

Abstract:

This paper is based on narrative performances collected in research by students of the University of Nairobi under the guidance of their lecturers. The fieldwork was conducted in February 2005 among nomadic communities in northern Kenya. The main thrust of the paper is to explore how Magdalene, a woman narrator, subverts the dominant masculine ideology inherent in the structure and orientation of oral narratives. The paper identifies the discrete and subtle ways in which the narrator seeks to undermine the manifest inclination of oral narratives towards male dominance. Considering that oral literature is a crucial tool in shaping the world view of a community (especially children), and bearing in mind that women artists perform many of the oral narratives, the imperceptible but subversive potential of such narration becomes even clearer.