1982 coup was a grave political mistake. Although they were now out of power, this particular song still acknowledged the immense influence of the Kikuyu elites symbolized by Njonjo. Misiani felt that they still had more hidden tricks up their sleeves. The spotted nature of the Leopard emerges as symbolically representing the subtly vengeful, sly, and ambitious nature of the Kikuyu.

For the hegemony to stay in power, Kenyatta hegemony is also presented as murderous and involved in killings and assassinations. However, the leopard image glaringly appears in most Misiani's song in the context of murder and assassination. In **ODM**, Misiani says that the leopard is prone to *fujo gi nego ogandawa*, violence and killing our people. In **Jowi Iye**

**Jawang'** and **Piny Osemer** Misiani pays tribute to the slain leaders JM Kariuki, Tom Mboya, Kungu Karumba, Argwings Kodhek among others. Although Misiani names these leaders who he believed to have been killed by the Kenyatta elites, their killers take the animal forms.

### 6.3.2 The Baboon Image

Misiani uses *Bim*, the baboon to represent the second tier of Kikuyu elite hegemony under Kibaki. He therefore uses it to represent the Kibaki hegemony. In 2003, Misiani released the track **Bim en Bim** (A Baboon is always a Baboon).

...

*To maJehova Nyasaye oloso moketo e piny mawantieni  
Obed gimafuyo, gimamol gi bundiye obed gima nie pii  
Obed dhano, obed lee, giko ninyaka otho.  
To nitiere kit joka lee mochwe kaka dhano to ok gin jii  
Achiel kuom-gi, en joka bimbe,  
maluwogi gi joka ong'eche; gichal gi dhano kabisa, kod sokue mutu  
Mokwongo adwaro wuoyonu e kit joka bimbe  
Bim en bim, obed mopidhi, obed manie bungu  
To bim en bim*

But the once created by Jehova God and put in this earth where we are  
Whether, those flying, whether crawling, whether in water  
Whether human being, whether animals, finally it has to die  
Then there are kinds of animals that look like human beings but they are not  
One of them is the baboon, the apes, they look like human beings yet they are not  
First, I want to talk about the baboons  
A baboon is a baboon, whether domesticated or wild  
A baboon is a baboon

This song is based on the short political honeymoon between the then President Kibaki and Raila Odinga the son of Oginga Odinga and the party leader of Orange Democratic Movement party. The two had worked together under NARC and successfully wrestled power from KANU after 39 years reign. NARC itself was a coalition between two parties, NAK (led by Kibaki) and LDP (led by Raila). The coalition was formed based on a Memorandum of Understanding that stipulated a 50-50 power sharing formula among other agreements should they form the next government (Mara, 2009).

For Misiani, though both were Kikuyu, Kibaki's hegemony turned out to be different from the Kenyatta led hegemony. It was now a post-single party era and multipartism was now in force. The political environment was radically different as there were greater democratic principles practiced in the country's political arena contrary to the dictatorship that characterized the Kenyatta regime. Nevertheless, the much talked about Kikuyu hegemony was rejuvenated under Kibaki's rule albeit under the guise of democracy (Oyugi, 1997). Misiani could not therefore refer to Kibaki as *Kwach* (the Leopard), to mean Kikuyu elite, but had to invent a new symbol to capture this radical shift in the practice of the Kikuyu hegemony. The latest Kikuyu elite hegemony had re-invented itself, molted into a totally new political creature. The artist therefore resorts to the Baboon symbol to effectively portray the Kibaki government and its unique political tendencies.

Misiani dropped the Leopard symbol, erstwhile used to symbolize the Kikuyu elite hegemony, and instead replaced it with the Baboon. Interestingly, the Baboon does not feature prominently in Luo narratives, mythology or religion. In his a Dholuo collection book, "Ahero Dhowa" (I Love Our Language), Dulo (1980) features Baboons in a narrative "Bimbe ma Chamo Jii" (Baboons that Eat People). Although the word *bim* is often loosely translated into English as 'baboon' (Oloo, 2007), it is also inclusive of a broad range of apes such as chimpanzee and gorilla. *Bim* therefore conjures up mental pictures of an animal that looks largely like a human being, even walks upright like a human being, but not quite especially in its mannerisms.

The Baboon symbol can also be understood in terms the political ideologies prevalent especially during the Cold War period. The portrayal of baboons as eating people hints at the ideological differences between Kenyatta's and Nyerere's (first president of Tanzania) governments that led to the collapse of the East African Community. Nyerere, who favoured the socialist ideology, is

reported to have described Kenyatta's capitalistic government as a "man eat man society" (Nasongo & Musungu, 2008). The baboon symbol therefore has insinuations of extreme greed associated with the capitalist system of government put in place by the Kenyatta administration and which continues to be used in Kenya to date. Further, the verb "to eat" stands out symbolically in the phrase "Baboons that *Eat* People". In postcolonial Kenya, the expression "eat" has acquired heavy econo-political overtones. It has in fact come to be associated with graft and the misappropriation of public funds that continues to bedevil successive governments in the country since independence. In **Bim en Bim**, Misioni exploits this symbolic political relationship between the Baboon and the political context.

It is in the **ODM** song released in 2005 that Misioni launched, the use of the Baboon and the related animal in the monkey as political images that represent the Kenyatta-Kibaki hegemony axis. In the wake of the first constitutional referendum in Kenya, Misioni composed a song entitled **ODM** in honour of the newly formed Orange Democratic Movement that was yet to become a fully-fledged political party. In the song, Misioni admits that he was forced to use symbolism in consideration of the grave consequences he might encounter in the hands of the government agents. He says:

*awacho ngeroni, Jakobwana opingo e lwete,  
itera epiny ogwenge,*

I use this parable, the man from Kabwana is handcuffed  
and whisked to the land of wild cats.

In this song Misioni speaks in *ngero*, parable; he says he will be handcuffed and taken to the land of wild cats. This is also a hidden image. This could be a strange land far different from the land of human beings. However, throughout Misioni's work, he uses the image of the leopard to refer to the Kikuyu elites. Now that it was president Kibaki in power, a Kikuyu, the wild cat most

appropriately still referred to Kikuyu elite. The consequence he was facing here being arrested and detained by the Kibaki government.

Misiani makes reference to the electoral symbols used during the referendum campaigns to represent the two competing sides:

*Awuok e thurwa nam, Jakabwana piny Magati  
Machungwa lilo, rabolo otow jii wito awita piny...  
Gimiyo ogwenge, jo-kabimbe gi jo-kaong'eche*

I left home, the man from Kabwana land of Magati  
Oranges only, bananas are rotten and people are throwing on the ground...  
They are given to wild cats, the baboons and the monkeys

Misiani starts this song from the point of his entry into Kenya. He says he was from Kabwana in Magati, which is in Tanzania, when he found eating oranges and discarding the bananas. He presents a picture of being awed by the situation, why people were only eating oranges and not bananas. He then found out that bananas were rotten, were full of maggots and could only be given to wild cats, the baboons, and the monkeys. The wild cats here as in other Misiani's songs, refer to the Kikuyu elite while the baboon refer specifically to Kibaki and Kikuyu elites that were within at the rulership in Kenya then.

In the extract above, the artist symbolically expresses his opposition to the proposed constitution. During the 2005 constitutional referendum, the orange fruit was the symbol for the opposing ("No") side while the banana fruit was the symbol for the proposing ("Yes") side. The song above celebrates the "No" camp that went ahead and won with a landslide and hence the proposed constitution was rejected.

The use of the baboon symbol creatively portrays President Kibaki's government that had come to power on a reform agenda only to turn out be equally resistant to change hence baboon. The

song captures the mood of disillusionment that engulfed the country upon the realization that Kibaki's government did not seem in a hurry to institute the necessary reforms in the country. This feeling led to the overwhelming defeat of the "Yes" side during the referendum.

Misiani addresses the content of the proposed constitution popularly referred to as the Wako Draft. The artist argues that the main reason why the proposed constitution was rejected overwhelmingly by Kenyans at the vote was because the government side was perceived to have watered down the people-driven Bomas Draft (Mara, 2009):

*Kapimo piny, rabolo otow jii wito awito piny  
Otimo kute, jokabimbe ema chamo...  
Mano asara yorgi, jachien otelnu ucham kute*

As I see the country, bananas are rotten and people are throwing them on the ground  
Full of maggots, only the baboons are eating...  
That is your loss, may the devil lead you as you eat maggots

In this case, the shortcomings of Wako Draft are symbolically depicted by reference to the banana infested maggots. Kibaki's government and the supporters of the draft constitution are the ones referred to as baboons feasting on the maggots infested bananas. The artist effectively captures the nation-wide rejection of the draft constitution and in the word "country" and portrays the supporters of the document as evil people as evident in the phrase "may the devil lead you".

