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### Protocol and Order during the Mourning Period for the Late President Moi: Understanding Official Discourse of the Disciplined Forces and Cultural Ideologies

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*Acts of Protocol,  
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Discursive Elements,  
Cultural Ideologies.*

This paper is a reflection on both the language and acts of protocol and honour witnessed during the days of mourning and funeral service of the second President of the Republic of Kenya, Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi, between the fourth and the twelfth of February 2020. Interviews with some military officers were used to shed light on the meanings of the texts and acts of honour and protocol. These include; the Presidential Proclamation, the flags traditions, the military marches, and the gun ceremony by army. The army was in charge of most of the ceremonies and activities that took place during that time of mourning. This discourse and honorary acts are contrary to another underplayed disgruntled discourse that those who suffered under the KANU regime had. Is it a cultural thing not to say ill of the departed? Was the media down playing these contrary views because of what they called 'negative Kenyan groupthink'? Discourse analysis theory was used to help shed light on the intricacies of language and meanings in the discourse of the disciplined forces and other discourses backgrounded in these events yet are part of human experiences and activities. The gist of the paper is how discursive elements in the chosen texts and acts (for this article, the military) have practical, ritual, symbolic, semiotic, and cultural functions. In discussing this one event, the paper endeavours to show the importance of language in revealing social and cultural ideologies and how this knowledge helps in understanding peoples' lives. As a social practice, language informs the social structure; who the people are, their behaviours and way of life.

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## INTRODUCTION

The second President of the Republic of Kenya, H.E Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi, died on the fourth of February 2020. Days of mourning ensued between the fourth and the twelfth of February 2020 through a Presidential proclamation. Of interest to this article were the elaborate events that followed; the language, the mood, the protocol, the parades displayed by the military and the citizens' queues to view the body which continued till the day of laying him to rest on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020. This was the official discourse. There was another unofficial discourse that was not given much room in the media. The discourse of discontentment towards Mr. Moi had been there during his reign but culminated at the swearing in of President Mwai Kibaki in 2002. On that day crowds jeered and pelted with stones the motorcade of the then outgoing President Moi. This paper sought to understand the underlying meanings portrayed in the respectful events and discourses at his death, and contradictions with those other disgruntled discourses in relation to Kenyan culture and ideologies.

That the late President, Daniel Arap Moi loomed large as life on the Kenyan public scene for over six decades is not in doubt in the mind of Kenyans as was also elaborated by his biographer Morton (1999), and other media writers in the recent past. It may have been this large stature in addition to being

a retired head of state which called for the elaborate send-off witnessed in the wake of his death and which had not been seen since the demise of *Mzee* Jomo Kenyatta the first president of the Republic of Kenya in 1978. This paper interrogates the procedures, the attendant language use (vocabulary, grammar, and intertextuality) while reflecting on linguistic theories that inform the understanding of such discourses. To weave through, the paper starts with the working definitions of concepts and terms as used here and in literature. The language and protocol during this period are then analysed. Later a critique is done on what all this meant.

The term discourses have several meanings ranging from normal conversation, written text and register which is language as used in specific contexts. For example, classroom discourse is different from court discourse in terms of the language used, the participants and activities possible within its domain. In this paper discourse is used mainly to refer to how people talk, believe and act as shaped and constrained by social and institutional structures. Discourse in social domains or institutional settings is politically, culturally, and ideologically constrained. In other words, it is "invested" and "reinvested" or "loaded" with societal beliefs and practices (Fairclough, 2003). Second, is the term discursive practice which can be manifested in a linguistic form as text, written or spoken language. An analysis of discourse as discursive practice focuses on its production,

distribution, and consumption, all of which are social and require reference to particular economic, political, cultural, and institutional settings within which the discursive practice is generated.

