

**PORTRAYAL OF ASPECTS OF DINKA CULTURE THROUGH ORAL NARRATIVE
PEFORMANCE**

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DECLARATION

This Research Project is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any other University.

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This Research Project has been subjected for examination with our approval as University supervisors

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Prof. Helen Mwanzi

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my dear children Aluel, Manyang, Atem, Chol, Ayom, Kuir—you have given me the joy of fatherhood, my loving mother, Mary Malang Akoch, your prayers have kept me going. The spirit of my late son, Aleu propelled me forward for academic excellence as he passed on the first day my university life. My beloved wife Elizabeth Ding Wol Marial – you pushed me towards my completing this work. To all my siblings, but above all, to God, who is ever merciful and loving in all seasons of my life.

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ABSTRACT

This Study explores the portrayal of some aspects of the Dinka culture in Dinka oral narratives. Attending and participating in oral narrative performances this research interrogates oral narratives as a repository of a people's culture which reveals itself through the live performance of the narratives. Dinka people in the republic of South Sudan have always interacted and continue to interact with other cultures in their contacts with the outside world as they are not an island in their own world, but rather, they are a part and parcel of the larger world with diverse cultural practices. This state of affairs has had great impact on Dinka people's culture and identity. This notwithstanding many of the values that the people as an entity espouse can be traced in the narratives they tell. This project draws from the lives lived and experienced by the Dinka people during and after the departure of the alien powers from South Sudan. Many Dinka oral narratives focus on the impact of alien cultures on the Dinka people. The project also draws from the life lived and experienced by the researcher as a Dinka and literate man at the crossroad of two diverse worlds -- the world of distinct and authentic Dinka culture and the world of flaming forces of foreign influences among the Dinka people as a result of civil wars which have scattered Dinka people into different places in the world that resulted into almost extinction of the Dinka authentic and distinct cultures and language. In exploring the aspects of Dinka culture traceable in the oral narrative performances, the study applies narratology as its main theoretical approach. Besides, the research also employs ethnopoetics in data collection and transcription, sociological literary theory and performance theories as tools of determining meanings in the narratives. The research scrutinizes the questions of religion, identity, language, and traditions among others through orality within the context of Dinka authentic culture and the outside cultural influences as coded in their languages , especially Arabic and English languages respectively. The dominance of English and Arabic languages as both official languages of communication and instructions in the introduction of formal education in the republic of South Sudan; have had tremendous effect on the traditional life of Dinka people and their culture as the stories narrate. As a consequence Dinka oral narratives present many characters struggling between the alien cultures and their traditional Dinka cultural values. This results in a kind of rootlessness that sees the characters rejected on both sides.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Background to the study

The Dinka community is the largest ethnic group in South Sudan at 35.8% of the total population according to the 2008 population census. They occupy the western, eastern, central, northern and southern parts of the country. It is worth noting that within the Dinka speaking community, there exist cultural and dialectical distinctions. Nevertheless, there appears to be an established set of attitudes which allow members of the various sub-ethnic groups to perceive themselves as belonging to a single cultural entity while at the same time acknowledging the existing internal distinctions in the community. This research project focuses on the portrayal of some aspects of the Dinka culture through selected oral narratives and the contemporary impact of alien cultures on the Dinka people. The project explores some of the artistic techniques in the oral narrative performances of the Dinka community and how the techniques serve to bring to light some of the values that give the Dinka people their cultural identity despite foreign cultural influences. Indeed the Dinka have faced Arabic and British cultural influences which continue to slip into their midst. This study draws from the lives lived and experienced by them during and after the departure of the alien powers from South Sudan.

This study concentrates on the artistic techniques of oral narratives which focus on some aspects of Dinka culture, preservation, identity and the influences of alien cultures on the Dinka community. The project also draws from the life lived and experienced by the researcher as a Dinka and literate man at the crossroad of two diverse worlds -- the world of distinct and authentic Dinka culture and the world of flaming forces of foreign influences among the Dinka community. The civil wars in Sudan which scattered Dinka people to different locations in the

world, resulted in near extinction of their authentic and distinct cultures and language. Fortunately many of the people's narratives were carried along; and in this way, the Dinka people in some ways carried their aspects of culture through their oral narratives which need to be rediscovered as well as weighing the impact of alien cultures on the people's own culture and identity.

In exploring the impact of alien cultures on the Dinka society, this research project scrutinizes the questions of religion, identity, language, and traditions among others within the context of Dinka authentic culture vis-a-vis the outside cultural influences as coded in their languages, especially Arabic and English. The dominance of Arabic and English languages as both official languages of communication and instruction in the formal education system in the republic of and the clash with the traditional oral Dinka culture are discussed and addressed in this project. In a nutshell, I the researcher, am of the view that the alien languages – particularly Arabic and English, which have attained a deeply rooted linguistic status in the Dinka community – need to be reevaluated in terms of their role in the Dinka society and on the Dinka culture, identity and language.

Indeed, Dinka oral narratives are at the core of the communal way of life of their society. It can be concluded that oral narratives form a crucial avenue of communication among the Dinka people, through which the community communicates its virtues and vices, likes and dislikes as well as its strengths and weaknesses. The way of life of the Dinka and the way they relate to other communities are clearly captured in their oral narratives. It is through narrative performance that the Dinka are able to construct its perception of communal coexistence within

which the elderly avail their cultural advice and practices to the young ones. It may be observed that the very telling of the people's oral narratives is the telling of the people's story of life.

This underscores the significance of oral narratives in the society and that all generations learn their cultural practices from the stories of the elders who know the past of their community. Thus, all generations carry forward their oral narratives as the only viable source of cultural continuity in the community. The same would be said to happen in the Dinka community where elders are sources and teachers of the community who impart their cultural norms and practices to the younger generations. The challenge, however, is that the younger generations today tend to want to pay little attention to the learning that comes from the narrations of the community elders. They (young) are very easily attracted to the alien cultures which they ape in the name of modernity. Indeed many African communities have adopted a mixed kind of oral literature that bears a deep influence from other people's written literature, which then begins to put to question the 'authenticity' of the African culture. This state of affairs is perhaps what Taban Lo Liyong (1990) has in mind when he complains about cultural impurity in our societies. In his work, *Another Last Word*, Liyong laments that " Our past has been so grossly ridiculed, so, systematically eliminated, that we have grown up with phobia about our past so that we look rootless or are actually rootless" (72).

