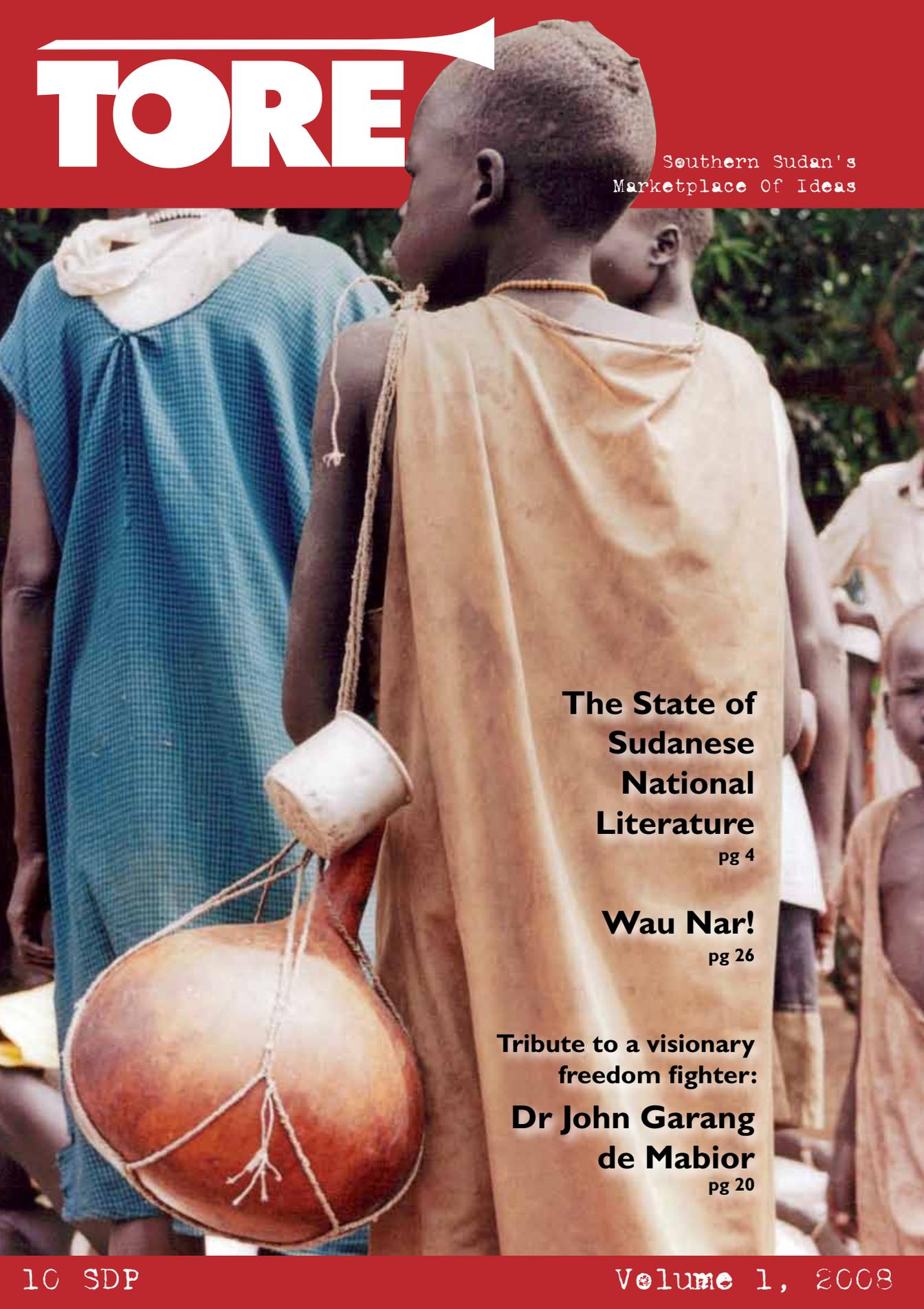


TORE



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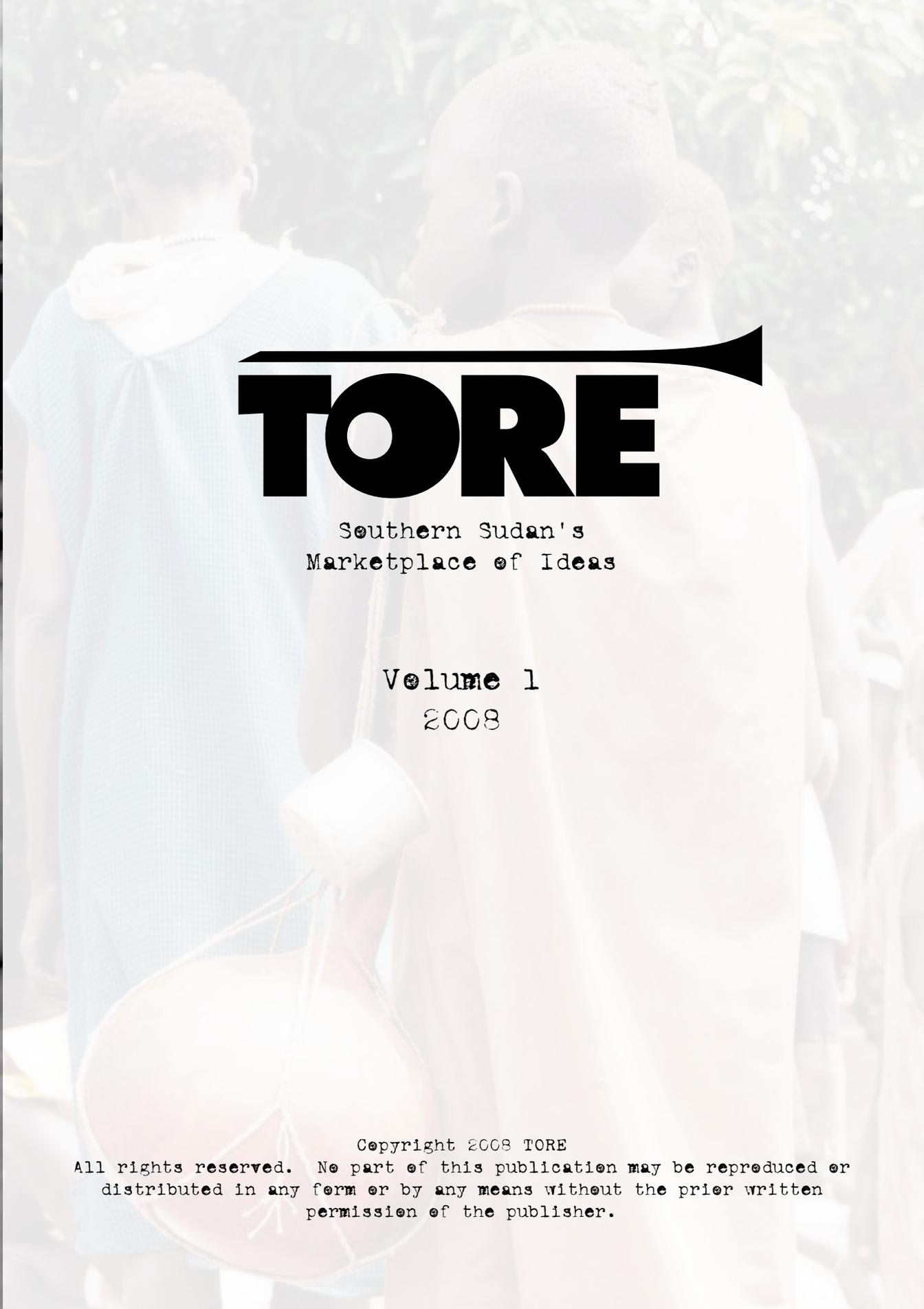
**The State of
Sudanese
National
Literature**
pg 4

Wau Nar!
pg 26

**Tribute to a visionary
freedom fighter:
Dr John Garang
de Mabior**
pg 20



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TORE

Southern Sudan's
Marketplace of Ideas

Volume 1
2008

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Contents

tereditorial	1
The Way to Juba	2
The State of Sudanese National Literature	4
Dinka folktales	8
Endless sleep	10
Afam Arabi	12
The Arab-Muslim Community in Kenger of the Days Gone by	13
Sunset of my life	19
Tribute to a visionary freedom fighter: Dr John Garang de Mabier	20
fruit salad	24
black mamba	24
Windows	25
Wau Nar!	26
I took my son	30
The green garden	31
Sanemiya railway station ghosts	32
Missing leg	34
Tereportrait:	38
Sounds of identity	39
The many faces of the Moon	40
Taking the pulpit to the farm	41
The Role of Gender in the Family	42
Moment of truth sums	45
Who makes laws in Southern Sudan?	46
Sudan suffers	49
'92	50

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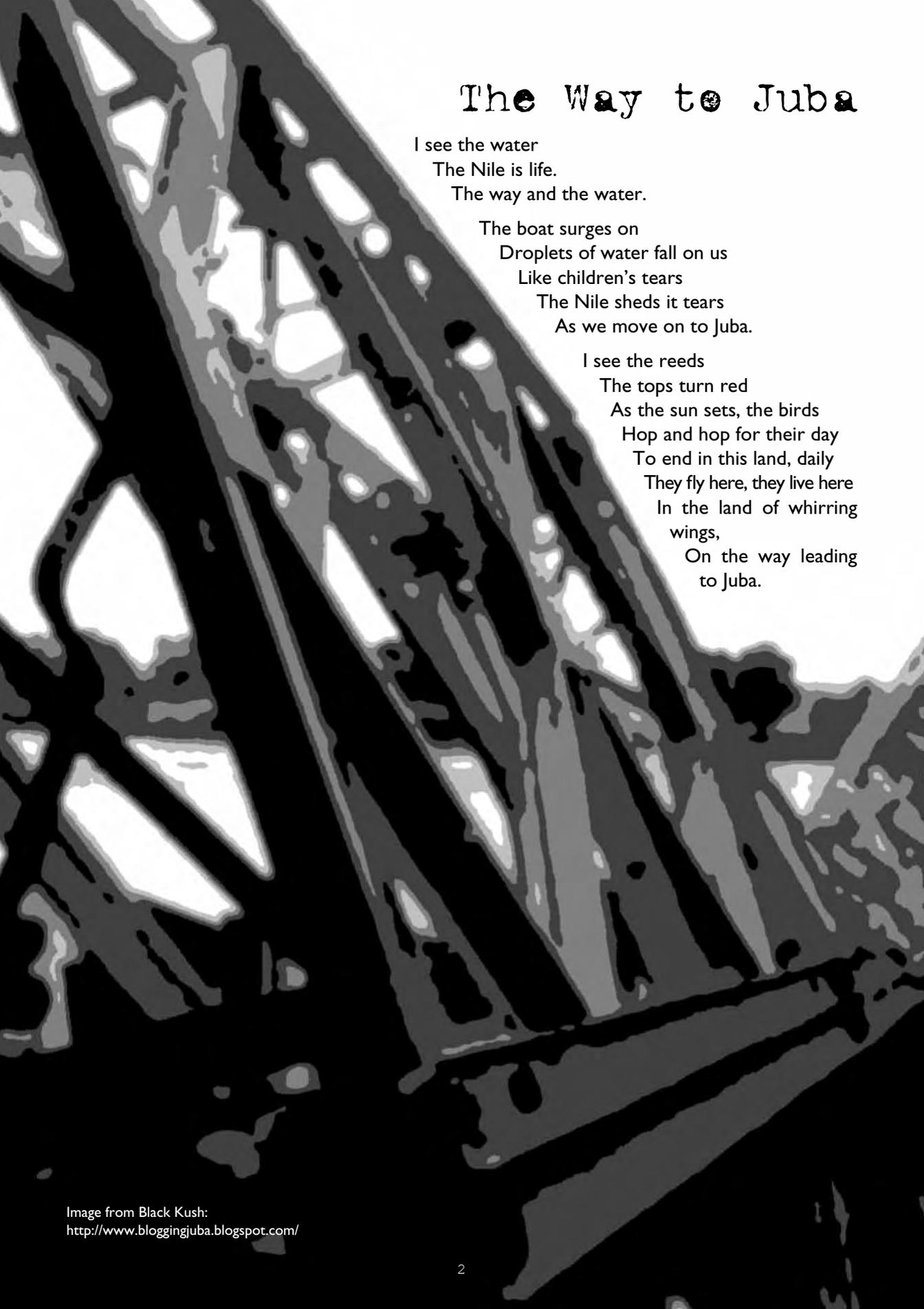
The Tore you are holding in your hands is a 'literary trumpet', blaring throughout South Sudan to awaken artistic and cultural expression that lay dormant during the years of our liberation struggle. This maiden issue is but a taster of a post-war literary harvest, to lay the foundation for a modern cultural revolution; to give voice to singers, vigour to dancers, creativity to writers, vision to painters, and fire the imagination of poets – both rural and urban guerrillas whose verses squib and squirm.

This is a marketplace of ideas: an invitation to artistic, literary and cultural discourse. South Sudan is not a literary desert as some people would want to imagine, and this journal bears testimony to our rich cultural heritage. This launching pad is to jettison more serious works to quench the thirst of readers who have for long been denied the opportunity to enjoy the creativity of the sons and daughters of the soil.

South Sudan has wept enough, it is time to tell stories, sing songs, dance, recite poetry and shed tears of joy to celebrate a new dawn where artists, writers, poets, playwrights, dancers, commentators, comedians take center stage to give our people food for thought, laughter, hope and even provoke. The important role of these creative people cannot be underestimated in peace building and to liberate the south Sudanese mind from negative thinking or feelings of inferiority.

Tore is a forum for South Sudanese to express themselves creatively in appreciation of our cultural diversity. The Tore literary trumpet is blaring, loud and clear. All you South Sudanese artists, wherever you are, fill your lungs with sanitized oxygen and blow the Tore, even louder. We want the world to hear us this time and join us in the literary feast.

TORE



The Way to Juba

I see the water
The Nile is life.
The way and the water.

The boat surges on
Droplets of water fall on us
Like children's tears
The Nile sheds it tears
As we move on to Juba.

I see the reeds
The tops turn red
As the sun sets, the birds
Hop and hop for their day
To end in this land, daily
They fly here, they live here
In the land of whirring
wings,
On the way leading
to Juba.

I see the birds
 Flying high, higher
 Soaring up in the sky.
 The airplanes in the sky
 Join them celebrating some height
 In the Sudan, the Nile lives
 To give life, light and lilies
 Yes, beauty, on the way to Juba.