The third term used in this paper is social practice which refers to a social activity where language is used in a specific way. The social activities could be economic, educational, political, cultural, and so forth. Language use (or discourse) is normally implicated in all social activities, yet a given activity is not necessarily reduced to discourse. For example, in the stock market, language is used to discuss stock market issues. The language used can be called the discourse or register of stock market with recognizable vocabulary and actors. However, the stock market activity remains an economic one. In the same way, the disciplined force is a social practice of its own kind as will be shown below.

The term Presidential proclamation is a statement issued by a president on issues of public policy. It is a kind of presidential directive. In the US, Presidential Proclamations have been used since the 18<sup>th</sup> century at the attainment of independence. (Wikipedia)

Protocol is the ‘official, especially diplomatic, formality and etiquette observed on state occasions...’ It is the official procedure or system of rules governing affairs of state or diplomatic occasions (The *Concise Oxford Dictionary, the new edition for 1990s*).

## METHODS AND ANALYSIS

Three forms of data were used. The first was the document; The presidential proclamation (*Appendix 1*), second were the programs for viewing the body at parliament buildings Nairobi, the funeral service at Nyayo Stadium and Kibaki home (*Appendix 2 A, B, C*). The third, was a list of terminologies used by the military during these activities as discussed by the writer with two military officers (appendix 3).

Language analysis under the broad term discourse analysis can be complex and technical. The paper will shy off technicalities and in the discussion that follows, focus on text analysis. Text analysis normally examines, the vocabulary, grammar-clauses, and sentences, cohesion, and organizational properties, force, or utterance (speech acts) coherence and intertextuality but here again, only some of these aspects are examined. Discourse analysis a term first used by Harris (1952) alludes to language analysis beyond the structure of language to focus on understanding meanings of the language in use. Such an analysis shows the relationship between discursive events, social practices, grammatical properties as well as the social and cultural ideologies typically not transparent to a casual observer. Therefore, the strength of discourse analysis lies in helping people understand social activities, language in use and cultural beliefs. For this paper it is the one social act of burying a fallen president.

In this analysis the theory of ethnography of communication by Hymes (1974) comes in handy to help understand the procedures and the socio-cultural context of the texts. Ethnography of communication looks at patterns of communication as part of cultural knowledge and behaviour or practices in given events. Culture is a system of ideas, a world view: a set of assumptions and beliefs that organize and orient the way people think and act. Culture gives meaning to behaviour. For this paper the cultural meanings are sought from events leading to the funeral of the late president as well as the military culture of procedure and protocol. An examination of language in use shows the connection between ideologies and the socio-cultural practices.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In analysing the data the paper looked at the texts dimensionally as follows: the discursive practice targeting the immediate context (function, participants, purpose, and content of the interaction); the text structure (grammar,

vocabulary delivery accent/politeness), Lastly, the research focused on an examination of the social practice (the social-cultural and institutional contexts).

### Discursive Practices

The texts forming the data are both written, spoken, and have acted out segments. The Presidential proclamation (appendix 1) is formal and serious leaving no doubt as to the originator of the message. He names all his titles as follows:

*I, UHURU KENYATTA, under the authority vested in me as the President of the Republic of Kenya and the Commander in Chief of the Kenya Defence Forces, do hereby....*

The discourse organization; that is the background and circumstances for the texts is also seen in the Presidential Proclamation. The formation of this text was occasioned by the passing on of the second president.

*'IT IS with profound sadness and sorrow that I announce the passing of a Great African Statesman, H.E. Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi, the Second President of the Republic of Kenya*

The purpose is accomplished in an appropriate context stated as follows:

*... SOLEMNLY ISSUED AT STATE HOUSE, NAIROBI'*

The programs (Appendices 2 a, b, c) also clearly indicate the setting or place of the events as follows

*STATE CEREMONY: LYING IN STATE PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS 08.02.2020 – 10.02.2020*

The participants are known. They involve the current president, the first lady, the attendant security, and assistants, then *wananchi* (general public) attending the viewing. The event is also clear. It is about the body of the former head of state lying in state and *wananchi* coming to view.

