

## **Aspects of Environmental Imagery in Selected Songs of Mũigai Wa Njoroge and Sovinga Wa Bibiana**

Njagi Antony Kinyua,  
M.A Chuka University, Kenya

Dr. Antony Mate Mukasa,  
Chuka University, Kenya

Dr. Wanja Kangangi  
University of Embu, Kenya

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**Abstract:** Songs serve as a medium for conveying cultural and political messages. It is therefore important to evaluate how environmental imagery is used to describe political realities. Some singers use the environment to communicate themes to the audience while others celebrate nature's aesthetic. This paper aims at cross-examining environmental imagery in selected songs of Mũigai Wa Njoroge and Sovinga Wa Bibiana. Although numerous studies have explored thematic and cultural aspects of Gĩkũyũ popular songs, limited attention has been directed to the role of environmental imagery as a distinct literary and aesthetic device. This paper contends that songs are one of the variations through which political motifs can be accessed and transmitted. A purposive sampling strategy was applied focusing on six songs. The data was analysed qualitatively. This study is guided by ecocriticism theory and stylistic theory which provides a conceptual lens to understand environmental imagery. Songs provide a platform on which an examination of political realities can be achieved because of the genre's popular nature and dissemination framework. Song as a genre is disseminated on traditional electronic media and modern digital space such as television, radio, YouTube, Tiktok and Facebook. The study reveals that environmental imagery is significant stylistic element in the selected songs. By analysing the environmental imagery embedded in the selected songs, this study demonstrates how the artists use environmental imagery to satirize societal issues and highlight pressing political concerns within the Kenyan context.

**Key Words:** Ecocriticism, song, political, environmental imagery, Gĩkũyũ.

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### **I. Introduction**

Political themes are expressed through various artistic forms. Songs serve as a medium to express these themes. This study examines how Mũigai Wa Njoroge and Sovinga Wa Bibiana use environmental imagery to describe political experiences of modern Kenya. Both artists are popular Gĩkũyũ singers who hail from Kiambu County, Kenya. They compose using Gĩkũyũ language. The two artists primarily perform independently. However, they have collaborated on several songs such as "Gĩkuũ Kĩa Nũgũ" [Death of a Monkey] and "Buchiri ya Hiti" [Butchery of Hyenas]. The selected songs employ environmental imagery as a literary tool to satirise governance, highlight moral decadence, expose the dark side of the political class, and advocate for societal transformation. Finnegan (1970) explains that songs play a crucial role in creating political awareness, encapsulating cultural values and ideologies. The two artists use media houses such as Kameme FM and Inooro TV, among other channels, to reach their audience. Ndege, Wangari and Mbugua (2019) explain that Mũigai Wa Njoroge is among the most influential Gĩkũyũ popular artists and is not afraid of confronting political issues. The three scholars further argue that artists act as community spokespersons; hence, their words are taken seriously and shape ideas in the society. Six songs have been selected for analyzing how environmental imagery describes political experiences in Kenya.

Purposive sampling was used to select the songs that employ environmental imagery to highlight political themes. The paper focuses on the employment of environmental imagery to describe political realities. Qualitative research design has been employed. The study used textual analysis to examine aspects of environmental imagery. The six songs were collected from a variety of music stores, and online platforms such as YouTube, and radio and TV archives. Guidance from music enthusiasts, cultural experts, and informal interviews helped identify key songs with environmental imagery. Data has been obtained from the six selected songs. The songs are written and translated into English.

### **II. Aspects of environmental imagery**

The environmental imagery manifests in two key dimensions: the organic landscape of the nature and the constructed settings of human design. The analysis starts with the natural environment.

### **III. The Natural environment**

African literature often employs environmental imagery to critique power structures. Achebe (1958) and Ngũgĩ (1977) demonstrate this through the use of nature-based imagery in oral and written traditions to convey social and moral lessons. Achebe uses animals in *Things Fall Apart* to highlight moral dilemmas, while Ngũgĩ's *Petals of Blood* uses environmental imagery to critique political greed and corruption. Songs, as a form of art, similarly utilize nature to communicate political issues figuratively. Finnegan (2012) observes that songs can express political support, exert pressure on opponents, and unify people. According to Mutonya (2010), imagery in Gĩkũyũ popular songs functions as a strategic medium for delivering political messages indirectly, making them accessible while avoiding direct confrontation.