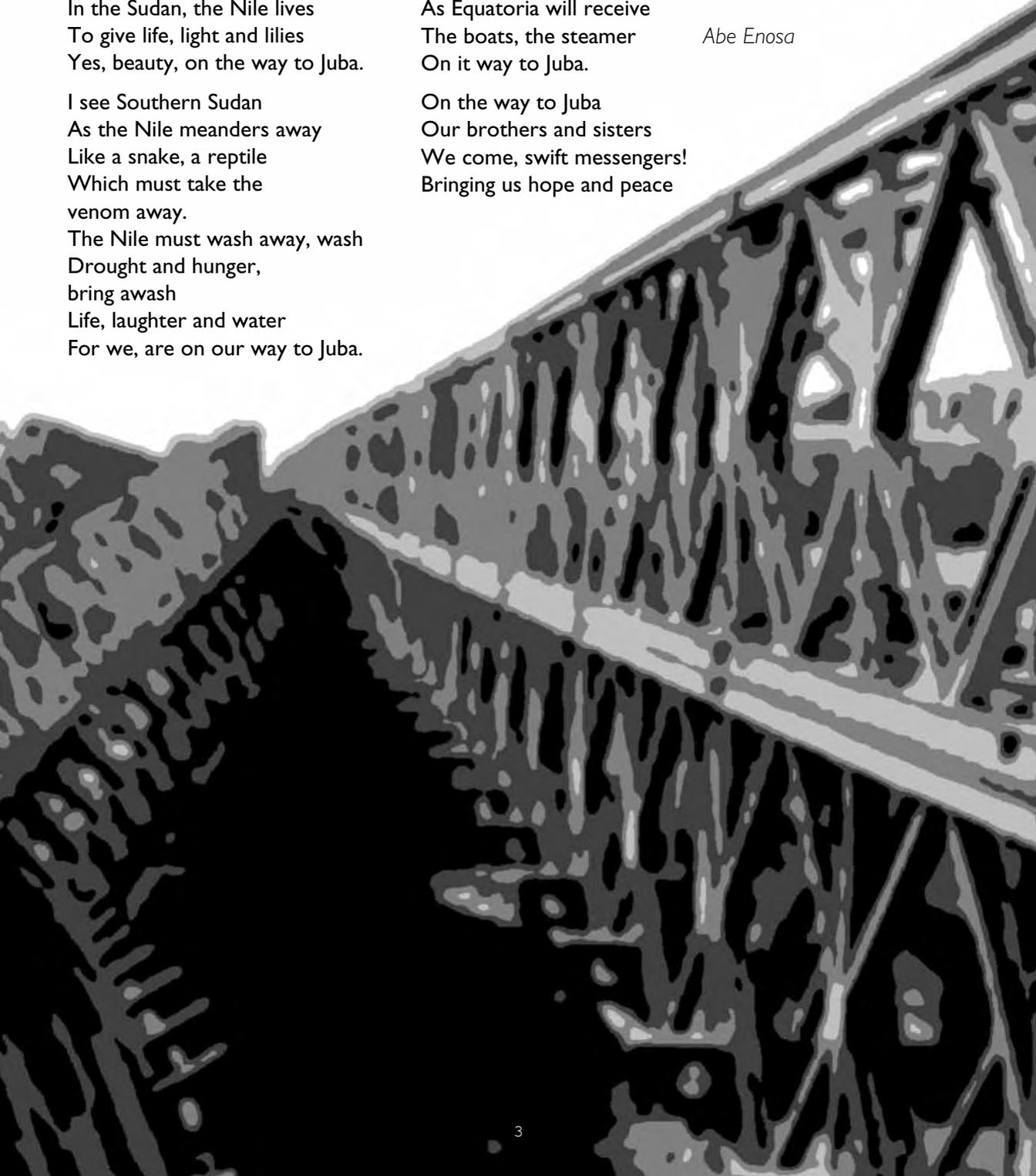
I see Southern Sudan
 As the Nile meanders away
 Like a snake, a reptile
 Which must take the
 venom away.
 The Nile must wash away, wash
 Drought and hunger,
 bring awash
 Life, laughter and water
 For we, are on our way to Juba.

The way to Juba
 Maybe, by the Nile.
 Up the Nile, Upper Nile
 Will be on its way
 Bahr el Ghazal too, await
 As Equatoria will receive
 The boats, the steamer
 On it way to Juba.

On the way to Juba
 Our brothers and sisters
 We come, swift messengers!
 Bringing us hope and peace

Good news of love, messages
 That everything has been
 agreed on
 And now, we are on the
 way to Juba!

Abe Enosa



The State of Sudanese National Literature

(Part One)

Prof Taban lo Liyong

That there is no Sudanese writer is no mere paradox. For, we have people who practice the craft of writing in the Sudan with very few who have mastered the art of creative writing. And being students of writing, of the technique of writing, they have hardly graduated to the mastery of writing, nor yet realized the ultimate vocation of writing and the enormous responsibility it bestows on the writer. Without their attaining to the calling of the writer how can we or they then designate themselves as Sudanese national writers? Unless we agree to use that word in a loose or lower sense, in the sense we designate some boxers, footballers, bankers as Sudanese boxers, Sudanese footballers, Sudanese bankers.

Let me not be too hard on the writers in and from the Sudan. Tayeb Salih, in his student days in London, and later on in his BBC Arabic Service days used the European novel form to produce a novel and other books. There is the *Season of Migration to the North*, and then of course there is *The Wedding of Zein*. These are superb works done in the days when the British critic F.R. Leavis expounded the gospel of the 'Great Tradition' in literature, and T.S. Eliot also put his foot in the corridor wishing to be included among the British writes and the British Tradition. Had Tayeb used English, he too could have qualified as a British novelist, though he would have been called a British novelist of Sudanese origin. But because he wrote in Arabic, and also about the Sudan in parts, he qualifies as a "Sudanese writer" without reservations. His short stories and novella have not only the flavour, but also the quintessence of Sudanese native tales. In the superb English translation that we use the tale comes out well, as if it were originally written in English. I wish I knew Arabic to read them in the original.

As far as *The Season of Migration to the North* is concerned, there is an evening by the fireside in the desert which is so admirable that one wished all Sudanese writers wrote likethat. Very definitely, he had used native tradition, native idiom, and thrown every-

thing he knew about Sudanese storytelling in it. That chapter alone qualifies him as a Sudanese writer, as far as the usage of the idiom is concerned.

Otherwise, in the context of the genres that contain or hold the writings of the period are concerned, *The Season of Migration to the North* is a novel of decolonization. This time, being the period leading to independence; the country-to-be independent happened to be the Sudan. And this Sudan colony happened to have been populated by an ancient base of **rutana**-speakers, people who use the ancient languages which the invading Arabs do not understand; people some of whom, like the hero Mustafa Said's grandmother, might have been from the Zande stock, and others of mixed African-Arab extraction. These 'Arabs', as the greater part of the novel tells us, had long ago been colonizers in Spain. So, *The Season of Migration to the North* is essentially a tale in the genre of decolonisation which celebrates decolonisation.

Another Sudanese writer who has written three novels is Dr. Francis Mading Deng. Dr. Deng is a scholar, an anthropologist, an ethnographer, a lawyer, a social scientist. Besides, he has been a top civil servant and an ambassador of national standing. And his intrusion into creative writing is in order to restate in the novel form some of the things he has said or written about in his essays and books. I find it difficult to discuss *The Cry of the Owl*, and *Seeds of Redemption*, as pure fiction. But as veiled moral tale, lying somewhere between a folktale – and with morals spread all over – they could be thought of as an essay written in order to teach the nation a lesson, a good lesson which one accepts and applauds because the sentiments expressed are good. This is not to say his works have no literary values. Only that one finds it hard to enumerate or classify them among the novel form of creativity. That he is a teacher of national morality though, is beyond doubt.

I feel, I must confess, unqualified to discuss this topic: The State of Sudanese National Literature. For I do not know Arabic in which most of the creative writings in the north have been

and are done. Besides, I have been away for the last 10 years to know what writings had been done in Arabic or English. For I would have wanted to review the writings of Dr Khalid al Mubarak in order to locate his precise place in the dramatic creative world of the Sudan. Besides, we have two or three young men and women writers whose works I have not read. We have some Sudanese writers who are striving hard to make a name for themselves in Britain, Europe and America. Some are publishing in the internet. Others in the orthodox medium. Without making a serious survey of all of these, including the juvenilia, one cannot do justice to Sudanese burgeoning literature.

Mr. Jamal Maghjob's writings need reviewing in the national context. How much of the Sudanese psyche he had internalized, growing up as he did in England, one would like to find out, especially when he attempts to represent the mind of a Sudanese rainmaker. His audience, especially the company he keeps and in whose creative ambience he gravitates is likely to affect his vision and the tone and tenor of his creativity. How much of that is British, how much Sudanese, I cannot comment on now.

Reviewing and categorizing my own place in the context of the world of letters in the Sudan can only be handled by somebody else. So, this topic cries out for another critic or other critics in a symposium to handle. One wished the Chairs of Literatures in Arabic and English in our various universities were all occupied by scholars who have demonstrated their expertise in analyzing, discussing and criticizing Sudanese literary works.

There is no Sudanese writer. As there is no British, French, Russian, American, etc. writer. The writer, ultimate master of the art that uses words in their **litera** (Latin for 'letters') form belongs to no physical territory, no national terrain except the virtual world of creativity. That is his or her territory. That is the world he or she represents. For it is the world conceived in the mind, peopled by the creatures of the mind that the drama of life takes place. Of course, like planes and satellites he gets launched from

a terrestrial world, a launching pad. And only in so far as the launching pad was in Moscow or New York or Dongola can we say he is a 'Russian' or 'American' or 'Sudanese' writer. Let me illustrate: the ultimate writer or dramatist, based in London could represent the world of a Danish Prince, a Negro General in Italy, a Jewish merchant, a Roman general and his Egyptian queen; an explorer of the new world, witches, etc. and do a credible job of it. William Shakespeare is the writer I am talking about.

The above is a tall order. And perhaps I could be accused of unrealism. Why then do I want to torture the present company with it? Am I sadistic? Do I want to dishearten our striving writers, national writers? Fortunately, I believe in human beings always seeking to better their lot in life, seeking to surpass their attainments, seeking to improve on their products, and that they would do everything in their power to torture themselves to perfection. In any case, it is the only order, or prescription I can give, and have given to East Africans since 1965; to Papua New Guineans since 1975; to South Africans since 1995; to Ugandans again in 2004; to the Dutch in 2006. You here today in Jebel Barkal are simply hearing the lesson I have been coaching the world with. I am, in a way, restating some basic truths I have given the world of creative writing since I decried the 'literary desert' of East Africa in 1965.

So, do not lower your gaze, do not aim low, do not belittle yourselves by wishing to be Bari-language writers, Dinka-language writers, Ara-

bic-language writers, English-language writers, Sudanese writers; tribal or national. Let us, writers or aspiring writers from the Sudan, set for ourselves the ultimate goal of writing till we become world household names in the world of letters; till our writings are prescribed texts and studied in the world's literature classes; till our books are sold in the world's major bookshops. Let our writing also act as lights our readers would use to guide them through life in this uncertain world. By then the world would have realized that we have pierced the hearts and minds of the people of the world because we have understood man and woman, we have understood life and the human condition in it and are speaking from inside life rather than superficially. We should also by then have attained to the mastery of a language complex and fit enough for representing so lofty a body of knowledge. Literature, being a language act, or art must also pass the test of verbal art.

The writer has parents, mother tongue, as well as primary culture. From this unitary launching pad he arises and joins the world of humanity. It is not only the teachings from his/her primary society that mould him/her into what he/she eventually becomes or attains. He/she comes out into the world already composed of genes that would develop into the person or artist of the future. Only if they are given the right atmosphere or conditions to grow in can they flower. The genes of creativity given to a would-be writer in the desert will wilt like all plants out there.



The main concerns of the writer are man and woman in his society, in other societies: what is physical life, what is mind life, what is spirit and spirit life? As well as what are human beings here for? Does life have a purpose? Or do human beings give man's life a purpose? Who are we? What do we do with ourselves out here? What are we supposed to do with our and other human beings down here? And who decided those roles? What are the validities of those assertions? Why should they hold sway on us? Is there any connection between us as human beings? With the varied backgrounds from which we came historically, religiously, linguistically, culturally, etc. which developed in our private enclaves, what do we do with ourselves in the present globalised world? The task facing the global writer is more complex than that which had faced past 'tribal' writers or religious leaders. Any writer who cannot explore these themes ends up a sectarian writer, a sectional writer, an Arab writer, an English writer, a Sudanese writer.

To be a writer means to revisit the religious teachings of the past and test them out in the lives of the modern characters we create. To be a writer means to draw morals from our own investigations and representations of personae in our creative works and present them to the world. Ultimately, the writer is a philosopher of no particular philosophy school, (except his own) a believer of no particular organized religion (again, except his own). As the writer writes

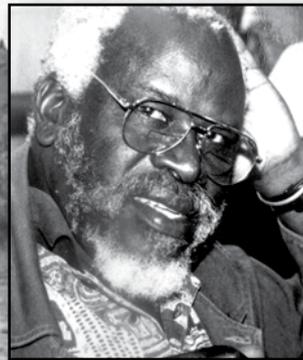
more so does he broaden his outlook on life; as he creates his tapestry so does he compose the mesh that ultimately becomes the world of his created life and its organizations. The spider spins out his act from inside him. So does the writer.

You are you. A writer. Alone.

You are one person in a sea of human beings. Something inside you urges you to like and dislike what you are or what you see. And that same thing urges you to do something about it. If you can retreat, and retreat easily then you were not made of the true writers' stuff.

Your human worth cries out for realization, for actualization. Each one of us, conscious of the fact, seeks to realize his worth, by displaying his talents. If you are a religious poet, (and they are the greatest poets), your challenge is towards extending a helping hand to those near you and those far from you. You give salt to those who need salt. You are the salt or salter of the earth. Yours is the task of sharing and sharing alike. Be in the crowd to give salt and succor; sometimes retreat into the desert to regenerate and plan. If you become part of the crowd, then you will be swarmed by the crowd around you, you could easily become lost. The teacher of the world should occupy the only chair in the classroom.

This article is an edited version of a lecture that the writer gave to a meeting of writers at the Nubian Restaurant, Jebel Barkal, Northern State, on February 4, 2007.



Prof Taban lo Liyong



Dinka folktales

Retold by Atem Yaak Atem

Why people become hungry

Once upon a time, there was no hunger.

One day Woman was walking in a glade. When she approached a dry pond, she saw a pinkish, flat and round object. The object was cutting grass which it rolled into itself. When Woman saw this she stopped and asked the object "Why are you doing this my child?"

"I am eating," answered Yac*.

"Is there nothing else you can eat?", she asked.

"Nothing," answered Yac.

"Then I shall take you home to feed you," said Woman.

"I will come with you", answered Yac

When Woman picked Yac, Yac coiled itself at

the belly of Woman and lodged itself inside Woman.

On arrival home, Yac started pricking the inside of Woman.

In pain Woman asked Yac why it was hurting her.

"I want to eat," replied Yac.

Woman got food. She ate. The pain went away.

But each time Yac wanted to eat it would just prick the inside of Woman.

Woman would eat to feed Yac.

And that is why people become hungry.

*There is no Dinka name "Yac". There are Yaac, Yak and Yaak.

The advent of death

Once upon a time Jok the Evil One used to come and snatch people. Those he took away never returned. They were dead.

People were angry with Jok. They agreed to do something about Jok to stop him killing people.

A meeting was held. It was decided that Jok must be killed.

Two men volunteered to kill Jok. They were one right handed man and a left handed man.

The two men went out to wait in the place where Jok used to visit.

When Jok appeared, the two men began to argue over who should spear Jok. After a long argument the right handed man gave in and told the left handed man to spear Jok.

The left handed man threw his spear at Jok. He missed him. Jok fled.

And that is why people have been dying to this day.

Owl's false horns

Once upon a time there was Agumut the Owl and Adol a small bird that made huge, beautiful shelter for herself and her children. Agumut did not know how to build a shelter.

One day, Agumut decided to evict Adol and her children from their home.

While Adol was with her children in their house, Agumut came and stood in front of the house.

With his bulging eyes and sharp horns ready to strike Agumut said, "Give me your house or I will spear you with my horns."

"Let me get out with my children before you enter", replied the frightened Adol.

Agumut entered and enjoyed staying in the house that Adol had built for herself and her children.

This went on for a long time. Each time Adol built a house Agumut would come to chase away Adol and her children and moved into the house.

Adicol a small blue bird was aware of what was going on. Adicol did not like what Agumut was doing to Adol and her children.

Adicol knew Agumut did not have horns. He had only long ears.

One day, Adicol saw Agumut sitting outside his house. Adicol flew over Agumut. After a while he sat on his back. He touched his ears. He found that they were not horns.

"These are not horns but ears. These are not horns but ears. These are not horns but ears." The refrain brought all the birds in the neighbourhood to the scene.

Agumut became afraid. He flew. But Adicol followed him with his song.

From that time onward Adol and other birds were no longer afraid of Agumut.

Narrator's note: Based on this folktale the Dinka people talk of "ka ci ya yith ka agumut" or owl's ears, meaning fear based on false image, mostly scary, of an enemy. Literally translated it would be "These are (things that were used to frighten people with) after all are owl's ears."

Deadly vengeance*

Once upon a time when people became ill, they went to the sky. People used to go there using a long rope.

One day a woman killed the young child of a small bird called Atoc.

Atoc became very sad because of the death of her child.