Njoroge Ngugi (1978) had earlier voiced concerns over adulteration of African cultures and oral literature, rooting for purity in what he referred to as "the village of oral literature", an idea that had also been revisited earlier by Okot P' Bitek (1973), as "the real thing" (49). By implication, this school suggests that modernity is at war with the traditional cultures and that, indeed, it is winning, thus, the justification to fortify culturally virgin villages. This school was apparently

driven by belief in a pure oral literature canon. The great tradition in oral literature according to this school lies in the original, pure, unadulterated performances in the remote villages. The school, however, didn't address clearly what it means by "authentic" African oral literature. I am tempted to disagree with this school of thought on if there is still pure African oral literature. This is because, as pointed out earlier, many African communities have adopted mixed kind of oral literature due to cultural and linguistic cosmopolitanism.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Taban Lo Liyong above has complained of cultural impurity as well as cultural rootlessness in Africa. Indeed his complaints are critical. The possibility of a people becoming culturally rootless can be a matter of great concern, particularly in the face of globalization, migration and cultural dynamism. This threat is real for a community such as the Dinka, who, apart from facing the dominance of Arabic and English languages in their midst, also migrated massively to the diaspora as well as to other parts of the larger Sudan as a result of the protracted civil wars in the country. Thus scattered to different locations, only one thing could possibly bind them as a cultural group: their narratives, through which they tell the story of their lives. From their narratives one may capture, not just the remnants of their cultural belonging, but also their aspirations and fears. This, indeed is the interest of this study as it asks the questions: What aspects of the Dinka culture sieve through their oral narrative performances? Besides, how are the cultural aspects in question disseminated? In particular, how are the oral narratives as repositories of the people's culture performed and geared towards restoring the Dinka people's values that have over time suffered the impurities such as those that Liyong above laments about? To answer these questions, this study identifies the artistic techniques of the oral

narratives, examines the thematic concerns of the selected oral narratives, analyses the intention of the narratives and weighs their ability to enhance the preservation of the Dinka culture after the community's scattering to different locations of the world due to frequent violent conflicts in South Sudan. This is premised on the view that oral narrative is a traditional obligation, which is carried forward from one generation to the next as a source of cultural preservation and identity. How does the Dinka people's oral narrative performance do this?

1.2 Research Objectives

This study has three objectives:

- i) To identify artistic techniques of selected Dinka oral narrative performance
- ii) To examine the thematic concerns of selected Dinka oral narrative performance
- iii) To analyze the weight of Dinka oral narrative performance in enhancing the preservation of some Dinka cultural existences.

1.3. Hypotheses

- i) Dinka oral narration applies techniques which capture uniquely Dinka experiences
- ii) Through oral narrative performance a people can voice their crucial concerns
- iii) Dinka oral narrative performance is a significant avenue of preserving the culture and identity of the Dinka people.

1.4. Justification of the Study

Oral narrative performance is an alternative form of cultural interpretation, transmission and preservation. The Dinka as a people will obviously aspire to protect their culture and identity.

The scattering of many Dinka people to different locations in the world precipitated cultural shock in the people's lives, especially for the younger generations, who may not be having a grip on what life was before the scattering. The remedy has, thus, been retelling the stories of Dinka people, their culture and identity. This may be achieved through oral narratives which are expressed orally by the elderly. An interest in the oral narratives is critical for the Dinka people trying to tell the stories of their lives. The findings of this study target to go a long way in boosting the appreciation, appeal, legitimacy and relevance of oral narratives among the Dinka community. This study also contributes to scholarship in African oral literature as it (re)emphasizes the relationship between oral literature and culture, in particular the occasion of oral literature narrating culture, while relating to real life situations through live performances. Besides, the study takes interest in the artistic nature of the narratives versus their role as communicators of the society's concerns. For the literary scholar, the interaction between form and content in oral performances forms a good point of interrogating the link between the literary ideal and the societal reality. This link is particularly important in the attempt to understand communities such as the Dinka, who are largely, orate while at the same time putting forward written material for posterity.

1.5. Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on the portrayal of some aspects of culture of the Dinka people through oral narratives, a vehicle that may greatly influence the people's way of life. The study is limited to the artistic techniques of oral narratives of the Dinka community, how the techniques shape and transmit the thematic concerns in the narratives, and particularly the concerns of culture and

identity of the Dinka people. Besides, interest is taken in how the oral narratives may contribute to the preservation of Dinka culture and identity in the contemporary society.

1.6. Literature Review

This section offers a review of literature related to the research area. It has been organised along important components beginning with studies on African oral narratives. The section focuses on studies of the texts that added value and crucial significance to my project. I read various journals and academic works on oral narratives of the local artists, works on oral artists and works that put emphasis on performance as well as the African oral heritage. A number of oral literature studies from different literary scholars have been conducted in Africa in general and Kenya in particular. Ruth Finnegan (1970:335) observes that some of the original works on African oral literature come from Africans. These writers, she argues... “Have drawn attention to many aspects which the earlier scholars, particularly anthropologists and functionalists tended to ignore.”

Several scholars have carried out studies on oral literature from Africa, concluding that this literature is based on orality. Dinka community uses oral narratives as a medium of communicating, preserving culture, identity and language that artistically appeals to the society’s senses, as the majority of the Dinka people live in rural areas. Besides, more than 90% of the Dinka population is illiterate, therefore, the elders use oral narratives of different forms as their platform of passing their cultural messages to the young ones, and hence, oral narratives are very significant among the Dinka people. Both the educated and non-educated members of the Dinka

society reflect on their culture through oral narratives. Oral literature is always associated with the society that composes it.

Commenting on the social significance of oral literature, Nandwa and Bukenya (1994) state that in African society, the whole society of adults was responsible for instructing and correcting the young (1983,9). Indeed, in the Dinka community oral narratives are tools that are used to educate, nurture and train the society on what is acceptable in the society and what is not acceptable and be narrated regardless of gender and age among the Dinka people. However, the society does not just accept these narratives present to them, rather, during performances, the society gets an opportunity to reflect on what is presented to them, and thus rejects or accepts them. This study focuses on the elements of artistic techniques of oral narratives to determine how it influences the society in terms of perception and the importance of the context in accordance with the norms of the Dinka people's perspective on culture and identity.

Asenath Odaga postulates that literature acts as a carrier and transmitter of culture as well as moral values (1985). The artist, therefore, uses language as a tool to communicate using images that reflect the society artistically and aesthetically. Since Dinka oral narratives explore the historical and cultural aspects of the people, roles are assigned to members of the community, especially the youth in order to determine how the behaviour of the individual and the whole society is influenced by these narratives in the society.

In *Understanding Oral Literature*, Wanjiku Kabira has analyzed images of women as reflected in Gikuyu oral narratives while Ciarunji Chesaina has analyzed images in Maasai oral narratives (1994). Both Kabira and Chesaina concurred that the images that emanate from the two societies show that women occupy low social position/ status and are viewed as bearing negative character traits. This study of Dinka oral narratives differs with Kabira and Chesaina about the perception of women. On the contrary, the Dinka society reveres and respects women highly to the extent that they are placed next to God.

