

The Clever Hare in Torobo Folklore

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■ ABSTRACT ■

The Maa speaking Torobo people inhabiting the southern portion of the Mau Escarpment in Kenya approach both individual and community survival from a relational orientation focused on ethnic identity and responsibility. This social responsibility to the tribe is in stark contrast to Torobo relationships with other ethnic groups. The purpose of the research is twofold. First, the paper explores how folkloric language through a trickster image reflects important cultural and social ideals, understandings, and patterns of thought in Torobo world view. A second purpose is to offer ethnographic information to scholars and students' alike necessary for world view studies of eastern Africa specifically focused on the interplay between anthropomorphic tales and the social context in which these stories are utilized.

The key research question for this analysis asks how the trickster image in Torobo folklore conceptualize the life experience. A Torobo folktale entitled, *The Clever Hare*, is the text chosen for analysis with the hare character as the protagonist. A second query explores the importance of the trickster image in understanding Torobo world view categories of Self and Other. The analysis contributes an ethnographic perspective for the world view categories of Self and Other as well as trickster folklore by examining the nature of Torobo-ness using the tale of the cunning hare as a research tool.

Key Words

world view, Self, ethnicity, trickster, African folklore.

1. Introduction

The folklore of the Torobo ethnic group in Kenya reflects significant world view notions concerning perceptions of Self and the relationship of Self with community Other. To truly understand the Torobo, you must understand their world view which is what they believe to be naturally so. A significant area to understanding Torobo world view is to study their oral literature. Folklore is an effective research tool for world view studies, because it goes beyond anecdotal evidence and embodies the assumptions of indigenous thought through linguistic symbols (Steffin 1998:477; Bradt 1997:3). What does a Torobo individual with a unique cultural heritage believe about their humanity, their time and place on earth? This can only be fully understood by learning significant cultural features and beliefs about the life experience among Torobo.

The purpose of the research is twofold. First, the paper explores how folkloric language through a trickster image reflects important cultural and social ideals, understandings, and patterns of thought in Torobo world view. A second purpose is to offer ethnographic information to scholars and students' alike necessary for world view studies of eastern Africa. The cultural assumptions and values discussed in this paper specifically focus on the interplay between an anthropomorphic tale and the social context in which the story is utilized.

The key research question for this analysis is, how does the trickster image in Torobo folklore conceptualize the life experience? A Torobo folktale entitled, *The Clever Hare*, is the text chosen for analysis with the hare character as the protagonist. A second query explores the importance

of the trickster image in understanding Torobo world view categories of Self and Other. The following discussion offers an ethnographic perspective for the world view categories of Self and Other as well as trickster folklore by examining the nature of Torobo-ness using the tale of the cunning hare as a research tool. Interviews with Torobo informants were conducted between 1997-2000 in the Torobo homeland using the questions contained in the following analytic model concerning The Clever Hare text.

2. Analytical Model for The Clever Hare

Folklore opens a window on what people believe to be naturally so. Folktales paint a storied portrait with captivating strokes of colour unique to each cultural context. Greet us with your stories and we will learn enough to enter into relationship. Tell us more stories and we will respect what you value. Folklore as a subset of mythology is an important cultural medium which influences the formulation of self concept because these kinds of stories “provide a culturally significant and coherent model of the self” (Pandian 1991:133). Folklore provides cultural discourses on the nature of self identity within a particular socio-cultural context.

Narrative psychologists believe the essence of human thought is found in the stories people use to inform and indoctrinate themselves to define reality. People use narratives such as folktales to think about Self and others and to make decisions concerning their behaviour and their values (Gardiner 1985:323). Myths may be understood as exercises in self evaluation because these traditional stories are used to portray both the ideal and the antiparagon in social life. Societies invite social obligation and certain self identities and discourage others through folklore accounts of heroes and villains.

The theoretical framework chosen to analyze the Torobo folktale, The

Clever Hare, is based on the model given by Halliday and Hasan (1989) in their book, "Language, Context, and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective." Their premise very simply put is this: to understand a people you must study their language, to understand their language you must study their texts, to understand their texts you must study the context. A text may be written or spoken and is defined as language serving some function in a context. It is a form of exchange and the product of the cultural environment. To analyze a text, the analytic model of this study considers four levels of textual interpretation as suggested by Halliday and Hasan: 1) Metafunctions of the text, 2) Context of Situation, 3) Context of Culture, and 4) Intertextual Context.

2.1 Metafunctions of a Text

The first level addresses three functions of the language system (see Table 1). The basis of Metafunction theory is that every text is composed of Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual functions. To interpret a text accurately involves understanding the Ideational Function (learning/thinking) composed of experiential meaning and logical meaning. The queries for this function investigate what events and their processes are expressed in the narrative as well as the meanings beyond symbolic features.