Atoc decided to punish the woman for killing her child.

Atoc went and cut the rope that used to take people to the sky.

And that is why people die.

**This folktale was first retold in Dinka primer "Bung Tueng de Cier".*

Endless sleep

Henry Jada

Mr. Man, the laziest man in town woke up at last. The time was eight o'clock. He had slept through the whole Sudan civil war. He yawned and allowed the first lazy thought of the day to pass through his mind: "Food". He clapped his hands and shouted for his wife Naleke, whom he called 'Lek', not out of love as one would expect, but because he only spoke one syllable words.

As usual the industrious woman was already up and about and nowhere to be seen. Mr. Man ground his teeth in disgust at this woman who never seemed to see the value of giving one's bones rest. "Bones shall rest forever, once we die," she argues.

"Silly woman," thought Mr. Man. Yet she provided for their table. Mr. Man recalled with horror the time when she had walked out of his life after a quarrel, the subject of which is not good for modest ears as it touched on his manhood. Hunger nearly got the better of him then. He put the ugly recollection away and turned his mind to his favourite past-time, reminiscing on the time he slept through the first 17 year Sudan civil war and woke up after the war was declared by referees to be over with no winner. Everybody at that time, with the exception perhaps of the umpires expected a rematch.

The first returnees who came then from neighbouring countries behaved like aliens from another planet. Strange, they insisted on speaking in the local language which locals had already banished to history. "A strange backward race," Mr. Man thought. The fact that they were in possession of papers reflecting a good education and spoke good English epithet did not impress Mr. Man. His one syllable dialect was superior and more refined than any spoken language, he believed.

Mr. Man yawned again and uncurled himself. Naleke's absence was the usual signal for him to take a stroll. As if God wanted to

compensate him somewhat, Mr. Man's strides were abnormally long. One stride was enough to lift him from Kator to Tongpiny.

Today, he wished to visit his uncle at Nyokuron. He took one stride and was lost in the commotion of people at Custom market, where to Mr. Man, everybody seemed to be very busy doing God knows what.

"*Mayayi, mayayi*", "Weewee, weewee" and some such incomprehensible words hit his ears. Mr. Man could not believe his ears. Once again, he was confronted with a new language which he now had to translate into the one syllable language he spoke.

He could see that the lady shouting "*mayayi mayayi*" was selling eggs and with hunger twitching his stomach, Mr. Man addressed the lady: "Wee," as this seems to be the way people were addressed, and pointing at the eggs said: "*ma*, how much?"

"*Ma, hakuna hapa, yiko uko*," the lady replied and pointed to another lady who was selling bottled safe drinking water.

There certainly seemed to be some kind of misunderstanding. Undeterred, Mr. Man picked up a boiled egg and demonstrated his need by cracking it open and eating it.

"Me want to eat more," Mr. Man conveyed his message with the help of relevant gestures.

"No problem. Just pay. One *mayayi*, one pound."

Mr. Man was astonished. The last time he bought an egg it cost 100 pounds. "Strange world this," he thought, "with prices coming down." With his lanky hand, he scooped a number of bills from his pocket and counted what he thought was enough for a tray of eggs. As he handed the money over to the lady, the lady shouted back: "Old money, not good anymore. Give me new money. Where have you been mister man?"

“I have just got up from sleep; and this is my first stroll of the day. How come you know my name,” Mr. Man asked in double astonishment.

“I don’t know your name, mister, nor do I wish to know it. Just give me my money and vamoose. You are holding up my customers,” the lady barked. When she saw that Mr. Man did not look like responding positively, she threatened: “Or do you want me to call the police?”

Luckily for Mr. Man, at this very moment, the sweet angelic voice of Naleke, also shouting the dialect of these aliens floated to his ears: ‘*mayayi, mayayi*’.

“Lek, come over here. I am in a fix,” he shouted. As she approached, Mr. Man asked: “Why do you sell eggs and not plant food?” Naleke ignored his question and enquired, “What is the problem this time?”

“Habari yako, Naleke, how nice you look in your bright new Kitenge dress,” the lady said as she recognized Naleke in the dress she had sold her the previous evening. The lady proceeded to ask Naleke: “Do you happen to know this long man? Time seems to have stood still for him and he seems to think the same goes for others as well. He wants to pay me in old bucks for the fresh eggs he has under his arm or already in his stomach.”

“He is the very husband who has a penchant to sleep that I chatted to you about over a cup of coffee sometime recently. I will pay for the eggs he has eaten, maybe since we are friends and in the same trade, you can take back the eggs he has under his arm.”

The lady having acquiesced, Naleke hounded Mr. Man and herself onto a *senke* motorbike and they were soon on their way home. “A ‘*boda boda*’ is the fastest most economical way to get home these days,” she told her husband when they got home. It was eight o’clock in the evening. “It is also the easiest and certainly most uncomfortable way to reach one’s destination be it in this or the next world,” Mr. Man retorted

as he remembered the dangerous swerves the child who rode the three of them home in the *boda boda* made. His stomach twitched, not with hunger but with fear then and even now in the safety of his house.

He reflected over the events of the day as he took lessons from his wife: “*mayayi, weewee, boda boda*”. He realized that turning the new agglutinating language into his one syllable dialect would be tricky.

Having had enough of lessons, he turned to another subject. “What is in the news?” Mr. Man enquired of his wife as he rested in his grandfather’s chair and sipped a cup of tea. “There is talk of not going back to war,” she replied, knowing well that this was the lullaby that would send her husband to yet another long sleep. With a twitching of stomach, Mr. Man curled himself up and fell into a deep sleep.



Afam Arabi

We went to different schools
Where I was taught 'Afam Arabi'.
In the other school, my blood brother was taught 'toa kitu kidogo'.
Somehow, despite the lack of a common lingua franca,
We understand each other so well
That we are able to educate the naive, unlearned world.

Henry Jada

Ethnography

The Arab-Muslim Community in Kongor of the Days Gone by (Part One)

Atem Yaak Atem

Introduction

This is not a work of fiction. It is also not a distilled piece of academic research. The tract basically belongs to ethnography genre and from a historical perspective. Without doubt the main source of the article is the writer's personal experience and childhood recollections of events, people, customs and so forth, of times that have gone by. Readers will inevitably be questioning the inordinate amount of space allocated to description and narration of matters pertaining to Jieeng (Dinka) of the time being reported. This observation may be correct up to a point. However, if the narrator were to write about the life of members the Arab and Muslim community in the area at the time, without any mention of the features of the host society that were and still are completely different culturally and in other aspects such as religion, the profile would lack context, point of reference, necessary comparison and contrast.

There is another point that has to be made clear at the onset: this is about choice of tense used. The story is about the past. In that sense verbs should be in a past tense. But from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph, present and past tenses appear, as it were haphazardly. This is likely to be seen as a form of inconsistency. It shouldn't. The idea behind apparent contradiction is that there were customs, beliefs and practices that are still alive today. An example of this is the importance, verging on adoration, rural Dinka give to cattle.

On the other hand practices that have gone out of currency today include use of money as a measure of one's worth or wealth. These days Dinka and particularly members of Bor community are demanding and receiving huge amounts of money, in lieu of cattle, in marriage of their daughters to young men in North America, Australia and New Zealand. One of the spheres where attitudes have been softened, if not tolerated, is the attitude towards circumcised men, however.

This sort of concession made about change, is in fact, an act of glossing over issues of transition from a traditionally-based society to a contemporary one. True, there were fewer Christians then than there are today in Kongor town and surrounding villages at the time under review. But today's crop of Christians whether they are nominal, novices or full-blooded believers, still share some of the indigenous beliefs such as immortality by means of one begetting a child to continue family name and lineage after the death of a parent. Again, across the spectrum many Dinka Christians still believe and practise polygamy. In a way, the use of present tense throughout this writing would still be in place but still does justice to the concepts and practices in time and space.

And as usual, I have kept out of the writing that obnoxious word "tribe" in reference to ethnic or linguistic group, opting instead for "people" or community as substitutes.

A Muslim-Arab island in the heart of an African society

The contacts between the peoples of Southern Sudan and Arabs, Turks and Muslims, coming from the north of the border go back to centuries of incursion and invasion, conquests and slave trade.

The Arabs and Muslims, whether as hunters for human commodity for sale or traders bartering salt and beads and cloth or ostrich, ivory or other rare and valued indigenous goods, left footprints in Southern Sudan which are there for everyone to witness. For example, in Western Bahr el Ghazal an African village still carries the name of the infamous Dongalawi slave trader Zubeir Rahma Mansour. The town is called Deim Zubeir.

In my home Bor area, we still have traces of Arab-Turkish heritage. In Mading or Bor town, there is a place called Abiith, a Jieeng (Dinka) corruption of Arabic *abiid* or slaves. At that place trade in human beings used to take place at the close of the 19th century. Moving North-West through the White Nile, about 50 kilometres from Mading, there is Ajak Beker, a river port at the confluence of the White Nile and

Atem River (the name bears little reference to the writer). This is the Jieeng version of El Jak Babiker. The port-cum-fortress-like Mading was a holding ground and transit point for people in captivity awaiting transportation to the slave markets of Omdurman, Khartoum and Cairo. The name has since officially changed to Dhiam Dhiam, or the slushy one in the local language.

Another way one can glean Arab and Islamic heritage in the area is through some names. Late John Garang de Bior, broadcaster, singer and self-styled Duke of Pacol who hailed from Kongor had Jadeen or Jadein as his nick-name. (As a son of a former senior chief Bior Aguer he named himself, in jest, Duke of Pacol- a hamlet of his birth that was almost an extension of Kongor.) He was given that sobriquet, I am told, because by the time he was born there was a Northern Sudanese para-medic with that name who was in charge of the local dispensary.

At a certain time during the colonial administration Kongor was made headquarters of what was a sub-district of Bor. That made the town seat of the Egyptian *mamur* or assistant

To be circumcised or not to be circumcised

As the traders and later teachers from the North were without exception Muslim, it also meant that they were circumcised according to the requirements of their faith. This custom *per se* as practised by new comers did not generate problems between the two communities except in rare cases of a local man engaged in heated argument with a circumcised one. Dinka boys and sometimes adults used to and continue to throw verbal abuses at other persons during a bitter fall out involving physical fight. One of the commonest and most provocative insult of the time would be for the opponent to shout aloud “*Yin ye anguala de raane!*” On the face of it this is a statement of

fact and should not cause an offence- in English this would translate into: “You the circumcised man/person!”

What provokes the addressee in this instance arises from the connotation of the word “*anguala*” or “the circumcised one” in Jieeng.

Eastern Dinka- those inhabiting east of the White Nile do not only reject the practice but also see the custom as abhorrent, detestable and something to be ashamed of. According to this thinking calling a man “*anguala*” is to scorn him, making him a laughing stock.

Some decades ago, attitudes towards circumcised people by communities that did not practise the

to district commissioner or DC. There are stories about a mamur known by the nickname of Ayom-nok. There were junior Government functionaries stationed in the area as policemen, clerks, telegraph operators and so on. Most of these workers were both Muslim or of Arab descent.

The profile of the people of Muslims and persons of Arab extraction in my town of Kongor is about people who operated a largely legitimate business during the boyhood of the writer. The personae in the story consisted of jallaba or petty traders, policemen and school teachers. The “expatriate” community and the host community, for most part, lived in peace and in some cases the “migrants” almost wholly integrated into the local clans.

The writer lived in Pakuoor village, exactly a mile away from Pawel or Kongor, the local court centre which was also a trading post. A vernacular village school or what was known during the colonial times as bush school, which this writer attended, was established there in 1938.

The stories I am writing about happened when I was a sort of hybrid malakiyya and country

tradition virtually verged on the irrational or obsession with a tinge of revulsion. Anyone from linguistic groups such as Bor as a whole, Ngok (of Bailiet), Ageer, Abiang, Padangor, Agar, Aliap, Ciec, Rel (Atuot) and Gok (Western Dinka) anyone who underwent the operation either for medical or religious reasons or from free choice had to live in denial for the rest of his life. Peers and even children would snigger at him behind his back, calling him names, mostly in whispers. At times “raan”, Dinka word for a person, would be applied as a code for “anguala”.

The length to which such societies went in their derision of the practice is illustrated by an event that took place many years ago in a Dinka village. (Details suppressed). A woman contracted a venereal disease as a result of

boy. Strictly speaking, a malakiyya person in the context of Southern Sudan refers to a man or woman from African backgrounds in terms of language, culture, customs and sometimes religion but for historical reasons is more at home with Arabic, Arabo-Islamic ways and cultural practices. Sometimes that would include profession of Islamic faith. Most of these attributes did not and do not apply to me. Nevertheless, I was closer to belong to the class of what we used to colloquially call “townese”.

Co-existence between diverse lifestyles and cultures

Broadly, the subject of this piece is about three groups of people with different ethnic, socio-economic life, customs, religious beliefs communities in Kongor area. The first consisted of the host community, or the Dinka. The majority of these were rural people who lived in villages surrounding the town and beyond. African by race and culture the Jieeng people share similar customs, value and belief systems and practices with other communities in Southern Sudan and in many societies on the continent.

liaison between her and a stranger she claimed had raped her. She then passed the disease to her husband. After the symptom appeared the two villagers who did not know the nature of their sickness did not report to a dispensary for early diagnosis and treatment.

When the man’s condition deteriorated he was rushed to a nearby health facility. The medical assistant recommended that the patient should undergo circumcision as well as to take a course of antibiotics. The man told the medico he preferred death to circumcision. Relatives were called to persuade him. Finally he relented. But the story did not end there. As soon as he had recovered he and his brothers approached his in-laws with a complaint against their daughter who had brought problems to her husband. The in-laws agreed to give him a

cont.

Mid-way there was this group of Southern Sudanese who had received basic formal education from the mission schools. These were “approved” teachers, clerks, veterinary and medical assistants and the like. These were Christian by creed and had little in common with the Northern traders by way of religion or culture (some of them did not know good Arabic). This group tended to bond together. They ate meals similar to that taken daily by the traders: “kisra and mulah”, also consumed by some of the senior chiefs resident in the town.

Nearly all these country dwellers practised what some writers refer to as traditional religion. The tenets of their faith did not require the “believers” to pray at fixed number of hours a day in a week or month. They did not have a Sabbath, Friday or Sunday as the Day of the Lord. In short, communication between Jieeng with Nhialic or God was occasional, in other words Jieeng would pray as a response to an emergency such as a sickness in a family. Crises, such as an outbreak of a livestock epidemic, long-drawn out drought or floods affecting part or whole area would require a collective remedy from clan elders. Sacrifices and

supplications would be made to appease the supposed wronged clan divinity. Believe it or not sometimes, the expected “divine” answer was received in form of rain or mysterious and sudden disappearance of epidemic

The representatives of people would report their concern to a spiritual leader believed and accepted as a mediator between the supernatural being and humans (Jieeng prefer the word *acuuk*- the small black ant- in reference to the relationship between human beings and Nhialic (God). While other faiths have synagogue, mosque, temple or church as places for worship, the Jieeng centre for spiritual gathering- when they need help- is a shrine which can be any spot any where with a tree or stump, for example, as an emblem, standing alone or within a compound of spiritual man called *tiet*. *Tiet*’s role would be to interpret whatever, mostly reasons behind tragedies and how Nhialic or deities would be appeased, mostly through sacrifices of an ox or a ram, to end an illness or other natural calamities.

Christian and Muslim version of immortality is different from Jieeng’s. A Jieeng is dead forever if he or she leaves no child bearing his or her

heifer as a form of compensation for the loss of his prepuce and for the slurs he was going to endure throughout the rest of his life.

These attitudes were also widespread among the Naath (Nuer) and Collo (Shilluk) of Upper Nile. Until recent times, members of these communities used to make fun of circumcised men. Like Jieeng, Naath and Collo used to compose and sing songs ridiculing “*thony*” the Naath equivalent of “*anguala*.”