Okot P' Bitek in *Artist the Ruler* argues that the world-view of any society is “created by the most powerful, sensitive and imaginative minds that the society has produced. These are few men and women, supreme artists, the imaginative creators of that time who form the consciousness of their time - they respond deeply and intuitively to what is happening, what has happened and what will happen” (1986:39). This article puts artists on a very elevated pedestal and emphasizes that their role cannot be ignored. The culture of any society is molded by artists through oral narratives and songs. P'Bitek insists that in Africa artists are highly acknowledged and their contribution to the society is experienced by all members of that community. The role of the artists according to P'Bitek is higher compared to the role played by the conventional leaders.

Peter Wasamba's article: “Preservation of African Oral Heritage” in the *Nairobi Journal of Literature, Number 3 march 2005* focuses on the indispensable value of African oral heritage. In this particular article, Wasamba argues that “researchers can contribute to the general effort of the preservation of Africa's invaluable intangible heritage, which many agree is threatened

with extinction (1). Wasamba defines oral heritage as the “works of art and culture that have been transmitted orally from earlier generations such as oral literature, oral traditions, verbal arts and performance” (1). This article argues that African oral literature is endowed with enduring aesthetic appeal and that it is relevant through generations. I concur with Wasamba on the possible extinction of African cultural heritage, but differ on the prospect of relevance from generation to generation due to the fact that education with Western ideas instilled in young African youth has resulted in the culture of abandoning oral traditions and devoting much of their time and energy to study fictional written ideas that praise Western thoughts and traditions as more civilized than African oral heritage. Currently most educated youth from the Dinka community are trying to adopt the carefree Western ideas, thoughts and devaluing their own ways of life, which they apparently consider uncivilized and outdated.

Donald Braid in “Personal Narrative and Experiential Meaning” in *Journal of American Folklore* 109 (431) argues that listeners actively participate in the creation of meaning of oral texts. He states:

Following a narrative, therefore, involves a repeated reframing of the perceived events in an attempt to predict the narrative course and grasp the coherence that informs the narrative and give meaning. While the organizing principle may be seen as temporal, the process of following or comprehending is experiential; it is an active process that takes place within time. Through this struggle they are led to tentatively accept or experience the coherence of narrative, a pattern that I suggest embodies the ideology of the narrator” (9).

The texts that are composed by the local artists have the same aspects as oral narratives and during performances which are experienced by the audience. Using these views I labored to understand how the Dinka people create meaning of narratives in relation to their lives. This article helped me formulate an opinion on the role of oral narratives and how people arrive at conclusions concerning imaginative meanings in their lives and culture.

Different scholars and critics have discussed the value of oral narrative as a means of understanding and comprehending life through fiction or historical renderings (Hawkes 1989, Barthes 1986, Braid 1996, Young 1987). They all comment on the universality of narrative, Roland Barthes points out that the narratives of the world are numberless and are present in myth, legend, fable, epic, history and even in conversations. According to Barthes the narrative begins with the very history of mankind (557). The narrative expresses basic human urges such as fear, aspirations, and dreams. When people recount personal experiences, they create personal narratives, which largely present their perceptions of things and responses to life. The narrative may, therefore, be seen as a genre that can enable one to be in touch with one's feelings and thoughts towards experiences.

A most rudimentary way of defining the narrative is to equate it to story. The actual everyday usage of both narrative and story is very broad and Polkinghorne (1998), suggests that this broad meaning should be accepted and story and narrative treated as synonyms. Polkinghorne defines both narrative and story as the fundamental scheme for linking individual human actions and events into interrelated aspects of an understandable composite (13). A widely used definition of story is given by E.M.Foster, who sees story as events arranged in the order of their occurrence.

From a linguistic perspective, the narrative is defined as 'two or more conjoined clauses that a sequence of temporally ordered events' (Och and Capps 1996:23). Waletzky's definition equates narrative to story by presenting chronology as essential to narrative. However,

chronology is only a rudimentary element of narrative. This becomes apparent when we consider the distinction between story and plot. Foster (ibid), distinguishes between story and plot and states that plot is the arrangement of events according to the order of causality. This definition is highlighted by Toolan (1998) who defines narrative as ‘a perceived sequence of non-randomly connected events’ (7).

Vincent (2002) equates narrative to story by presenting chronology as essential to narrative. However, chronology is only a rudimentary element of narrative. This becomes apparent when we consider the distinction between story and plot. Foster distinguishes between story and plot and states that plot is the arrangement of events according to the order of causality. This definition is highlighted by Toolan (1998) who defines narratives as ‘a perceived sequence of non-randomly connected events’ (7). Another distinction that has been made and suggested between story and narrative is that the story is the sequence of occurrence of events while the narrative is ‘a story as told by a narrator.’ In this sense, ‘narrative = story + theme. The theme is a layer added to the story to instruct, to provide an emotional connection, or to impart a deeper meaning’ (Vincent 2002). A narrative is, therefore, some kind of retelling, of something that happened in a story. The narrative is not the story itself but rather the telling of the story which is why it is so often used in phrases such as ‘written narrative and oral narrative’ While a story is ideally a sequence of events, a narrative recounts those events, perhaps leaving out some occurrences because they are, from some perspective, insignificant and perhaps emphasizing others because they are perceived to be important to the purpose of the narrator. Narratives thus shape history.

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Currently, the term narrative is used in many disciplines including politics, science, law, medicine and cognitive science. Brooks (1991) attributes the popularity of the term to the power of narrative. He argues that the popularity of the term is due to the recognition that narrative is one of the principal ways we organize our experience of the world; it is a part of our cognitive tool kit for understanding ourselves and our world (Brooks qtd.in Ryan 2007:14). This study analyzes a sampled number of oral narratives of Dinka community that portray some aspects of culture in the Dinka society and their experience of their world within their cultural contexts.

As indicated earlier, temporality is a fundamental aspect of narrative. The chronological dimension offers the narrator vehicles for imposing order on otherwise disconnected experiences. Narrative order is a key means of organizing life’s experiences. According to

Mink, 'the narrative is a primary cognitive instrument... of making the flux of experience comprehensible' (129).

It has often been argued that human beings are natural storytellers who participate in this activity not only because it is pleasurable but also because it enables them to inchoate content of their lives intelligible. Narration as an activity of human consciousness is a medium for understanding human experiences since it articulates sequence, thereby placing events in a framing context, which then relates to Brooks' (ibid) observation about narrative that:

Our lives are ceaselessly intertwined with narrative,
With the stories we tell and hear told, those dreams or
Imagine or would like to tell, all of which are reworked
In that story our own lives which we narrate to ourselves [--] (32)

Indeed for the Dinka, narration has been the surest way of re(membering) their life's experiences and culture as well as reinstating what was otherwise lost during their scattered sojourn in foreign lands. This study, therefore, is engaged in interrogating what aspects of Dinka community's culture that become evident through oral narrative performance.