It is also important to grasp the Interpersonal Function (relational, mood, modality) composed of interpersonal meaning. Every text has attitudes and judgments that are basic assumptions about reality both characters in the story and those listening bring to the narrative experience. Recognizing attitudinal assumptions and rhetorical examples enlightens the meaning between those listening and interacting (Halliday & Hasan 1989:20).

A folktale will reveal a Textual Function (theme/cohesion) composed of textual meaning built from focus, themes, and cohesive relations. Narrative analysis should provide the researcher with a sense of the focus of the information and the thematic structure, and further detail those parts of the story which make the text flow from one part to another.

By understanding these functions and meanings of language, it is then possible to identify prominent imagery associated with a heroic or villainous character, the way in which the characters communicate social values and significant features of Self as a community being, and how social values are enacted in the Torobo community.

Table 1. First Level of Myth Narrative Analysis: Metafunctions of a Text

Metafunctions of a Text		
Ideational Function (Learning/ Thinking)	Experiential Meaning ♦ <i>What is the Experiential Meaning described in the story?</i>	What event, action, or process of the person's life is expressed? What symbolic features represent reality in this culture? What process is described?
	Logical Meaning ♦ <i>What is the Logical Meaning of the experience described in the story?</i>	1. What is the sequence of events in the story? 2. What is the relationship between one event and another in the story? 3. What is the main point of the entire story to the storyteller?
Interpersonal Function (Mood/Modality)	Interpersonal Meaning ♦ <i>What Interpersonal Meaning does the story have between those listening and interacting?</i>	1. What attitudes and judgments are given or assumed in the story? 1. What rhetorical examples are used?
Textual Function (Theme/Cohesion)	Textual Meaning ♦ <i>What Meaning does the Text express about the experience described in the story?</i>	1. What is the focus of the information? 2. What is the thematic structure? 3. What parts of the story make it flow from one part to another?

2.2 Context of Situation

All language including every text has a context. Context of Situation is the second level of analysis and “serves to interpret the social context of a text, the environment in which meanings are being exchanged” (Halliday & Hasan 1989:12). It is the immediate environment in which the text is functioning (see Table 2). Three features which compose the conceptual

framework of Context of Situation for analytic purposes are: 1) Field of Discourse (What is happening?), 2) Tenor of Discourse (Who is participating?), and 3) Mode of Discourse (What is the role of language?).

Field of Discourse answers the question of what is happening in the story. Just what kind of activities are taking place? What is the nature of their social action that narrative characters and listeners associate with events? Often outsiders to ethnic folklore misunderstand or completely miss what narrative actors are engaged in and this hinders cultural understanding.

Tenor of Discourse situates each character within the socio-cultural context. The individual status, individual role and role relationships provide awareness of socially significant relationships among characters. The tenor reflects an individual's place within the greater social context.

Mode of Discourse specifically considers the role language plays in communicating the text. What does the storyteller and listeners expect the telling of the narrative will accomplish by hearing it? Is this particular folktale of high value? Does the story function as a persuasive or didactic teaching tool, admonishment, or entertainment? Is the channel of the text written or oral, public or private?

By understanding Context of Situation with its three features, it is possible to explain the reason the text exists in its final form. Explanations for why certain ideas and facts have been spoken or written on a particular occasion and what other ideas and facts could have been verbalized or written but were excluded. The narrative is being conveyed in a specific social setting for particular reasons that field, tenor and mode of discourse highlight.

Table 2. Second Level of Myth Narrative Analysis: Context of Situation

Context of Situation	
Field of Discourse ♦ <i>What is happening?</i>	1. What kind of activity is happening? 2. What is the nature of the social action taking place? 3. What are the participants engaged in?
Tenor of Discourse ♦ <i>Who is participating?</i>	1. Who are the participants? 2. What are the status and roles of the participants? 3. What kinds of role relationships exist among participants? 4. Are there socially significant relationships among participants?
Mode of Discourse ♦ <i>What is the role of language?</i>	1. What do participants expect language to accomplish in the situation? 2. What is the status of the text? 3. What is the function of the text in the context? 4. What is the channel of the text? 5. What is achieved by the text in terms of such categories as persuasive, expository, and didactic?

2.3 Context of Culture

The text and its context also operate within the broader scope of a culture which is the third level of analysis termed the Context of Culture. Any Context of Situation setting the stage for a text to function is not an arbitrary fabrication of random features but a representation of an accumulative world view (see Table 3). It is important to seek those elements of cultural history and tradition that bring broader meaning to a folktale. More specific information gleaned from cultural values, attitudes, beliefs, roles, and norms also provide additional meaning to the story.