Viewing of the dead is ingrained in the Kenyan psych and mandatory.

Other acts were varied and followed the normal protocol when the head of state is in attendance, such as the security standing at attention or mounting a parade to receive the president, to him being ushered into the room where the body lay, to leaving the premises, and for the *wananchi* being allowed to view the body in turns.

### Text Structure

The grammar and vocabulary of the text are insightful. For example, the use of the title Presidential Proclamation instead of 'speech', use of pronouns 'I' and 'Our', markers of politeness *mzee* (respected old man); use of verbs and adverbs are all part of the said circumstance.

Speech acts according to Austin (1962), performs certain action. The first was to inform, the key words being 'I announce' for example in:

*... I announce **the passing of a..... OUR NATION** and our Continent were immensely blessed by the dedication and service...*

\*caps and bold are used herein as found in the original texts.

There were also other Speech Acts as in the following **directives**:

*I, UHURU KENYATTA... President of the Republic of Kenya and the Commander in Chief of the Kenya Defence Forces, do hereby **ORDER** and **DIRECT**...*

*...as an expression of public sorrow, the **Flag of the Republic of Kenya** shall be flown at **half-mast** at State House, State Lodges, all Public Buildings and Public Grounds, all Military Bases, Posts and Stations, on all Naval Vessels of the Republic of Kenya, from dawn **on 4th February, 2020 Until sunset on the day of the Burial...***

The speech acts ‘order’ and ‘direct’ were used to accomplish the speaker (president)’s intended action. The addressees determined intended meanings from what was said. For example, following the pronouncement all those in charge of raising flags had them at half-mast. This is to say that language is not only a system of representation but that people *perform* acts besides making statements.

### The Grammar

The grammar used of the present tense and first person was telling;

*‘I announce’ ... our heartfelt condolences go out to his Children, Relatives and Close Friends....., I wish to ....*

The use of pronoun ‘I’ is authoritative in line with the office from which the speaker makes the statement. Pronoun ‘our’ (where the audience is drawn in albeit without their consent) is not authoritative but softens the dictatorial ‘I’.

The use of vocabulary such as; ‘RUNNING ORDER’ instead of the more known term- program and other clauses such as ‘laying in state’ remind us that this is the register of the disciplined forces and that President Moi was ‘somebody’ and not just any ordinary folk.

### Intertextuality

There are statements that show the intertextuality of this text in terms of the use of both official and unofficial vocabulary. For example, two terms are used to relay the information of the death of the former president. The term ‘death’ is more official than ‘passing on’ which is a cultural concept.

*THE DEATH OF H.E. DANIEL TOROITICH Arap MOI, ...SOLEMNLY ISSUED AT ...To the People of the Republic of Kenya, the Sons and Daughters of Africa, and the World... I announce the passing of a..... OUR NATION*

*and our Continent were immensely blessed by the dedication and service...*

Intertextuality is seen further in the drawing on of the discourse of religion into this official genre when the words ‘faith’ and ‘reward in heaven’ are used.

*Daniel Toroitich arap Moi ran a good race, kept the faith, and now he is enjoying his reward in heaven.*

The concepts; ‘kept the faith’, ‘reward in heaven’ are used a lot in the Christian faith. This is religious discourse; it refers to faith and after life. It is interestingly brought here into a very official discourse to show how discourse can be “invested” and ‘loaded’ with societal beliefs and practices (Fairclough, 2005) as will be argued below.

### Cultural Ideologies

#### *Not Talking Ill of the Departed*

There is a sense in which Kenyans do not talk ill of the departed. Firstly, the long queues to show respect where the late president lay in state, but even more the positive comments were a testimony to this cultural thinking. This was unexpected as many murmured against Mr. Moi while he was still alive.