1.7.0. Theoretical Framework

1.7.1 Introduction

To understand the dimensions of the Dinka oral narratives, this study examines and utilizes an eclectic approach in which a number of theoretical tools are employed; the major ones include Ethnopoetics, Narratology and Sociological literary theory as well as the theory of Performance. Below is the description of the theoretical approach and then a conceptual frame work that guides the analysis in this study.

1.7.2. Ethnopoetics

As a theory, Ethnopoetics focuses on the aesthetic and poetic structuring of oral art. Its methodology and theoretical foundations lie in pragmatics, phenomenology, sociolinguistics, ethnography, conversation analysis and ethnography of speaking and performance,' Anttonen (1994:113). One strand of this theory was advanced by Dell Hymes (1982). It is based on the idea that works of verbal arts are important organizations of lines and verses, therefore, oral poetry and expressions are founded upon socially constituted poetic structure that is presented both in the organization of experiences as well as the organization of report on that experience''(Anttonen 1994:113). According to Hymes (1982), the lines and verses are "organized in ways that are a kind of rhetoric of action in that they embody an implicit culture schema for the organization of experiences." The implication for the above is that analysis of verbal art cannot be interpreted or analyzed outside of the context in which it was performed. In other words, an understanding of the culture of the source community will aid a comprehensive analysis of the collected oral text.

The Theory has two main strands, one generated by Dennis Tedlock and the other by Dell Hymes. Both strands complement each other. Tedlock's emphasis is placed on the oral nature of the text and the dependence of the organization of the text upon lines. When transcribing, the two factors guide the activity. "The text is arranged into lines according to the pauses of the oral performances. Each new pause indicates the end of the line and the beginning of another (Anttonen 1994:114). In addition, the transcription shows the variations on pitch, volume, vowel length and presents the text as it was heard in performances," (Anttonen 1994:144). This strand emphasizes the importance of fieldwork—all material studied must be transcribed by the

researcher studying it. Dell Hymes's strand of Ethnopoetics on the other hand has "emphasis on the notion that many things in oral text revolve around a pattern number or a sacred number or some multiple of it," (Anttonen 1994:114).

Based on their findings, therefore, it can be argued that graph-logical presentation of a given narrative retains certain original features that would otherwise be lost. To find the formal narrative structure of the text, the strand focuses "on the stylistic, artistic and grammatical features. The text analysis is based on the principles of structural analysis in which signs and text are looked at in terms of their communication. Considering semiotics, meaning is studied in terms of the relationship between signs and the user.

This theory aided in collection of the oral narratives, their transcription and translation from the source language to the target language. It was also crucial in the analysis and literary interpretation of the oral narrative performances, in particular considering the literary strategies deployed by the artists.

The conceptual framework I deployed in this study followed the requirement that:

Interpretation and analysis of oral text is done within their cultural contexts. The linguistic signs and their symbolic meanings are culturally bound. The meaning in the narratives can be correctly interpreted if analyzed from the cultural perspective of the source community. Bauman (1975:292) emphasizes; "performance represents a transformation of the basic referential uses of language. In other words, in artistic performances of this kind, there is something going on in the communicative inter-change which says to the auditor, "Interpret what I say in some special sense; do not take it to mean word alone taken literally, would convey" This may lead to further suggestion that performance sets up or represents an

interpretive frame within which the messages being communicated are to be understood, and contrasts with at least one other frame, the literary one. “A researcher must be deeply in dialogue and interaction to understand the structural and underlying issues surrounding a phenomenon and a community (Melhuss1995:97). In this research, I got deeply involved with the community in attempting to comprehend the interaction surrounding the oral narratives and the community.

Fole (1995:48-49) posits: To appreciate the work on its own terms, one must attend the event in the proper arena in the same place in which it has been performed and received. I actively and deeply participated and even joined the performances for my own appreciation and understanding of some aspects of the culture portrayed in the oral narratives.

1.7.3 Narratology

The theory of Narratology forms the interpretative grit of this research. The theory of Narratology according to Mieke Bal (2009) entails the study of narrative structure and the way they affect the readers ‘perceptions. Narratology posits that the narrative is divided into two parts: the story which is an account of the events and discourse which is the process through which the story is told. Gerard Genette’s (1980) contribution to the theory of Narratology identifies narrative as constituting of three fundamental aspects: story, text and narration (25-26). Genette focuses on not only just the narrative itself but how it is told. According to Seymour Chatman (1980) any narrative text has two major components namely the story which is the content and discourse which is ‘the means by which the story is communicated’ (19). This implies that both the story (what) and discourse (how) contribute to interpretation and meaning-making in any narrative.

While talking about narrative discourse Peter Barry (2002) says “ it isn’t just the plot in the narrow sense which is the issue, but the style, viewpoint, pace and so on, which is to say, the whole packaging of the narrative to create the overall effect”(215). Thus technique together with point of view and other embellishments that complete a text is important when it comes to the theory of narratives. In this study, narratology helps examine how the narratives in the Dinka community are packaged as well as how the artistic techniques impact on narrative structure, plot, character, and issues raised. Bal (2009) singles out the narrator as the most important part of the narrative. She defines narrator as “an agent that tells a particular medium, such as language, imagery, sounds, building, or combining thereof ” (18). By looking at the choice of narrator, the study examines the story constructed in the narrative context.

1.7.4 Sociological literary theory

Robert, K. Merton in “Sociological Theory” in American Journal of Sociology, Vol.50, No 6 (May, 1945) argues that when people are confronted with societal crises they respond to the stimulus appropriately. This means that the society shapes the perception of people concerning their lives. Merton states as follows:

Malinowski was led to re-examine the Freudian notion of the Oedipus complex on the basis of a general sociological orientation, which viewed sentiment formation as patterned by social structure. This generic view clearly underlay his exploration of a specific ‘psychological complex in its relation to a system of status relationships in a society differing in structure from that of Western Europe. The specific Hypotheses which he utilized in this inquiry were well all congruent with generic orientation but were not prescribed by it. Otherwise put, the general orientation indicated the relevance of some structural variables, but there still remained the task of ferreting out the particular variables to be included (464).

Merton observes that the social structure is crucial in sentiment formation. The values of a given society are influenced by the general sociological orientation. Sociological literary theory is partly concerned with the role of literature in a society; it focuses on how literature influences the society and how society influences literature. The theory is defined as a set of interrelated ideas that allow for the systematization of knowledge of the social world. This knowledge is then used to explain the social world and make predictions about the future of the social world.