By understanding the Context of Culture, it is possible to gain insight on the cultural ideology that gives value to the text and provides boundaries for interpretation. All folklore is constrained by the sociocultural environment in which the narrative was constructed and now is situated. Context of Culture describes the cultural assumptions made in the social context a folktale exists within and in what way these determine how

a text is interpreted in its Context of Situation.

Table 3. Third Level of Myth Narrative Analysis: Context of Culture

Context of Culture	
<p>Broader Background ♦ <i>What is the broader cultural background that gives meaning to the story?</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cultural History? 2. Cultural Tradition?
<p>Specific Background ♦ <i>What specific information further enlightens the meaning of the story?</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cultural Values? 2. Cultural Attitudes? 3. Cultural Beliefs? 4. Cultural Roles? 5. Cultural Norms?

2.4 Intertextual Context

Part of the textual environment includes other texts which have been incorporated into the text or support the textual assumptions in their own storyline. As the fourth level of analysis, Intertextual Context is an unconscious awareness by participants of the continuity between texts and their shared understanding.. It is possible to identify significant cultural themes as well as cultural continuity and discontinuity by comparative studies of Intertextual Context (see Table 4). What assumptions are found in other stories or proverbs from this culture that are relevant to this folktale? The Torobo narrative, The Clever Hare, is socially situated among other Torobo oral literature that provide both support for the notional intent and give additional meaning.

Table 4. Fourth Level of Myth Narrative Analysis: Intertextual Context

Intertextual Context	
<p>Other Textual Support ♦ <i>What assumptions are found in other stories or proverbs from this culture?</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General Folklore? 2. Mythology? 3. Self Narratives? 4. Proverbs?

3. The Torobo Text: The Clever Hare

- (1) Long ago there was Water and Fire and these animals: Lion, Elephant, Snake, Hare, and a Hyena.

Water, Fire and each of the animals went to raid cattle.

They stole the cattle but their enemies grabbed the cattle from them.

One day Hare was thinking about this and said to himself that he leads this group and of our number we know that Lion will kill us.

Lion and Elephant are big and will refuse to let us have cattle and will kill us. What should we do?

Hare talked to himself about his problem.

Hare said, "I will cause all the animals to fight each other until I am the only one alive."

Hyena bit Lion and it died the next morning.

Again the Hare said to himself that he would do to Elephant what he did to Lion.

He told Snake to go inside the nose and bite Elephant with poison. At sunrise Elephant died.

Snake and Hare went and went and went along driving cattle and then they went to sleep.

Hare said to himself, "What will I do with Snake as I am afraid of it?"

Hare said to himself this is what I will do.

Hare told Fire, "We need to do something because Snake will grab the cattle we have."

Hare said when we go to rest, you light a flame in the bottom of the tree because we will climb to the top and the flame will come up.

When Snake falls down from the smoke, do not let it escape but burn it."

Fire did what Hare told it.

Now Hare looked around and said, "All that remains are Fire, Water, Hyena and me."

Hare said to himself, "What should I do? Which one can defeat us?"

Hare said again to himself that Fire can defeat us so Hare went and saw the water.

Hare told Water that Fire will grab our cattle.
This is what we will do about Fire.
Hare told Water to go to a steep place.
“What you should do when you get to the steep place is roll down and hit Fire and cover it all with water.” Water did as it was told.
When Water finished, Hare talked to himself about what to do next.
Hare said to Water, “Will Hyena grab the cattle?”
Hare again said to Hyena that Water will grab the cattle.
So Hare said to himself that he would go and see Water, tell him to kill Hyena, and we both can have the cattle.
“You should enter the stomach of Hyena and bloat it so he is unable to find a solution.”
When it was bloated, Hyena died at sunrise.
Hare was very happy when this was done and Hare only had to think and decide what to do with Water.
Hare said, “Let’s go, take Water and climb a mountain.
When they got to the mountain, Water was not able to climb the mountain and the cattle went and went, climbing up to the top.
Water waited and tried for a long time to climb up but could not.
Hare went and brought the cattle down from the mountain. (see Appendix A).

4. Analysis of the Clever Hare

To analyze the story we turn to the four levels of textual interpretation and begin with the Metafunction of the text. This first level addresses four aspects of language meaning to be discussed in the following discourse. Opening comments centre on experiential meaning with logical, interpersonal, and textual meanings to follow.

4.1 Metafunctions of The Clever Hare

Analysis of The Clever Hare text begins with four metafunctions of

language (see Table 6). These functions identify specific features of Torobo self identity: a) how an individual is viewed as different from Other, b) how a person communicates with Other, and c) how Self is culturally described and enacted in the social community.

The Hare character brings into view that aspect of life which makes it a risky, unpredictable experience. The experiential meaning of the text highlights that a person must always be alert for potential enemies and also be wise and cunning enough to survive such a circumstance. Surprisingly enough, Hare is considered the hero of the story and symbolizes wisdom. The sequence of events in the narrative unfold his clever plan with logical precision (see Table 5).