Misiani makes it clear who the Baboons are in the song **ODM** saying, "*Ni telo aa e lwet bim, telo ochiko Mara thurwa*" (that power is slipping off the baboon's hand and is headed for Mara, our home). It is common sense that it was Kibaki elites, who was in power and therefore the one represented by the Baboon. Misiani predicts an imminent end to the ruling hegemony during the 2007 elections and a win for "Mara", a phrase he uses to refer to pro-democracy Kenyans in many of his songs. He relates the Kibaki government, symbolically, with the previous Kenyatta

government declaring that people can recognize a similar thread running through the two. He says, “*Koth joka ogwenge, jii osomo siri e dug gi*” (These off springs of the wilds cat, people have unveiled the secret of their nakedness). Misiani seems to be considering the Baboon as a descendant of the Leopard. In the following stanza, Misiani comments on the leadership style of the Baboon:

*Tend jokaoyieyobendechal gi joka ong'eche*  
*Tend jokabimbebendeochiko kor onogo*  
*Laro mwandu, laro telo gi nego ogandawa*  
*Jogi aneno chalre jogi, jogi koth joka ogwenge*  
*Koth joka achudhe, jogi koth joka ondiegi*  
*Koth joka thwangogi jogi koth joka lee*  
*Ohero ahera laro, laro telo gi timbe magath*  
*Akuno pinywani, dak tek adwaro chung'ka*

The leadership of the rats is similar to that of the monkeys  
The leadership of the baboons also heads a similar direction  
Grabbing wealth, grabbing power and killing our people  
These fellows are similar; they are descendants of the wild cats  
Descendants of vultures, they are descendants of hyenas  
These descendants of baboons, they are descendants of wild animals  
They enjoy grabbing power using unorthodox means  
I have boycotted this country of ours; life is hard hence I want to leave

The above extract demonstrates the artist's contemptuous attitude towards the Kibaki hegemony which he compares symbolically to that of the leopards. By comparing the Kibaki's government to that of the other wild animals, Misiani implies that Kibaki's government, though in different era, is as bad as the previous Kenyatta hegemony. He overtly describes the regime as being power-hungry, corrupt and murderous. He therefore portrays the Kibaki regime as capable of doing anything to maintain their elitist hegemony.

Although known for his extensive use of terse symbolism, Misiani at times resorts to almost directly addressing the country's leadership in his songs. In **ODM**, Misiani thinly veils his criticism of the Kibaki government that ascended to power on the promise of a myriad of social,

political and economic changes:

*Ujenzi ere, barabara uwito kanye?  
Pesa nyocha oor, golo tek ukano e bugo:  
Skunde ere, jopuonje be ringo e pinyka  
Hosiptal ere, daktache be gomo e pinyka  
Pesa oor mondo okony nyithindo makiye  
Mago uloko magu tee, kech lich e K mangima  
Masicho lilo, laro telo uketo e ngimau*

Where is the construction? Where have you taken the roads?  
Funds were brought, but you have stashed them away in barrows and cannot avail  
Where are schools? Teachers are deserting this country  
Where are hospitals? Doctors are on strike in this country  
Funds were sent to help orphaned children  
You have grabbed all that; there is extreme hunger in the entire K (Kenya)  
All is misery; grabbing power is your life

In this case, Misiani uses the pronoun second person ‘you’ to create the effect of direct address; to directly address the baboon-the Kibaki hegemony. It is therefore clear that he wants to get the attention of those in power. The artist goes ahead to carry out an audit on the Kibaki led government and returns a poor report card. The artist presents the Kibaki hegemony as being characterized by corrupt leadership whose major preoccupation is plundering national resources with abandon. It emerges that corruption enhances a skewed trend of distribution of the national resources. Many parts of the country therefore lag behind in development while other politically correct regions live in plenty. This is insinuated in the line “Where have you taken the roads?” Other than highlighting the plight of orphaned children and the ailing health sector, Misiani uses this song to scrutinize the education sector. This is quite significant politically because one of Kibaki’s pre-election pledges was the introduction of Free Primary Education in the country (Mara, 2009). He argues that the program risks failing unless the necessary infrastructure such as personnel and physical facilities are put in place.

The Baboon symbol as used by Misiani therefore captures the metamorphosis of the Kenyatta

hegemony to Kibaki hegemony under Kibaki's rule. The old Kenyatta hegemony erstwhile symbolized by the Leopard had radically changed tact and assumed a new identity hence the need to use a different type of symbolism. Misiani thus picked the Baboon image to symbolize Kibaki hegemony. It is significant to note that a Baboon closely resembles human beings but is not human. This symbolizes the deceptive nature of President Kibaki who originally came across as a democrat and a reformist only for him to turn around and renege on numerous pre-election pledges he had made to Kenyan.

### 6.3.3 The Hyena and Goat Imagery

The Hyena and the goat are used in Misiani's songs to represent Moi's government, but specifically Moi and Kalenjin elite hegemony. In **Piny Osemer**, Misiani uses the Hyena symbol to represent what he perceives as Moi's elites and by extension, his Kalenjin hegemony as opportunists (Oloo 2007):

*Otoyo to ochung' e mesa  
Sano gimor ginyierowa anyiera  
Ni ring'o mang'enygi,  
Ni choke mang'enygi,  
Ni dhao en maru  
Kuon to odong' e mesa  
Makata uringo wadong' wachamo*

But the hyena is standing on the table  
They are happy and just laughing  
That all this plenty meat,  
That all this plenty bones,  
That the battle is yours  
The *ugali* has remained at the table  
Even if you run away, we shall remain and feast

In this song, Misiani depicts Moi hegemony as unduly taking advantage of the political misunderstandings between the Kikuyu and the Luo to take over power and plunder the country's resources. This is evident in the fact that the Hyenas are presented as celebrating the

epic duel between the two political rival communities in the country and benefitting from the spoils of war, so to speak; *sano gimor, ginyierowa anyiera...wadong' wachamo*, 'hyena laughs...we shall remain a feast'. The artist succeeds in portraying Moi as having come to power by fluke and not on merit and therefore an undeserving individual. In Misiani's view therefore, the rise of Moi to presidency was only possible because of the infighting between Kikuyu and the Luo. However, by portraying Moi as having inherited left over "bones", Misiani implies that the former Kikuyu regime had plundered the nation's resources to the extent that Moi was almost taking over an empty shell (Oloo, 2007).

The Hyena is a scavenger animal and often feasts on whatever prey the other swifter animals have struggled to hunt down. It rarely takes its own initiative to earn its meal but rather waits patiently to take advantage of other animals' sweat. This confirms the assertion that Moi hegemony never really fought to get where they were but capitalized on the loose ends of the Kenyatta hegemony and Odinga's anti-hegemony fight. This character of the Hyena is effectively exploited by Misiani in his political songs, the lazy opportunistic animal which does not go on its own way to hunt for a game of its own.

Misiani also uses the Goat symbol to portray Moi and his government. In **Kwach Rakido** released after the abortive 1982 coup, Misiani tells Moi:

...  
*Kwach oidho yath, diel biro abira to ingiyo*  
*Thuol mako tek gimatinde oparo be uneno*

*Bwana wuon diek iyie e tang ainya in gi lweny*  
*Kwachiyeowangkwachluo ling lingkainindo*  
*Kata mana sigu kik inyore ahinya to ineno*  
*Chako chon ber yie iwinjie magwagti kwawacho*

*Ben jaka bwana Owino mak Owiti gi sega*  
*Ji ochayo pile makata gima oneno to upingo*

*Kwach osedonjo yie uchwoye achwoya gi kanyo  
Diel iye opong gikone unutho to uneno*

*Bwana wuon diek iwek timo nguono kamano  
Kodhino to rach en ngama yiki opwoyo  
Nego ng'ato bende kwach negi anega to ineno  
Tang chon ber yiegi ngama koro kata otim*

...

The leopard is up a tree, a goat approaches as he looks  
Catching a snake is not easy; you may not know its ways

The goat – man, be careful, you are facing war  
The leopard agitated, it approaches quietly when you are asleep  
Do not face the enemy blindly  
An early beginning is good, listen to me

Misiani, from Kibwana, Owino son of Owiti and Seka  
I am despised, you despise even what I see glaring  
The leopard is here; just spear him right away to death  
Your goat is pregnant, let the leopard not kill it as you watch

The goat – man don't be so kind  
The breed, is evil we can only praise a dead one  
To a leopard, killing a human being is no big deal  
It is good to be careful, listen to a seer even if he is small

Although livestock are valued among the members of the Luo community, goats are generally regarded as “small” animals. In the community, those who herd livestock (*jokwath*) are generally viewed with contempt due to the stereotype that they are often uncultured and uncivil in their behavior. A goat herder, therefore, would be rated very lowly as compared to a cattle herder. However, the herdsman are also recognized among the Luo for their perseverance and remarkable survival instincts that see them withstand harsh weather conditions and navigate treacherous terrains in the countryside as they practice their trade. The Goat symbol is politically significant in Misiani's songs especially considering the prey-predator relationship between it and the Leopard. While the leopard wants to eat the goat, there is also need to protect the goat.