Merton theorizes that ‘abundance of empirical findings in the fields as propaganda and public opinion; reactions to unemployment, and family responses to crises suggest that when persons are confronted with an ‘objective stimulus-pattern’ which would be expected to elicit responses counter to their “initial predispositions,” Their actual behavior can be more successfully predicted on the basis of predispositions than of the stimulus-pattern’ (473). The objective stimulus for the case of narrative is the society. This theory shows as much as the society influences the art produced by the artist, the art also influences the community or society’s perceptions. This theory applies to this study in as much as we attempt to determine the role that oral narrative performance plays on the portrayal of aspects of the Dinka culture and its preservation. Indeed sociological literary theory is well recognized for its social function of storing, interpreting and transmitting the values of a given society.

1.7.5 Literary theory of Performances

The chief proponents of this theory are Richard Schechner and Victor Turner. This theory is helpful in analyzing the performance of oral narratives as cultural rituals and crisis oriented. Performance helped me to identify the cultural crisis and restore the much needed order of things

in the society. The research has drawn much on this theory from the propositions in the works of Bauman (1984), Turner (1993). And schechner (1984), in their interpretation of performance theory as an approach to the study of verbal arts. Performance studies as a discipline does not narrow itself to the classical definition of performance, but looks at performance as an interdisciplinary field that studies performance as a tool to study the world. It studies artistic and aesthetic performance such as concert, theatrical events, and sporting rituals and among others. During the narrating of the oral stories, the story tellers in the Dinka community literally perform. They get fully engaged, applying the hands, feet, face as well as voice modulations. They may also sing, dance, demonstrate as well as using props I the performance. All these help enhance the meaning that the narrator is set on putting across. The theory of performance was, thus, very useful as I tried to put meaning to the narratives through my interpretation of these accompanying extras.

1.8.0. Methodology

1.8.1. Introduction

This section explains the methodology that was employed in the field. Field research is a vital tool in filling up the gaps in knowledge and verification of the existing oral texts. John Hocking (2003:5) observes that “... field research entails asking appropriate questions based on theoretical understanding of communication then collecting and analyzing data in such a way as to advance our human knowledge of how humans communicate.” From this definition, it can be inferred that research involves an attempt at authenticating existing knowledge or realities in the society. This view is captured by Jan Jonker and Barjan Pennick (2010:11) when they posit that “research entails the deliberate and methodological search for (new) knowledge and insights into

questions that have been formulated in advance.” Pennick stresses the need for formulating questions beforehand for the success of the field research.

Peter Clough and Cathy Nut-brown (1981) in their book *Research Methodology for Students* state that “Research is methodology”. Methodology refers to a systematic and scientific manner which a particular task is approached, carried out and accomplished. In this chapter, the researcher demonstrates how the data were collected and analyzed. The focus was on the relevant information considered in attempting and addressing the research hypotheses. The nature of research problem and theoretical orientation led the researcher to identify relevant research design, sampling frame, research instruments, methods of collection, methods of analysis, and methods of interpretation of the material and its presentation. In the sections that follow the project describes all these aspects. In addition, the section highlights the challenges that were encountered during the field research in Rumbek.

1.8.2. Permission to conduct Research.

Permission to conduct this research was sought from the relevant arms of government and institutions beside the University of Nairobi introduction letter to the researcher. This had been done prior to the involvement of the researcher into the actual research project for the researcher’s safety and security purpose in South Sudan as a war torn country in Africa. This preparation was done before the researcher was given a go-ahead to carry out the aimed research project. Also, necessary equipment were made available and travel arrangements taken care of. Personal items were organized, and accommodation was arranged before the commencement of

the research in the town of Rumbek in Western Lakes State which is the central region of the republic of South Sudan.

1.8.3. Research Design

In this section, I focus on the general organization and execution of the entire research process. Keith Punch (2005: 62) defines research design as: “all issues involved in planning and executing a research project from identifying the problem through to reporting and publishing the results.” The present study used both descriptive and analytical designs. This involves a set of questions which helped the researcher to get meaningful information on the Dinka oral narratives. The study deploys primarily qualitative methods and perhaps some elements of quantitative design. Bruscia (2000:129), postulates that qualitative and quantitative approaches are competing claims of knowledge, with contrasted underlying philosophies.

1.8.4. Sources of Data and Sampling Techniques

During field research, I collected eleven oral narratives which for the benefit of the readers are presented in the appendices sections together with their English translations. The researcher attended fifteen performances of oral narratives from across Rumbek County. This study focuses on five oral artists or performers of oral narratives in the community. The five artists gave a total of fifteen performances from which I selected eleven narratives dropping four since they were repeating the versions that I had collected earlier. The artists performed oral narratives on the questions of religion, language, culture and identity from which I selected eleven for literary analysis and interpretation. The five artists were used to represent the larger population of Agar section of Dinka.

1.8.5. Data Collection

The study used the participation of the respondents in the collection of data. Deliberate sampling of data had been done in the selection of the research area and identification of oral artists. The data were recorded using a camera, voice recording machine and video recording machine and supplemented by note taking and observation during the fieldwork time. The Artists were induced positively so that they open up while recording performances by asking them with open ended questions.

1.8.6. Research Instruments

a) Observation and interview

A number of methods were deployed in the collections of data. They included participatory approach, observation, interview through informal discussions; conventional methodology in oral literature research was applied. To build rapport with the informants and artists versed in the culture and oral tradition of a community requires that the researcher integrates with the community. Once accepted he or she collaborates with the members of the community to identify the well informed oral artists in the community. These methods were largely applied in the study of American Indians (Antonen 1994).

b) Interview schedules

Structured interviewing was conducted in which questions were poised to the informants and oral artists. The same set of established questioned were used. The questions were open ended, opening room for a variety of answers. It helped in reinforcing what was recorded. Historical details of certain cultural practices were sought from the experienced artists and influential

individual among Dinka community of Rumbek County in South Sudan, using the interview schedules.

1.8.7. Research Procedure

The researcher submitted and presented the research proposal to the department of literature at the University of Nairobi for reading and scrutiny, and he was given a go ahead for the actual research on the portrayal of the culture of the Dinka through oral narratives. The researcher then went to the field in Rumbek for data collection; recording oral narratives, transcribing them in the source language of the Dinka before translating into the target language of English. This was then followed by literary analysis and interpretation.

1.8.8. Quality Control and Tools to be used during research

Pilot testing of research instruments such camera, video camera and other instruments that control the quality of research was done.

1.8.9. Data Analysis

The researcher transcribed the collected data in original language i.e. the Dinka language and later translated into English with the full knowledge that it would not do total injustice to the original performance. This was followed by the textual analysis of the collected narratives to determine the language use in these narratives with regard to the portrayal of culture of the Dinka through oral narratives. The researcher in this study uses English as the language of literary communication and instructions at the University of Nairobi [UoN].

1.9. Conceptual Definitions of Operational Terms

Community: in this study, the term community refers to a group of people identified with a particular region and sharing similar characteristics like ancestry and cultural background, who in this study are the Dinka people. These people have shared beliefs and customs like marriage, language, and funeral rites. Communities can be equated to building blocks that allow a given people to make sense of the world, in which they live, participate and share experiences of their lives.