Table 5. Outline of Sequence of Events in The Clever Hare.

Sequence of Events	
Sequence	Event
1.	Group of multiethnic tribal friends went to raid cattle.
2.	Successful raid but enemies stole many of the herd.
3.	Hare plots to kill all the members of the raiding party.
4.	Hyena deceived by Hare and kills Lion.
5.	Snake deceived by Hare and kills Elephant.
6.	Fire deceived by Hare and kills Snake.
7.	Water deceived by Hare and kills Fire.
8.	Water kills Hyena.
9.	Hare takes remaining herd of raided cattle to a mountain.
10.	Water cannot follow up the mountain.
11.	Hare has all the remaining cattle as his own.

Hare was not obligated to the other raiding group members, because these characters were not hares; alas, they were not members of his community to whom Hare must remain loyal. As the story unfolds, it reveals an intricate planned process of taking from competition to ensure

self preservation. This is always appropriate in Torobo world view, and Hare executes the clever plan in grand Torobo style. It is not necessary to share with the other group members because not enough cattle was available for everyone to benefit. Thus the need and value to care for one's Self first is the logical meaning behind the actions of Hare. A person must find ways of preserving Self and the Torobo community, and the spirit element (*inkiyanget*) within a person helps direct the way. Hare possessed a good spirit which is characterized as a guardian spirit.

Good spirits are not individually created but are taken from the living Spirit of Creator *Enkai*, and are considered still a part of his spirit essence. The role of guardian spirits is threefold: (a) initiate and maintain life with inhaled breath, (b) serve as the causal force of all good on earth, and (c) protect and save a person from evil. The ideas and creativity to outsmart others are directed by the good spirit element in a person. The spirit element has controlling power over personality and in the case of Hare, this causal action produced an abundant food source and protected Hare from the treachery of others.

Torobo believe the role of the spirit element influences all aspects of individuality including the thoughts and ideas of a person. The spirit element literally controls the person by consent of Self because the heart (*oltau*) is controlled by the spirit element, and the heart controls Self. In the case of Hare, the good spirit entity caused right emotion, desire, and behaviour by cultural standards of morality. While interpersonal relationships are important, it is the prevailing sense of personal and community survival above all else which governs motive and behaviour.

The valued end point of the entire narrative is twofold: 1) Use your intelligence to overcome problems; 2) Avoid challenges and conflict by outsmarting others. The value of human life, be it insiders or outsiders, demands high respect since life is given by Creator *Enkai* himself. The Torobo tendency is to flee in the face of danger to protect Self and the use of trickery to slip away from an enemy threat. Cleverness and

the use of tricks are highly valued because these offer a way of escape without threatening life force. At the very least, a cunning plan will reduce casualties and that effort is noted by the divine.

The interpersonal and textual meaning of the story mirror one another (see Table 6). The common thread of tribal identity which lumps Hare with his community of Hares differentiates the Hare Self from earthly Other. Those outside the Hare tribal community are thought of in terms of Them vs. Us. Lion, Elephant, Snake, Hyena, Water, and Fire are earthly Other and viewed as living the life experience on a parallel course with Hare toward the finality of death but just that - parallel. A proverb teaches,

(2) “Enemies cannot get to know each other,”

and the enemy is anyone outside one’s community (Sankan 1995:91). Self and earthly Other are headed in the same direction and probably with the same desires for happiness, but the two cannot and will not meet. Loyalty is given only to one’s ethnic group even if others share the same geography. Torobo world view fosters the attitude that self preservation and community preservation are above all else.

Table 6. Metafunctions of Torobo Folktale, The Clever Hare

Metafunctions of the text		
Ideational Function	Experiential Meaning	Plan ahead for Self survival and to avoid conflict.
	Logical Meaning	Avoid challenges and conflict by outsmarting others.
Interpersonal Function	Interpersonal Meaning	Attitude of self/community preservation above all else.
Textual Function	Textual Meaning	Use intelligence to solve problems. Loyalty is only to one’s own ethnic group.

A Torobo proverb admonishes,

(3) “Hang up someone’s bow but don’t hang up your eye” (Jackson Ngayami).

The eye represents a person's ability to perceive and evaluate experiences. One textual meaning found in Hare keeping his wits about him is that he identified the problem a small herd presents for too many mouths to feed, and he devised a plan to overcome it. The value expressed in the textual meaning of the experience is to admonish children to use intelligence to solve problems. The topicality of the thematic structure revolves around maintaining absolute loyalty to one's ethnic community. Cleverness is needed for personal survival and community survival.