The reverse of circumcised is “*ayuuk*” in the dialects of Western Dinka, mainly Rek, Twic of Warrap and Gogrial, Malual-Giernyang of Aweil and Ngok of Abyei. The word is derogatory. Since these Jieeng clans carry out circumcision as a rite of passage, an uncircumcised man is considered to be a boy. In these communities there is a general belief that being uncircumcised would

almost amount to poor bodily hygiene. The idea that the operation guarantees cleanness is common among the Semitic peoples and their neighbours such as the Ethiopians and Eritreans, Christian or Muslim.

In Africa the issue surrounding circumcision can become a political and leadership issue. I am thinking about Kenya. During the multi-party presidential and parliamentary elections of 1992 some members of the Kikuyu ethnic group whose community practise the custom opposed the leadership of Oginga Odinga on the grounds that he was alleged to be uncircumcised- on the assumption that his Luo community does not perform the rite- and was, allegedly, not qualified on that account to be president. In a public reply the old man said he underwent the surgery many years back.

name at the time of death. This form of life after death did not speak of a day of judgment.

For their livelihood, the rural population of Jieeng relied heavily on livestock primarily as source of milk. As the people depended on primordial agricultural methods and tools such as hoe for food production the result was insufficient grains, mainly sorghum that did not last from harvest to the next, even for most of the hard working farmers. Other food crops grown such as beans, pumpkin or maize which paradoxically did very well and were not labour intensive received negligible interest or attention they deserved because the whole community did not consider them staple or part of their daily diet.

There were few traders from Southern Sudan. During the time in question there were three of them. The oldest was Monycol Deng. A former soldier, Monycol, who all the time wore jalabiyya and turban pulled close to his forehead to conceal his scarification was a shopkeeper for Doka Fadhil Mullah, a rich merchant in Bor town. The shop keeper was one of the richest in the area; he had many cattle. Contrary to expectation Monycol allowed his chil-

dren to choose their religion or what to do for a living. One son, Alfred Deng went to school and embraced Christianity while Kiir, later to be known as Mohammed Kheir went to a Muslim school before going to study in Egypt and the former West Germany. Kiir later returned to Bor area where he operated a matatu transport business among others. He was an SPLA captain when he was killed during the fighting before the Government forces retook Kapoeta in 1992. The rest of Monycol's sons bred cattle and had always been among the wealthy families of Kongor until the split within the SPLA of 1991.

Dhebidayo Anyieth Akuei was the second long serving indigenous trader. Originally from Pathuyith in Central Bor, Dhebidayo owned and operated a modest shop. He was a quiet man and dignified looking person who enjoyed the conversation of some chiefs who lived next to his shop and residence.

The third businessman to open a shop was a pioneer in several things. Probably one of the first to receive formal education which was high by the standard of the time, William Garang Dut. completed intermediate school be-

During my intermittent sojourns in Kenya from 1992 to 2005 I often read of gangs in market places in Nairobi forcibly circumcising some Luo men after the crowd learned there was a "boy" in their midst.

In Southern Sudan, time has softened attitudes. From the late 1970s through to 1980s there young Dinka Bor youth mostly students were flocking to hospital in large numbers to have a cut. It soon became so fashionable that it turned into stampede. "The demand (for operation) was so high that we had to do it by "appointment", a doctor who worked in the area at the time told me years later. When the war broke out soon, those young people who had missed out at home had to have the operation performed on them in clinics in the military bases. These were men from those

ethnic groups- Jieeng, Naath, Collo, Murle, who had opposed the practice for years, making a reverse decision.

Are people making a fuss over whether a man is circumcised or not circumcised? Yes. Is my answer. In my opinion, if one's religion or community decrees that one has to undergo the operation, there is no reason why others would have to complain. Again if a person gets a cut because of medical reasons or purely as a matter of personal choice, that also should be respected. On the other hand, if for cultural reasons other people do not perform the operation, that custom has to be respected. It boils down to mutual respect just like in spheres of religion or political party affiliation.

fore he trained in forestry. He was stationed and worked at Kagelu before moving to other areas, including Bor where he introduced several species of trees which are still there to this day. Before and after independence William Garang tried his luck at politics by contesting a seat in Northern Bor. He lost. The next step was to start a shop which was run by one of his relatives, Duot Gak. The former politician was not a resident businessman and appears to have had no social relations with Northern traders in Kongor.

Dinka-nisation of Arabic names and words

As it is to be expected, the people from Northern Sudan were culturally and linguistically different from their Jieeng hosts. The locals had problems with how to pronounce the names of the traders or other outsiders who had come to live and work in their area. (There was a Moru policeman whose son was called Tilian or Italian as he said he was born during World War Two. People had difficulty with pronouncing names of other members of his family members except his.)

The way around the conundrum was to apply the nearest Jieeng equivalents. Awad es Said one of the pioneer traders to construct a shop made of corrugated roof and brick walls in the Pawel was simply known as Awet, the Jieeng word for crane, the bird with the gold crown and dances beautifully. Awad's shop keeper, Al Amin, was Alomin. (In later years I came to learn that Abu Baker Awad a popular Sudan TV news reader from late 1960s to 1970s, was the merchant's son.)

Another Northern Sudanese trader whose name baffled the customers was Omar Habiballah. To make life easier, the Jieeng addressed him as Wumer, with the stress on the first syllable or on the second depending on the addresser's caprice.

The fasting month of Ramadan was twisted to Arok-madhan (Arok being a name, unisex, giv-

en to a child born when a family mourns death of a close relative; *arok* being a word for a sign of bereavement worn by members of a family that have lost a loved one.) There was nothing predictable in this game of names' or words' corruption.

The best escape route was for someone to come up with what students of social anthropology refer to as personality ox name. Awad es Said was known as Awet Majong-jaar. Abdalla or Abdullahi was changed to Adhulai. Mirghani Marzuk originally from one of ethnic communities of Darfur and who was a medical assistant in the area settled the matter by introducing himself as Manyang e Dut.

Manyang-dit for short, became his name, to all his patients, friends and the rest of the community.

Mirghani was married to two women from Bor and that fact made him a fully integrated settler. (When he retired from medical work he set up a shop in Kongor.) Like the rest of the members from the North he sent his sons to be educated at home somewhere outside Bor area.

There were two others who married local girls, one a trader while the other was the headmaster of the then new Arabic elementary school.

Several members of the "expatriate" community would have wished to get married to local girls. However, many girls' parents were not ready to allow their daughters to be married to people whose customs were different in many ways. The idea for women and their relatives being married to someone whose home origin was believed to be at "piny thar" or the earth's end was another disincentive. Then the huge number of cattle demanded by the families from suitors of their daughters was a further hindrance. Nearly all the girls and their relatives of the time could not countenance the idea of marriage with circumcised men although this topic was not discussed in the open. (See "to be circumcised or not to be circumcised")

Sunset of my life

I watch, now, the sunset of my life,
Every fleeting moment of it float through an hour
glass Located somewhere in my being,
Somehow time ceased to exist for me;
And I was hurled head and foot into an abyss
Located somewhere in the bosom of nowhere

I recall, now, the sunrise of my life,
Every fleeting moment of it,
And wondered at which o'clock,
Did I engage a devil's advocate.

I remember, now, the rise and fall
Of hope in my breast,
Every fleeting moment of it
Stuffed with dreams
Of changing everything and nothing.

Henry Jada

Tribute to a visionary freedom fighter: Dr John Garang de Mabior

Joseph Abuk

On a daily basis, at sun rise, sun-set and other hours in-between, there was and still is, to some extent, this queue of mourning pilgrims visiting the tomb of departed leader, Dr John Garang de Mabior, situated between the former military school of the Old Sudan and the southern Sudan Legislative Assembly in Juba. Some could have now repeatedly come here very many times. The most regular among them are school children, priests, the SPLA, journalists, intellectuals, and politicians.

There were those who came as organized prayer and choir groups. As they paid homage they maintained a disciplined attitude of prayer punctuated with singing and making of lamenting utterances and dirges directed to God and the deceased.

One little Onen aged twelve years old was in the habit of asking a persistent question each time he was at the tomb, he spoke in Acholi literally saying, "God you allowed my father to be killed before I was born. Now when I was preparing to see Garang who had become my second father, you allowed him to be killed. Could it be the same enemy who murdered both parents?"

This, as I was standing next to the small boy on one such occasion, was what broke my resistance, my tears stole their way rapidly down the corners of my eyes though I tried hard to restrain them by looking up to let them sink back into my eye sockets. The circumstance forced me to repeat a little prayer to myself

advising the leaders of South Sudan to take real good care of this type of Infant Terrible.

As I walked away, I noticed a certain man, most likely a foreigner looking pitifully at me. He was free to think what he liked for he did not know the enormity of the tragedy that hit the south following the death of that single man.

But who was this Garang that even posthumously could be able to fuel an ever burning candle in most hearts at the local, regional and international scenes? How did he become such an icon that symbolized him as the guardian angel of every downtrodden Sudanese African, affecting even those of tender ages such as Onen? What ideals injected him with the petrol of nationalism that kept his human engine running for twenty-one years in the bushes of liberation and twenty one days in the lime-light of historical leadership? Could Dr. John Garang de Mabior be accredited to be in the league of post-colonial African leaders? The man's personality can truly incite us to pose an endless list of probing questions.

It was at about 8.45 pm when I was jerked to attention by a BCC news item reporting that the Ugandan helicopter that flew Dr. John Garang from Entebbe airport in Uganda on Saturday 30 July, 2005 had not yet arrived his base



at the New Site in South Sudan .The news sent immediate shudders all over my whole body. I had a very restless night in which I tried in vain to invalidate the possibility of Garang's crash and likely death. At 5 am I switched on the radio and there again was the BBC boldly announcing the leader's death and a bit later, narrated his profile; date and place of birth, his education, his early professional life as a young officer in the Anyanya and Sudanese army, his SPLA/M leadership that ultimately led to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

The radio referred to his visionary leadership as a freedom fighter. "My God," I exclaimed, could it be this simple that colossus such as Garang could be wickedly tossed out into physical oblivion at the critical hour when people demanded his presence most if it should be established that a Brutus and Pompey took the life out of Ceasar, what will be repercussions for the African destiny in the Sudan? Helpless questions, you could say.

On Friday 5 August 2005, much effort was exerted on the construction of the Bright star-structured tomb-monument to be the next house of Dr. John Garang de Mabior. Children, youth, women, old folks, civil servants, soldiers, people from different walks of life, and religious leaders, all assembled partly as job doers, or as spectators milling sadly around the tomb site. You could liken the massive crowd to a huge army of ants engrossed on performing various crucial details of construction under the command of cruel king. The task force at the site was working on a count-down ultimatum of 48 hours deadline that began a day earlier.

In the 1960s we fled to East Africa as refugees. Being students, we were initially resettled at Bombo, 21 miles north of Kampala, where we met others of similar description from South Africa and the then North and South Rhodesia. As the number of new arrivals built up, the more experienced left Bombo for other parts of East Africa. Those of John Garang found themselves in Tanzania and some of us in Kenya.

There were many opportunities such as school holidays that occasioned frequent meetings of the refugee students in Nairobi. It was here that the student union and the political groups organized enlightenment meetings on issues of concern such as the Anyanya war, the political situation back home in the Sudan and problems destabilizing the students. There were times when the briefings and political statements presented by meeting organizers, were not received quietly by the audience. Those were moments of heated and tough debates to analyse issues involved. Eloquent speakers always made their influence felt and such were the practical schools that nurtured the talented.

The years of exile in east Africa, coincided with Kwame Nkrumah's concerted campaign in the independent capitals of Africa, to raise consciousness for a continental Union government. Cities like Nairobi, Kampala, Addis Ababa and Lagos were crowded with mellifluously eloquent youthful Ghanaian intellectuals preaching the gospel of the Osagyefo - the African Messiah for African unity that would bring about the total liberation of the continent and guarantee the full emancipation of the black man everywhere.

The Sudanese in refuge received Nkrumah's campaign for a Pan-African consciousness with special zeal emphasizing all those connotations that called for empowerment of the black man. It was a new experience of awakening that eventually strengthened their determination to fight their own war against Arab colonialism that had inherited the mentality and instruments of repression from their external predecessors and their enslaving history.

Those leaders who spear-headed the battles that won independence for their countries at the beginning of the 1960s, following Ghana's freedom in 1957, were also men of considerable charisma. Among them were Jomo Kenyatta, Julius Nyerere, Patrick Lumumba, Milton Obote, Modibo Keite, Leopold Senghor, Nandi Azikiwe, Kenneth Kaunda and the freedom fighters of South Africa: Nelson Mandela and

Steve Biko. They held luminous candles high above their heads to enkindle the flames of the radiant dawn of freedom for the people of Africa. They posed as living models for the endowed youth who were to step into their shoes of leadership when the hour to relay the torch came. From the public gallery in the Kenyan parliament, those students of political oratory listened to the witty voice of the golden boy of Kenya, Tom Mboya.

Towards the middle of 1960, the Sudan Africa National Union (SANU), which provided the political umbrella for the Anyanya war of liberation, split into two. William Deng maintained the mainstream wing of SANU and Joseph Oduho and Aggrey Jaden the other faction which later became the Azania Liberation Front (ALF). William Deng's original position was that of Secretary General. He was another eloquent intellectual with an attractive personality. He was the nearest leader to the younger generation of southerners in exile. When his wing of SANU agreed to attend the Round Table conference in Khartoum which he proposed and was organized by Sir Al Khatim's transitional government, he selected four youth to be part of his delegation. John Garang and the writer were among them, but both broke off to return to Nairobi after spending some days of deliberations at the Silver Springs Hotel in Kampala, leaving the rest to proceed to the Sudan for the conference. Such instances of associations with Garang during those early days clearly revealed that he was a youth with an extremely sharp talent and an ascending vision leading him to heights of firm statesmanship, the kind he achieved before his departure.

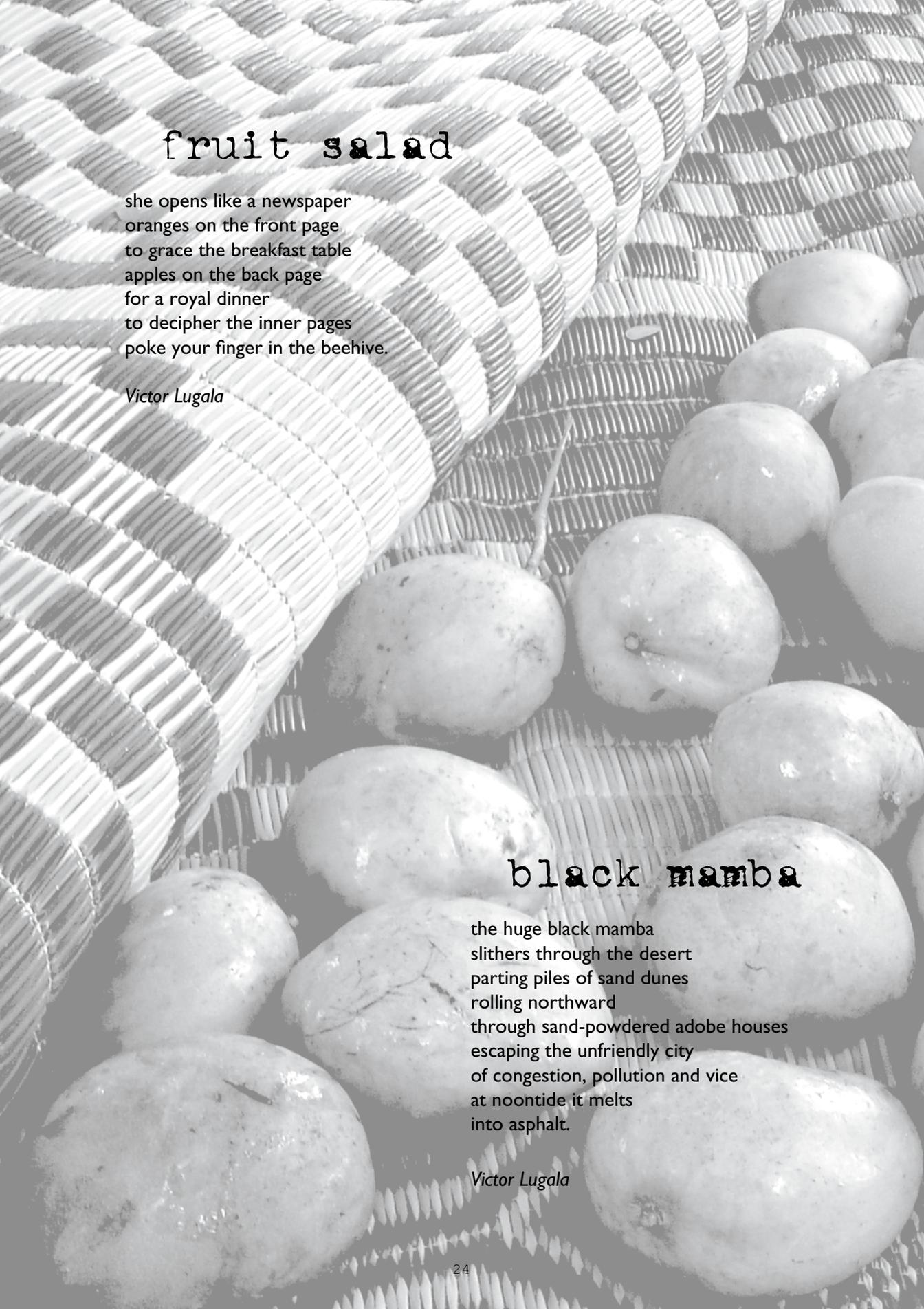
If any statesman held high a gleaming ray of liberating hope for the marginalized Africans of the Sudan from the quagmire of pseudo-Arabism and its enslaving booby traps, that was to be Dr. John Garang de Mabior. Alas, he is no more and the job is unfinished! And yet he had already gone a long way in planting the critical milestones along the road of true redemption for the country. It is only for taskforce charged with following the footpath, to step on the right marks in order to

accomplish the construction.