The concept of community is shrouded in contentious definitions. Wendell Berry (1992:2) defines a community as “a physical place that we share where people have values, beliefs, needs and interests that connect them.” He posits that the term community can also be used to describe a group of people with a common affiliation, not necessarily linked by geography, (p.3). According to him, a community identifies itself by an understood mutuality of interest. From Berry’s definition, it can be deduced that community is a distinct group that boasts of certain uniformities in day to day activities.

Benedict Anderson (2008:15) defines a community as “a social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality and often has a common cultural and historical heritage.” What emerges from the above definition is that communities have common beliefs and are bound by the same geographical links. However, it is instructive to note that with the changes that have been occasioned by technological advancement, it is increasingly becoming untenable to confine a given group in a place and call them a community based on geographical connections. In the contemporary world, communities are varied and individuals may belong to two or more communities which range from family, education, business, work, religion to culture.

Nevertheless, these communities provide a sense of identity and purpose, a sense of being a part of and belonging to the community. This is realised through championing common interests of the people belonging to a given community. It should be pointed out that community generally entails the interdependence of a particular group of people in the society. It is through this interdependence that different groups emerge in the society. The existence of different communities is vital to the present study in the sense that provides a platform upon which the researcher can study the construction of the Dinka perception on communal coexistence.

Culture: In this study, the term culture refers to conceptual perceptions and may be conceived of as providing the distinction of correct versus incorrect behaviour. But who decides on the correctness or incorrectness of this distinction? Several scholars have defined culture differently. For instance, Brown (1991:40) posits that “culture consists of the conventional patterns of thought, activity, and artifact that are passed on from generation to generation.” According to Brown, it can be argued that if a society demonstrate a recognised pattern of activity, such as rice production, that is part of their culture.

In this study, culture can be understood as the self-description of a modern society able to programme how it regulates the reproduction of its operations. Yet, this is correct only so far as the programme does not quite succeed. According to Oxford advanced English Dictionary, culture refers to the attitudes and behavior that are characteristic of a particular social group or organisation. Hofstede (2010:1) defines culture as: “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.” He argues that culture is a collective phenomenon because it is partly shared with the people who live or

live within the same social environment where it was learnt. Therefore, it is the art and manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively. In this cultur study, refers to the way of life of the Dinka community. Also the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of the Dinka society. All the knowledge and behaviour, values and attitudes shared by a society.

Dinka: in this study , the term Dinka refers to a tribe of the Jieng community in South Sudan that speak Mounyjang language. These are mainly found in Bhar el ghazle region and Upper Nile region. The Dinka community is the largest tribe in South Sudan and basically of four different sections and each section seems to have claimed a different ancestry. Evidence of these differences is revealed in some minor cultural differences especially, during burial rites and slight dialectic differences in terms of speech dialects among the Dinka sections. Other differences are along gender, age or class lines. This works against the perception of the Dinka as a autonomous groups with unique way of life. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this study, the Dinka people are viewed as homogeneous group with a lot of shared practices. This study's position borrows from Gayatri Spavak's (1990:15) concept of the strategic essentialism where she argues that ".....essentialism presupposes that a group or a category of people or object share some defining features exclusive to the members of this particular group or category." Although strategic essentialism is often discussed together with the questioning of categorries like race and nation, in more pragmatic level, it can be applied by gropus and individuals to realise certain effects.

Worldview: This refers to the way people live, act, think, work, and relate. In this study, worldview refers to the communal perception of reality. Generally, it maps out the community's

cultural, religious, economic and political views and relationships. These relationships affect not only the Dinka but also other neighbouring communities. JanVansina (1998:133) defines worldview as "... a representation of ultimate reality in all aspects visible and invisible." He rightly argues that worldview includes the creation of the world, about the kinds of beings that are in it and their taxonomies, on its layout and functioning. In this study, the main concern is on how the Dinka construct their worldview through the selected oral narrative performance.

Marriage: The term marriage in the majority of African societies, if not all of them, has traditionally involved various presentations. These have been in the form of gifts given to the parties affected by marital union, and are commonly referred to in anthropology as marriage presentations, payment transactions, (Radcliffe-Brown 1950, Comaroff 1980, Lemos 2010:105, Kanogo 2005), or even as marriage by exchange (Levi-Strauss 1967). Basically among the Dinka, marriage transactions involve presentations or payments mainly of two types: dowry and brideprice.

Perception: in this study, the term perception refers to the way people interpret a number of issues surrounding them in the society. Perceptions can be personal or communal and are bound to change over time. In this study, communal perceptions are evident where the Dinka would want to distinguish themselves as different from other communities whereby other groups are considered as strangers in the midst of the Dinka community. Where perceptions are held over a long period of time, they constitute a people's worldview on a number of issues among them communal coexistence.

Performance: It refers to the use of aspects of communication style like language and manipulation of the body to realise certain effects. Richard Schechner (2002:4) defines performance as “a mode of behaviour, an approach to an experience, it is play, sport, aesthetic, popular entertainment, experimental theatre and more.” From Schechner’s point of view, it emerges that performance is a multidimensional process with the potential of eliciting different meanings at different times. This study looks at performance as a means of communicating that is essential in the construction of meaning.

Society: The term society in this study refers to the aggregate of people living together in a more or less ordered community. It also refers to an organisation or club formed for a particular purpose or activity. And it also refers to an extended group having a distinctive cultural and economic organization such as the Dinka have.

1.10. Conclusion

The chapter is a summary of what this research set out to do, how this was done and the environment/ circumstances under which this was done. The chapter introduces the reader to the Dinka community and its relationship to oral narrative performance. The chapter further, through its literature review examines what other scholars have said on issues of narrative performance. The chapter also considers the theoretical frameworks that appear relevant in this study.

1.11. Chapter Outline

This project research report has four chapters. Chapter one introduces the study and provides background information of the study. It also comprises of the statement of the problem,

objectives, hypotheses, justification, scope and limitation, literature review, theoretical framework and methodology used in the research.

Chapter two deals with brief background information of the Dinka community, artistic techniques of oral narrative performance by the Dinka, significance of oral narratives in portraying culture, socio-economic aspects of Dinka oral narratives, socio-political aspects of oral narratives, religious aspects and legal and judicial aspects of Dinka community as brought out through oral narratives,

Chapter three makes an inquiry into the thematic concerns of the Dinka culture and their views of the social world. Within this chapter I examine the kind of stories or narratives people tell throughout the generations of Dinka society as a way of portraying their culture, customs, norms and philosophical perception of the social world and their own cultural preservation. This chapter also deals with certain foreign cultural influences on the Dinka property ownership, narrating familial ownership as well as analysing the position of a woman in the Dinka society. In addition, the chapter discusses the status of the above identified thematic concerns in the community's politics, economy, justice system, education, and ownership.