4.2 Context of Situation of The Clever Hare

The kind of activity happening in the Field of Discourse of the narrative is unusual. It is atypical for a single Torobo to form a raiding group whose membership is from multiple tribal affiliations. Traditionally young Torobo warriors referred to as *murran* are entrusted with the task of providing for the community through raids. Stealing is taboo within the in-group but quite a legitimate practice to take from out-groups to provide food for one's own community. It is a journey only Torobo age-mates would make together. Age-mates face challenges together and would not dream of raiding alone or with out-groups without in-group support. Thus the unusual circumstances of the Context of Situation heighten the relational differences Torobo maintain between in-group and out-group members (see Table 7).

Traditionally, the social action of raiding cattle and stealing were considered a legitimate means of economic survival. The modus operandi was survival by any means necessary. However, taking from another community member is taboo and self defeating to community vitality, ergo the custom of stealing from earthly Other became the norm. Pillaging from outsiders to improve one's own situation is thought to be clever even today. Earthly Other are to be exploited while community Other are to be supported. The story revolves around: Who has the resources and how can I get them?

Table 7. Context of Situation of Torobo Folktale, The Clever Hare.

Context of Situation	
Field of Discourse	Survival by outwitting others by any means possible.
Tenor of Discourse	Hare, lion, elephant, snake, hyena, water, fire are outsiders to one another = competition within this temporary grouping.
Mode of Discourse	Oral literature using trickster motif.

Analysis of the Tenor of Discourse reveals the actors, Lion, Elephant, Snake, and Hyena, are considered enemies of man. Torobo believe each of these animals possess an evil spirit element and each represent evil and danger. Water and Fire have a double-sided nature which makes each unpredictable, and anything unpredictable one naturally must be suspicious of for security reasons. Cattle are viewed as blood-wealth and valued by other African economies besides herders. Each animal and element represent a separate group or tribe. The characters in the story are participating in exploiting others and eliminating competition.

Self has a defensive relationship with earthly Other. The world outside the community is hostile and seeks to encroach upon an individual and his community at any given time. Hare participated with earthly Other (Lion, Elephant, Snake, Hyena, Water, and Fire) as long as it benefited him to do so; however, his relationship was always one of mistrust. This attitude of dubiety comes from the basic cultural character contained in *olkuak* (personality) and *empukunoto* (character). It is believed the Torobo character element is naturally suspicious of out-group members by divine design and the personality element learns caution from social, environmental training. A proverb warns,

- (4) “No one is so clever that he cannot be cheated” (Sankan 1995:86).

Anyone can be swindled, however chicanery goes both ways. One can cheat others no matter how powerful or clever they may be, and one can fall victim to thievery by a multiplicity of others.

The Mode of Discourse for the story is as a didactic tool illustrating the relationship of Torobo to earthly Other. This relationship is marked by a seemingly endless series of plots and counterplots to contend against or prevent the schemes of community outsiders. Torobo and earthly Other relate around the dance of exploitation. The steps are measured to see who can exploit who first and for how much. Yes, you can win but only by recognizing a potential calamity and implementing a plan through the cleverness of deceit.

This folktale is oral literature. Orality is a significant means of communication among Torobo because of the low literacy rate of the group as a whole. The low economic status of Torobo also contributes to very few published works of Torobo oral tradition and mythology. The narrative functions in the Torobo context to instill the practical value of eliminating competition. It also teaches all challenges can be overcome by cleverness.

4.3 Context of Culture of The Clever Hare

The Clever Hare text is situated within that the larger framework of Torobo culture and history. It is one strand woven into the overall fabric of Torobo world view. Understanding the background for the Torobo value of cleverly avoiding conflict and suspicion of earthly Other can be enhanced by historical knowledge of the ethnic group.

The name, Torobo, describes an ethnic category of hunting-gathering groups residing on the fringes of various east African pastoral and agricultural peoples. The primary criteria for Torobo identity has been a livelihood by hunting-gathering. The term, Torobo, is the Maa word, *Ittorobo*. The name itself is somewhat muddled in meaning although

certainly originating in Maa. Dundas (1908:139) suggests Torobo is derived from the Maa word, short, which reflects local and European belief the Torobo people are descendants from San or Pygmies.

Blackburn (1974:139) concludes the name characterizes the group by their low economic status in the eyes of the Maasai who refer to a Torobo as a poor person since they own little or no cattle and eat wild animals. Europeans wanting hunters contacted the Maasai who referred them to any tribe who hunted wild animals. Consequently, the term, Torobo, lumped together different peoples without regard to their particular tribal affiliation. A third meaning is derived from the Maa word for tsetse fly. This name has historical roots owing to the traditional bush areas the nomadic Torobo hunted were infested with the tsetse fly, whereas Maasai herders occupied the plains outside the range of the tsetse fly (Maguire 1948:129).

