



Symbolism in Zarma Epic Poetry

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Abstract

The epic discourse is shrouded with myth, just as it becomes a favorite ground for the griots who indulge in using rhetorical skills of all kinds in its declamation; starting from metaphor up to repetition, via symbolism to name but few. This study aims at analyzing the stylistic device of symbolism and it uses in Zarma, the second largest ethnic group in terms of number of populations after the Hausa from Niger, epic (moolo in Zarma) narratives. In fact, in the Zarma culture the griots (gesere) considered as 'speech masters' celebrate the emblematic heroes of the milieu amazingly and amusingly using figures of style. The study is based on the epic poems of an old and famous griot of this community, Kulba Baaba Seebeeri. As theoretical framework, the paper adopts 'the stylistics' before concluding that Kulba Baaba is mainly inspired by some animate and inanimate sources symbolized respectively by animals and things around the heroes in his performance.

Key words: symbol, animate, inanimate, Zarma, epic poetry

Introduction

Broadly speaking, epic is developed as a discursive and cultural practice in West Africa and in other parts of the world. In this vein, Sir Cecile Maurice Bowra (1952:3) contends that "Heroic poetry still exists in many parts of the world and has existed in many others, because it answers a real need of the human spirit." It is one of the most studied poetic genre according to Paul Zumthor (1983:103) who wrote that "Till now, the oral poetic genre studied the most as such, beyond ethnographic discourses or hazardous historical rapprochements, is epic."¹ It is performed in a specific way in Niger, especially in Zarma community where it is narrated by the griots called *gesere* or *nyamkala* who differ from the other beggars known as *ɲwaarayko* in at least three ways. First, the *gesere* praise the nobles and encourage them to have a sound behavior, especially courage, by reminding them about the exploits of their forefathers. Second, they are always linked to a chieftaincy. Third, they inherit their function from their ancestors.

In fact, these three characteristics mentioned above show that epic is never the apanage of amateurs. It is always handled by professional griots. So, the existence of epic in a given society is linked to the presence of professional griots in this society. Lilyan Kesteloot and Bassirou Dieng (2000: 51) explain that "... until otherwise proven, neither the social structures ..., nor the heroism need of a people ..., nor the identity function or the ideological finality ... are sufficient to explain the presence or the absence of epics in a society."² The griots are essential in Niger.

In the Zarma culture, the class of the griots constitutes the memory of the people through the conservation and transmission of traditions and cultures of the area. They are both the historiographers and genealogists of sociocultural practices of that community. The griot of our concern here is Moumouni Sékou better known as Kulba Baaba Seebeeri. He is affiliated to the canton or chieftaincy of Seebeeri (Kouré) in the district of Kollo where recently griots were trained in schools dedicated to them at Liboré, N'dounga and Saga in Niger.

Due to the variety and richness of Kulba Baaba's repertory, we will focus our analysis in the present work on only three epics namely Gorba Dicko *moola* (The Epic of Gorba Dicko), Sumailu Gakoy

¹ « Le genre poétique oral le mieux étudié jusqu'ici en tant que tel, au-delà des relevés ethnographiques ou de hasardeux rapprochements historiques, c'est l'épopée. »

² « ... jusqu'à preuve du contraire, ni les structures sociales..., ni l'existence des lettrés érudits..., ni le besoin d'héroïsme d'un peuple..., ni la fonction identitaire ou la finalité idéologique... ne suffisent à expliquer l'apparition ou l'absence d'épopées dans une société. »



moola (The Epic of Soumailou Gakoye) and *Jika Jibrilla moola* (The Epic of Jika Jibrilla). The aim of the study is to examine the stylistic device of symbolism and its uses in the above-mentioned epic poems. To reach our goals, we will use ‘literary stylistics’ that offers precious tools to analyze and understand texts, as theoretical underpinning.

We will use this approach to depict and interpret the symbols used by Kulba Baaba in his narration. The essential of the study, then, is about decoding these symbols to see what is hidden behind them and what are their significance for the hero and his society. To do so, the work goes around two main points and concludes that Kulba Baaba is mainly inspired by some animate sources symbolized by animals like the horse and the cows on one hand. On the other hand his inspiration is about inanimate sources that he symbolized by things such as the heroes’ garments, saddles and arms in his epic performance.