While Moi hegemony need to survive, the Kikuyu elite hegemony would want to scheme and make a comeback into power.

In this case, the artist uses the title “Mr. goat-man” to refer to Moi due to his pastoralist Kalenjin background (Oloo, 2007). This song was a cautionary warning to Moi to be careful when dealing with the remnants of Kenyatta Hegemony. It was also reminder for Moi to prepare for war against the remnants of Kenyatta elite hegemony. This is seen in the words of: ‘you are facing war, the leopard is agitated; just spear him; killing a human being is no big deal to a leopard.’ The Goat symbol here may also be belittle Moi’s government as that led by a lowly placed politician. It also captures the feeling that Moi’s government was merely transitional government, a caretaker regime, (Dianga, 2002) since the goat herder usually plays the caretaker role for the real owner of the flock who would often be out the scene. The Goat symbol may also be viewed as implying Moi’s iron fisted kind of leadership that was gave no consideration to individual’s opinions. Just like a goat herder would use his staff to drive the animals, so would Moi show the political direction for the leaders and the citizens and expect no dissenting opinion.

Misiani also uses the Goat image when addressing Moi hegemony on the need to take stern action on Njonjo especially in the light of his alleged involvement in the failed 1982 coup (Oloo 2007). He says in **Kwach Rakido**:

*Bwana wuon diek, iwek timo ng’uono kamano  
Kodhino to rach en ng’ama oyiki ema wapwoyo*

Mr. goat-man, do not be that lenient  
That breed (of the leopard) is wickedness, we can only praise a dead and buried one.

Here, the artist seems to incite Moi against Njonjo and the other Kenyatta elite allegedly implicated in the planned Kikuyu-led coup. Misiani goes ahead to express his stereotype against

the Kenyatta elites as being a bad breed of politician that cannot be trusted especially with political power.

Misiani further uses the Goat symbol in a broader perspective to represent the entire Moi hegemony. He seems to warn Moi in **Kwach Rakido** that:

*Diel... iye opong' gikone enotho to uneno*  
The she-goat... is expectant, it may end up dying as you watch.

In this extract, the “expectant she-goat” represents the hopes and aspirations of the entire country’s populace that a new political order had been established by Moi’s coming to power and which is under threat from the leopard. The artist thus seems to warn Moi not to disappoint the expectant Kenyan population that views him as a saviour of sorts. At another level, the pregnant she-goat could be interpreted as representing the need for Moi to jealously guard his new government against forces of destruction led by the remnants of Kenyatta elites. Misiani seems to hold the view that the Kikuyu elite pose a big danger to Moi’s rule hence the need for him to do all that is within his powers to protect it just like a shepherd would his treasured expectant goat.

#### **6.3.4 The Cockerel Image**

Misiani uses the cockerel image to represent Moi hegemony. In **Njao Par Ng’ato** (Defiling One’s Homestead), Misiani censures KANU’s unnecessary aggression towards the opposition.

Based on this then Misiani laments:

*Wang’ni eka aneno ma-uwinjo,*  
*Yawa loch kuku ma uwinjo-ga,*  
*Ni loch jo-ka winy tek!*

This time round I have witnessed what people often hear about,  
Indeed the reign of the cockerel you have been hearing about,  
The authoritarian rule of the birds’ group is harsh!

In the song, the artist describes in details the events surrounding the invasion of a night vigil at the late Oginga Odinga's first anniversary by government security forces. He laments the attack on a peaceful cultural program of such a senior politician could only be described by echoing Misiani's words.

In this song, Misiani testifies to the excesses of the KANU government symbolized by the Cockerel. In the song the artist decries the high handed-ness of the cockerel. He says that the reign of the birds is harsh and authoritative. In fact Moi's government was trolled for being harsh and dictatorial. He gives a witness account of the events that unfolded at Odinga's cultural anniversary party when armed police descended on mourners hurting several people in the process. He ridicules this as a ridiculous act and belittles KANU's leadership as displaying a cock mentality and seeing rivals even where there are none at all. He therefore portrays Moi's government as intolerant, politically insecure and desperate to be at the centre of every activity however irrelevant to them. By disrupting Odinga's anniversary party, Moi and his KANU regime emerged as those capable of pursuing their political rivals even in death.

Misiani uses the Cockerel image to portray KANU's territorial tendencies in the Kenyan political scene. Just as the cock strives to remain unchallenged in the compound, so does the KANU party which would do anything to annihilate opposition in Kenyan politics.

In post independent Kenyan politics, the Cock appears in two contexts. First, the cock is engraved in the nation's coat of arms alongside an axe and a shield. Secondly, the new found political party KANU also adopted *jogoo* (the cockerel) as its symbol (Odinga, 1969).

Misiani castigates the use of the Cockerel as a political symbol of KANU. In fact, to Misiani the Cockerel served as a symbol of the Moi Hegemony. A cock is known to be a very domineering

animal and one which does not tolerate challenge or opposition. In an entire brood of hens, only one Cockerel reigns and an attempt to introduce a second one is known to provoke a fight to the death of the weaker one. Misiani uses the Cockerel symbol in his songs to symbolize Moi and KANU's strong arm political tactics and intolerant attitude towards political competition. During the reign of KANU at its glorious peak, KANU and the government was one and the same thing; opposing KANU meant opposing the government (Dianga, 2002).

The KANU-NDP merger is well captured by Misiani in **GorMahia Pt I**. The artist decries the Hegemonic cannibal tendency of the Cockerel but also ridicules their naivety :

*Wause ne joka gweno mawuod odongo otoa lak  
Karomin Akinyi oloso rainbow mokano e dala  
Joka gwen ne morte negiparo ni gi mwonyo tingawa  
Gi timo kosa kubwa ok gi swiche off tingani*

We sold it to the people of the chicken family, that son of Odongo burst out in laughter  
Yet brother to Akinyi already made a rainbow and kept it at home  
The people of the chicken family were happy believing that they had swallowed our tractor  
But they made a big mistake; they never switched off the engine

The NDP-KANU appeared to be a plus for KANU party as NDP dissolved itself to join it. The artist expresses this by the use of party symbols. This is what he refers to as the chicken family swallowing the tractor; the cock being the symbol of KANU while the tractor symbol of NDP. It was almost obvious that the NDP brigade would be stranded or could have nowhere to go should they find KANU not hospitable. This was KANU's calculated move to paralyse the opposition. The artist tells us that while the KANU brigade was rejoicing, they had missed to see two very important political moves by NDP leader: figuratively, they did not switch the tractor engine off as the cockerel swallowed it, and secondly, they did not realise that Raila had fashioned rainbow and left it at home as he walked on to join KANU. The tractor engine is used by the artist to

show that although NDP was swallowed, Raila was not politically muzzled and that his political agitation was still intact and he could still do as serious harm to KANU as he used to do while in NDP and outside KANU. Secondly, ‘rainbow’ in the song is figuratively used as a fall back plan that Raila fore-fashioned but did not reveal it to his new allies. Eventually when Raila left KANU and together with other politicians went and form Rainbow coalition which eventually formed NARC, a party that went ahead to win the general election (Mara, 2009).

It is evident above that the artist portrays KANU as celebrating the merger with NDP thinking it marked the end of the opposition party. Moi, referred to above by his Luo nickname “son of Odongo”, is presented as having been very upbeat at what he considered a milestone in the history of KANU and a political lifeline to the party whose fortunes seemed to have been dwindling in the face of a rejuvenated opposition. There is an unconfirmed assertion that the Luo and the Kalenjins were siblings of twin brothers; Opiyo the ancestor of the Luo and Odongo, the ancestor of the Kalenjins. It was then safe to have NDP merge with Kanu to form a new party; a party of siblings. The fact that Moi “burst out in laughter” demonstrates that the merger was the actualization of his long-term political scheme of taming his critics, in this case Raila Odinga. The line “we sold it to the cockerel’s people” is loaded with symbolic meaning considering the goodies Moi was reputed to use to lure prominent opposition figures into cooperating with his government. The line also implies the fact that the merger was perceived as a betrayal of opposition politics especially at a time when the country was struggling to build the culture of competitive politics.

Therefore other than outright repression, the KANU party also adopted the strategy of “cannibalizing” the opposition either by enticing key political figures of other parties to defect and join it or building political mergers. The main objective of such mergers was to “swallow”

up smaller political parties in order to strengthen KANU and extend its hegemonic rule. Multi-party politics therefore was under threat from the domineering presence of KANU (Chege, 2008).

Misiani ridicules Moi and his KANU regime as being overzealous in the song **GorMahia Pt 1**.

The artist says that Moi's celebrations following the KANU-NDP merger were short-lived.