Whatever the origin of the title, historically it carried a derogatory tone of condescension which has not diminished even today (see Table 8). The encapsulating groups did not merely assert their political dominance over the hunter-gatherers, they also treated Torobo as inferiors, as people apart, by stigmatizing and discriminating against the group. The stereotypes held by encapsulating groups are politically potent and colour the whole range of interactions between these tribes and Torobo hunter-gatherers.

Maa speakers of Torobo have a kind of peripheral identity associated with Maasai by language and adoption of some Maasai cultural customs and oral literature (Little 1998:445). The inferior place and low status afforded Torobo by Maasai is based on the negative attitude toward a hunting and gathering economy. The inferiority of Torobo from the Maasai perspective is well documented in literature dating back to the earliest accounts of the group (Hollis 1905:xx; Jacobs 1965:95-99; Kipury 1996:31). In the words of Galaty, "The Maasai see themselves as dignified, honourable, wealthy, favoured by God, and brave; they see the Torobo (hunters) as offensive, mean, poor, and cowardly" (1982:6). It is not surprising that the Torobo have been described as shy and elusive people who have

a dormant distrust and fear of outsiders (Huntingford 1951:1). The fact remains that Torobo are a small ethnic group on the lowest end of the social hierarchy of Kenyan people groups. As a small band with weak means of force for protection, it is understandable the value of cleverness to escape or outsmart danger and a defensive posture against outsiders is taught vigorously.

Table 8. Context of Culture of Torobo Folktale, The Clever Hare

Context of Culture	
Broader Background	Torobo as a small ethnic group are vulnerable to more powerful groups.
Specific Background	Use of tricks is highly valued among Torobo. Tricks are learned with ideas coming from one's mind and influenced by one's spirit element.

The cultural attitude concerning Torobo identity implicit in the narrative is in terms of something shared by others in the community. The Self is more than something unique to the individual, indeed this uniqueness in and of itself would only leave the person incomplete and dysfunctional. One's community has priority over each person as an individual, and this suggests a person is defined more in accordance to their membership within the relational scheme of the community than according to private individuality. The underlying social role of Self is to survive and thereby be able to assist community Other in their survival.

One cultural norm states it is natural to desire more in life. Can anyone ever truly be satisfied with his station in life? A Torobo proverb states,

(5) "The hide of your calf is not enough for you" (Massek & Sidai 1974:24).

The proverb means a person is never satisfied with his own possessions. This being the case,

(6) “Do not ever tempt warriors with cattle” (Kipury 1996:186).

Never leave cattle unguarded if warriors from another group are near because the cattle will surely be stolen. Always remember, it is in-group vs. out-group, community Other vs. earthly Other.

Historically, hunters shot the nose of an elephant to kill it because the nose skin is softer and it bleeds easily. The ear is a weak part of a person or animal. For a snake to bite the ear would make it die quickly. The skin is thin inside the ear and poison quickly flows to the heart. Hare took advantage of each member’s weakness and followed a traditional strategy of eliminating competition without actually doing any of killing. The first survival tactic of smaller, less powerful ethnic groups is to avoid conflict by all means possible or get others to do the fighting for you. Hare is considered wise because he recognized a future problem and allowed his spirit element to instigated a plan without actually getting his hands dirty.

It is believed that the spirit element of a person can actually be hungry itself in the sense that no matter what good or evil a spirit entity has caused, a spirit is never satisfied. Good spirits hunger to display more goodness and evil spirits hunger for more evil action. Spirits perpetuate their nature in the actions of the individual and the cycle is unending. The Hare character possessed a good spirit, so it is fitting he found a way to preserve himself from the evil actions of others.

4.4 Intertextual Context of The Clever Hare

We have mentioned a few proverbs throughout our discussion that have supported certain notions of Torobo world view identified in The Clever Hare narrative (see Table 9). We now turn to other pertinent proverbial wisdom enhancing and supporting the meaning of the folktale. A Torobo teaching proverb that both rebukes any individual who does not remain cognizant of the immediate situation and encourages Torobo

to remember danger is always lurking is

(7) "Carelessness killed the owner" (Kipury 1996:173).

In addition, there is the proverb,

(8) "Man is always beaten by his own trick."

This proverbial wisdom warns obedience to cultural precepts and adherence to cultural values (Julius Ngayami). The word for ‘trick’ is *olosek* and may also translated ‘short-cut’. Chosen action which disregards the social norm will undoubtedly result in failure. A significant Torobo social norm is self preservation at all cost and this is preferably by cleverly avoid direct challenges. Hare was ultimately successful because he followed the socially sanctioned action of eliminating competition through wise use of intellect.

Table 9. Intertextual Context of Torobo Folktale, The Clever Hare

Intertextual Context	
Other Textual Support	<p>Proverbs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Enemies cannot get to know each other. ◆ Hang up someone’s bow but don’t hang up your eye. ◆ No one is so clever that he cannot be cheated. ◆ The hide of your calf is not enough for you. ◆ Do not ever tempt warriors with cattle. ◆ Carelessness killed the owner. ◆ Man is always beaten by his own trick.