1. Animate Symbols

By animate symbols we mean dynamic beings not static ones. Beings like trees that can move on the effect of the wind and animals that are able to walk by their own. These beings especially animals assist the epic hero in his quest journey that becomes “... a combination of a legendary tale and an air of *Moolo* to which is added the creative imagination of the griot who enriches and transforms it.”³ Hence, the importance of animals in the story of mankind is first illustrated by Allah (God) when He ordained Prophet Noah to take them with him in couples in his ship. Since then, mankind and animals become inseparable. Our oral artist, Kulba Baaba quickly understood this importance and took advantage by giving as examples cows and horses.

1.1. The inseparable companion of the epic hero: The horse

In epic poetry, the horse is the symbol of fidelity. Horses are faithful companions of heroes in epic poetry in general and in Zarma epic poetry in particular. Everywhere the hero goes, his horse is not far from him. They are inseparable. They form the best duo of the story. The complicity between the hero and his horse sometimes exceed imagination. The hero may even find from his horse consolation and compassion he could not find from his alike because according to Albert Ouedraogo (2005:61) “... the epic song was first legend; on the realities of the characters, places and certain actions, to which is grafted the imagination of poets-griots.”⁴ It is the case with Gorba Dicko who was assisted by his horse when he was asked to bring a living snake to make a protective charm for him,

126 Gorba Dikko tun ga karu baari	126 Gorba Dicko got up and rode his horse
127 Nda nga maabe	127 Together with his griot
128 I ka gar firsfa fatta	128 They found that the snake went out
129 Hay kulu binde si	129 Suddenly
130 A ne nga maaba se a ma waasu	130 He told his griot to hurry up
131 Gorba Dikko ye ga goro firsfa guso bon	131 Gorba Dicko sat in front of the hole of the snake
132 Kala I gono kala I ga danjo funnay a ga di ga ka firsfa bonjo raa	132 In a while, they saw the snake coming with the fire burning from its head
133 Kala firsfa ka ga ne nga ga bon dooru guso raa	133 Until it came and intended to enter the hole
134 Gorba Dikko deebe ga koli bonjo ga	134 Gorba Dicko leaned and caught the head of the snake

³ « ... une combinaison d’un récit légendaire et d’un air de *Moolo* auxquels s’ajoute l’imagination créatrice du griot qui l’enrichit et la transforme. »

⁴ « ... le chant épique fut d’abord légende ; sur les réalités des personnages, des lieux et de certaines actions, va se greffer l’imagination des poètes-griots.



135 A binde

135 Then

136 A karu baariyo boŋ

136 He rode his horse

The horse and the griot are the supports of the hero in this dangerous phase of his quest. The danger of the scene does not prevent them to help their master as it is said popularly that ‘a friend in need is a friend indeed’. The difference between the griot and the horse in assisting the hero is that the griot observes the courageous deeds of the hero from a faraway point whereas the horse participates actively in the action. The horse is a true friend of the hero. Neither the horse nor the hero was afraid of the fire splitting snake. They stay firm and overcome the dangerous reptile. Moreover, when Gorba Dicko is afraid he gets inspiration from the courage of his horse. He gets afraid only three times in his life according to the story and during these scary moments the horse is around him loyally. The first time is during a stormy deep night he saves an unknown lady on his horse,