Songs have a capacity to communicate political realities. Mũigai wa Njoroge and Sovinga wa Bibiana have used natural environments to describe contemporary Kenyan political experiences. The symbolic use of natural environments in the songs of Mũigai wa Njoroge and Sovinga wa Bibiana reveals a number of political issues. Environmental imagery, such as trees, mountains and animals, are symbols and metaphors for political tensions, power dynamics and societal struggles. Barry (2007) explains, speaking of the natural environment, people usually mean the physical nonhuman environment, such as the countryside, forests, animals, rivers and waste' spaces. When this setup is used in literature, it reveals symbols that deeply resonate with human experiences.

The forest is symbolic in the song, "Ndaci ya Nũgũ" [Monkey Dance]. The artist explains that there is a dowry ceremony in the middle of the forest. All the wild animals and domestic animals are invited to witness the marriage between the elephant and the monkey. Peculiarly, even after the invitation of all domestic animals, it is only the cat that attended; others are wild animals who ate plenty of delicious food and alcohol. There is an intertwining of nature and cultural issues such as dowry, characterized by drinking, eating and merrymaking. The forest imagery in this song symbolises a setting of unity among a certain class of people in the society. It is also ironical that the monkey who would be interpreted as weak is the one paying the dowry. This implies he married the elephant. This portrays incongruence and incompatibility in politics where politicians with different leadership strategies or manifestos come together for the sake of their own interests. Another aspect of irony is when carnivorous, herbivorous, primates and even birds eat the same food and drink alcohol. Omondi (2019) notes that the verb "to eat" in Kenyan politics alludes to stealing and plundering state resources. Thus, such unity between the elephant and the monkey is for stealing and misusing of state resources. Such unions have been witnessed in Kenya, where the opposition and government merge their own interests and agree to share power. In the process they use state resources to benefit themselves. In this context to eat refers to corruption, embezzlement of state resources and misuse of power.

Merging the ruling regime and the opposition leaves the government without a whistleblower or checker in case those in power violate the constitution. Daily Nation, March 11th, 2025, explains that opposition leader in Kenya, Raila Odinga, who has been second in four presidential elections, had "handshakes" with his opponent after every election. The opposition was merged with the government as a result. The artists mock such unions when they term them as a monkey dance. Komu (2016) explains that the monkey is a metaphor for stupidity in literature. The marriage between the monkey and the elephant symbolises a political marriage of convenience where parties come together without genuine commitment. Drunkenness can be interpreted as actions that often lead to confusion and hence mediocre leadership.

The artist explains that the swearing in of the elephant as the new leader of the forest was on the following day. However, the elephant lost kingship to other animals because he was drunk and forgot to attend the swearing-in ceremony. It is noted with caution that in the dowry ceremony there was a lot of alcohol and all the animals indulged in excessive drinking. The elephant, as the largest animal, symbolises the longstanding structures of power and reflects the political elites who dominate Kenya's political arena. The political elites wield control over resources and decisions making. Kibutu (2012) explains that the elephant is the biggest animal on land. Hence, the use of the elephant in the song is appropriate for a president of a country. The forest is symbolically depicted as Kenya's political arena where politicians meet, discuss political issues, protect power and overindulge in state resources. The imagery of forest in this context has successfully been used to describe the political environment in the country.

The symbolism of a forest also appears in the song "Bũrũri wa Mũrĩano" [Country of Man Eaters]. The artist says animals in the forest are better than Kenyans. He explains that Kenya is a forest of man-eating animals. This is as a result of the wild behaviours of Kenyans and their leaders. In this song, the artist criticises everybody. He says that the wild animals in the forests are better than Kenyans. The imagery of the forest appears in this song to describe horrible activities in the country. This environmental imagery is fitting for injustices in court, hospitals where doctors are faking diseases, and citizens selling food without following healthy protocols. Hence, Kenyans are likened to wild animals that eat each other because their behaviours will lead to many deaths. The artist explains that one can die anywhere in the country of man-eaters.