Rev Njoya, a man who had been known for his heavy criticism of President Moi in life, was quoted in the media talking of the late president honourably instead of venting his anger against the late president. He said,

*I know that Africans worship their ancestors of whom Moi has become one.. if Moi is in heaven, let him sit on God’s right side and keep the left side seat for me’* (Daily nation 7. 2. 2020, page 10.)

Kenyan Negative groupthink

Mutuma Mathiu a well-known journalist, did pick a few negative voices, but dismissed them as ‘the few



chattering discontent disrespectful masses. He wrote on twitter;

*'In view of those who have given vent to their (negative) opinions...that Moi was unmitigated disaster and that we shouldn't say anything positive about him... (But) this is the problem with Kenyan groupthink. It is always negative always intolerant, always wrapped in a tattered shroud of self-righteousness'.*

Mutuma Mathiu went on to say how he grew up fighting 'Moism', but that during the swearing in of President Kibaki in 2002;

*'When the crowd pelted Moi with mud, I was very offended, I thought that the rowdy mob was being very disrespectful and totally missing the point' (Daily nation 7. 2. 2020 page 14)*

The words of Mutuma Mathiu show the contradictions where at some point president Moi was hated but in death he is revered.

### ***Respecting those in Authority***

The cultural line between respect for elders/authority and genuine complaint is fussy in Kenya. People chose more to persevere in silence rather than challenge authority. Mutuma Mathiu says the following regretting the street riots he participated in in his youth against Moi regime;

*'Mr. Moi did not come looking for us in our farms or classrooms and send us to Nyayo house for torture, we challenged his authority...This was naïve to expect Mr. Moi to invite us ... for a cup of tea and hand over to us the keys to State house'.*

Mutuma Mathiu appears apologetic in a way and in short, he is saying here that the agitators should have known better than riot and throw stones. All this regret was surfacing now during the days of mourning.

The most telling word in the presidential proclamation mentioned earlier and indeed in all

texts in the media is the term *Mzee*. The meaning of this term is known to most Kenyans - an old man. However, its use in these official documents is interesting. It brings in the Kenyan cultural angles of honouring the elders. This is contrary to the references that Mr. Moi was named in past discourses where he was called in his surname as just Moi. Why is this? Even more, the honour and protocol witnessed and other references accorded him are telling. For example, *His Excellency*, his full name repeated severally, *Mzee Moi, Great statesman, pan Africanist, Africa's greatest*. These are contradictions and they stem from cultural thinking of not shaming the dead.

Honor was shown in the formation of troops, the 19-gun salute, and the gun carriage all of which were explained by the interviewees as the highest honour to an individual in military traditions.

### ***Culture and Religion***

The religious-cultural angle is seen in the reference to religion and the spirituality as a way of life for Kenyans.

*Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi ran a good race, kept the faith, and now he is enjoying his reward in heaven.*

The proof of this religiosity is seen in the way on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays when droves of Kenyans attend mosques and churches. It is no wonder then that these words- 'faith', 'has run his race' 'reward in heaven' appear easily in the official discourse.

### **CONCLUSION**

This paper has shown the kind of respect shown to the second president of Kenya in death as exemplified by the official discourse of army with full colour, protocol, and procedures.

The texts of these events however, carry messages beyond the intended briefing and guiding the nation on what was expected during the time of national mourning. The texts are shrouded with other

discourses pointing to the Kenyan culture of respecting the dead, respecting those in authority and ideologies of spirituality. In short, the paper demonstrates that social processes do impinge on the linguistic system to portray cultural beliefs and practices not necessarily mentioned openly in the text. These unspoken or alluded to texts tell us more about the Kenyans' lives, culture, and beliefs; their way of life which may be different from other cultural groups. Notably, there is much in the Kenyan cultural values which is undocumented. Cultural beliefs need to be studied and documented. Such understanding of cultures will help the nation when policies are drawn and when awareness on different issues is made targeting the people, but even more in dealing with any divisive politics.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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#### APPENDIX

