

Oruka on Home, Will and Spirits: From Sociology to Philosophy

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The paper addresses the fundamental issues raised in Oruka's response to cross examination in the trial leading to the burial of S.M Otieno, better known as SM. The paper raises questions about the limit of philosophical explanations to sociological matters. It challenges Oruka's interpretation of basic concepts in Luo tradition. Oruka's distinction between a home and a house and his attitude to the question of Will and Spirits come sharply into focus in this paper. The thinking here is that there could be issues and concepts in the sociology of power and social mode of articulating them that may not lend themselves to philosophical method of analysis.

The paper raises doubt about the intended role of Oruka as an 'expert' witness in an issue of sociological significance as raised in the burial of SM. It also challenges some of the 'knowledge' Oruka claimed to have drawn from sages about 'Luo culture' and 'Luo philosophy'

In his 'expert testimony' Oruka unwittingly exposes the very problematic of nature of his approach to the method philosophic sagacity, valorizing culture and tradition at the expense of a critical evaluation of them. I suggest this could not have been the original intention of Odera Oruka.