5. Concluding Remarks

The fundamental basis of human thought is found in the stories we use to inform and indoctrinate ourselves to define reality (Howard

1991:193). "We dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative" (Hardy 1968:5). Many of the things we want to learn about people are not visible to the unperceiving eye. However, most events and values are rendered socially visible through storytelling. Robinson and Hawpe (1986:116) propose storying is an effective utility for understanding the actions of Other and Self in relation to Other. These researchers further argue that domain specific information concerning rights, privileges, and responsibilities of Self guides the reasoning behind cause and effect in narrative.

The Clever Hare is a folktale steeped in Torobo tradition and their particular life experience. Mishler (1986:106) posits cultural identity is revealed in stories and this is certainly true of The Clever Hare. Torobo identity is expressed in the narrative by the Hare character embodying cultural themes and values. The Hare symbolizes all Torobo believe to be a wise person. He at once recognizes a life threatening problem in the making and with great cunning instigates a plan to eliminate the threat without direct confrontation. The Hare character is frequently used in African folklore to denote one who is clever and tricky. The Kaguru of Tanzania match the cunning Hare against the clever but short-sighted and greedy Hyena (Beidelman 1986:194). In the east African oral literature of the Kalenjin, the Hare is almost always the trickster but, unlike the Torobo Hare, the Kalenjin Hare can in turn be deceived (Chesaina 1991:23).

As a cultural text, The Clever Hare is a testament to the Torobo maxim that strength does not conquer everything. Torobo insist a wise person will know this only too well. A neighbouring ethnic group, the Gikuyu, have a proverb that expresses the same idea,

(9) "Wisdom outweighs strength" (Wanjohi 2001:85).

Kipury (1996:22) comments of Kenyan Maasai folklore, "Through Hare's antics we witness the triumph of brain over brawn and of brilliance over

steadiness."

African folklore stresses the consequences of a trickster's behaviour on the interests of his community (Arnold & Walcott 1996:235). In *The Clever Hare*, Hare must outwit the other characters so that he personally and the Hare community in general will survive. It is through this kind of trickster folktale Torobo children learn social norms, values, and expected behaviour (Peek & Yankah 2004:7). Many African Hare characters are amoral, without social values and use trickery as a means of hurting others purely for amusement (Austin 2006:26). These traits are in stark contrast to the Torobo Hare as well as the Hare character in Iteso narratives from Uganda where survival at all costs is deemed appropriate and positive (Akello 1981:129). Any Torobo mirroring Hare's behaviour is wise indeed.

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Appendix A

Folktale: The Very Wise Hare

Date recorded: 6/18/98

Interviewer: Shelley Ashdown

Folktale told by: Jackson Ngayami, male, age 20

Netii opa kuna nguesi olngatuny, oltome, olasurai, on kare, on kima, on kitojo, olngojine.

There was/long ago/these/animals:/a lion/ an elephant/a snake/water/fire/a hare/ and/a hyena.

Nepuo ejore aaru nkishu nepuo aaru inkishu.

They went/raid/bring/cattle/they went/raid/cattle.

Ore opa kulo oshomo aapurru nkishu nepuonunui nereuni, nereuni, nereuni nkishu omeitunguari ilmangati enkop opa natii ilmangati.

Then/long ago/these/went/steal/cattle/happened/grabbed/grabbed/grabbed/cattle/ gone/enemies/earth/formerly/ place where there are/enemies.

Ore nabo olong nenguena enkitejo nejo ama taa ele orere narikito naa looba nji naa kayiolo ajo kear iyook olngatuny.

Then/one/day/discussed/hare/said or thought/then/so then/these/people/lead/and/of this/ number/is known/that/it will kill/us/lion.

Nemetiki iyook inkishu ang near sii ninye oltome kuna nguesi sapuki kaa taa kintaas?

Refuse/us/cattle/our/kill/also/him/elephant/these/animals/big/what/this/we do?

Ore ake pee epuo neiguenta ake enkitejo.

Immediately/when/went/they discussed/only/hare.

Nejo ore enaiko kairriki kuna nguesi pookin metaarata aarie enguesi enkae ometaba anaa neaku nanu ake.

Said or thought/then/I will/incite to fight/these/animals/all/to fight/a fight/animals/each other/ until/then/it came to pass/I/only.

Nelo newony nejo akenyu otua opa olingatuny.

Went/to bite/happened/sunrise/died/formerly/lion.

Neitoki ainguenta nejo kai taa aiko ele tome neitoki ake aitaasa anaa enaitaasa olingatuny.