Chapter four focusses on challenges encountered in the field, summary and findings of the study, recommendations for further research in the Dinka oral narratives and conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

ARTISTIC TECHNIQUES IN THE DINKA ORAL NARRATIVES

2.0. Introduction

This chapter deals with brief background information on the Dinka community, reasons for choosing this ethnic group for study, processes involved in narration, contexts of Dinka oral narrative performance, artistic techniques of the oral narratives and how the artistic techniques develop contexts within which the Dinka society and cultural practices are observed, significance of oral narratives in portraying culture; socio-economic aspects, socio-political aspects and religious aspects of Dinka oral narratives. The chapter also deals with the nature of Dinka oral narratives and their role in justice for members of the Dinka community.

2.1. Brief background information on the Dinka community

The Dinka form close to 40 percent of the total population of the republic of South Sudan. This is according to the population census of 2008. The Dinka community consists of four major dialectic groups: Padang, Rek, Agar and Bor. Traditionally, economically and culturally, the Dinka are pastoralists whose economy is centered on cattle rearing. The people value cattle more than they value monetary wealth that dominates the modern world. Within the Dinka cultural context, people accumulate cattle in large numbers as their source of pride, wealth and economic power. Just like money settles almost anything in the modern society, in the Dinka community's economy, cattle play almost all roles ranging from buying food, to settling court fines and blood compensation in case of bloodshed during communal fights. They pay cows as dowry or bride price in their marriages to the girl's parents and in case of marriage breakup as happens to James Mayom and Nyabiliny in narrative 10, the cattle have to be refunded. Cattle play an important

role in the Dinka society as a source of wealth, pride and social position of the individual person in the community. Their residential settlements are permanent, but cattle camps are almost exclusively run by youth and always on the move in search of water and pasture for cattle during the dry seasons. Most tasks (chores) in the cattle camps – all performed by teenagers – include milking and nursing sick cattle, in addition to watering them and feeding them. Cultural roles are given to both boys and girls in accordance with gender stipulations, by highly respected and culturally esteemed elders in the society. In other words, men educate and train boys while women educate and mentor girls respectively.

A typical Dinka residential home or compound consists of at least three or four *tukuls* [huts] and surrounded by at least seventy to one hundred acres of arable land for cultivation of crops such as maize, sorghum, beans, groundnuts, millet and vegetables to supplement the household's diet. Generally, cultivation, caring for the livestock and building of huts are activities performed by both men and women among the Agar group of Dinka where this study concentrated. And in this community, women are highly respected and dignified, the Dinka honour their wives, perhaps as much as they do their bulls. In other words, the people take great pride in both owning a bull as well as being married. So during cultivation times, young men are mobilized in the village (s) to cultivate and harvest crops while women prepare food for them. This kind of communal cooperation in the Dinka community is called *Kutkut* [putting hands together]. Wine is also served to these young men during planting and harvesting time only, because, the Dinka culture does not allow young men to engage in drinking wine before they marry. However, they are encouraged to taste it during the time of cultivation and harvest perhaps to motivate them and raise their spirit of work.

Being a patriarchal culture, the Dinka expect household tasks such as cooking, caring for young children and logistics at home to be performed exclusively by women even as the community holds them in high esteem. The Dinka honour getting married and having children. This is a cultural and communal expectation about every young man. Therefore, all men are culturally and communally obliged to get married for the continuity of the community. The position of the woman is regarded highly because it is generally believed that women are the deputies of God the creator. This is in the sense that life begins in their wombs and is nurtured there for the period of nine months prior to being delivered into the world. Hence, women should be highly respected as divine as they continue the process of creation through human procreation.

Since the Dinka believe in immortality or continuity of life through offspring children are expected from every individual, even if it is just one child. Indeed, an individual who passes on after having at least one child, especially a boy, is still celebrated and may not be mourned much, because he is believed to be alive in the form of his child in the community. On the other hand, if no child had been left behind by the deceased at death, then one is considered dead. However, there is a remedy for such a situation when the deceased is not survived by a boy child. The family of the deceased marries a woman on his behalf and one of the deceased's brothers or paternal cousin will bear children with the bride on behalf of the deceased. And the children belong to the deceased. This kind of marriage among the Dinka people is culturally accepted and is a communal belief that if a family does not marry for the deceased member of their family, the children of the other brothers or sisters will automatically die. The deceased claims them for himself; therefore, it is the spiritual right of the deceased to take them to the world of the dead with him. As Francis Mading explains, "When a man dies before marrying, even at infancy, he

leaves his kinsmen with religious and cultural obligation to marry on his behalf and beget his name” Mading (1979).

The biological father of the children so born for the deceased will be responsible for the deceased’s widow and he will support her in every way as he would to his own wife. The Dinka society calls this kind of marriage *Koch e nhom*, which can be literally translated as “standing the head.” In a nutshell, the brother of the deceased person or cousin becomes the husband and father of the widow and children of the deceased respectively. It is his due right and obligation to stand the head of his dead brother or cousin and make him immortal in the family and the entire community. It is also a culturally and socially accepted norm and the typical Dinka culture that governs the codes and ethics of this kind of marriage among them. As earlier noted, the Dinka community is a patriarchal traditional society, and the family lineage is patriarchal. This means that in a situation or scenario where the deceased does not have a brother or half-brother; a cousin is identified by the family of *Koch e nhom*; the choice must be a paternal cousin and never a maternal one. However, if the family of the deceased has no paternal cousin, the son of the sister of the deceased is culturally obliged to ‘stand the head’ of his maternal uncle and children born to him will belong to the family of deceased maternal uncle. It is a cultural obligation and responsibility to ‘stand the head’ of his deceased maternal uncle.

The Dinka people are polygamous. A rich man in the Dinka community marries more than ten wives and chiefs marry more than that number of wives. Marrying many wives is considered a strong status symbol, for it is a source of wealth as many children born to this family produce enough resources, pride and power in the Dinka society. An old man of over seventy years of age

can get married to a girl aged eighteen years who will be given to one of his beloved sons to bear him children who are considered the father's children and not the son's; they become part of the father's wealth and source of pride because the elder brothers and sisters will benefit from them even after the demise of their father. Interestingly, the biological father will call the children his siblings and not his children because the woman belongs to his father, therefore, the children also call him their elder brother and not their father.

In the Dinka culture, it is the task of the elderly people to give advice to the young ones on different social ways of life. *Deng Abuk*, a legendary Dinka forefather is often quoted as saying “when you are dead, you do not know that you are dead. All the pain is felt by others, and it happens when you are stupid, the society experiences your stupidity.” Therefore, he advised people from different generations to listen to their elders at all stages of life. “We believe in the values and norms which are connected to our cultural roots. Our cultural mission is to preserve our culture, identity and to strengthen our family legacies and values by capturing our loved stories that can serve as a cultural thread for future generations to continue nurturing our cultures.” Indeed this legendary wisdom and much more about the Dinka beliefs is often artistically captured in the oral narratives whenever expert story tellers in the community tell the stories.