Symbolism makes an object stand in the place of another and often operates on multiple levels of meaning. This enriches the text with deeper layers of interpretations (Northrop, 1957). The imagery of a river is symbolic in three songs. In the song “Gĩkuũ Kĩa Nũgũ” [Death of Monkey], the river separates two warring groups. The groups are at some point joined by a bridge for interactions. The persona in the song says he built a bridge; criminals use it to close the river, abusing him. In this context, the persona is the president who sought unity with the opposition. The river is symbolic in the sense that it shows those in the government enjoying wealth and power while the opposition is outside but tries to use the bridge to reach those in power and hence access resources. According to Moseley (2008), rivers have long been associated with the flow of passive power, disruption and often mirroring the turbulent political climate. Hence, the river is used to explain the persistent resistance that hinders the ruling regime from effectively implementing its strategies because the opposition wants to benefit from state resources.

In the songs “Ndaci ya Nũgũ” and “Ciira wa Kagondũ”, the river stands for destruction and loss. In the “Ndaci ya Nũgũ” [Monkey Dance], the monkey fell into the river while going home from the dowry ceremony where they had heavy drinking. The monkey could have been made drunk to forget swearing-in of the new leader and die in the river. Alcohol is a strategy used to dull the mind of men as seen in the song.

The destructive nature of the river is in the “Ciira wa Kagondũ” [Petition of the Lamb], the river is warned that it would vomit the people it had drowned. This personification of the river swallowing and vomiting is in agreement with (Daily Nation, January 19th, 2022), that some rivers in Kenya like River Yala have been used for political killing. Hence the river explains the destructive methods used by politicians to eliminate their critics, opponents or enemies. The river in this song is likened to a place of death.

The imagery of a deep valley in the song “Buchiri ya Hiti” [Butchery of Hyenas] has been used to symbolise the sufferings of the ordinary citizens. The artist asks who would fill the valley filled of sleeping angry and suffering. The valley is described as “of sleeping hungry and sufferings”. This signifies a state of simmering and frustration where the citizens are dying of hunger while the political class is enjoying state wealth. Additionally, the valley evokes the idea of marginalisation, with the political system leaving certain groups submerged and disenfranchised (Glottfelty & Fromm, 1996).

The imagery of mountains in the Gĩkũyũ popular song may be used literally or literary. The two artists have used Mountains to communicate to the living different aspects of societal structures. In the song “Hinya Wa Kĩrĩmainĩ” [Power of The Mountain] Mũigai says, “Mt. Kenya has exploded with fire. We the Mountain make the president of Kenya. We are the King maker. Mount Kenya, you are a beautiful lady.” According to Kenyatta (1938), Mountains in the Gĩkũyũ worldview are symbolic in the sense that they connect them to divinities and viewed with awe. Mount Kenya is a place of worship and is seen as representation of powerful forces in the Gĩkũyũ community. Karangi (2005) explains that Mt. Kenya is seen as the mother of all the mountains in Kenya. The size of Mt. Kenya makes it stand out as a powerful entity. Mount Kenya is described as spewing volcanoes violently. First, the mention of Mount Kenya is an affirmation of existence of Gĩkũyũ people and the GEMA nation (Gĩkũyũ, Embu and Meru). It is a symbol of the people who live around the mountain. These communities share Bantu linguistic roots, cultural practices, and historical ties.

Mt. Kenya is not just a geographical symbol but also represents the GEMA political power, heritage and influence. The mountain is used in the political context to refer to a region that vote as a block. The mountain, popularly known as *Mlima*, is a symbol of a rich basket of votes for politicians (Daily Nation, May 17th, 2021). It is argued that the people of the Mountain consider themselves as the gatekeepers of political power, particularly in the context of Kenya’s political history where leadership often revolves around this region (Daily Nation, June 15th 2011). Hence, Mt. Kenya’s explosive fire represents the fragmentation of political alliances, as well as the power held by the region in determining national leadership. The fire burning at Mt. Kenya is a symbol of political unrest and division. It represents the dangers of failing to unite for a common cause, showing how internal divisions can destroy the political fabric of a community or region.

The mountain is also metaphorically described as a beautiful woman. Metaphor, a figure of speech in which one thing is described in terms of another, extends meaning beyond direct statements. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) propose that metaphors shape human thoughts and perception, not merely use of flowery language. Both scholars have come up with Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which suggests that metaphors influence how people structure their experiences. Metaphors enhance the depth and complexity of artistic expressions. They allow for multiple interpretations, enriching the textual and thematic layers of a work. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) explain that great poetry relies on the conventional metaphors of everyday life but extends them in new and creative ways. Stylistic theory, as outlined by Leech and Short (2007), helps in analysing how metaphorical language shapes meaning. In this introspection, the meanings referred to by artists have political implications.