*To ne gitimo kosa maduong'; ne ok gi swiche of tingano  
Ahonda gi iro kod mor tinga  
Thuon gweno ni e taabu, thuon gweno fuolo mang'eny*

But they made a big mistake; they never switched off the engine  
Coughing, smoke and the roaring of the tractor  
The cock is in trouble, the cockerel coughs a lot

Raila and his former NDP brigade had hit the ground running in their new party KANU and soon started advocating for reforms within the party. For instance, Raila led the other presidential aspirants within KANU to demand for a competitive process of choosing the party's candidate for the 2002 elections when Moi hand-picked Uhuru Kenyatta. The rebels soon stormed out of the party to form the Liberal Democratic Party thereby extensively weakening KANU. Misiani effectively captures the trials and tribulations of KANU following the merger with LDP:

In the above extract from **Gor Mahia Pt 1**, Misiani presents the KANU-NDP merger as having caused more harm than good to the party that had ruled the country since independence. The KANU party is portrayed as being consumed by its own aggressive expansionist policy. By "swallowing" a tractor, the NDP symbol, therefore, the cockerel had indeed bitten too much to chew hence ended up struggling to survive. This symbolically demonstrates the extent to which the new KANU members rocked the boat from within with their reformist opposition brand of politics formerly alien to the age old party (Mara, 2009). It is significant to note that KANU was

handed its first humiliating defeat at the 2002 elections when the party's rebels left and joined forces with other opposition politicians to form National *Rainbow* Coalition (NARC) which in Misiani's words *owadgi Akinyi noseloso rainbow okano e dala-* 'the brother to Akinyi had fashioned rainbow and kept it at home.' Brother to Akinyi is a praise name for Raila Odinga. The Luo use one's sister's names as praise name, in this case the Akinyi is Raila Odinga's sister. By using this praise name, Misiani seems to celebrate the destruction of Kanu as a party. NARC marked the end of the Moi led Kalenjin hegemony in Kenyan politics.

### 6.3.5 The Lion Image

Misiani uses the lion image to represent the Odinga as anti-hegemony. In **Piny Osemer**, Misiani sings:

*Simba ne ruto to kwach chur achura gi chunye*  
*To thuol ne nyise ni ter mos mondi waloso*

The Lion was roaring but the Leopard purring inwardly,  
And the Snake was telling them, "Be patient, we are working things out."

In **Piny Osemer**, released in 1969, it is not surprising when Misiani used the king of the jungle to symbolize Odinga. At that time, Odinga had established himself as the undisputable leader of the Luo and of the Luo ruling hegemony. In this song the lion, symbolizes Odinga hegemony, is sparring with the leopard, a symbol of Kenyatta elites. He had fought for Uhuru and was instrumental in the release of Kenyatta and later became the first ever vice-president of Kenya (Oyugi, 1994).

In this song (**Piny Osemer**) Misiani was faithfully acknowledging and building Odinga Hegemony. He puts Odinga higher than Kenyatta and Mboya in the political realm; each represented by the lion, the leopard and the snake respectively. The lion roars while the leopard instead purrs. From this scene, Odinga is already a force in the mind the musician. Mboya the

only Luo to have ever succeeded in challenging Odingaism in Nyanza is represented here by a snake which has a religious connotation of sly, treacherous animal (bible Mathews 10:16; Genesis 3). Mboya is said to have managed to contain Odinga in the Limuru 1967 conference where Odinga was disgracefully demoted from KANU's leadership. The Luo took it as the worst kind of betrayal. However it is with the death of Mboya that Odinga hegemony was born.

As with the animal kingdom, to the Luo in Nyanza, Odinga remained their symbol of strength, courage, nobility, determination, pride, protection, authority, and conquest. In the two songs **Piny Odong' Kodwa** and **Jo-Luo Watim Ang'o** released after the demise of Odinga in 1994, Misiani fondly refers to Odinga as *simba wuon loch*, translated as 'Lion, the Lord'. Odinga here is given both political and religious authority. This title *wuon loch* is commonly used in religious circles to refer to either God or Jesus; *Hosanna wuon loch*, *obong'owuon loch*, 'Hossana the Lord, obong'o the Lord.' Misiani therefore was lamenting the loss of 'a Luo lord'. *Wuon loch*, which loosely translates to "the one in authority," has this idea that although either Kenyatta or Moi was in power, the one who was actually controlling the political direction of Kenya was Odinga.

Again it was Odinga who could bravely stand and oppose Kenyatta authoritarian leadership when he unveiled KPU, the new opposition party (Oyugi, 1994). He was a giant among other giants in politics. Odinga himself never referred to himself as a lion; however later, with new political dispensation, Odinga thought of a lion which became the symbol of Forum for Restoration of Democracy (FORD) and later of FORD Kenya party (Barkan, 1993).

#### 6.4 The Journey Symbol

The journey symbol or the migratory Nile syndrome is commonly exploited by Misiani in his political songs. Misiani uses it to represent the political journey in Kenya. This is anti-hegemonic journey. The movement implied by the journey motif in Misiani's songs has immense symbolic potentials that are often exploited to good effect by the artist in the portrayal of the prevailing political environment in the country.

In **Gor Mahia Pt 2** released in 1982, Misiani talks of his journey to the land of the Leopards. He says:

*kwach moro obiro ni jogi aa kure?  
kokono to oa kure?  
ban thumni idog go thuru!*

One Leopard came and asked, "Where have these people come from?  
Where has that noise come from?  
Pack your musical instruments and return to your home!"

In this case, Misiani resorts to the use of the journey symbol to cleverly criticize the attitude of political intolerance among the ruling elite. The Leopard, with its aggressive nature, seems to contextually symbolize the government authorities which often cracked down on dissident voices perceived to be critical of Moi's regime after the 1982 attempted coup. The artist uses the journey symbol to portray the curtailing of the citizen's freedom of speech by the government during this period. The line "Pack your musical instruments and return to your home!" demonstrates the tendency by the hegemony to drive critical artists into exile as happened to Misiani himself on a number of occasions. The fact that the events captured here occur to Misiani at the alien land of the animals implies that Moi's government had radically changed to the extent that it was now estranged to the people who formerly welcomed his reign.

#### 6.4.1 Cross-Border Image

One of the major images in Misiani's journey symbol is the cross-border image. In **Safari Ya**

**Daresalam**(The Journey toDaresalam), Misiani sings:

*Beng' makAwiti kili omin Auma oke Orongo;  
Ng'wech gola dala mar Kisumu, nyaka yo Musoma  
Nyaugenya ring ka ndege.  
Okao wuod Owiti gi usiku;  
Sibania adhi akalo gi Tarime  
Wan-gi Meja Osunga*

Beng' son of Awiti, Kili brother of Auma, nephew of Orongo;  
I have set out for a journey from Kisumu towards Musoma  
Ny'augenya traveling as rocket speed  
It has picked son of Owiti at night  
We passed Sibania and Tarime  
We were together with Major Osunga

First, this spatial movement of the persons across the border, can be marked by three phases; initiatory phase, the transformation phase (Ogude, 1999) and the arrival phase. Most of Misiani's journeys songs markedly begin at night, and progress either into the deep darkness or into a morning dawn. Usually transformation does not take effect till the persons have gone through the winding and treacherous journey. The journey is, in most cases, quite tedious and challenging.

Misiani start the journey from Kisumu, and as the title suggests; he is travelling to Daresalam, he is travelling via a bus christened as *Nyaugenya*. Misiani describes *Nyaugenya* speed as terrific speed, *Nyaugenya ringo ka rocket*, 'Nyaugenya is traveling at a rocket speed' and soon he passes Sibania and Tarime. One notable thing is that he has a travel-mate whom he mentions as Major Osunga. Misiani starts this journey at night. From the very onset the journey, from Kisumu to Daresalam, it is predictably not going to be an easy one. The musician refers to night since he sings in a context of gloomy political scene; where political freedom is curtailed and repression is endemic. This darkness parallels the political scene in Kenya with respect to the repressive

hegemonic authorities that do not give room for any contrary opinions. It is significant to note that Kenya's journey as a nation has not been an easy one right from its birth at independence through the hegemonic Kenyatta, Moi and Kibaki hegemonies. The country's journey has been littered with allegations of repression, corruption, nepotism, tribalism, detentions and political assassinations. These adverse conditions that have blotted Kenya's political past have often been described as the "dark days".

The musician crosses the boarder from Kenya in Tanzania. In many of his songs, the artist describes his journeys across the Kenya-Tanzania border. Crossing borders often has connotations of overcoming certain barriers in one's path. Misioni describes his exploits in the sojourn in details including the harsh conditions he has to endure and the tiresome nature of the journey. But majorly, cross boarder symbol reflects the expectation of good life in the other side of the world. It also connotes the political transformation and transition from one hegemony to the new one.

The speed at which the bus travels give a picture of one in a hurry to reach his destination. Indeed the artist hurriedly tells us that he has crossed the border and is in Tanzania; Tarime is in Tanzania. The speed points to the urge of speedy change in the hegemony with an expectation of better thing.