The out-pouring of grief on Garang's death at the national and international circles was a testimony of his greatness because of the historical achievements that he presided. The signing of the CPA, mediated by IGAD and witnessed by the powerful West, his triumphal entry into Khartoum to be received by six million Sudanese and finally his appointment as First Vice President of the government of culturally Arabized and Islamized Sudan. These were landmarks of un-precedent proportion in the country and could have helped to mechanize the air crash that stole away the Pan-African giant. Even the grim events that followed his death, the spectacular burial ceremony, the spontaneous violence that rocked many cities in the Sudan and elsewhere, were all monumental. His enigmatic loss has robbed the country probably of the only opportunity that might have ushered the Sudan forward into an era of general equality in the quest for genuine unity. But now we may just continue to ask as the Mundari did in this dirge:

*Monye Lu'bang lo gbayani,
Abur lo Ayul do koloki,
Ado kukuju Peyir,
Moket Nikang naleya,
Kene Awula Cin Kace ,
Gwa kak ce ko ludu,*

*Where is the head of this homestead?
Abur son of Ayul
You are left to wail pitifully,
Oh, the range of our arrow
Cannot be disclosed as yet
Their shit shall be a big heap
At the wild-cats' shifting ground.*



fruit salad

she opens like a newspaper
oranges on the front page
to grace the breakfast table
apples on the back page
for a royal dinner
to decipher the inner pages
poke your finger in the beehive.

Victor Lugala

black mamba

the huge black mamba
slithers through the desert
parting piles of sand dunes
rolling northward
through sand-powdered adobe houses
escaping the unfriendly city
of congestion, pollution and vice
at noontide it melts
into asphalt.

Victor Lugala

Windows

I have tasted the July rains of Khartoum
 My tongue hurts more than my heart:
 My ears explode from inside;
 The impending storms threatening from outside

Breeding on the man-child
 That died inside the soap operas of instability;
 Of forced displacements from homes became,
 On streets and verandas of voiceless animosity
 Stringed on footprints of enslaved hands raised in prayer

Whether you fight
 through to your bus;
 Whether you jump
 through windows;
 Doors are the things of
 luxury here; seats?
 Whoever sat on the Arab
 lap must be a Habash

It is in Khartoum winters
 Christian calendars
 start in January;
 It is in Maydays sunlight
 flirts metaphorically
 With Sub-Saharan Africa;
 In Khartoum

The pouting many faces of the
 moon did not give away
 The cloudy intercourse
 between Shamaal and
 Junuub
 Stripping between tributaries
 that fed my Nile;
 our Nile

Sam Obaloker

Wau Nar!

Charlton Doki

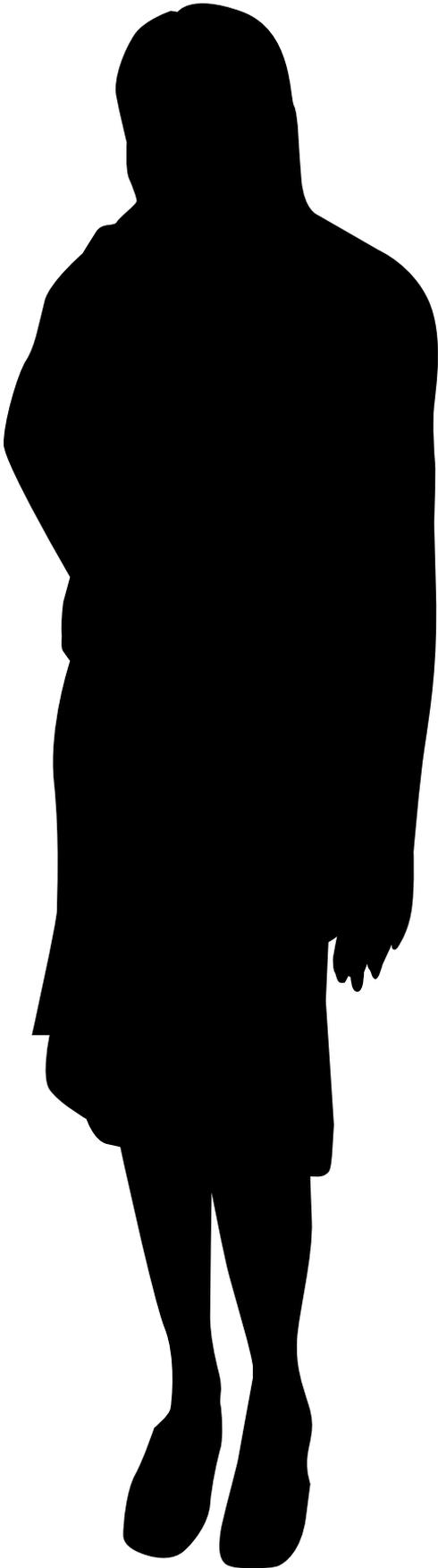
To many people both in and outside Sudan, the name Darfur is synonymous with violence, displacement, destruction, rape and anything associated with war and armed conflict, like the one in Western Sudan.

But in another part of the same country, the same word has no connotations to armed conflict. In the town of Wau, Western Bahr el-Ghazal state, the word Darfur is synonymous with food, tea and shisha, which is a jag-like container fitted with a tube from which people smoke mild opium, known as hashish.

Hotel Darfur or “Funduk Darfur”, as the locals refer to it, is also known for being a favourite hangout for Ugandans who work and live in the town. The Hotel is located along the main highway leading to northern Sudan, probably the same road leading to Khartoum. On a recent, first trip to Wau I spent two nights at the Hotel.

Fast forward... It is dusk and I am making my way to the opposite side of the road to an Ethiopian restaurant to have some *anjera* (Ethiopian bread) as “Funduk Darfur” does not serve dinner. A few meters from the hotel entrance a group of men are puffing a hookah, locally known as shisha, which is a favourite pass-time in Sudan. Shisha is a jug-like water pipe for smoking herbal fruit or opium. I walk on and pass by a young woman wearing tight jeans and a top so short that it exposes the lower part of her belly.

She mumbles something in Arabic. I only make out the word “gurush” and the phrase “aleila rakhis”. When I hear this I know there is something to do with money and about today’s offer being cheaper. So what exactly does she want to say? I can only use common sense to fill in the gaps: She wants to offer me sex at a cheaper cost than she usually charges other



clients. Even with my limited knowledge of the Arabic language, I know the young lady is not fluent enough. Secondly, given her accent, dressing and body morphology, I guess she is not only East African but Ugandan. She wears a broad smile and repeats the same words. I ignore her as I have done many times whenever and wherever I am approached by women who ply this oldest trade.

Near the entrance to the Ethiopian restaurant, I notice another young lady wearing what would pass for a dinner dress in East Africa but would be described as a skimpy dress in Sudan. There is an elderly man wearing a white jallabia, coming from the opposite direction. He looks away as he bypasses the young lady and approaches me. ...”*La hau Allah, La hau Allah, Allah Akbar....*,” exclaims the man. At the Ethiopian restaurant, whose name I forgot to jot in my note book, I met many Ugandan women, many of them dressed in trousers.

Fast forward...back at my Hotel, I decide to buy a beer and sit at one of the several tables. The place is now full of patrons. Unlike during day time when there were about half a dozen patrons, mostly Ugandans, at dusk, Sudanese of northern origin begin to trickle in. They come in groups of three or four and there are about two dozen people. Some of these young men know a bit of English and they are friendly to me or at least act in a friendly manner. They ask me whether I am a Kenyan or Ugandan. I tell them that I am southern Sudanese and I come from Central Equatoria, the same state in which Juba is located. “And you don’t know Arabic?” they wonder.

Hotel Darfur is a place with two faces or you could call it a double character. During the day, it’s a quiet restaurant, and tea shop. In

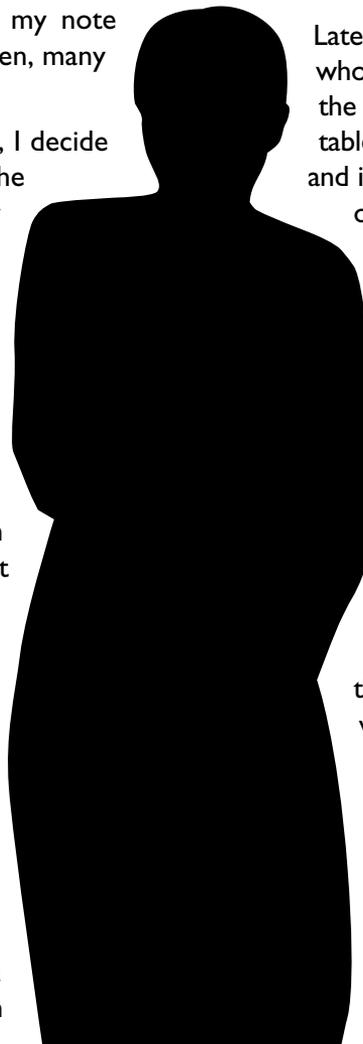
the evenings, it turns into a bar whose patrons are mostly Ugandan men and women.

Wau, like many southern Sudanese towns, goes to sleep early or rather its residents retire to the solace of their homes early. But this particular part of town where Hotel Darfur is located has more than one face or you would say character. During the day time you only notice the several eating joints, bars, garages and a few hair saloons owned by Ugandans. But as dusk sets in a few of these eating joints, also referred to as “hotels”, turn into lively hubs of human activity. In the two Ethiopian restaurants nearby, music blares from loud speakers as patrons enjoy their *anjera*. Restaurant and bar patrons, including mostly northern Sudanese, civil servants and soldiers spend some pounds on beer, *anjera* and Ugandan women.

Later I recognize the young woman who had tried to speak to me outside the Hotel. She comes and sits on my table and tells me she is called Shantal and is aged 32. I mistake her for some one from Western Uganda and try to speak to her in Luganda but realize she is inefficient at the language. We revert to Swahili, which she speaks with a Kinyarwanda-French accent.

Curiosity urges me to interview her. But I know she might decline. I decide to buy her a beer and true to my prediction, she obliges to be interviewed. She does not want her identity revealed or her picture taken but the 32-year-old is willing to explain what she does for a living.

Shantel was married in Rwanda where she and her husband were blessed with twins. Then her husband “left Rwanda a few years ago due to problems back home”. Her husband told her he was going to Uganda and would arrange for her to join him. Later



he asked her to travel to the Ugandan border town of Kisoro to join him. “When I got there I heard he had gone to Nairobi. The next thing I heard that he had gone to Lilongwe, Malawi. Next I heard that he had gone to the Netherlands.” This is when she decided to send her children back to Rwanda and to embark on prostitution in Kisoro. Shantal hoped that by selling her body she would be able to support herself plus the twin daughters.

“But life became hard in Kisoro because there were many of us doing the same business (commercial sex) in a small town and men in Kisoro were paying peanuts for a whole night of sex.” From there she headed for Kampala to try her luck but later decided that “the harassment by police was too much to bear.” She tried Nairobi but like in Kampala, “business was not good”.

Following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and the opening of southern Sudan’s borders, Shantal was among the many economic migrants who found their way to the region. She joined scores of Ugandan men and women who have come here to make “dollars” or “quick” money.

Another Ugandan woman Sheilla (not real name) works in Wau too. When she noticed that I speak Luganda, Sheilla was ready to talk to me as long as I did not name her in my story or take a picture of her. Sheilla traveled to southern Sudan with the intention of starting a business such as a saloon or a restaurant. She

started a beer bar but soon found out that selling her body was more lucrative than the beer business. Currently, she is a bar woman during the day but gets some side jobs to entertain patrons in the late night. She and her boyfriend have lived in Wau for nearly one year. “And how do you sell your body when you are living with your boyfriend, doesn’t he complain?” I ask. “We came here to make money”, she retorted before reminding me of the old adage that “desperate situations call for desperate measures.”

Now Shantal says she has made “some money” but still wants to make more. Unlike in Kampala and Nairobi where Police used to roundup the women and charge them with loitering, in Wau they conduct their trade with no disturbance from the authorities. Since Shantal does not have any other job, during the day she just stays indoors and sleeps. At times she joins Sudanese men to smoke shisha or just roams from street to street. The other Ugandan women work in hair saloons, restaurants, or they just go and chat with Ugandan men who work as motor mechanics around the town.

The commercial sex workers are ready to go to any part of Sudan so long as they can make money there. “I was in Juba for more than six months but business in Juba was slowing down and I decided to try Wau,” says Sheilla. Shantal agreed with Sheila and adds that, “We will move northwards because there is now less money here than when we came. If it necessitates we will go as far as Khartoum.” She adds, “Business is not good now because our number has increased and even the women who have other jobs are also joining our business (prostitution).” Apparently even women who went to Wau with the intention of doing business are now engaging in commercial sex because it pays more. “Sudanese men especially northern Sudanese men pay very well. Most of the times they pay 50 pounds for a shortie”, explains Sheilla. A shortie is a term that Ugandan pleasure-women use to describe a brief sexual encounter with a man. Sheilla says a longie, which can be from 30 minutes to a whole night’s en-

counter, costs from 50 to 100 dollars. “Some men can give you more money if you ask for it after treating them well”, said Shanatal, adding that “We give our regular customers discounts so that they can come back next time.”

I noticed that Shantal was becoming freer and more open once she got tipsy. I knew more beer would mean more information and ordered for another bottle to be brought. Shantal said that some of those restaurants owned by Ugandan women serve as brothels during the night. None of them is clearly marked as a brothel but the clientele know where they are located. “Men know where to go if they want to have a nice time with a woman.” She concluded.