This personification of the mountain as a beautiful woman is loaded with literary meaning. The artist says politicians were behaving exactly like womanisers looking for that beautiful woman, the mountain. The

politicians are mocked as wild or immoral for their thirst for votes during the elections. The artist says an old man from Kisumu had camped at Mũrang'a in anticipation to woo Mt Kenya. One, that personification makes the mountain people look negative. When the artist tells the mountain she is a beautiful woman, it objectifies the mountain people. Second, it describes the area as having a rich basket of votes. This depiction exposes the picture of campaigns in Kenya during general elections. Votes translate to power and wealth, hence sought at all cost.

Conversely, in the song "Cira Wa Kagundu" [The Petition of the Lamb], Sovinga describes several mountains that are frightening. The artist says mountains and hills will exhume the people they have buried. The mountains are personified as exterminators. Buell (2005) explains that mountains and hills symbolise the immovable nature of historical power structures, often serving as a permanent record of societal upheavals and conflict. The mountains are accused of holding the buried truths of past injustice. The mountains in this context are personifications of people who eliminate opponents or innocent citizens. The persona in the song believes they will be revealed and their evil deeds punished. This imagery of people buried in the mountains reveals how people are killed secretly in Kenya and their bodies disposed where relatives will never find them. Politicians who have disagreed with the presidency in Kenya in the past have paid for it with their lives. JM Kariuki, MP Nyandarua, was found dead dumped in the forests in the reign of President Mwai Kibaki. The minister of foreign affairs, Robert Ouko, was also discovered in the bushes and his body disfigured in the reign of President Moi. The accusing finger was pointed at the government (Daily Nation, June 21st 2023). Heise (2008) highlights that trees' symbolism is central to discussions in ecocriticism theory. They often represent life, stability, and the destruction of these ideals through human interference. The artist in the song "Gĩkuũ kĩa Nũgũ" [Death of monkey] explains that when the death of a monkey is certain, all trees become slippery. The slippery tree is an imagery of unstable political systems or power that is waning in this context. The artist says the monkey would die or get injured for killing Wanjikũ. Wanjiku is a popular Gĩkũyũ female name. In Kenyan politics and popular culture, Wanjikũ is used to refer to the ordinary citizen or the poor in the Gĩkũyũ community and the workers in Kenya who don't earn much (Omanga, 2011). The person, who is doomed as a monkey falling from a slippery tree, had made the poor suffer and die. The artists explain that even if that person built a house in the trees, God would send a strong wind to burn it. Hence, the singers are not talking about monkeys but people. The character that killed Wanjikũ (the poor) and burnt her house is being cursed in the selected song. By calling the offender a monkey, the persona is scornful of their evil deeds.

#### **IV. Man-Made Environment**

Human activities and the built environment shape the ideas and ideologies of those who inhabit them, creating spaces that influence social as well as political realities. According to Barry (2007), the environment for a typical city-dweller may mean the houses, buildings, waste spaces and parks. The village, the city and the house are celebrated in the Gĩkũyũ popular songs (Mutonya, 2013; 2014). According to Mutonya, the village is a calm place, unlike the town, where there is noise, crime and scarcity. It is important to note that there is the use of an imagery of the house and the House of Mũmbi in the selected songs, which refers to two different things. The house of Mũmbi reappears in many songs by the selected artists. In the song "Hinya wa Kĩrĩmainĩ" [The Power of the Mountain], the artist begs the House of Mũmbi; they should not fight with swords and machete because of the mistake of their president, who had taken the opposition leader to them. Mũmbi is the mother of the Gĩkũyũ people (Mutonya, 2013). The Gĩkũyũ people are matriarchal (Ngugi, 2019). Hence the community refers itself with the mother. The House of Mũmbi stands for the community's identity, Gĩkũyũ people and their traditions, and collective memories. A house is a space occupied by people who are related or friends. Thus, the imagery of a house refers to related people or a community. The House of Mũmbi has been used to request the Gĩkũyũ nation to unite and avoid fighting because of political differences. The artist further cautions them to elect leaders who can help the community because they have a large number of voters. The concept of a house builds political realities in the Gĩkũyũ community.