In **Gor Mahia pt 2**, the artist laments:

*Sibuoche mang'eny ni bang'wa,  
To ondiegi malich ni nyimwa  
Uwi to agoyo gi nduru  
To onge ng'ama res chunywa*

Lions are pursuing us,  
And ferocious hyenas wait for us ahead,  
We scream and wail,  
But no one comes to our rescue

The artist describes the circumstances and what a sojourner face in the course of the journey. In this journey described in **Gor Mahia Pt 2**, lions are pursuing them, while in front of them are ferocious hyena. He scream but seeming they do not get any help. The lions and hyenas portray the various political hurdles and tribulations that the citizens undergo courtesy of oppressive hegemonies. It is also clear in the line ‘but no one comes to our rescue’ that the artist is crying out for a messiah of sorts to emerge and save the suffering people from further trouble. The fact that he is aware of the ‘hyenas’ that are ahead but goes on with the journey represents the resolve those who champion change have in bringing change to the populace.

In **Safari ya Daresalam**, Misiani symbolically doubts the route and the competence of the driver:

*Penjna uru ng'ano,  
Kabende ong'eyo yoo,  
Koso omadho njaga,  
Koso omadho pombe kali, jowa  
Kara en ng'atma tiyo kawaida,  
Daresalam ema bor.*

Please, ask that man on my behalf,  
If he is indeed conversant with the route,  
Or is he on drugs?  
Or has he taken a strong drink?  
Yet he is jump a competent person  
It is the distance Daresalam that is long

While at the initial stages of the journey, Misiani appeared to be in a hurry, and the *Nyaugenyabus* was traveling at a rocket speed, yet in this section of the poem, the poet seem to have reached the dead end of his expectation; he had expected to reach his destination, Daresalam, soonest. Despite his speed, they have failed to reach their destination. In his frustration, Misiani turns to his journey-mate and requests them to kindly asks the driver why they are not reaching their destination. He doubts the sobriety of the driver, he even suspects that

either the driver is in drugs or is a poor driver and has taken a wrong turn, otherwise they could have reached Daresalam long time ago. The musician is then assured by his companions that they have a good driver and the problem is not with the driver, the problems lies with the distance: it is Daresalam that is far. Misiani do use journey to convey various political phases and political endeavors. In this song Misiani has already crossed the border, and the expectation is high about reaching the destination, however destination seem elusive of very far. This song was sang at the celebrative mood of cooperation between the ruling party and one opposition party NDP. Expectation was in the air. It was like the members and supporters of NDP had crossed a political border into a new land. But there is one thing that jolts the Musician and he wishes to convey it across: reaching a political destination takes time. Overthrowing a hegemony is not a one day affair, it take time. It takes long to achieve freedom and democracy and to overthrow the ruling hegemony.

The driver, as animage, seems to refer to key figures in the country's anti-hegemony politicians. In this song, the artist appears to question whether or not the members of the opposition are using the right strategies to enable them achieve their desired goal of bringing political liberation to the people. Maybe there is need for the politicians to revise their approaches if only to achieve the right results. It can also be argued that Misiani questions the sincerity of the doyens of political change in Kenya.

However, as he is told, Daresalam is far off; the desired political revolution takes some time and patience is a key virtue. It is important to note that even after doubt so many things about the journey, Misiani still continued with the same, focusing on the destination.

#### **6.4.2 Destination Image**

Misiani's songs, however, do not comprise an everlasting journey but one that eventually comes to an end at the Arrival Phase. Despite the many challenges during the journey, the artist portrays

an optimistic picture of some light at the end of the tunnel. This emerges in the song **Safari Ya Daresalam**, where the artist celebrates having arrived at his destination thus:

*Saa apar wachopo Magunga mak Owiti kod Otieno  
Daresalam achopo kaol;  
Ng'ama ruaka oonge!  
Martin maka Adede, wuonya Ngire ogolo Chesta mare magreen  
Oomo wuod Amara;  
Wuod Apondo otera adonjo Sin-Park  
Sama koro adonjo gi Nashon, Adwet mami gi Perusi;  
Jogi duto lamona Mungu ogwedha adonjo City;  
Mama Sarah kwayo Jehova orita  
'kik adonj e richo city mbaya'  
'Mama awinjo wachni.'*

At 4.00 pm we arrived, Magunga son of Owiti and Otieno  
I arrived in Daresalam very much exhausted.  
And there was nobody to receive me  
Son of Apondo booked me in at Sinpark  
When I arrived together with Nashon, Adwet and Perusi  
The Martin son of Adede, son of a professor brought his green Chesta vehicle  
Come and fetched son of Amara;  
Mama Sarah asked for protection from Jehovah  
That we may not find ourselves problems, the city is full of evil  
'Our mom Sarah prayed for all of us, blessing our arrival'  
'Mom, a have listened and accepted what your cancel.'

As much as the celebration here is quite muted, the important thing is that the sojourner finally reaches his long desired destination. The lack of excitement by the artist at the arrival, except that he is weary and poor reception, could be symbolic of the fact that the desired ideal of political liberation is far from over yet. Both the title of the track **Safari Ya Daresalam** and the name of the destination “Daresalam” are politically figurative. Tanzania is famed for its political stability among the East African nations while Daresalam means “harbour of peace” (Bryceson, 2010). These two symbols thus complete the artist’s picturesque portrayal of his journey as heading towards a political Canaan. The sojourner therefore finally reaches the much awaited destination that constitutes symbolically the political dawn. In a country of political thuggery, an

election, positive constitutional amendments or mere change of guard at the top that results into democratic space may constitute what one may call a political dawn.

### **6.5 Images of Dreams and Visions**

One of the successes in Misiani is his ability to explore what he terms as his visions concerning the political state of the country. Some of these dreams are based on well-known visions in the Bible but which he conveniently manipulates to his advantage. The transfer of hegemonic power in Kenya's politics, for instance, is alluded to in Misiani's reference to the book of Daniel chapter two and three. In **Wang'ni to Lich PT2 (This Time Round, Things will be Terrible)**, Misiani poses a string of rhetoric questions:

*Nebuchadnezzar aliota nini  
Kwenye ndoto zake?  
Na, mwishowe alikuwaje?  
Hebu soma fungu la pili na la tatu  
Ya kitabu ya Danieli*

What did Nebuchadnezzar dream about?  
In his dreams?  
Eventually, how did things turn out?  
Please read chapter two and three  
Of the book of Daniel

The artist further urges us to read the second and the third chapters of the book of Daniel. He asks what Nebuchadnezzar dreamt about and from the dream Misiani want us to find out what came out of the dream. Now to find out, Misiani directs us to go and read chapter two and three of the book of Daniel. In the book of Daniel chapter 2 verse 31-35, Nebuchadnezzar dreams of an exceedingly magnificent image whose head was of fine gold, its chest and arms silver, its belly and thighs bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly iron partly clay. Daniel interpreted the dream saying that the head, chest and arms, belly and thighs, the feet represented the Babylon, the Persio-Medes, the Greeks and the Roman empires respectively. Indeed Daniel's interpretation of

Nebuchadnezzar's dream, is focused on the transfer of power from one kingdom to the other (Daniel Chapters: 2, 3); one hegemony to another, from Babylon to Persio-Medes to the Greeks and eventually to the Romans. Misiani uses this biblical transition of power to portray the political circumstances in Kenya. He seems to imply that one individual, community or hegemony cannot hold onto power forever. This song sang during the reign of Kenyatta and Kikuyu elite hegemony, points at the statue's head as Kenyatta hegemony. By the time of Misiani's death, Kenya was under Kibaki's hegemony; the belly and thighs hegemony. By recognizing the possibility of transfer of political power, he also expresses optimism towards a regime change in future.

Following Kenyatta's death, Misiani released **Wang'ni to Lich PT2** where he sings:

*Mnamo tarehe 21 mwezi wa nane  
Wakati wa usiku, ndoto iliniija*

*bwana Misiani, ombi lako limejibiwa  
wachawi waliokuwa wakikuroga sasa wanaelekea mtoni,*

On August 21<sup>st</sup>  
I had a dream at night.  
Mr. Misiani your prayers has been answered

Those that have been bewitching you are on their way to be drowned in the river.

The dream refers to in this song is politically symbolic. Of significance is the fact that the date mentioned is in fact a day before the sudden death of President Jomo Kenyatta on 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 1978. By claiming to have accurately predicted the demise of Kenyatta, the artist celebrates the passing on of the then president as a significant event that may positively turn around the political environment in the country. The celebratory tone, Misiani spells the end of the witches who are being led to the river to be drowned. The witch in this song refers to Kenyatta, whose

political antics could be political magic. The fact that this song was sung in Kiswahili symbolizes the artist's intention to reach a wider audience beyond his usual Luo one.

In his song **Dalmas Otieno**, a campaign song composed for Dalmas Otieno a former Minister in the government, Misiani uses Nebuchadnezzar's dream image to represent Dalmas Otieno.

...