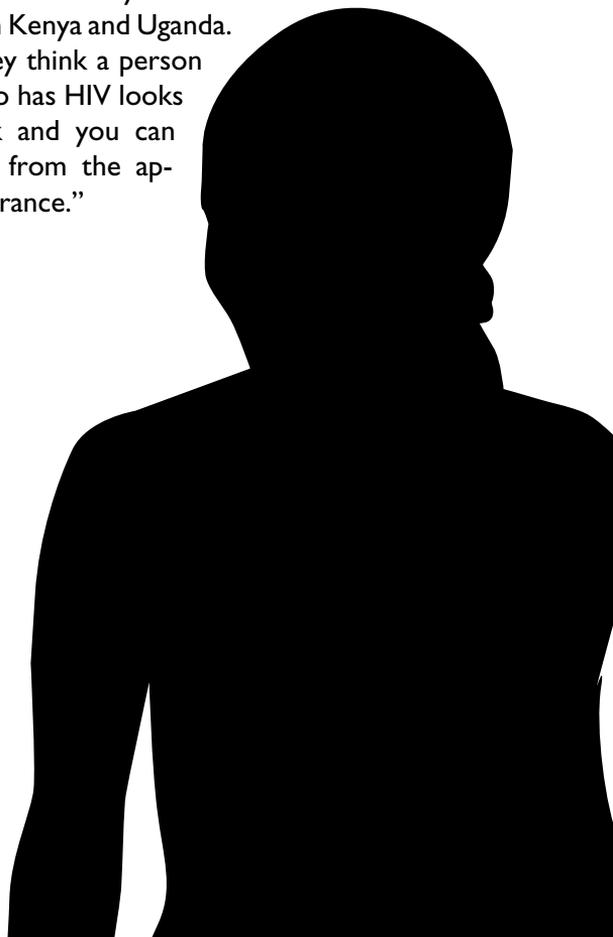
What challenges do the sex workers face in Wau? - I quizzed further. “There are clients who refuse to pay,” she explained. In addition, “some of the men are sometimes armed and at times threaten to shoot us if we continue to demand for money,” she complained. Just last week, a man pulled out a knife and threatened to stab me if I did not leave him alone,” Sheilla added in Luganda. Besides, there are signs of xenophobia in the streets of Wau. “Yesterday one Ugandan woman was attacked at dusk. There are people who beat you up or rob your money if they meet you at night and they know you are a Ugandan,” complained Sheilla.

Given the booming sex trade in this part of Wau, there are several strange stories. Shantal said Sudanese men were endowed. “But they don’t know how to “do it”. They are not as strong as men in Uganda or Rwanda”. There are also stories of instances where a woman agrees to go with a man only to realize later that the man has invited his colleagues to the room. “That’s why we now prefer to use our brothels, instead of following a man to a place you don’t know - it’s risky,” Shantal acknowledged.

The place is also full of male sex escapades. During a chat with Juma, a young man who works at one of the nearby restaurants, he pointed to a group of northern Sudanese men smoking shisha. “They are talking about the women they have slept with,” he said.

What about the danger of contracting HIV/AIDS? I asked Shantal. Sheilla chipped in when she noticed that her colleague was hesitant to answer the question. “There are men who refuse to use condoms especially the soldiers. If a man refuses to use a condom I refuse to ‘ride with him’, however much money he promises to pay,” she emphasized. “Yesterday an Arab man agreed to pay 100 dollars for the night but when we entered the room he declined to use a condom. I refused and he was disappointed.” She pointed to a table where three men sat with two Ugandan women and added, “That’s the man in a white shirt.

I asked Juma, the young man who works at one of the restaurants if people in Wau use condoms whenever they have sex with non-regular partners. He said there were condoms in some of the shops but he did not know if anybody was courageous enough to buy them. “People might think that you are immoral and that’s why many fear to buy condoms.” He added, “And some people don’t believe that there is AIDS in Sudan. They think AIDS is in Kenya and Uganda. They think a person who has HIV looks sick and you can tell from the appearance.”



I took my son

By the hand
I took my son
Tender and young
Mummy, yes, son
Where are we going?
To enjoy the day.

His warm blood flowing
I felt it in my left hand
It comforted my cold heart.
Walking hand in hand
Mother and son
Heart to heart.
On the road we walked
Laughed as we talked
Our hearts filled with peace
Suspecting none at the least.
Celebrations and friends
Await for us at the feast.

I took my son
By the hand
Towards the point
Where the unknown enemy sat
To kill his as I watched
When his foot on it was set.

By the hand
I took my son
The day he was blasted
By the mine which lasted
To kill him at last!
He said, Mama, at his last.

Sacrifice I have heard of

By men and women
Who gave and gave
Sons and daughters to the grave
But my son was a sacrifice
To those who can't save.

My son lost his life
The day I took him
By the hand.
I touched and felt him
I felt the warmth of his hand
But out of my motherly hand
Death took him!

In my ears I can still
Hear his last word
Mama!
But it is now as cold
As the heart he once warmed
When I took him by the hand.

Abe Enosa

The green garden

I have a green garden
Planted of my own, on my own
Flowering plants and lilies
Litter, my heart each one to win.
In the green garden, birds,
Insects and budding meet.

I am a god who likes gardens
And I have one, so green, green.
I took my garden from the wild
In Africa and farmed and kept it
With fruit trees and wild animals
Both reptiles and mammals.

I love the garden I planted
In it is a group of my servants
Men and women by my plan, I placed
Have been made to work as servants.
I see birds fly, high as they fly
Freely they live, or is it servitude?

The green garden has a life
I will lure it to me, patiently,
In love and in hope, and strive
To keep it green and lovely.
In servitude and commitment to me
Let all its off springs come out
For they are lovely.

Here in my garden, let life flourish,
Forever let it be like the flowers.
For in the wild I keep the beasts
Men and women I keep with hem abreast.
They are mine for ever and I will for ever
Keep them close to my heart, I will, for ever.

I am a creature of a God who live
Life, whether they are known
As Sudanese, or they are black
In colour, and pomp for life, I know,
Like them as my people,
I will be their God.

Sudan, it is time to stop, stop,
Stop the suffering and begin your life.
Look deep and wide and ask, what for?
What are we up to, if not humanity?
What are we for if not unity?
What do we live for if not community?

Sudan, open our eyes and see,
Neighbours whisper and plan
The wicked are about to plunder,
Plunder your homes and lives,
Your riches and wealth, your core!
They count on you to make them rich!

Oh, my people, my country,
What curse have you suffered?
Or what spell befell you at night?
Wake up, scatter the enchantment,
Grow up, live again, and seek life.

Abe Enosa

Sanomiya railway station ghosts

Taban lo Liyong

The fast moving train Shenkishan sweeps its way into the waiting berth at Sanomiya – Sanomiya station eagerly awaits its fleet of trains as they disgorge and suck in Petite Japanese girls ever so tightly decked out in colourful kimonos flit in and out It is the half-past two inter-city train Lady Tokugawa has her eyes peeled out for She is holding her large floral parasol at an angle and twirling her milk-white rose

She is breathlessly scanning the train doors for passengers from tradition rich Naru: Is he on this, was he on other trains that have just passed or is he on the next one? Had I heard it right when he whispered over the mobile the time of arrival?

Two in Japanese, three in Chinese, one in Vietnamese or many numbers in Korean Sound confusing to a lover's ear when pronounced in a booth or hostile group. Would he miss this tryst again as he has missed many a one before?

The summer sun is up and now sloping towards the setting West, Flowers in their beds are wilting, those artificially crafted stay as turgid as ever My spirit that was buoyant before is now a potted plant that has not been watered.

Ash-powdered Tokugawasan paces the railway station like her ancestor on parade: Her date, Master Hidekisan, closely related to the Kawabata line takes his time – He takes his time keeping time for important assignments: not in keeping, His ancestors were among those dispatched to Europe during the great Shogunate: They were to discern the secrets of the 'straight-kneed' people had cultivated This had elevated them to the height they now occupied in world affairs.

TIME and its keeping they came back dining into peoples' ears is the key.

Thus were many clocks imported by the Imperial Ministries of Education for schools, Transport for railway stations, bus stations, harbours, and every public building.

Kawabatasan, should you not have been exemplar in keeping that which you brought?

The paradigm shift that followed that epochal journey of reconnaissance

Uplifted us the Nihonese above every Tartar around: stealing the fire it is called.

Now what is an illustrious family name for if it cannot be kept?

Here I have been standing here, three days have I done it, looking common place:

Not even the seller of beer comes to parade her unbuyable merchandise thrice,

Shameful is she who goes to the market knowing fully well that there is market.

My merchandise is left to dry in my hands; the wallpaper is waved by the wind.

“Shumimasen! Shumimasen! Excuse me Sir ,Excused moi, messier –

Have you seen my Kawabatasan? You would not have missed him, being Kawabata

He was going to wear a white tie over a purple shirt and checkered suit;

The whitest shoes with blackest linings he was going to wear: like Al Copone.

In his historical hands he would have had a colourful parasol the twin of this,

And a red rose he would have been twirling like what I've been doing all along.

Kawabata, also called Hidekisan, wears some dark glasses daytime or by night.

From his hand that holds the rose there would be a small parcel containing goodies.

Shumimasen, Shumimasen, have you seen my Kawabata-Hidekisan?

“Young lady! Young lady! I feel sorry for you if it is that man you want!

The night shift has reported that at this very time at night he comes prowling

He comes dressed as you have just described, and paces more circumspectly

He glances forwards and more backwards as if expecting the worst any moment;

Your Hidekisan enquires after you, sometimes furtively, sometimes anxiously.

Madam, the night shift has felt besieged! The dayshift is now also jittery!

Now that you have revealed to us your diurnal and nocturnal assignations

It is clear to all that you belong to the day and your Hideki to the night

Day and night do not meet as whale and elephant belong to different terrains.

(Some of us fear that you two are cursed. But we are now modern and not affected.)

Would you like to join His Imperial Majesty's Railway Service? The pay is good.

You would still await your Kawabatasan – I hate the name Hideki, it is hideous.

And your boy can keep company with my night watchmen? You would change

Change your dresses for the railway uniforms, of course. They are smarter!

And as you exchange stories with my people you are bound to become uniform

With us.

There are many ways of joining the services: maintaining sure assignments

That are compatible with the way the railway timetable operates is the surest.

Your commission started three days ago – that is when you assumed active duty.

Kawabata's commission also is backdated to the day he paced the station.

Either you joined us as invited

Or we hand you over to the police

For possible underworld creatures!

With a hideous name and Al Capone shoes

Every judge knows your type

And conviction would be sure!

As the philosophers say:

The choice is yours!

Missing leg

Victor Lugala

It was a moonless night, good for sinning. And the good people of the village had long gone to sleep. In the distance, in the woods by the stream, an owl was hooting. The village was in deep sleep, except for these three women who were roaming the vicinity like some lost souls.

The women could not be seen in the night, not even their silhouette. Not because it was pitch dark, but because they were black and nude. The women were as dark as the night. As they navigated the narrow village path the dew on the tall grass slapped and tickled their bare bodies.

The women talked in whispers as if they were afraid to wake up the village ghost. They selectively moved from one homestead to another. When they reached a particular hut the other two women consulted their leader, and if she objected, they simultaneously spat on ground in disgust and walked away. Their leader was a skinny woman with sagging, wrinkled breasts that slapped against the cage of her chest pap, pap, pap, as she walked.

“Do we settle here?” one of the women asked the leader. But without a word, she sniffed around the huts and shook her head in disapproval and prodded the ribs of the other two women to urge them to move on.

The three nude women continued to roam the village, moving from one homestead to another in pursuit of their mission. They reached another homestead surrounded with mango tree and one of the women asked a question directed at the leader: “Do we camp here?” But without saying a word the leader decided to walk away, and the others followed her. They moved in a single file, one after another, silently.

Time was fast ticking away.....

The three women got numb on account of the dew. One of them who got impatient and apprehensive whispered to the leader: “The

roosters will soon start to crow.” But the answer she got was a sharp, painful pinch on her left fleshy buttock. She winced.

Then they came to this hut. The door was ajar. The inside was even darker than the night outside. The three women whispered to each other. The hut belonged to a newly married couple. The fact that the door was ajar indicated something they wanted to know or just quit before they were caught red-handed. Despite the darkness they tried to look around but all they could hear faintly was the sound of somebody urinating behind the hut. From the piercing, sharp-shooting sound of the urine they could tell that it was a fellow woman peeing.

“Sister, sister,” the leader called softly. Who could be calling at this time of night? The woman who was urinating behind the hut wondered. Having hailed from a neighbouring village, and having heard weird stories about night runners in this village of her husband, she obliged foolhardy, though. She emerged from behind the hut and stumbled on the three figures. Her heart began to beat faster.

“Ah, sister, so you’re still awake!” said the leader of the three. Feigning knowledge, the owner of the hut replied, “Oh, I’ve been waiting for you actually, I thought you were not coming.” The leader was amused.

And soon the new lady joined the party, bringing the number of the nude women to four. The fourth woman had dropped her leaf skirt where she had peed. As they headed deeper into the village, the fourth woman had no idea of the night mission.

The party finally came to a house at the periphery of the village. One of the women then asked the leader, “do we settle here?” Without much ado the leader of the group accepted as she set about to perform her things.

As if it was her house, she parted the grass curtain and stepped in. There were four occupants in the hut: sleeping on a bamboo bed was a man and woman, and on the floor, two young girls were huddled on an antelope skin. The intruder touched and caressed the bodies of the sleepers; then she settled on the man. He was well built and hefty. Mechanically, she pulled the man's arm and gave it to one of the three colleagues. The woman with the arm went into the bush to enjoy herself.

The leader went ahead to pluck the second arm of the man and gave it to the other colleague; who disappeared into the bush to 'munch' it.

She descended on the man's legs and plucked one, which she gave to the third colleague. This one also looked for a convenient place in the bush and settled down with the man's heavy leg.

Then the leader helped herself to the man's other leg and went behind the spear grass.

This operation took place uninterrupted; all the inmates were fast asleep, if not sedated by some spirit. The man whose limbs were removed remained helpless, though he did not know what was happening to him, for he too, was in deep sleep. With a limbless body, he looked like a mutilated doll.

Now dawn was approaching.....

Having been finished with the job, the leader of the team crept out of the bush with the man's leg, and started to summon the rest of the team members to return the other limbs for 'reassembling'. The other two women returned the limbs, except for one, the other woman who joined them on the way, the one who was found peeing was nowhere to be seen.

Alarmed by the delay of the other woman, the three women combed the bush, in vain.

"Sister, sister, where are you, time is up. Bring the leg lest daybreak find us here," whispered the team leader, almost shouting. They were impatient.

"Sister, sister, this is not the time for playing pranks," said one of the women.

There was silence, except for the chirping of crickets, and the occasional cry of the owl.

Panicked-stricken, the women did not know what to do because time was against them.

The leader 'reassembled' some of the man's body parts and the party went away, cursing their ears, which were too deaf to hearken to the sinister message of the hooting owl.

At dawn, the villagers were woken to two strange sounds. The first one was that of a talking drum at the chief's court, summoning all the villagers to witness a spectacle that was stranger than a folktale. And the second sound emerged from the periphery of the village. It was a distant sound of people wailing.

The village elders were torn between the two sounds. After consideration and consultation, most of them dashed to the chief's court for fear of being fined for absenteeism. It was unusual for the chief to summon his subjects to his court very early in the morning. This was the first time. And the villagers were treated to a rare spectacle.

This is what greeted their eyes: One of the village women, and a newly married woman to boot. She sat on the sand; next to her was a hairy human leg which looked like a huge smoking pipe.

The villagers gathered in the chief's court were all agape, overpowered with disbelief, awe, flabbergasted.

There was overpowering silence in the chief's court except for the occasional grunts, coughing, sneezing and spitting.

One elder moved closer to the woman next to the severed human leg. The woman's face was expressionless. With his walking staff, the elder pointed at the human leg.

"Ah, gods of my ancestors, wherever you are, am I seeing what my eyes are showing me, or am I dreaming in broad daylight?"

"Young woman," the elder continued, "are you not the wife of the son of my age-mate? Were

you not married only a couple of months ago? I beg your pardon, my daughter-in-law, if I am being too inquisitive. Inquisitiveness is a symptom not only of ignorance but old age. Tell me, my beautiful daughter, whose leg is this, eh?"

The woman did not answer.

As if beckoning on the surging crowd for support, the elder pointed at the crowd and said: "I dare challenge you, young men, those of you with clean pair of eyes. Is this not the leg of Lasu? Look at the toes. I swear, it is his leg, my eyes tell me so."

As if there was a conspiracy of silence on the part of the woman and the crowd, the elder went away and sat on a rock, to wait, like the rest of the people, for the arrival of the chief.