There is a song titled "Nyũmba Ino" [This House]. The artist explains that the house belonged to them. The house leaked when it rained. There was a lot of garbage within their homestead, trash of all types. The situation at the house in reference is chaotic. In this context, the house is a site of a political crisis. The artist says that it was their father who had allowed children to destroy the walls. He further explains that the clan had gathered together, but their father refused to listen to them. In this context, the father, as the head of the family, symbolises the president, and the house is Kenya that has been destroyed economically. The term father stands for a leader such as a president in Kenya (Daily Nation, February 26th 2025). The leaking roof and destroyed walls reflect the internal struggles within the Kenyan society as a result of poor leadership.

The house stands in a homestead described as a garbage site. The homestead symbolises the heart of a community, as depicted by Ngugi (2019). However, the garbage inside it reflects how leadership has allowed corruption and mismanagement to pile up. This is a critique of the state's failure to manage resources properly.



In the same song the house is used in a Gĩkũyũ proverb; the artist says age group and the house must be in harmony (Barra, 2010). The imagery of a house is used in this context to explain to the members of the Gĩkũyũ community why they should be responsible and united against bad politics. The artist argues that if they destroy their economy, they will suffer.

The homestead is celebrated in the selected songs. In the song, “Gĩkuũ kĩa Nũgũ” [Death of the Monkey], the homestead is filled with violence. The artist says sibling monkeys took axes and swords to fight each other. A beast came at the homestead and started killing the fat monkeys. Here, the homestead is used to refer to the nation. The song captures the waves of the post-election violence in 2007 in Kenya. The citizens are described as monkeys fighting each other. The conflict was so violent, and it attracted the international community. As a result, the ICC (International Criminal Court) prosecutor was sent to arrest those who had incited the citizens to fight (Kindiki, 2011). In this introspection the homestead symbolize Kenya as a society that is tribal, selfish and violent because of fighting each other.

The homestead is also mentioned in the song “Ndaci ya Nũgũ” [Monkey Dance]. The artist says the animals from homesteads went to witness the unity of the monkey and the elephant. One of them was the cat. The cat left early when others started drinking alcohol. The cat tried to advise the monkey to go for the swearing-in of the new leader of the forest, but the monkey insisted on taking alcohol. The leadership was taken away from the elephant. The homestead is used to contrast the wild debauchery of the political class and that of responsible leaders. The cat is socialised, not like the animals who revelled instead of attending the swearing-in. The cat went alone. As a result, the elephant lost the kingship because he was also too drunk.

Earlier, the artist said filthy garbage littered their homestead. In the song “Hinya Wa Kĩrĩmainĩ” [The Power of the Mountain], he tells the audience they have a broom which they would use to sweep the filthy garbage within the homestead and throw it away. The broom, a common tool in a homestead, represents attempts to sweep away corruption, which is symbolically referred to as garbage. The symbol of the broom is hyperbolic in the sense that it can sweep the filthy garbage in the whole country. The artist is talking about the voting cards as brooms, which are in every home. The voting card will be used countrywide to vote out (sweep) the corrupt leaders. Hence, the broom is a metaphorical imagery drawn from the environment to represent the power of the voting card. The singer reminds the audience they have the power to remove corrupt leaders from power.

The song “Buchiri ya Hiti” [Butchery of Hyenas] uses meat business to describe corruption and greediness in the country. Both artists ask what would happen if one had butchery and employs hyena, to cut meat, cat as cashier and dog to pack for the customer. Both artists address the president directly and ask him to protect the wealth of the country so that it is not stolen by the corrupt politicians. The last stanza of this song makes the audience to understand the butchery and the animals are symbols and metaphors used to discuss corruption and embezzlement of public funds. First, the president is mentioned in the chorus, and then the artists say in the last stanza, the politicians are compared to pigs, because they have thirst for the blood of the ordinary citizens (Daily Nation, 2nd July 2020). That is to say they steal money from tax payers. The Butchery is a built environmental imagery used to describe the parliament or any other government institution that has corrupt officials or politicians. In the butchery, the meat is cut and sold. The meat symbolizes resources that are being devoured by the corrupt political leaders. In literature, the hyena is a symbol of greed. It is used to describe greedy leaders as well as condemn materialism (Baara, 1960). The artists are castigating the greediness and corruption among the political leaders who are compared to dogs, cats, pigs and hyenas. These are animal metaphors explaining how tax payers’ money is plundered or mismanaged. The butchery bring the whole idea of the institutions that are affected by corruption, greediness and stealing.