*Ibed ng'ama long'o kaparo wechena matieko wacho gi*

*Lek moro aleko ka nindo otieno*

*Ni en gima lich kaparo to berndi*

*Osimbo moro aneno ka wuotho otieno*

*To da usomo buga makoro emuma moting'o e wechego*

*Osimbo aneno kochung kuoma*

*Ochung ka mfuano to orieny nyaka malo*

*Tiende dhahabu mondikie telo ma mare*

*Nungone mkanda mondikie weche te maruoth osechano*

*Kore Almasi marieny nyaka goke*

*Lwetene to aneno kokonyo jowa*

*Dhoge awinjo kosomo muma*

*Wichne to aneno kosidhie osimbone ma Ruoth oseketo*

*Beng' wuod adongo nochungo malo*

*Apene Jehova manyalo to oduoka*

*Ruothwa Jehova noduoko leknano*

*To Otieno wuod Anyango ema oromo konyowa e Kuja*

...

Be prudent and remember this message that I speak to you

I had a dream last night when I was asleep;

It was horrible dream but wonderful to remember;

I saw a figure walking at night

You need to read prophetic books that carry such messages

I saw a crown standing before me

It stood erect like a statue

On its golden feet were written its powers

On its waist a belt written Lord's future plans

Its chest to the shoulders, was bright diamond

I saw its hands helping people  
I heard its mouth taking oaths  
On its head, I saw the Lords crown on it

An artist, son of Adongo, when I woke up  
I asked the mighty Jehovah to give me answers  
The Lord Jehovah interpreted that dream for me  
That it is Otieno son of Anyango that fits to help us in Kuja

In this song, Misiani tells us that unlike the dream in the Book of Daniel which was dreamed by Nebuchadnezzar, this time round, it is Misiani who dreams. He tells us that as he slept at night he had a horrifying dream; he saw a figure walk at night. Surprisingly, Misiani tell us the read prophetic books to understand the dream. Then the moment he starts to describe the dream, we instantly realize that the dream is similar to Nebuchadnezzar's dream. However, in this case Misiani tells us that upon inquiring from God the meaning of the dream, God tells him that this image who 'speaks oracles, whose hand helps and whose is crowned' is none other than Dalmas Otieno.

It should be understood that over the years, Otieno has always remained the face of the ruling hegemony in Luo Nyanza. When almost all Luo politicians had crossed to the opposition, Dalmas Otieno remained in the government (Oloo, 2007; Ahluwalia, 1997). So when Misiani sings in praise of one who people thought was a community traitor, he sings then about the government, the ruling hegemony, as Otieno is the visible symbol. Its 'golden feet, its belt, diamond chest, its hands and its mouth' are shown to take up various forms of duties. This image that Misiani paints exemplified different hegemonies in the country; the ruling hegemonies. The Luo community has been in the opposition politics for as far as 1966 when Oginga Odinga broke ranks with Kenyatta and formed his KPU party (Ahluwalia, 1997). Otieno then stands as the government presence in the Luo community. He is the symbol of the government. Although

people feel agitated against the ruling hegemony, they also want the government to help them in development projects; the Musician therefore sings presenting the hegemony using positive attributes as: *Lwetene to aneno kokonyo jowa*, I saw its hands helping people.

In a hegemonic political situation like Kenya, Misiani dedicates a number of hits to political characters painting them in messianic images. A community that suffers relentless political domination is bound to cry for a savior. The kind of literature produced by this political setting is messianic. Political figures that appear savior-like are elevated deity-like; in their deaths, they are redemptive sacrificial offering-Christ like. This is what comes to fore in Misiani's elevation of the dead political figures; Oginga Odinga, Tom Mboya, J.M. Kariuki, Dr. Robert Ouko, Oyugi Ogango among others.

### 6.5.1 Prophecy as an Image

Owino Misiani claimed that he could see all these coming, before they happen. It is true that sometimes Misiani would warn Kenyans of some political happening. They would happen and people would call him a seer. In the eulogy to the slain Minister Dr. Robert Ouko, titled **Dr. Robert Ouko**, Misiani summons his known methods of address, where he summons the bible to refer to the Kenya's political world.

*Uneno masiche medore  
Ndalo ru ochiewgi chapo  
Hosanna unune malit  
Ndalogi ogik kaka ondiki.*

Do you see tribulations increasing?  
The end is almost  
Hosanna, it will be terrible  
Their end time has come, as is written

As Misiani eulogized the slain minister, he points out that as you see such tribulations, means that the end of time is almost reached. He the end of time has indeed come as written. Most likely, ‘as written’ possibly points to or refers to Mathew 24: 6-7 and/or Luke 21: 8-12.

According to Misiani the death of Ouko was the final sign to the end of Moi and Kalenjin hegemony. *Ndalo-gi ogik kaka ondiki*, ‘their end-time was apt as it is written’; Ouko’s death was the beginning of the end of Moi. In **Njao Par Ng’ato** Misiani tells Moi that his end has come, *yoo ogik e nam*, your road has reached in the lake. When a traveler is travelling on the road then suddenly, the roads ends in the lake, then that would portend the end of the journey unless now you acquire a boat. In this song sang in 1995 during Moi’s sung reign, Misiani meant that the Moi’s hegemony had reached its dead end. Indeed Moi hegemony and KANU lost in the subsequent general election.

In part two of **Amolo Piny Pako Te part II**, Misiani uses a prophetic tone to evaluate the political happening in the country. Misiani’s score sheet read:

*Pinyini kang’iye, pinyin karange mos*  
*Pinyini kang’iye, pinyin karange mos*  
*Pinyini kang’iye, to wabiro yudoe gima wadwaro*  
*Pinyini kasome to wabiro ringo ng’we lee*  
*Pinyini kang’iye, to wabiro yudoe gime wadwaro no*

*Nyathi kineno tugo koda mach*  
*Ketie lwete*  
*Nyathi kineno mulo losruok*  
*Kuon maliet e lwete*

*Ochako kalo mano tabusana*  
*Ngano piny emapuonje*  
*Pinyini kasome to wabiro yudo e gimawadwaro*  
*Pinyini kasome to wabiro ringo ng’we lee*  
*Pinyini kasome to wabiro yudo gima wadwarono*

*Pinyini kang’iye, pinyin karange mos*  
*Pinyini kang’iye, pinyin karange mos*  
*Pinyini kang’iye, to wabitro yudoe gima wadwaro*

*Pinyini kasome to wabiro ringo ng'we lee*  
*Pinyini kang'eye, to wabiro yudoe gime wadwaro no*

*KajoLybia kedo to kik imor ahinya ni bor*  
*Liberia kedo to ok okoborgi in*  
*Sieraleon kedo tabu sana ji tho rumo*  
*Pinyini kasome to wabiro telo e pinje mamoko*  
*Pinyini kasome to wabiro yudo e gimawadwaro*  
*Pinyini kasome to wabiro chamo e jii kangima*

*Unjokanisegi, ti gi gima ondik e buk*  
*Uwek thuwo oganda, to un jomakweyo piny*  
*Uwe kelo nyiego gi ukora kod siasa mag piny*  
*Pinyini kasome to wabiro chamo e oyieyo*  
*Pinyini kasome to wabiro ikoe ji ka ngima*

### **The Entire Country is Praising Amolo pt II**

When I contemplate this country  
As I look at it carefully, this country as I study it  
This country as I look at it, we shall get that which we have been looking for  
This country as I look at it, we shall flee like wild animals  
This country the way I see it, we get that that which we have been looking for

If you see a child plays with fire  
Put its hand on it  
If a child plays with feaces  
Put hot *ugali* on its hands

If the child doesn't learn a lesson  
Then let the world teach it  
This country as I look at it, we shall get that which we have been looking for  
This country as I look at it, we shall flee like wild animals  
This country the way I see it, we get that that which we have been looking for

When I contemplate this country  
As I look at it carefully, this country as I study it  
This country as I look at it, we shall get that which we have been looking for  
This country as I look at it, we shall flee like wild animals  
This country the way I see it, we get that that which we have been looking for

When Libyans are at war, don't rejoice that Libya is far  
When Liberia is torn apart by war, it is not far from you  
Serra Leon is in war, people are dying, it is sad  
This country as a study it, we shall just be like these countries  
This country as I study it, we shall get what we have been looking for  
This country, we shall eat each other alive

When I contemplate this country  
As I look at it carefully, this country as I study it  
This country as I look at it, we shall get that which we have been looking for  
This country as I look at it, we shall flee like wild animals  
This country the way I see it, we get that that which we have been looking for

You church leaders, use what is written in the book  
Stop causing bad blood between communities, be mediators  
Stop igniting jealousy, corruption and politics in the country  
As I study this country, we shall eat even rats.  
As I study this country, where we shall bury people alive,

Misiani sang this song just after the second Kenya's multi-party election, when Raila dissolved his National Democratic Party (NDP) and joined KANU to form new-KANU. In part one of this song, Misiani celebrates the cooperation and merger between the two parties. It is surprising that in this part two, Misiani opts to paint a gloomy picture of the future of Kenya. Misiani says that as he keenly observes what is happening in the country, the country shall get what it has been looking for. He says that Kenya is soon getting that very thing it has been looking for. Misiani repeats the chorus severally to emphasise the fact that Kenya is at the edge of some catastrophic ending. As he looks into the future, Misiani says that Kenyans will flee, will eat rats and will bury each other alive. Misiani does not use run but uses the simile, 'flee like wild animal'. Here Misiani give a picture of a terrified wild animal scampering for safety without any sense of direction. When Misiani talks of eating rats he give an impression of extreme food scarcity. Rat is not considered food among most Kenyan communities, therefore for Misiani to say people will eat rats alludes to the fact that there will be extreme food scarcity that people will eat anything edible. Similarly, burying each other alive gives an impression of Kenyans losing their humanity. Human beings mourn and bury their dead, but when one buries another alive, it can only be explained in a state of violence, war and chaos; exactly what Misiani suggests in the line, 'we shall bury people alive.'