##### Appendix 1: Presidential Proclamation

With Respect To-

THE DEATH OF H.E. DANIEL TOROITICH Arap MOI, C.G.H. Second President of the Republic of Kenya

SOLEMNLY ISSUED AT STATE HOUSE, NAIROBI

ON THE 4th DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2020

To the People of the Republic of Kenya, the Sons and Daughters of Africa, and the World at Large;

**IT IS** with profound sadness and sorrow that I announce the passing of a Great African Statesman, **H.E. Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi**, and the Second President of the Republic of Kenya. His Excellency the Former President passed on at the Nairobi Hospital on the early morning of this 4th February, 2020; in the presence of his Family.

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**OUR NATION** and our Continent were immensely blessed by the dedication and service of the Late Mzee Moi; who spent almost his entire adult life serving Kenya and Africa in a number of capacities. The Late Mzee Moi served us as an Educator, a Teacher, a Legislator, Member of Parliament, a Cabinet Minister, the Vice-President and finally as the President of the Republic of Kenya.

**UPON HIS RETIREMENT** from State Office, and in keeping with the seemingly boundless energy that characterized his many decades of Public Service, the Late Mzee Moi continued to serve Kenya and Africa by mentoring leaders in Kenya and beyond, continued participation in development projects and charitable works, and advocating for Peace, Love and Unity throughout Africa and the World.

**AS A LEADING FIGURE** in the Struggle for Kenya's Independence, and an ardent Pan-Africanist; the Late Mzee Moi's Legacy undoubtedly positions him as one of Africa's Greatest, a Man who made his Nation and the Continent immeasurably better. Following the sudden death of the First President of the Republic of Kenya, the Late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, the Late Mzee Moi stepped into apex leadership in 1978 and immediately brought calm and confidence to a Nation reeling in shock, following the unexpected death of the Head of State.

**THE LATE MZEE MOI'S** steady hand guided Kenya through the restoration of multi-partism and many other challenging periods; culminating in the peaceful transfer of power in December 2002, a then rare occurrence in Africa and one which set an example that has been emulated across the Continent and beyond ever since. His Legacy endures in Kenya even to this day, encapsulated in the **Nyayo Philosophy** of 'Peace, Love and Unity' that was his mantra throughout his tenure as our Head of State and Government.

**AS WE MOURN THE PASSING** of an African Icon, our heartfelt condolences go out to his Children, Relatives and Close Friends. We will never forget that even as he served Kenya, Africa and the World; the Late Mzee Moi remained a deeply committed family man, a loving Husband, Father, Grandfather and earnest Friend to so many. While they undoubtedly grieve his passing, *I* wish to assure them that Mzee Moi lives on in the hearts of the Millions of Kenyans who benefited from his servant-leadership, and in the peaceful, harmonious and united Kenya that was built in large part by the works of his hands.

**ABOVE ALL ELSE**, the Late Mzee Moi was a devoted Christian, who nevertheless championed the rights of all persons of all faiths to observe their religion without discrimination or impediment. Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi ran a good race, kept the faith, and now he is enjoying his reward in heaven.

**IN HONOUR OF THE LIFE AND TIMES** of the Late Great Mzee Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi, and on behalf of a grateful Nation forever indebted to our deceased Second President for all his many years of steadfast public service, **I, UHURU KENYATTA**, under the authority vested in *me* as the President of the Republic of Kenya and the Commander in Chief of the Kenya Defense Forces, do hereby **ORDER** and **DIRECT**: -

**I. THAT** in testimony of the respect in which the memory of the Late Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi is held, the nation will observe a period of **national mourning** from today until the day of his funeral;

**II. THAT** the Late Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi shall be accorded a **State Funeral**, with all appropriate **Civilian and Full Military Honors** being rendered and observed;

III.