191 A ne ce fo

191 He related that the first time

192 Nga go nga baariyo boŋ

192 He was riding his horse

193 Beena hiiri

193 Then the sky threatened

194 A singi ne a singi ne

194 From right to left

195 Nga wo nga si di nga ce gna

195 He could not even see his toe

196 Bariyo hinne no ga di fonda

196 Only the horse can see the path

197 Saagi bi raa

197 In a thick bush

198 Hay kulu si a raa kala musu nda ce beeri

198 Inhabited by only lions and elephants

199 A ne cin bina din raa

199 That middle of the night

200 Nga ka ga tangi nda tuuri fo

200 He came near a tree

201 Baariyo hinne no ga di

201 Only the horse sees

202 Kala nga ma tuuro yollo raa

202 From top of the tree

203 Booro fo ne nga se barikaro ye ga ay korgo ni bariyo ga

203 A voice begged him to take it astride the horse

204 Nga na baariyo banda banda

204 That he drove the horse back

205 Nga kanda ga geeri tuuro ga

205 Till to the tree

206 Nga ne da ni ya kwara booro no

206 Told whether s/he is a person

207 Da ni ya ganji booro no

207 Or a beast

208 Ma zumbu ga karu

208 Get down and ride on the horse

209 Boora zumbu tuuro boŋ mo

209 S/he got down then

210 Kala a ka ga korgo bariyo ga a deebe ga jase kambu hinka di

210 Mount astride and took his shoulders

211 A mana zagu a ga

211 He didn't look at him/her

212 Kala a ka fu

212 Until he came home

213 A ka ga zumbu

213 He got off the unknown from the horse

214 Fu fo go

214 There was a house

215 A ne booro se a ma koy furo fu wodin raa kani hala susubay

215 He told the unknown to go and spend the night till morning



216 A koy kani	216 S/he went to sleep
217 Kala susubay	217 Till morning
218 Mo biya ga bo faada margu	218 The day breaks and the court gather
219 A ne I ma koy fuwo din raa	219 He told the courtiers to go in that house
220 Ga guna nga se booro fo si jan	220 And check there may be someone inside it
221 I koy guna	221 They went and checked
222 Kala I ka ga booro gar	222 And found the person
223 Za I kwara konjo fo no	223 It is a she-servant from their town
224 Kanj koy ganjo raa ga tuuri ku	224 Who went to the bush to collect woods
225 Hari hawo na a darandi	225 The storm disoriented her
226 A koy karu tuuro din bonj	226 She went to climb that tree
227 A ne I ma a ce nga se	227 Gorba Dicko ordered them to call her
228 I na a ce a se	228 They called her
229 A ne to	229 He said that
230 Waato kanj ga	230 At the moment
231 Nga na bariyo banda banda	231 He drove the horse back
232 Ga kande ga geeri tuuro ga ga ne a ma karu	232 To bring near the tree and ask her to get on
233 Kanj a karu	233 When she got on
234 Cimi no	234 That's true
235 Kanj a deebe ga nga jasa di	235 When she leaned and caught his shoulders
236 Nga wo mana zagu a ga	236 He didn't turn to look at her
237 A ne no dini	237 So, that day
238 A ne nga humburu	238 He got scare
239 Amma nga kwaayi hinka kanj go nga ginde ga mana bay	239 But nobody realized that, even the garments he was wearing

Both the second and the third times Gorba Dicko gets afraid, the horse still there with him ready to help. Furthermore, when Gorba Dicko defeats all his enemies he turns in a warrior who do not need to fight to win battles. His presence is sufficient for the opposite champ to surrender and offer the cattle of the village as ransom. Now, Gorba Dicko who was born with only one cow as heritage cannot count the number of his cows.

1.2. Cows: sign of wealth

Cattles in general, cows particularly represent the symbol of wealth in Zarma society. The number of cows you possess, the richer you are. If you do not have any cow at your possession then you are classified among the poorest of the society. The Zarma epic hero's bravery is measured by the number of cattle he brought back from his expedition. Mostly, at young age heroes do not have many cows. They gain them the more they grow and the more they become skillful. For instance, at his birth, Gorba Dicko has only one cow,

10 Hana kanj hane I na Gorba Dikko hay	10 The day Gorba Dicko was born
11 Kanj baabo ka ga bu	11 On that day his father died



- | | |
|---|---|
| 12 A mana bu ga hay kulu nan a se | 12 He left nothing as legacy to him |
| 13 Nganda gnanjo se | 13 To him and his mother |
| 14 Kala haw gna follon | 14 Except one cow |
| 15 Haw gnanjo din | 15 From which |
| 16 Nga no gnanjo ga koy gaa | 16 His mother would go to the encampment |
| 17 Ga waa ta ga kande nga no Gorba Dikko ga han | 17 To fetch its milk for Gorba Dicko to drink |

The sustenance of the young Gorba Dicko is guaranteed by this only cow his father left for him and his widow mother. Apart from that cow, Gorba Dicko's family has no other means of subsistence. Gorba Dicko's family, then, is one of the poor families if not the poorest one of the villages around. Unfortunately, Dicko killed the cow to satisfy his fellow young mates and locusts and mice hunters on a day they found nothing in their hunting party. The young hero would prefer to lose his unique cow than seeing his companions going back home emptied bellies and empty hands. Let us read Kulba Baaba on this issue,