With a resigned tone, Misiani uses the image of disobedient child for an illustrate; a child should not play with fire or feaces,it should be stopped. But one way of stopping it from such behavior is to give it a more painful experience. From this painful experience, the artist believes that the child is able to learn and change.

Misiani also cautions Kenyan about a belief that their country is forever peaceful. He tells Kenyans not to glee over other countries tribulations because soon they are facing the same. He tells Kenyans that the war in Sieraleon and Liberia is not unique, and Kenya can easily slide into that kind of league. With prospects of chaos and mayhem, Misiani candidly welcomes mediation form the religious leaders; his focus is on leaders who would broker peace away from bad blood that is characteristics of political leaders.

Misiani would have sung a song reflecting a brighter future for the nation (which he somehow sang in part one of the song) but he chose to paint gloom and doom (in part two). Misiani still saw numerous flaws in the government that could not be cured by mere merger of two parties, of KANU and NDP.

Misiani therefore sings that, the country shall get ‘what it has been searching for.’ The musician tends to say that, as a political analyst, he is convinced that by Kenya regressing into the old habits, its future was bleak. According to him, Kenya has been looking for something; political unrest and it would soon get it. He foresaw a possibility of Kenya degenerating into political violence. He says that Kenyans shall flee like wild animals. The future of Kenya and the mistakes of other countries were presented in a Luo saying in the same song:

Misiani seem to say that Kenya had failed to learn a lesson and soon will slip into political violence. Comparatively, a child that does not learn that fire is hot even after being slightly burnt

or child that does not learn that feaces is bad even after being burnt by a hot ugali, is beyond redemption. Indeed every election has been synonymous to violence in various parts of Kenya especially in the Rift Valley and Coast provinces (Ndegwa, 2003). Kenya is a child that does not learn from earlier mistakes. He then tells Kenya that it will reap the consequence of not learning from the past.

Misiani already saw Kenya relapsing into war and its clean record of island of peace being tainted. Misiani says that, a closer look at the country shows that Kenya will just be like other African countries torn apart by war, where people will suffer the consequence of war where the population will flee and people will be buried alive while others to face hunger and eat rats .

Earlier in his song **Ywak Hezekiah Oyugi pt 1** (Hezekiah Oyugi's Dirge pt 1) Misiani had told Kenyans that:

*Anyisi to ok ine;  
Apimoni to ok donjni,*

I point out these things for you; you don't see  
I share with you, but you don't understand.

In this song is pointing out some danger to Kenyans, but they seem not to see the danger. He shares with Kenyans what he knows but Kenyans seems too dumb to understand. Misiani stands out on a pedestal of a sentinel, warning the population of an impending danger. The hegemony does not take heed of the warning and thus anti-hegemony forces are set to counter the hegemony and replace the ruling hegemon. Misiani was wondering aloud why Kenyans don't see what he was seeing into the political future. He told Kenyans in the same song:

*Be uneno lweny marang'ongoni?  
Ngwejni be-inene?  
Nyithindo mang'eny modong' etie yien-gi be unenogi?  
Mon man-gi iye kod madhodhogi manene malich-gi, to mond kanye?*

Do you see this horrifying war?

Do you see the people fleeing?  
These stranded children under the tree, where are they from?  
What of these desperate pregnant and suckling women?

In the above song, like the previous one, Misiani's prophetic eye sees a head in time; he sees war, people fleeing, stranded children, desperate pregnant and suckling women. These are symptoms and evidence of a failed nation or hegemon, a nation that is at the crossroad of political turbulence.

He asked Kenyans whether they are seeing the impending war, the fleeing thus refugees, desperation and deaths this orphaned children. He then concludes that if Kenyans don't believe, then it is a 'let us watch, wait and see'. Kenya needed not wait for long before they watched and saw Misiani's prophesy coming to pass and the hegemon's stability threatened; the 2007-2008 post-election violence, a violent attempt of counter hegemony (Kagwanja, 2009). Misiani's prophecy had come true; Kenya had got what they had been looking for. They had fled like wild animals, they had eaten rats; people were displaced and relocated from their home into internally displaced persons camps (Kagwanja,2009) The country was now not different from other African countries riddled by political unrest. Kenyans would not now laugh at the warring countries.

## **6.6 Summary**

This chapter has discussed how the readers view on images and symbols in Misiani's political songs. The chapter has detailed the main animal symbols in Misiani's songs across all dominating hegemonies in Kenya. Similarly, it has looked at journey and main religious symbols used by Misiani.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary and conclusions that have been drawn from the findings of the study. The first section of the chapter gives a summary of the study, section two focuses on conclusions drawn from the findings guided by the objectives of the study. Section three presents' recommendations made by the researcher with respect to the study and finally section four suggests possible areas of study which future researchers can look into.

#### 7.2 Findings

The aim of this study was to explore the imagery and symbolism employed by Misiani in constructing politics in his songs. It was guided by the following objectives:

1. To determine the extent to which Misiani's socio-cultural background influences the choice and use of symbols and images in his songs;
2. To evaluate how the repressive and hegemonic Kenyan political past shapes the artist's nature of Misiani's songs;
3. To examine how imagery and symbols construct the theme of politics in Misiani's songs.

Migration became an important factor of convergence between the reader and the artist. Misiani documents migration or journeys towards a land of tranquil and plenty. Movement motif, an aspect of migration runs across a number of Misiani's songs.

Naming becomes integral part of Misiani's work that influences his choice of images and symbols. For political reasons, Misiani adopts, ethno systematic way of naming, teknonyms and nicknames. Misiani's symbols and images are created from Misiani's ways of naming. Another aspect of culture of that influences Misiani's choice of symbols and image is Luo oral literature.

Misiani becomes an oral artist thus telling political metaphorical narrative, riddles, proverbs allegories, *ngero* and *pakruok*.

Most importantly, religion has played a key role in shaping up symbols and images in Misiani's language. Misiani's songs as noted are sometimes too religious. Bible characters and stories become symbols and images. He uses this dream to interpret Kenya politics.

The repressive Kenyan history right from independence influences both the reader and the artist. It forms a key political background from which the artist creates his political themes. Three hegemonies are analyzed in the study; Kenyatta hegemony, Moi hegemony and finally Kibaki hegemony. Through the process of anti and counter hegemony, a new hegemony is ushered in. Based on different political eras in the Kenya history, the readers and the artist get affected across these dominant hegemonies.

Kenyatta hegemony replaces the colonial hegemony immediately after independence. In his attempt to consolidate power, Misiani sings about, Kenyatta's attempt to create a hegemony that is basically a Kikuyu elite hegemony. The musician addresses this as alienating other political players and Kenyans. The artist read intimidation and harassment, setting up of regional hegemony, murder, assassinations and detention of dissidents, ethno-regional political coalition and authoritarianism in Kenyatta's hegemonic domination. His songs hit at Kenyatta's excesses on his mode of administration.

While the musician applauds Moi's euphoric entry into power, he is later able to respond to the repressive nature of Moi hegemony that replaces Kenyatta hegemony. Moi follows the footsteps of his predecessor in his famous, *fatwanay*, following in the foot step, slogan, and employs the very repressive tactics that Kenyatta employed. The musician responds to Moi's repressive

politics of dismantling Kenyatta hegemony and creating his own Kalenjin elite hegemony. Misiani records anti-hegemony processes: 1982 coup attempt, arrest and detention of key political leaders, murder and assassination of political leaders, ethno-regional political coalition and authoritarianism.

The reader and the artist again converge in the post Moi hegemony, and that is in Kibaki hegemony. In the tribal sense, Kibaki too took the cue from his predecessors and established his own hegemony mainly composed of Kenyatta era political elites. While the artist recognizes that politics has much changed since the days of Kenyatta and Moi era, the current hegemony though democratic, has maintained the status quo. The artist sings about the establishment of regional hegemony, failure to amend the constitution and skewed distribution of resources and appointments.

This study identifies three main symbols in Misiani's work. The readers may read three main symbols in Misiani's lyrics that address the hegemonic politics in Kenya; animal, journey and religious symbols. Although there may be other symbols, but based on both socio-cultural and hegemonic repressive political background, the reading zeroed down on the above major symbols. The symbols were carried along several specific images.