**IV. THAT** as an expression of public sorrow the **Flag of the Republic of Kenya** shall be flown at **half-mast** at State House, State Lodges, all Public Buildings and Public Grounds, all Military Bases, Posts and



Stations, on all Naval Vessels of the Republic of Kenya, and however elsewhere throughout the Republic of Kenya; from dawn **on 4th February, 2020 Until sunset on the day of the Burial;** and

**V. THAT** our national flag shall be flown at **half-mast** for the same length of time at all High Commissions, Embassies, Consulates, Diplomatic Offices and other facilities of the Republic of Kenya **abroad**.

May the Late Mzee Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi Rest in Eternal Peace.

ISSUED under the HAND AND SEAL of the President, on this 4th Day of February, 2020.

UHURU KENYATTA,

President.

**Appendix 2: (a): State Funeral and National Memorial Service 08.02.2020 – 10.02.2020**

STATE CEREMONY: LYING IN STATE PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

TIME

EVENT

**8:05 a.m.** Solemn State Procession from Funeral Home to Parliament Road

**8:10 a.m.** Forming up of troops in line at Parliament Buildings

**9:00 a.m.** Reception of the State Funeral Procession at Parliament Buildings

**9:45 a.m.** Tribute to the Second President of the Republic by His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta

**10:15 a.m.** Arrival of His Excellency the President, accompanied by the First Lady, Margaret Kenyatta, at Parliament Buildings National & E.A.C Anthem

**10:30 a.m.** His Excellency the President, accompanied by the First Lady lead the nation in paying last respects to the nation's second president.

**11:30 a.m.** Presidential retreats National & E.A.C Anthem

**12:00 noon** Public paying of respects up to 5:00 p.m. - Monday 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2020

**Appendix 2 (b) : Running Order At Nyayo National Stadium On 11th February, 2020**

**8:00 a.m.** Public are seated

**8:00 - 10:15 a.m.** Presentations by choirs

**8:30 a.m.** President Daniel Moi's cortege leaves parliament for Nyayo National Stadium

**10:00 - 10:20 a.m.** Arrival and sitting of State officials and guests

**10:30 a.m.** Arrival of His Excellency the President and the First Lady

**10:35 a.m.** State reception of the cortege of President Daniel Moi

**10:45 - 12:00 noon** State memorial service

12:00 - 2:00 p.m. TRIBUTES

**2:15 p.m.** Casket of the late President Daniel Moi leaves Nyayo Stadium for Lee Funeral Home

Appendix 2 (c): RUNNING ORDER AT KABARAK ON 12TH FEBRUARY, 2020

08:00 - 10.00 a.m. Funeral procession

Cortege lies in repose

10:00 - 11:00 a.m. (Arch bishop and family as participants)

i. FIRST READING

SECOND READING

### Appendix 3: Military Terminologies

**Running order** the order in which groups or performers appear or songs or other items are presented at an event or on a recording.

**Solemn state procession** very serious or formal in manner, behavior, or expression

**Forming up troops** "Formations are those military organizations which are formed from different specialty Arms and Services troop units to create a balanced, combined combat force.

**National Anthem** A **national anthem** is a country's national song

**Paying respect** to visit or speak with someone in a polite way as a sign of respect

**Cortege** a solemn procession, especially for a funeral." a funeral cortège"

State reception of cortege

**Cortege lies in repose** Lying in repose is the tradition in which the body of a deceased person, often of high social stature, is made available for public viewing.

Military pall bearers

Casket draped in flag this honor is usually reserved for veterans or highly regarded State and National figures, the Flag Code does not prohibit this use. (Americanism Commission)

**Gun carriage** - a wheeled support for a piece of artillery.

Historically, fanfares were usually played by trumpet players, as the trumpet was associated with royalty

**Sounding of the last post** In military tradition, the **Last Post** is the bugle call that signifies the **end** of the day's activities. It is also **sounded** at military funerals to indicate that the soldier has gone to his **final** rest and at commemorative services such as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day.

Guard of honor

Military brass band

19 - gun salute