- | | |
|---|--|
| 19 Hala Gorba Dikko ka ga caram | 19 Till Gorba Dicko grew up |
| 20 Hala zanka kulu ye Gorba Dikko banda | 20 Till all his age mates were behind him |
| 21 I ga ngey hangawiyaw yan te ga koy ganjo raa | 21 At that time, they made small bows and went to the bush |
| 22 Ga ngey doyan fo | 22 To hunt some locusts |
| 23 Da ngey canyan | 23 And mice |
| 24 Hana fo I koy ganjo raa I mana du hay fo | 24 On a day they went to the bush and found nothing |
| 25 A ne zankey ma nga dum | 25 He asked his comrades to accompany him |
| 26 Gaa do | 26 To the encampment |
| 27 Zankey na a gana kala I koy gaa | 27 They followed him until the encampment |
| 28 A ne fulanney se man ngey hawo | 28 He asked the Fulani where their cow was |
| 29 I ne aran hawo ne | 29 They showed him their cow |
| 30 Gorba Dikko ne I ma hawo di | 30 Gorba Dicko ordered to catch the cow |
| 31 I na hawo di | 31 They caught the cow |
| 32 I na hawo zeeri a ne I ma wi | 32 He asked them to strike the cow down and kill it |
| 33 I na wi | 33 They killed cow |
| 34 A ne zankey se booro kan ga dumbu ga ton | 34 He said to the kids: "Whoever wants to cut and roast |
| 35 Ma dumbu ga ton | 35 May do so |
| 36 Booro kan ga dumbu ga konda ni gna ma hina ni se | 36 Whosoever wanted to cut and bring to his mother to cook |
| 37 Ma dumbu ga konda ni gna ma hina ni se | 37 May cut and bring to his mother as well" |
| 38 A ne laami day ga kande doo hayyan nda can | 38 It is only desire that leads to hunt locusts and mice |



Sometimes we must sacrifice the better things we have in order to get the best ones. In the gesture of Dicko, we have the notion of self-sacrifice. Till young Dicko shows that he is not selfish, he does not defend his own interest. No, he privileges the common interest instead. And this brings him to higher degrees later on when he becomes mature. He is able to bring back not only cows but herds of animals the village cannot hold. Let us again follow carefully Kulbaa Baaba in this long passage of the story,

58 Hana fo binde i na wangu ka	58 One day warriors of his village went out to fight
59 I na wangu kaa	59 They went to fight
60 Gorba Dikko tunu ga dake I ga	60 Gorba Dicko followed them on foot
61 A ga I hansì gana	61 He followed them at a distance
62 A ga I hansì gana	62 He followed them at a distance
63 Kala wango koy to kwara fo do	63 Until the troops reached a village
64 I na kwara hawo kulu di	64 They caught all the cows of this village
65 I ye ga bare nda hawo	65 They drove the cows towards home
66 Gorba Dikko ye ga dake I ga	66 Gorba Dicko still followed them
67 A ye ga dake I ga	67 He followed them
68 A ye ga dake I ga	68 He followed them
69 Kala a gono	69 Suddenly
70 Kwara boorey kaŋ hawo I koy sambu	70 The villagers whose cows was caught
71 Kala I go ngey hawey laawal raa	71 Traced back their cows
72 Kala Gorba Dikko mo ka ga fatta I ga	72 Then Gorba Dicko appears
73 I ne a se iri booro wala booro waani	73 They asked him: "Friend or foe?"
74 A ne araŋ booro no	74 He answered: "Friend"
75 Gorba Dikko na I gana	75 Gorba Dicko followed them
76 Kala kala kala I koy to ngey hawey	76 Until they came to their cows
77 I na ngey hawey zumandi	77 They took back their cows
78 Gorba Dikko yaŋ kwara boorey ga	78 From the people of Gorba Dicko's village
79 I na hawey boy ga ye	79 They drove back their cows towards home
80 Gorba Dikko ye ga dake I ga	80 Gorba Dicko followed them again
81 Kala I koy to sajo raa	81 Until they came to the bush
82 A ne wango se	82 He threatened the troops
83 Booro kulu ka dake hawey din ga	83 That whosoever followed those cows
84 Kulu boora ga nga teeli taamu	84 Would dig his own grave
85 I ne kociyo maŋ no iri ga ni bay	85 They said: "Young man where did we know you?"
86 Iri haw kaŋ wangu za iri koy ta	86 Our cows caught by troops that we took back
87 Nga no ni ga ne booro kaŋ dake hawey ga	87 That you say whosoever followed them
88 Boora ga nga teeli taamu	88 Would dig his own grave
89 Maŋ iri di nin ce fo	89 Have we ever meet you once?