In Misiani's lyrics, animals in the jungle, birds in the air, and fish in the water create Misiani images. In Misiani's music, the world of men, politically the country is equated to either, the jungle where animals live, the air where birds live or the lake where the fish live. It is; however, the animal kingdom, the jungle that runs across most Misiani's music. The study points out three distinct animals to represent the three hegemonies in post-colonial Kenya. The animals are the

Leopard, The Hyena and the Baboon. Each of these animals has folk lore and natural features that make them very relevant to the hegemony that they represent.

In Misiani's world the leopard is described as *rakido*, *wang'etindo* and *bade dongo*, insinuating shrewdness and highhandedness. The leopard represented Kenyatta hegemony, a hegemony that presided over the launch of outright autocracy and bad governance that has bedeviled Kenya politics to date. Even after the death of Kenyatta, Misiani still used the leopard to point at Kikuyu elites, especially that group headed by Charles Njonjo that occasionally reared its head to in an attempt to take over power.

The second animals that featured prominently is the hyena, known for its greed but held in awe by the Kalenjin community because of its ability to eat dead flesh. The hyena came to represent Moi and the Kalenjin elite hegemony. Just like the hyena's greed, Moi's government is said to have presided over looting the state coffers and enriched themselves. A hyena is also known for its cowardice and could be easily evicted from its territory. The coup of 1982 fits well in this hyena image. Misiani however props the greedy and cowardice hyena with another tough image; the cockerel image, the party symbol of KANU. So when Moi turned dictatorial, the cockerel took over as the symbol. A cock among a party of hen and other cockerels does not entertain challenge. It does not entertain power sharing or at worst opposition. The study found out that the political nature of Moi hegemony is clothed in the image of the hyena and the cockerel.

Misiani uses the image of the baboon to represent the third hegemony in Kenya, the Kibaki hegemony. Misiani adopts the baboon image because so much reform had taken place. Section 2A of Kenya constitution barring multi-partism had been repealed. Kibaki then became a

president as a democrat and as a reformer. That does not happen as Kibaki then becomes a democratic-turncoat and avoided the much needed constitutional reforms. Misiani uses a baboon, to represent Kibaki, an animal which closely resembles a human being, yet, it's not. This may mean that Kibaki was on the face value a democrat and a reformer yet in reality he may not have been.

In the analysis, Misiani uses much of religion in his songs. The readers read a seer in Misiani as he uses religious images to interpret the politics future in the country. Of the many images used by images, this study identified three religious images to explain the trends of the three hegemonies in Kenya.

Misiani used prophetic image to explain the past, the present and the future of the hegemonies in Kenya. The hegemonic changeover is presented in a prophetic tone. After observing the political trends in the country, Misiani would issue a prophecy that a change is in the offing. Usually when change comes his way, his fan referred to him as a prophet.

Misiani uses dream and vision as religious images in his treat of political lyrics. Misiani's messages are presented inform of dream and visions. Misiani uses dream motif to interpret the politics in Kenya. He presents hegemony changeover in dreams and visions. He compares leaders to the images and visions and dreams. Anyone ready Misiani will uses the bible to explain the image of the bible to explain what was going in the country.

Misiani presents a messianic image; a people who have great political suffering, Misiani presents a messianic image. In a number of his songs, Misiani props various political leaders to a various status, a political messiah who save Kenya from, tyranny, autocracy, tribalism, poor distribution of resources, among other political disjuncture.

Misiani interpreted the political transformation in Kenya as a journey, to some political Canaan. The process of one hegemony being replaced by another becomes a journey in Misiani. The changeover from Kenyatta to Moi then to Kibaki hegemony come with some positive change though sometime subtle, is an indication of a journey to some political emancipation. To illustrate this change, Misiani put in effect two images;

The study found out that the cross-border image is used by Misiani shows the movement from one government to the other. By crossing a boarder from one country to the other, Misiani implies political movement to new political dispensation. Usually, Misiani's journey would begin at night and end during the day and to the destined place. Every Kenya agrees that the journey to a free Kenya has been long and perilous.

In the journey symbol, Misiani demarcates the political gains and sometimes political journey hazards with sign-posts. The death of Kenyatta, the end of Kenyatta hegemony, the entry of Moi hegemony, the 1982-attempted coup, are all documented as sign posts along the journey. In Misiani's songs market places, towns, road junctions are the sign-posts along the political journey.

In this symbol, Misiani in a kind of a rethought says that although the government is mostly evil in the opposition zones, the government also a necessary evil. Just like a river causes flooding that causes untold destruction, a river is also a source water and food to the community. The people actually not do without the government.

### **7.3 Recommendation**

After completing this study it has become apparent that Misiani makes use of several types of images and symbols; those from the water, land and even terrestrial beings and objects. This

study was a general overview and kind of introduction to the insight to expansive corpus of Misiani's work. There is need therefore to do a specific and a narrow-down study on these images and symbols. For example, a study need to be done just on water images only or on terrestrial bodies only and of course their various interpretations. In the course of the study, it became apparent that Misiani's work is highly poetic akin to modern European and American poetry. It would be interesting if a comparative study is done of Misiani's oral poetry and the poems of poets like W.E. Yeats or Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The use of biblical allusions, ancient and cultural allusions, unique poetic structure are just a few things that still require detailed analysis in Misiani's poetry rich songs.

#### **7.4 Suggestions for Further Research**

Misiani's lyrics are literary rich; there is therefore need for a study to be done using other literary styles apart from symbolism. This study highly recommends studying Misiani's political lyrics through the eye of satire. This would make a very informative study of politics in Kenya.

It would be interesting if a comparative study is done of Misiani's oral poetry and the poems of poets like W.E. Yeats or Samuel Taylor Coleridge among other poets.

Misiani's work can be looked at from post-colonial theory point of view. This might address conclusively the political themes in Misiani's songs.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### Songs Referred to

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. <i>AdumaOkilKamaloka</i>          | Advocate Aduma                               |
| 2. <i>AmoloPiny Pak Te 1</i>         | The Entire Country is Praising Amolo part I  |
| 3. <i>AmoloPinyPakoTe 2</i>          | The Entire Country is Praising Amolo part II |
| 4. <i>BimenBim</i>                   | A Baboon is a Baboon                         |
| 5. <i>Bodaline</i>                   | Bodaline                                     |
| 6. <i>DalmasOtieno</i>               | DalmasOtieno                                 |
| 7. <i>DalmasOtieno</i>               | DalmasOtieno                                 |
| 8. <i>Dr Robert Ouko</i>             | Dr. Robert Ouko                              |
| 9. <i>Dr. Robert Oukopt 1</i>        | Dr. Robert Ouko                              |
| 10. <i>GorMahia Pt 1</i>             | GorMahia part 1                              |
| 11. <i>GorMahia Pt 2</i>             | GorMahia part 2                              |
| 12. <i>Grace pt 1</i>                | Grace part 1                                 |
| 13. <i>Jo Luo WatimAng'o</i>         | The Luo, what should we do                   |
| 14. <i>Jokale</i>                    | Animal World                                 |
| 15. <i>Jokawiny</i>                  | Of the Birds                                 |
| 16. <i>JowiiyeJawang'</i>            | The Buffalo is Agitated                      |
| 17. <i>KwachKakido</i>               | The Spotted Leopard                          |
| 18. <i>Muunganopt 1</i>              | Unity part 1                                 |
| 19. <i>Njao Par Ng'ato</i>           | Defiling One's Homestead                     |
| 20. <i>ODM</i>                       | Orange Democratic Movement (ODM)             |
| 21. <i>PinyOdong' Kodwapt 1</i>      | We have Remained Desolate part 1             |
| 22. <i>PinyOwachopt 1</i>            | The Country has Spoken                       |
| 23. <i>Rainbow pt 1</i>              | Rainbow part 1                               |
| 24. <i>Safari YaDaresalam</i>        | A journey to Daresalam                       |
| 25. <i>Safari YaMusoma</i>           | A journey to Musoma                          |
| 26. <i>Safari YaMzee Nyanza pt 1</i> | The Old Man's Journey to Nyanza part 1       |
| 27. <i>Safari YaMzee Nyanza pt 2</i> | The Old man's journey to Nyanza part 2       |
| 28. <i>Thuond Luo</i>                | Luo Heroes                                   |
| 29. <i>To WanywaknePiny</i>          | We Bemoan this Country                       |
| 30. <i>Wang'ni To Iringo</i>         | This Time You are Fleeing                    |
| 31. <i>Wang'ni to Lich</i>           | This Time Round its Terrible                 |
| 32. <i>Ywak Ezekiel part 1</i>       | Lamentation of Ezekial part 1                |
| 33. <i>Ywak Hezekiah Oyugipt 1</i>   | Lamentation of Hezekiah Oyugi part 1         |
| 34. <i>PedowuodAlogo</i>             | Pedo son of Alogo                            |