

## **Womens' lamenting curse as 'world-making':**

### **A case of kafara/sacrifice among the Meru-speaking people of Arumeru district in Tanzania?**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This presentation revolves around the abduction and violent murder of a seven-year-old boy among the Meru-speaking people of Tanzania in 2011: how the community acted and reacted upon his disappearance, the subsequent discovery of his mutilated body after five days of search, to the process of finding the culprits.

In this experimental exercise I first explore the grieving women's ritual curse of the police and the community's indifference. By lamenting their curse, milking their breast in public, the women strongly object to the police order to immediately bury the boy without neither postmortem examination nor a proper funeral.

Further, the presentation inquiries into the gruesome murder with a focus on how people reason along their ethno-ontology; had someone killed/ sacrificed the child (kumchukua mtoto kafara) performed by scrupulous people to generate "quick money"?

In this experiment I regard the women's cursing ritual as "world-making" by exploring its "internal aesthetic dynamic" (Kapferer) and creative potentialities – either as a Moebius-like "inward torquing" or as "outward-twisting" practise (Handelman).

The event involved people far beyond the local communities through the search by local people, district and regional police as well as prayers performed by multiple religious congregations. Local and national radio channels and newspapers continuously reported on the kafara's unfolding, producing an event – inspired by the coining of Guy Debord and Achille Mbembe's conceptualisation – as a "necro-spectacle".