The crowd rose to their feet when the chief arrived. He proceeded to sit on his reclining chair made from leopard skin. One of his aides took his walking staff and leaned it against the mud wall.

An *askari* in the chief's court marched forward and saluted the chief. With a loud voice he explained to the chief that the crowd was gathered in his compound on account of the woman who was accused by the mob of being a witch. Evidence? The severed human leg.

The chief shook his head in wonderment. He was visibly shocked. After a moment of silence, the aide brought him a smoking pipe. And he smoked to relax his nerves. After smoking the pipe he cleared his throat and turned to one of the elders in the chief's council, and whispered something to him. Thirty minutes passed in whispered deliberations, as the crowd waited in near total silence.

Given the seriousness of the matter, the chief rose to his feet and cleared his throat three

times as a way of telling the people in the crowd to lend him their ears.

"My dear subjects, what has happened this morning is very shocking, to say the least. The glaring evidence before our eyes explains that we have a witch in this our village. Who could tell that such a humble-looking and beautiful woman could do such a terrible thing to her fellow human beings and villagers!" When the chief said this, all eyes were focused on the woman alleged to be a witch.

The accused woman raised her arms skywards and started to scream in protest. She continued to scream as she rolled on the ground. Her naked body was powdered with sand. An elderly woman appeared from nowhere with a leaf skirt which she gave the accused to cover her nudity.

"Restrain her, restrain her," murmured the village priest, as three of the chief's *askaris* grabbed her and pinned her to the ground.

The chief consulted with his council of elders. Meanwhile, the crowd bayed for the woman's blood. Some vigilantes armed with sticks shouted: "Death to the witch! Death to the witch!"

It took about an hour or so for the chief and his council of elders to meet and deliberate over the fate of the woman who was alleged to be a witch. An *askari* read out the charges and the verdict to the effect that the woman was found guilty of causing death to the man whose leg was in the chief's court. And that the court summarily found her guilty of being a witch. The woman was sentenced to death by drinking poison. On hearing this, the villagers clapped their hands in approval of the death sentence. "Death to the witch! Death to the witch!" shouted the vigilantes as the woman composed herself, ready to brave any eventualities.

The woman was asked to make an appeal in front of the villagers. She got on her feet and turned to the crowd. By way of making an appeal, she addressed the crowd.

“My fellow villagers, I want to tell you nothing but the naked truth, and God in heaven who has eyes bigger than ours, is my witness.” The crowd was silent as the woman started speaking. “I want to state here and now that I Priscilla, the daughter of Ginja, I’m not a witch...” But someone cut her short “Liar! Shut up.” But the *askari* shouted him down “shhhhh!”

The woman said she was not a witch, but said she knew the witches. “The witches who killed the owner of this leg,” she said this as she pointed at the severed leg, “are from this village and they are present in this gathering.” There was commotion as the villagers looked at each other suspiciously. Without any prompting she mentioned the names of the three alleged witches. Without wasting time the vigilantes picked the three women and dragged them to where their accuser was standing. The crowd surged forward as the villagers wanted to catch a glimpse of the women they had known all their lives. The women looked nervous and sweated profusely.

The chief summoned the *askari* and whispered something into his ear. The *askari* disappeared into the chief’s living quarters and returned. He was followed by an old woman who walked with a stoop, supporting herself with a walking staff. In her left hand she carried an old but shiny calabash. She walked with calculated steps, careful not to spill the liquid content in the calabash.

With a nod from the chief, an elder got up and told the old woman with the calabash to stand by his side to the left, then he addressed the crowd in general and the four alleged witches in particular. He pointed at the calabash in the hands of the old woman and said: “Ladies and gentlemen, as you can see, this is poison often administered to suspects who have done a dastardly and horrendous act like bewitching a person to death. However, I must say that we are here to administer justice. The four suspects you see in front of you here will have a sip from the calabash of life and death. And if indeed they are innocent, they will walk back to their homesteads on their legs and breathing the free air. But if indeed they are the ones responsible for the death of the owner of the severed leg in front of us, then they will accompany him to their maker.”

The woman who had brought the leg to the chief’s court was asked to come forward. She came. The *askari* asked her to sip from the calabash, which she did willingly. She was followed by the other three women who cast wily glances at each other. As the clock ticked away the assembled people waited with bated breath. There was almost subdued silence. When someone sneezed in the crowd the old man exclaimed, “Truth shall reveal herself!” The many pairs of eyes in the crowd were now fixed on the four women, expecting the inevitable. These ones are dead, someone thought. Some women in the crowd started to sob. The woman who had brought the severed leg looked sober as she watched her co-accused, seized with convulsions.



Toreportrait: Franco Taban Gordon

Victor Lugala

Franco Taban Gordon is a Bohemian artist. As the Baganda would say, the man sleeps in his shoes. Ironically, he can be a prolific painter, especially after visiting a watering point that has good company and out-of-place characters.

Influenced by the tradition of the Khartoum School of Fine and Applied Arts where he graduated almost three decades ago, Franco, as he is well known by his first name started splashing colours on canvas as an abstract artist. In the mid 1980s Professor Taban lo Liyong described his namesake's exuberant painting style as 'an overflowing bowl of soup'.

Since he sleeps in his shoes, Franco is not so much in love with his bed, really. Some of his former colleagues at the Khartoum School of Fine and Applied Arts recall how Franco seldom slept in the school's art studios or photography darkroom studios. And he had a kaleidoscope of bizarre dreams, perhaps some nightmares which he translated into paintings on canvas or etchings. Even his black and white photographic prints were deliberately mutilated work of art. You could say the man typifies a typical mad artist.

Way back in the mid 1980s, before the war forced us to part company, Franco used to be

well heeled from his art work and he used to give free offers in those dingy watering points in the suburbs of Juba – Hi Thoura, Atlabara and Munuki. He used to rent a house in Munuki, all right, and he was very much single and independent-minded. His neighbours rarely saw him because he 'slept in his shoes.'

One day we had one too many for the road and ended up sleeping outside his house, in the open compound, chatting and gazing at the stars, stoned. In the morning when I wanted to wash my face, the water pot was dry and dusty, evidence of his many days of absence from his abode. He however had some packets of oral dehydration salt as if his was a village health clinic. Whenever, the man had some stubborn *ketuk* (hangover), he mixed the stuff and was up again and running. That is Franco for you.

In 2007 we met after twenty years in the woods. The man had not changed, except for the hair on his head and chin that had turned into a white canvas. Having mellowed with age, the political currency in southern Sudan impacted on his style: he purged himself of abstract art and switched to realistic painting to enable him to connect with his buddies at the watering point.

Sounds of identity

Hear, listen,
 Oh ye men of the land,
 Midway to the East of sunrise
 As you approach Udano
 In the verdant plains of Bahr El Ghazal,
 Birth shrine of royal Nyikano,
 The fanfare of the Reths' *Adalo*
 Is heralding advance of footmen
 The royal warrior pilgrims with shields
 Are scurrying thither to pay homage,
 To the ancestral homestead
 Of the Shilluk nation
 Architects of the blue empire.

Hear, understand,
 You of Mediterranean south,
 The sounds of *ngong* fill the valley
 The sage guardians of the Lwak
 Scared tidings they have to break.
 Lirpio the spear of life and death
 Has been recovered at at Madieng,
 Land of Malok the people's poet,
 The sacrifice is ten thousand bulls,
 The cleanse the descendants of Deng Kao.

Listen and hear,
 Africa of the hills of Manelik
 Kings of Kings' ancestral Ethiopia,
 The *kang* is blaring revelation,
 Ngun Deng the prophet of central Luo,
 Delivers the ageless epic atop the Bie,
 Man-made pulpit of cow dung
 His gaze discerns generations to come,
 Of the inevitable encounter of ran Nuer
 And the ochre-skinned
 In the eastern horizon conflict,
 Garang and Machar follow.

Listen, listen,
 Africa where the sun goes to sleep,
 The vibrating blast of the mbaya,
 In the direction of Sue at Gbambi,
 The royal seat of Ngia Gbudwe,
 The king of the Avangora nation,
 Is stirring restless in the archives,
 Is wrestling with the royal stool,
 In the African jungle for the resurrection.

Hear, hear,
 Ye Africa where the sun wakes up,
 He Tore is blowing shrills,
 Over the mountains, valleys and rapids
 Echoing a message over the Fulla Rapids,
 The colonial bridge of Supiri,
 Has been washed apart
 By torrents of the Equatorial rains,
 At the command of Pitya Lugor.

Hear, wake up,
 Ye of mid south of the Nile,
 The trumpet of black diversity.
 Is calling and beckoning,
 A generation of literary trumpeters is born.
 Let it be known Tore is calling,
 Poets, playwrights, media people,
 And artists to sign and dance
 Tot eh tune of art and literature.

Adalo, nong, kang and Tore, mean the same instrument: Trumpet.

Joseph Abuk



The many
faces
of the
Moon

Yesterday's songs did not sprout
on alpha beta scribbled in black ink

You and I know plain images aren't real;
Penis of man did not spring from songs
Sung in courts of Lords and Lovers,
I have cried rainbows into the black water
Holding our certificate:
The many faces of the moon
Holding vomit of our malarial contents

Yesterday's songs beat my consciousness,
Feeding on my Pan Africanism bled on
Poisoned darts shooting down the many faces of the moon
Alpha Beta in black ink casts dark shadows like flashlights
Over the undergrowth,
Exposing far-fetched histories in the many faces of the moon
Running tap water on barren grounds; burial grounds

I have counted ten thousand; one million faces and more –
The African children drenched in sperms mingled in blood–
Each struggling to tell their story,
Every one of them written in Alpha beta scribbled in black ink
On black pages in the many faces of the moon..

Sam Obaloker

Taking the pulpit to the farm

Angelo Lokoyome

Adam and Eve were farmers in God's own Garden of Eden, the breadbasket of the world. A reminder of that garden in our modern times is Dr John Nyikako, an academic turned farmer at Pisak village, 12 miles along the Yei-Maridi road.

The modest PhD holder, Nyikako is the proud manager of an experimental four-acre farm at the sleepy village of Pisak, arched by the lazy-flowing river Kogbo. The farm is veritably named the Eden Keepers' Farm. The farm was started in 2005 to guarantee food security in the surrounding villages ravaged by sleeping sickness and grinding poverty.

The late Dr John Garang had a vision of taking towns to the villages as a way of boosting development in the rural areas, but most importantly to arrest the tide of rural-urban migration.

It is for this sound reason that Dr Nyikako has embraced pragmatism. While intellectuals like him are flocking to Juba to pick up plump white-collar jobs in air-conditioned offices and to enjoy a slice of the GOSS cake, he decided to go rural to remind people that God was not wrong to put Adam and Eve on the Garden of Eden to till the land. In essence God had made farming the first occupation of man.

The Presbyterian pastor, Dr Nyikako says that by starting this farm he wanted to salvage the image of farmers: "Farming and farmers are always despised. But there is something good in farming that is why God made Adam and Eve the custodians of the Garden of Eden."

He explained that even the highly industrialised west depends on the ordinary African farmers for raw products like African gum which is plenty in our forests, shea nuts, cocoa, rubber.

The Eden Keepers' Farm serves as a training centre for training extension farmers on modern farming techniques. The immediate beneficiaries are small-scale farmers from the triple axis of Pisak, Soka and Mapoko villages.

The farmers are taught managerial skills to be able to manage cash-crop farming and to empower them economically. The ultimate objective of the farm is to phase out traditional methods of farming that result in a poor yield, and gradually switch to modernised or mechanised farming for cash.

As a trained agricultural researcher, Dr Nyikako has taken his rightful place – he is right there in the field rubbing shoulders with fellow farmers. He loves the soil and what it yields.

Doubling as a local pastor at the local the Presbyterian chapel at Pisak, Dr. Nyikako is a radical reformer who wants to do ordinary things in extraordinary ways, for instance he says he wants to preach the word of God through farming. "I want to take the pulpit to the farm instead of waiting to preach to farmers in the church," says keeper of Eden Farm.

Here is a man who has refused a government job because "it will deprive me of farming," says Dr Nyikako. Having done his graduate studies in the West, he points out that Westerners are makers of events, while Africans are followers who lack creativity."

The Role of Gender in the Family

Mercy Modong Kolok

The term gender has been misinterpreted and continues to be misinterpreted by most people. When one mentions the word 'gender,' most people tend to think that it refers to issues regarding women. The society at large has had negative feelings towards 'gender.' In fact, most people associate the term with feminists. Whatever your pre-conceived ideas are, I can simply describe gender as the masculinity or femininity of a person. Gender according to the World Health Organization has been described as the socially constructed roles, behavior, activities and attributes that a particular society considers appropriate for men and women.

Now that we are on the same page about the definition of gender, it would be ideal for us to define our roles in the family. A gender role is defined as a set of perceived behavioral norms associated with males or females in a given social group or system. "Gender role is the set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity, and in which these transformed needs are satisfied." (Reiter 1975. 159)

Gender role refers to the attitudes and behaviors that class a person's stereotypical identity, for example men fix cars and women take care of the home.

Our gender roles are usually formed during the socialization phases in our childhood and adolescent stages. These roles influence us throughout our lives. Our strongest influences on our perceived gender roles are our parents. It is from our parents that we learn what is expected of us as boys or girls. For example girls are taught to be caregivers and homemakers while boys are expected to take charge or responsibility of the home. The pressures

that we get from these roles tend to affect our lives. In most cases, the roles favor one sex over another. Even in this day and age, we find that the role of the woman is still similar to the roles that were laid down half a century ago. If anything, the list keeps growing longer and longer. Roles have disfavored women because everyone in society took time to lay down the role of the woman in a family. A good example where a woman's role has been defined is the "Good Wife's Guide," a magazine rumored to have been published on May 13, 1955 issue of House Keeping.

The Good Wife's Guide

- Have dinner ready. Plan ahead, even the night before, to have a delicious meal ready, on time for his return. This is a way of letting him know that you have been thinking about him and are concerned about his needs. Most men are hungry when they come home and the prospect of a good meal (especially his favourite dish) is part of the warm welcome needed.
- Prepare yourself. Take 15 minutes to rest so you'll be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your make-up, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh-looking. He has just been with a lot of work-weary people.
- Be a little gay and a little more interesting for him. His boring day may need a lift and one of your duties is to provide it.
- Clear away the clutter. Make one last trip through the main part of the house just before your husband arrives.
- Gather up schoolbooks, toys, paper, etc. and then run a dust cloth over the tables.

- ❑ Over the cooler months of the year you should prepare and light a fire for him to unwind by. Your husband will feel he has reached a haven of rest and order, and it will give you a lift too. After all, catering for his comfort will provide you with immense personal satisfaction.
- ❑ Prepare the children. Take a few minutes to wash the children's hands and faces (if they are small), comb their hair and, if necessary, change their clothes. They are little treasures and he would like to see them playing the part. Minimise all noise. At the time of his arrival eliminate all noise of the washer, dryer or vacuum. Try to encourage the children to be quiet.
- ❑ Be happy to see him.
- ❑ Greet him with a warm smile and show sincerity in your desire to please him.
- ❑ Listen to him. You may have a dozen important things to tell him, but the moment of his arrival is not the time. Let him talk first - remember, his topics of conversation are more important than yours.
- ❑ Make the evening his. Never complain if he comes home late or goes out to dinner, or other places of entertainment without you. Instead, try to understand his world of strain and pressure and his very real need to be at home and relax.
- ❑ Your goal: Try to make sure your home is a place of peace, order, and tranquility where your husband can renew himself in body and spirit.
- ❑ Don't greet him with complaints or problems.
- ❑ Don't complain if he's late home for dinner or even if he stays out all night. Count this as minor compared to what he might have gone through that day.
- ❑ Make him comfortable. Have him lean back in a comfortable chair or have him lie down in the bedroom. Have a cool or warm drink ready for him.
- ❑ Arrange his pillow and offer to take off his shoes. Speak in a low, soothing and pleasant voice.
- ❑ Don't ask him questions about his actions or question his judgment or integrity. Remember, he is the master of the house and as such will always exercise his will with fairness and truthfulness. You have no right to question him.
- ❑ A good wife always knows her place.