The environmental imagery, such as the marketplaces, plays a crucial role to the business community in order to facilitate the flow of goods. Towns and market in the song “Bũrũri wa Mũrĩano” [Country of Man-eaters] represents markets in Kenya where Business community meet customers from different part of the country. The artist explains that the political leaders have hiked taxes for business people, making it difficult for the House of Mũmbi to run businesses. The imagery of Gikomba and Nyamakima helps to describe the economic struggles in the country. Thus, the marketplaces become a site of exploitation, where political leaders hike taxes to exploit the business community. Business people are symbolically referred to as the Kibaki’s bird in the same song. President Kibaki’s regime governed from 2002 to 2012 and was characterized by economic growth. The Kibaki’s bird is the business people who were favoured by the president’s economic policies.

In the song “Hinya wa Kĩrĩmainĩ” [The Power of the Mountain], the artist says a certain old man from Kisumu had relocated to Mũrang’a and warned the Gĩkũyũ community to be alert. It emerges that the old man was a politician from Kisumu who had come to the mountain to woo votes (Sunday Nation 4th August 2021). This representation symbolizes the political heartland of Central Kenya or the mountain as very crucial in Kenyan politics. Both Kisumu and Mũrang’a symbolize both historical and contemporary centres of political

power and tension. The two towns may also symbolize new political alliances, bearing in mind the mountain had not been voting Raila Odinga who came from Nyanza region referred to as Kisumu.

Another symbolism of human creation is a large pit on the ground. The artist in the song “Nyũmba Ino” [This House] tells the politicians they have dug a large pit for the Gĩkũyũ community! According to the artist, the pit could swallow the entire Gĩkũyũ tribe. The large pit symbolizes a deepening crisis and economic decline in the nation. Achebe (1958) explains that holes and pits left open are imagery of death or destruction. The large pit in the song symbolizes emptiness and destruction. An open pit is seen as a sign of danger in the Gĩkũyũ community where fatal accidents can occur. Ngugi (1977) in his novel *Petals of Blood*, the economic oppression of Kenyan peasants is compared to being buried in a deep hole of suffering from which they struggle to escape. Thus, the open deep pit in this song is an imagery of poverty and suffering as a result of stealing of state resources by the political class.

## **V. Conclusion**

Through the use of natural and built environment, the selected songs describe the political struggles in Kenya. The environmental imagery, such as exploding mountains, animals, the rope, the river, and hills that have swallowed people, describes political motifs, power dynamics, sufferings, and conflicts in the society. There is exploitation of the ordinary citizens by the political class seen across the selected songs. Corruption and mismanagement of state resources are discussed in all the songs.

Houses, the mountain, Mt. Kenya and homesteads are used to describe internal conflicts, corruption and poor leadership. The house is used to solidify a nation, community or region. The imagery of a house and broom is a warning to the political class to rethink their criminal activities that threaten the unity in the country because the citizens can decide to remove them from power. The artists use a broom to describe how the citizens will vote out all the corrupt and incompetent leaders as sweeping the house or the homestead. The mountains reveal injustices in the society while Mt. Kenya stands for existence of GEMA nation. Mt. Kenya is used to describe conflicts in the region and electioneering seasons.

The citizens are depicted as innocent and vulnerable apart from the song “Bũrũri wa Mũrĩano” [The Country of Man-eater], where the whole nation participates in destroying each other by selling food without following health measures, doctors lying to patients, lawyers stealing from their clients and exploitation of the workers. Those evil deeds made them referred to as wild animals. The GEMA Nation is significant in Kenyan politics, and they are as big, complicated and unpredictable as the mountain which has exploded with fire. The mountain region is a phenomenon that every presidential candidate must take into consideration to ascend to power in Kenya. The singers have used wild or domestic animals and familiar settings, such as the Butchery of Hyenas, to explain how the state resources are plundered by politicians. Parliament or any government institution has been given the characteristics of butchery where there is greediness and corruption. Man-made environment is crucial in Gĩkũyũ popular songs in the description of political realities.

The singers have shown beyond doubt that they are not using the environment for its aesthetic only but symbolically to construct and describe Kenyan political realities. Phenomena such as mountains, rivers, animals, and forests transcend their literal meanings, representing power struggles, justice, and survival. The ecocritical perspective reveals that nature is not merely a backdrop but an active element in shaping socio-political discourses. The selected songs underscore the urgent need for ethical leadership and social transformation in Kenya.

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