90 A ne to hawey no ya	90 He says: "Well here are the cows"
91 Sohadin	91 Suddenly
92 I na baari za ka furo Gorba Dikko boŋ	92 One warrior attacked Gorba Dicko
93 A na boora din hay ga ka baariyo boŋ	93 Gorba Dicko knocked him down
94 A ye a baariyo boŋ	94 And mounted his horse
95 Ay me cino a kaŋ i raa	95 Presently, he attacked the troop
96 Kaatiyaŋ folloŋ a na I ka hawey raa	96 In a few moments he took the troop out of the cows
97 A na hawey boy ga bare	97 He drove back the cows
98 Kala a kandey fu	98 Till he brought them home
99 A ka ga I kayandi kwara banda	99 He stationed them at the entrance of the village
100 A ma ne nooro wo min jay baali wo min jay	100 He would say: "nooro wo min jay baali wo min jay" ⁵
101 Ni ma wala	101 Do you hear?
102 A ne gnaŋo se a ma tun ga za gaaso ga koy gaa	102 He told his mother to take the calabash and go to the cattle
103 Ay ne ni se Irkoy hinne no ga fundi ka a ma fun	103 I told you that it is only by the permission of God that a soul die
104 Irkoy ga baranda manci booro ga baranda	104 God possesses everything not mankind
105 Handin	105 From that day
106 Nga no Gorba Dikko ye beene kaŋ a mana zumbu	106 Gorba Dicko ascends to glory and never comes down anymore
107 Kaŋ Gorba Dikko no ya	107 Gorba Dicko ascends to warrior glory
108 Hala nga no ya	108 He continuously ascends to glory
109 Hala nga no ya	109 He continuously ascends to glory

It is noticeable in the above passage that the term cow is repeated at least ten times. This repetition is not done at random. The oral artist uses it for specific purpose. It has both pedagogical and didactical meanings in the sense that it teaches the audience the place and importance of this animal in the Zarma community. The artist focuses on repeating this word cow because: "... repetition does have more specific stylistic values One is giving a certain amount of emphasis to a point that needs to be stressed, ..." (Okpewho 1992:71) Beyond the pedagogic and didactic values the repetition of the same word adds an aesthetic characteristic to the text. It gives it a touch of beauty or attractiveness. It provides certain sing-song melodies - and Belcher (1999: xix) supports that "singing provide the entertainment for the occasion.", to the text of Kulba Baaba who is not only inspired by animate things only but also with inanimate ones.

2. Inanimate Symbols

By inanimate symbols we refer to things that are neither capable to move nor able to walk. They are static not dynamic. They need intervention from mankind to serve. These elements are used in the performance of Kulba Baaba as sources of his inspiration. He frequently mentions the hero's arm, the saddle and even his garments.

⁵ Fulani language meaning: that ... is mine, that ram is mine.



2.1. The hero's garments and saddle: courage metaphorized

In Zarma culture, *the toubal*⁶ announces the gathering of war events. In fact, as soon as the *toubal* is bitten, nobody asks himself what is going on. You just wear your war garments and respond to the call. The sound of this big drum is largely sufficient to tell everybody that they are attacked or are about to go to the battle field for new conquests. So, the *toubal* is one of the symbols of war symbols in Zarma culture. The horse, we talked about in the first point, is also a symbol of war apart from being symbol of loyalty. For this reason, before colonization, at least each family in Zarma villages has its own horse. For the same reason the Zarma epic hero is always with his horse.

Besides the *toubal* and the horse, some specific types of clothes and the saddle of the hero also symbolized war in the Zarma society. For clothes, it is the case of the Chief's '*kwayi bi*'⁷. In case of extreme emergencies, there is no time to beat the *toubal*, the reference is the *kwayi bi* of the Chief. The warriors will recognize and just follow their leader without any question for his garments told them what they want to know. The *kwayi bi* indicates the seriousness of the situation. So, in Zarma epic poems, if the hero wears his *kwayi bi* it is synonym of combat.

Furthermore, what is so extraordinary with the epic hero is that once he puts his *kwayi bi* he is going to fight with or without a supportive friend. He is going to fight alone against the opposite troops whatsoever their number as "... battles, duels and other violent conflicts are truly typical of the epic...."⁸ The next step after the *kwayi bi* wearing is the saddling of the horse. After that the hero will mount and take the path to the battle field. A good example is given by Kulbba Baaba in the epic of Sumailu Gakoye in the following lines:

421 A haamay ga furo fuwo raa	421 He propelled himself into the house,
422 A na bari gina kulu sambu ga fatta ce follonj	422 And picked up the entire harness, all at once
423 Kaŋ a na karikey dake	423 When he put the saddle pad on the horse's back
424 Kaŋ a na gaaro dake bariyo boŋ	424 That he put down the saddle itself,
425 Ga deebe ga kuna habirijo totolo di ga a candi	425 That he extended his arms to take and draw the reins,
426 Ka me nama ga a cindi bariyo ce gina hinka kulu go beene ga kay	426 That he bit his lip to pull the strap, the two front legs of the horse were upright.