Again/discussed/said or thought/what/then/do/this/elephant/again/only/do/as/he did/lion.

Ore pee iwony oltome tijinga ake atua enkume toonyo atua nipik esayiet. Nejo akenyu etua oltome.

Then/when/bite/elephant/enter/immediately/inside/nose/bite/inside/poison. Happened/sunrise/ it died/elephant.

Natii epeny nepuo, nepuo, nepuo ore erewita nkishu nepuo airrag.

Place where there are/alone/they went/they went/they went/then/driving/cattle/they went/to sleep.

Nejo amaa taa ele asurai naa kaure kaji taa aitaas.

Said or thought/now/then/this/snake/I fear/what/then/do.

Nejo kalo ake ore anaiko ketii enkima neisho ake ana kata.

Said or thought/go/only/when/like/there is/fire/I will give/only/like/this.

Nejoki enkima ore taa eninko amu keoru iyook kuna kishu nikiata.

I tell/fire/then/only/will do/because/grab/us/these/cattle/we have.

Nejoki eikipuo nikipuo ayengiyenga nelo iyie ayupuyup te ntonata olchani amu aikiked aapuo shumata niyupuyup ake nimirakino ninye.

Said/we will go/go/rest/go/you/flame/in/bottom/tree/because/will climb/go/top/
light flame/ only/go parallel/it.

Ore ake pee esulunye mincho elo nipejoo ake pee ijoki neija.
Then/immediately/when/falls down/do not give/go/burn/only/so then/tell/that.

Neas ninye enkima anaa enatiakaki neidip.
Do/it/fire/like/was told/finish.

*Neitoki aingor amaa taa amu etelekutua intokitin etelekua enkima o enkitejo
o enkare olongojine neitoki.*
Afterward/it looked/and/then/now/remaining/thing/remained/fire/and/hare/water/
hyena/afterward.

Nejo kaa taa kalo. Leton eidim iyiook?
Said or thought/what/then/do?/Can/defeat us?

Neitoki ake nejo keidim iyiook enkima nelo, nelo aduare enkare.
Again/only/said or thought/defeat/us/fire/went/went/see/water.

Nejoki ore taa iyie enkare ore enkima naa keworu iyiook inkishu ang.
Told/then/what/you/water/then/fire/will/grab/us/cattle/our.

Are eninko tara ena kima.
What/we will/do/this/fire.

Nejoki ore amu aikipuo aajing eneshongishong.
Told/then/because/we are/going/steep place.

*Ore eninko ore pee edoiki eneshongishong imperiperunye iyie tijinga toosho anaa
duo*
Then/you can do/then/when/go/steep place/roll/you/enter/hit/like/formerly/

kima intemoi pookin neiko ninye enkara anaa enatiakaki.
fire/cover/all/did/it/water/like/told.

Ore pee eidip neitoki ake enkitejo ainguen a enaduo kitejo ake.

Then/when/finish/afterward/only/hare/discussed/one earlier mentioned/hare/only.

Nejo amaa taa kaaworu sa enkare kuni nkishu?

Said/then/this/grab/me/water/these/cattle?

Nejo aa neitoki nejo ore taa olngojine ninye likae laidim atooru nkishu.

Said/no/again/said/then/this/hyena/it/other/which/grab/cattle.

*Neaku ore enaiko olngojine kalo aduare enkare nejoki taara pee kiya kuna pokira
are taata.*

It came to pass/what/do/hyena/will/see/water/teel/till/so that/take/we can/these/
two/now.

Sii iyie olngojine tijinga ake atua enkoshoke niipong metala anaas.

Also/you/hyena/enter/only/inside/stomach/bloat/unable to find/what to do.

Ore pee epongu nekenyu etua.

When/then/bloat/sunrise/died.

Neaku kashipa oleng amu eidipe.

It came to pass/happy/very/because/finish.

Ore pee eidip neitoki ake aigüena nejo kaji taa aitaas enkare.

Then/when/finish/afterward/only/discuss or judge or consider/said or thought/what/
then/ do/water.

Nejoki maape nerik ake enkare nerik ake nerik ake omeitakedo oldonyo.

Told/go/took/only/water/took/only/took/only/climb/mountain.

*Ore naa oldoinyo iyiook ajo meked enkare oldonyo neilep enkitejo onkishu nelo,
nelo, nelo ometabaiki shumata oldonyo.*

Then/that/mountain/you/see or know/cannot climb/water/mountain/climb/hare/
cattle/went,/went,/went until/ up/mountain.

*Nejo duoo arreshu enkare meilepu nejo arreshu meidim naa enkare ailepu shumata
oldoinyo.*

I tried/wait/cannot/that/water/climb/up/mountain.

Nelo ninye nelo arreu inaduoo kishu.
Went/him/went/to bring/this/cattle.