Though things seem to be changing in this century, most men still expect women to do most of the things mentioned in guide if not all. Women are feeling pressured to do all these things to keep their marriages work. While trying to make the husband and children happy and comfortable, the modern woman leaves no time for herself and her efforts are never reciprocated in equal measure. This has developed into resentment and that is why most women will ask their husbands to contribute to housework. To prevent this resentment in the home, I thought that it would be a good idea to also have "The Good Husband's Guide." This guide is not a way of trying to get even with men. We can never be even! Men and women are unique in their own ways, so we can only complement each other if we are to live happy and fulfilled lives. We love the men in our lives and we are happy to serve them but we also want the men in our lives to appreciate our efforts and to carry out some of their duties that most seem to have forgotten.

The Good Husband's Guide

- ❑ Clear up after your mess. Do not throw your clothes on the floor. Make the bedroom friendly by keeping your things in order.
- ❑ During the cold months of the year, prepare for her a hot bath and be ready to receive her with a warm blanket and embrace her in your arms. Make her feel loved and cherished.
- ❑ Spend some time with the children. Be

directly involved in their lives. Once in a while, take some time to bathe the children. Take the children out and give her some “quiet time” or her “me- time.”

- ❑ Be happy to see her. Greet her with a warm embrace and show her that you really care about her.
- ❑ Take some time to listen to her and give her space when she needs it.
- ❑ Make the evening hers. Give her your time. Don't talk about work!
- ❑ Never complain if she works late or if she needs to spend sometime with her mother, sister, best friends or other friends. Instead step into her shoes and take the responsibility in the house. Understand that sometimes she needs to spend some time away from you.
- ❑ As a man, your goal should be to make sure that your home is a comfortable place to live in. Understand that you are the man of the house, hence the provider! Never let her remind you of your duties as a husband or a father.
- ❑ Don't complain if she prefers to eat out on certain nights. Cooking can be a boring task!
- ❑ Make your woman comfortable. Buy her a comfort chair or prepare her a place where she can rest and revitalize after a long day. She needs to be comfortable especially after a hectic day from work
- ❑ Help in spreading the bed. Remember, that is where you also slept
- ❑ Offer to give her massages
- ❑ Don't ask her questions about her mood swings instead, tell her that you love her very much and that you appreciate everything that she has done for you and the children.
- ❑ Remember that she is the queen of the house and hence deserves to be treated like one. If you do so, then be sure to be treated like a king.
- ❑ A good husband should never be insecure. She wouldn't have married you if she didn't think that you are “the one.”
- ❑ If she starts getting bored with you, then know that you need to step up your game.
- ❑ She knows that you are the head of the house but you need to understand that she is the neck. Point here is, you need to work together if your marriage is to succeed

These are just but a few things that a good husband should provide to his wife. Some of the points may not apply to everyone because of their immediate environment. They can however be used as guidelines on how you can make the woman in your life feel special. For example, for the man who lives in the village, you can sometimes fetch water for your wife. Remember that there is nothing for free in this world. If you expect to be treated well, then you should treat others well. For the wives out there, treat your husbands well and your good deeds will be reciprocated.

Moment of truth sums



The people want freedom:
Aye, bellows the liberator;
The people want peace:
Aye, bellows the peacemaker;
The people want reconciliation:
Aye, bellows the mediator;
The people want love:
Aye, bellows the lover;

The people want food:
Nope, bellows silence;
The people want education:
Nope, bellows silence;
The people want houses:
Nope, bellows silence;
The people want hospitals:
Nope, bellows silence

Ayes + Nopes = WAR

THE PEOPLE WANT WAR:
AYE, BELLOWS THE WAR MONGER.

Henry Jada

Political dithyramb

Who makes laws in Southern Sudan?

A. Gubek Mogga, Canada

The president of the Government of Southern Sudan sits at the top of one of the great spoils systems in democratic politics. In addition to the usual power to place allies in ministries, he has more jobs to dish out, including some crucial offices in state-controlled companies such as the Petroleum Commission, Sudan's powerful energy giant. The political value of these baubles is not all great since the president doesn't have to work hard to command a working majority in the southern Parliament, where none of the opposition parties represented does hold more than 18 per cent of the seats.

In his key note speech during the SPLM convention, the re-elected Chairman of the SPLM, Salva Kirr, complained of the slowness of the parliament in bringing laws to make the south function. This was followed by excuses by the Honorable Speaker that the slowness does not lie with the assembly but with the ministry of constitutional affairs and was due to the fact that the south lacked a good number of trained lawyers. I was befooled, and started to wonder whether our leaders really know what they are doing. Does the Honorable Speaker know who in the country is supposed to make laws? In our democracy, law-making is the work of elected representatives. Although in the south the present members are not elected, they are nevertheless mandated to make laws on the people's behalf. Judges have only the job of applying those laws to the cases that come before them.

By the president's measure, Southern Sudan legislators are the least productive in the Sudan. Since coming to parliament, they have

only produced 16 laws. But even that record does not seem to justify their high salaries: They earn more than their national counterparts. Southern Sudan members of Parliament make about US \$ 4000 a month, which does not include family visit allotment and funds for constituencies' development, even when they do not have to do anything. In the National Assembly, members receive much more less than \$ 1000 a month, plus a housing allowance. In stable and developed African countries like Uganda and Tanzania, members of the assembly make do with just less than \$ 1000 per month. The contrast is more marked at the government level, where the monthly compensation for undersecretaries is \$ 900, the Director General makes approximately \$700, the majority make do with less than \$ 300 a month.

In the South it isn't enough that the members of Parliament make a lot of money, there has also been the multiplication of appointed officials, such as private secretaries, commission members, and so on. Nearly all people in southern Sudan are paid to work on behalf of the public good. There are GoSS ministries, state ministries, state assemblies, the police, the armies, and God knows what. There are the representatives of regional, provincial, local and municipal administrations. But the number balloons when paid consultants and political appointees are factored in. This is the cost of our Democracy. By this estimate, the cost of paying elected officials and of financing political parties is at least in billions a year.

Compared with other government sector compensation, paychecks for appointed representatives can be seen as conspicuous.

They are overpaid and don't have a lot to show for what they earn. In the end we are paying for everything, from bodyguards and chauffeured SUV's to houses and homes in foreign countries.

Politicians are supposed to care for their country, but it seems to me it's more about personal interest. The real concern is the message that young people get from their lawmakers about the protected public sector. It is as though they are saying go into politics, it's the best paid job for the lowest effort.

Since the discussion on the weakness of our assembly came out, however I would like to correct the picture of the work of members of the assembly lest it be taken wrongly by our young people.

Anyway, in the absence of any standard for Southern Sudan Politicians, whether in government or the opposition, I thought this might prompt some of them into trying to think like this: I have a duty and these include the following:

A Member of Parliament is first and foremost a representative of the people and accountable to those who elected him/her. They must see themselves as working for the common good of all south Sudanese, or perhaps primarily as a law-maker, and still emphasize their role as government watchdog or a player in partisan politics.

In fact, an MP has many job descriptions, including legislator, negotiator, ombudsman, policy analyst, public speaker, and diplomat.

To perform these duties, Members carve a well-worn trail from the House to caucus and committee rooms, and parliamentary and constituency offices.

In the Chamber under the eyes of television cameras, MPs take their seats in the House. For debates in the House, Members draw on the opinions of their constituents, caucus, parliamentary researchers, special-interest

groups and regional interests, as well as their own personal convictions. House debates therefore should reflect diverse southern Sudanese views. Most debates lead to a vote, whereby MPs vote for or against bills, or to amend them. Committee work requires that Members be familiar with a wide variety of complex issues and hear from experts, including government officials, affected individuals, special-interest groups, business people, academics, and professionals such as lawyers, accountants and economists. There are about 20 permanent or "standing" committees, as well as special and legislative committees set up to consider specific issues and bills. Mr. Speaker, we don't have to wait for the ministry of Constitutional Affairs for laws!

As a member of parliament one is supposed to listen to and act on behalf of the people, attend sittings of parliament, study reports, proposals, complaints and petitions, present debate and vote on new laws and changes to existing ones, sit on select committees to look at bills before they become law, attend meetings and public events, make speeches and give interviews to journalists, be in charge of a ministry or government department, work with various departments, ministries and ministers to develop policy, hold a managerial or administrative position in parliament such as junior or senior whip (the person who manages a party's MPs). Again there were needed requirements for our Member of Parliament. Did our leaders look at Personal requirements and skills and knowledge of the members of parliament they appointed?

As in some countries like Canada, to become a Member of Parliament one needs to have the knowledge of political, economic, social and cultural aspects of Southern Sudan or the Sudan, the life and knowledge of the region they are representing.

One needs to have the knowledge of official parliamentary procedures with excellent communication and listening

skills, good in public-speaking and debating skills, decision-making ability, planning and organizational skills and finally negotiating skills and skills in interpreting and evaluating information.

I don't think our leaders looked at these qualities in the individuals they appointed and are requesting that they make the necessary laws.

To be a Member of Parliament you must be able to gain people's trust, make good judgments and work well under pressure. One must also be motivated, responsible and be able to lead others. To be a Member of Parliament one must have clear speech, a tidy appearance and a good level of stamina.

Take me right, there are no specific tertiary educational requirements needed for a Member of Parliament. Members of parliament should not take on any other jobs other than working in offices at parliament, and in their own home or regional office.

They visit various businesses and organizations, and travel to meetings, press conferences and promotional events in the country and overseas. They may have to be away from home for days

at a time. There is a lot of stress involved, as members of parliament are in a position of high responsibility.

For Members of parliament to make laws in a country that has no working laws, they must work long and irregular hours, including weekends and evenings.

Members of parliament work in a team. They have contact with the public and they interact with other members of parliament, staff and journalists, government departments and interest groups.

Members of parliament can progress into senior roles within their caucus (the members of parliament in their party), such as the chairperson of a select committee, party whip, front bench positions, and deputy or party leader.

If the party they belong to is in government, members of parliament can also become parliamentary under-secretaries, ministers outside cabinet or cabinet ministers.

I wonder how many of our candidates would fit the skills and knowledge specifications!

Sudan suffers

Sudan, why are you the only sufferer?

Has God forgotten you?

Or what did you do

That went very wrong?

Rise up and tell the world

Rise and show it to the world

That you are suffering

Shout about your suffering.

Sudan, women die slow death

They watch their children

Starve, dwindle, and

surrender to death.

What did you do?

That went very wrong?

That in awe and surprise

Africa watches your demise?

As the world fails to surmise?

Sudan, the gun has destroyed

Your youth, the ablest, the learned

The strong sons of our land, destroyed.

Now you are vain, dilapidated

Oh, Sudan, why this pain for you?

Can't you rise to shake the world,

Even the conscience of the holy

So that they can ask heavens for you

Sudan, why the killings, the death

Brother against brother have risen

Storms in the family have arisen

Why, don't you have ears to listen

To the cries of the dying and the widows,

Or the sobs of the orphans, pleading?

Arise, arise higher than your pride

Can't you envy those in peace are proud?

Sudan, you are rich, rich enough

You are strong, stronger than the eagle.

You are bestowed with power and wealth

But you have ruined your health

By war and the savagery of tribalism.

You have become a sore spot in the world

Shame and poverty are your artwork

Suffering and death are your daily meals.

Sudan, Oh Sudan,

Where shall I go to let you see?

What shall I do to let you hear

That this has to cease?

Wake up and save your children

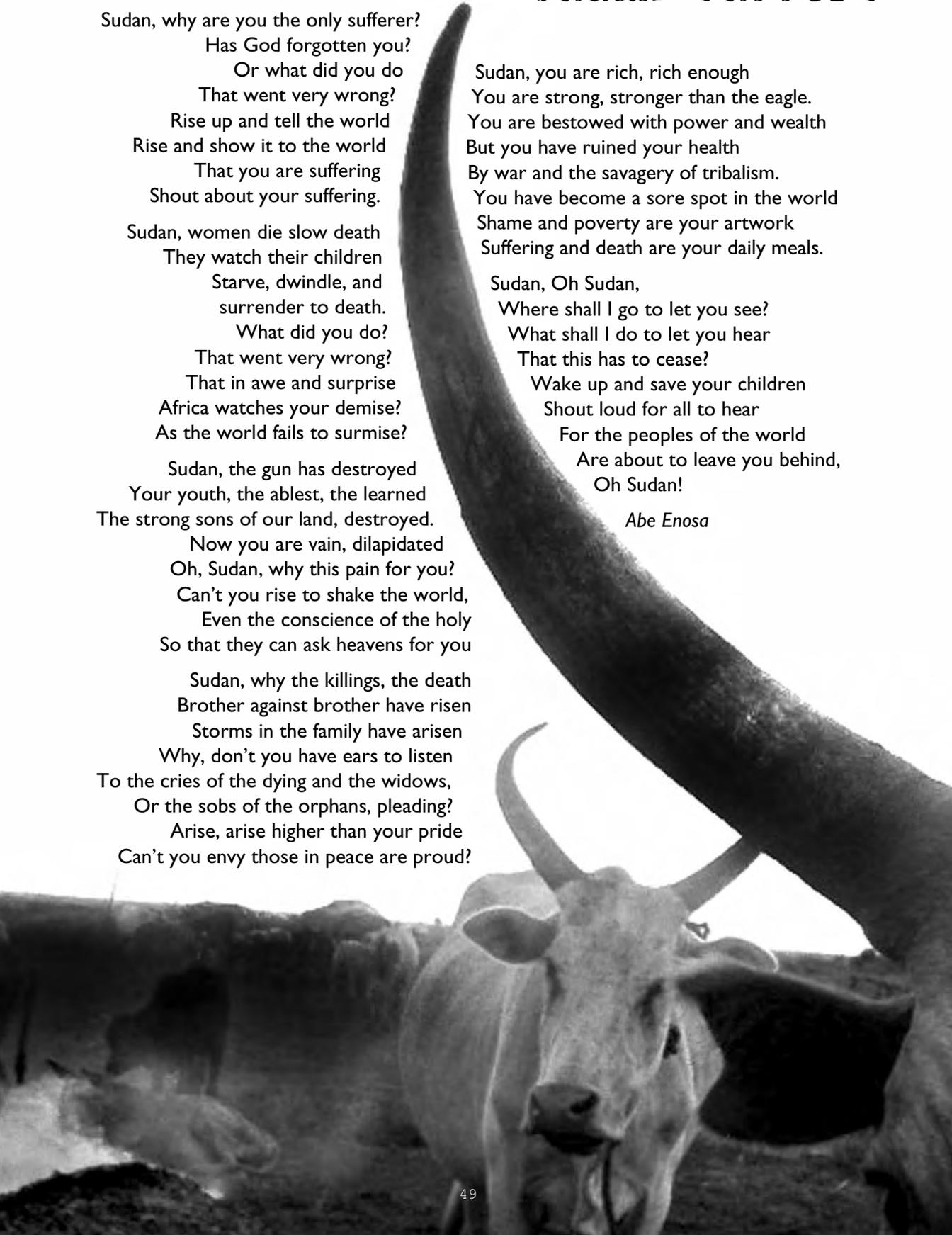
Shout loud for all to hear

For the peoples of the world

Are about to leave you behind,

Oh Sudan!

Abe Enosa



in the blindness of time
june seventh ninety two
drowned in the red sea
the blood of slain compatriots
drips from the tongues
of the butchers of juba's white house
but they too will fall
gnashing their teeth
to atone for their evil
when st peter's bell tolls for them

Victor Lugala



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**Southern Sudan
Anti-Corruption Commission
Juba, Southern Sudan**



"If you eat stolen food you will vomit it!" - LT Gen Salva Kiir Mayardit

**Let's make Southern Sudan
Corruption-Free by combating:**

- **Bribe Giving & Taking**
 - **Extortion**
 - **Favouritism**
- **Embezzlement**
 - **Fraud**

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Corrupt-Free Southern Sudan!**