"The legs of the horse were upright" ready to transport Gakoye wherever he wants to go in his quest for according to Renard (1985:182), "Heroes almost always go to a *far-off land*, ...". (Italics in the original) In this quest journey the hero brings with him any kind of arms, mostly the spear.

2.2. The hero's spear: death incarnated

The spear of the hero incarnate death in Zarma epic poetry. All the heroes of Kulba Baaba namely Gorba Dicko, Jika Jibrilla and Sumailu Gakoye do have a spear. It is used during dire combat but sometime, even its first exposition can make victims. An example is when Jika unties his spear contained in a soft but dangerous bundle of rags. People do not know it is a spear in the rags bundle. When Jika starts to remove the rags around it, everything is fine till the moment the spear is clearly apparent,

⁶ A big drum

⁷ Black clothes

⁸ « ... ce sont les batailles, duels et autres conflits violents, qui sont véritablement typiques de l'épopée... » (Seydou 1983 :35)



378 Kala kala kala a na zarazara feeri	378 Till till till he opened the rag completely
379 Ga ka takuba ga ga banj	379 And took the sword from it
380 A ka gar wura muusu bonj	380 Whereas it is a golden lion head
381 Nga no a soogu	381 That he melted
382 A ga no a na takuba didigi	382 He covered the sword with it
383 Kala a to takuba bonj ga	383 Till he reached the head of the sword
384 A hanse ka takuba bonjo di	384 He grasped the head of the sword very well
385 Day a na a tanj boorey game raa	385 Then he let it in between people
386 Takuba sallanta	386 The fact that the sword redressed
387 Booro hinka go ga furu I kulu bonjey fun	387 Two person are lying without head
388 Wirrr boorey feeri a ga	388 Suddenly people left him

There is no combat, yet. It is the only fact of redressing the spear that kills two persons. The sword by its own without any manipulation from its owner makes two victims, how if it is used by the hero himself? The answer is that the victims are uncountable when the spear is used by the main character. It is like a natural catastrophe. For instance, the action of the spear of Sumailu gakoye on his opponents is compared to that of bush fire on dry grass.

701 Wango ka ga fatta	701 When the enemy army was in sight
702 Waato ga nga mo ye Bara bonj	702 Sumailu Gakoye got back on the saddle of Bara.
703 Nango kanj a na Bara za ga danj I raa din	703 The side he started with
704 Danga waati kanj yaara du subu koogo	704 It was like a bush fire on dry grass.
705 A na laawal wo din saatu a Konda	705 He made a wide gap
706 A ye ga a danj koine	706 And then returned the opposite way back.
707 A na no din saatu	707 He pushed his horse again and scoured a new side.

As on its way in, the spear makes the same or similar havoc on its way back. It provokes many victims drenched in blood everywhere on its passage. Corpse are piled up there. A true hinge. Furthermore, on other occasion the hero uses arm like stick made with iron. An illustration is given by our oral artist in the epic of Gorba Dicko during his encounter with a supernatural being he was challenged to kill in order to show that he is really courageous. It is a spirit living around a magical *Hasu* tree

362 Kala a di ginno bonjo ku nda haso	362 He realized that the spirit is even longer than the tree
363 A na guwo haabu	363 He rushed the stallion
364 Guru goobu go ga dake jasa ga	364 He had his stick of iron on his shoulder
365 Kala a ka ga to haso do	365 Until he came to the <i>Hasu</i> tree
366 A na guwo kurru no din	366 He rode the stallion there
367 A na takuba danj ga haso nda ginno labu	367 He hooked the spirit and the tree together

There is no time for Dicko to make the difference between the tree and the devil living in it. He strikes both the tree and the demon at the same time to make sure he has killed the later. To do so; the iron stick is a very good means. Dicko returns home victorious over the spirit.



Conclusion

In sum, Zarma epic poetry is full of symbols. This paper has analyzed only some animate and inanimate symbols exposed by Kulba Baaba Seebeeri. On one hand, he focuses his performance on animals like the horse and the cow to show his genius. The analysis demonstrates that the horse is the symbol of fidelity whereas the cow symbolizes wealth. On the other hand, examples of special garments, saddles and spears are given as inanimate symbols of things. The garments and saddles are symbols of war and courage while spears represent death and mourning.

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