2.2. Justification of the choice of Rumbek

Rumbek is the headquarters of Agar section of Dinka society, a central land of the Dinka community, as it is believed to be the initial ancestral land of the Dinka community. Therefore, most of the narratives of Dinka society are centred on the Agar sub group. This justifies my

choice to carry out research on the Agar Dinka as the representative subcommunity of the Dinka society.

I found the Agar community area relatively peaceful as opposed to other areas that still appear tense from the effects of the civil wars that have plagued South Sudan for decades. The Agar people call the other sections of Dinka their children because the entire Dinka culture is believed to have originated from and socially nurtured by Agar community. This sub-community appears to represent the Dinka people's unity, identity and culture. Their oral heritage apparently represents the unquestionable cultural obligation to be obeyed; the societal norms and customs to look up to as long as the Dinka society is in existence. And since, the current political situation in South Sudan has not severely affected the area of Rumbek, I would move in the area without fear for my life. Most people of this area live in the deep rural areas and this means that they still maintain to some appreciable degree the authentic culture, norms and traditions of the Dinka society. As already noted, this section of the Dinka is believed to be the ancestor of the whole tribe, so their roots and traditions are believed to apply to the entire Dinka community. It is even claimed that the Agar speak the authentic version of the Dinka language, which actual appear to be easily understood by all other sections of the Dinka community.

In addition, the Agar section of Dinka is still maintaining their ancestral land even as the civil war has scattered many sections of the Dinka community and there is a possibility of getting the unchanged or altered oral narratives from this section. A further advantage was that the researcher could walk to different villages without fear of insecurity as there was no sign of the civil war in this section. Indeed, this section and area occupied by the Agar was not much

affected by the civil war; hence many elderly people are still alive and are able to make available knowledge of the past. These elderly people enjoy high social status, respect and absolute cultural authority from the society because they have not been shaken from their roots: by the civil wars and the forces of the modern contemporary world. Furthermore, having been a resident of this community for some time, I gained much knowledge and recognition of the highly respected, recognised and valued members of the community who are knowledgeable of the values, norms, customs and traditions nurtured in strongly cultural practices of the Dinka society.

2.3. Performance and meaning in Dinka oral narratives

The focus of this sub-section is on performance of Dinka oral narratives, indicating how elements of performance are vital in suggesting meaning of culture and the Dinka perception of their social world. The sub-section is informed by the fact that artfulness of Dinka oral narratives is not entirely found in the oral texts but in live performances as most of the people of this community are illiterate and live in rural areas. Aspects of performance such as form can only be realized through attending the actual occasion in which they are performed. This provided the opportunity for the researcher to interact with the research community. It is through such interactions that the researcher was able to penetrate, understand and analyze the meaning of Dinka oral narratives. The question answered in this part is how the performer contributes to the interpretation and analysis of oral narratives especially with regard to the construction of culture, and how narratives preserve the Dinka culture and their perception of the social world.

According to one of our informants and narrator, James Kon Chadhor, oral narrative performance in Dinka traditional community was a daily preoccupation. As soon as darkness engulfed the villages, children would quickly retreat to their grandmothers' or mothers' huts in readiness for story telling sessions. In most cases, these stories were told by grandmothers and mothers to the children. Men, on the other hand, would be meeting other men to talk about wars escapades and other related stories as they slowly drank their local brews. Generally, a single individual was assigned the duty of performing a story for the rest. To reveal the cumulative nature of the narratives, the narrator may probe the audience to suggest the kind of narratives they wanted performed for them. He/she could then go ahead to pick one but promise to perform to the audience many more narratives. This is a clear revelation of the myriad oral narratives that characterize the Dinka cultural setup. Through these oral narratives, many aspects of life touching on the Dinka society and the entire humanity are communicated.

To ensure that oral narratives remained alive, they are retold again and again. During this process, the materials of the narratives naturally undergo several changes and adaptations. A similar story by the narrator can be told differently on different occasions depending on the composition of the audience, the context of the performance, the intention of the performance among others. This is a creative and dynamic aspect that characterizes oral literary genres. In her comments, on the flexibility of oral literature, Finnegan (1970:2) stresses the significance of the performer when she notes that the definition of oral literature indeed depends on the performer who formulates it in different words on specific occasions. This calls for creativity on the part of the performer who has to cleverly tailor his or her performance to meet the dictates of each

occasion. The present study agrees with Finnegan on the significance of the performer in that it sets out to examine how meaning is suggested in narrative performance.

Some of the narratives examined and discussed in this chapter reveal the position of women in the Dinka community; how to deal with crises; the challenges related to famine and its consequences in the society and issues of manipulation and control. In working with all the narratives, the researcher examines the role and place of performance in assigning meaning with special regard to the construction of meaning of culture in Dinka perspective, and preservation of their culture through oral narrative performance. In examining these oral narratives, the researcher has paid close attention to some aspects of performance like audience involvement, place of performance, verbal and nonverbal features among others.

2.4. Contexts of Dinka oral narrative performance

2.4.1. Introduction

A look at Dinka oral narrative performance and considering the narrator's method and message, one is able to understand the narratives as representations of different contextual perceptions: social, cultural, economic, political, spiritual and even legal. These are set below.

2.4.2. The socio-cultural context

In examining the social context of performance in Dinka selected oral narratives, the study focuses on the environment within which Dinka oral narratives are performed. For instance, it considers relational issues like the function of bringing together different groups of people for

the purpose of learning about the Dinka society and their cultural perspectives to life. It also deals with the way different groups relate to each other as expressed in the narratives, as well as societal expectations of individuals in their day to day interaction. These social groups include children, women, and men. They form part of the audience and they all play a role in constructing Dinka society's perception of culture through their oral narrative performances which focus on different aspects of life in the community.

Ideally, Dinka oral narratives are embedded in the social fabric which calls for a deliberate effort on the part of the narrator to evoke the atmosphere in which these narratives flourish if any meaningful interpretation is to be realized. This is the background that gives rise to the narratives in the Dinka oral narrative performances. The narration involves a turn-taking performance where the audience is actively involved in the actual performance during the process of narration. The narration exercise is not a preserved task of a given group of people in the sense that each member of the community is capable of telling a story. In the actual narration, the audience may at times intervene with a question, make a contribution or even seek some clarifications as the narration unfolds. In narrative 1, "The Woman and The Poisonous Pumpkins" for example, in which a woman reverses the condition of her dead children who had eaten the poisonous pumpkins, bringing them back to life after hearing the dove sing, one member of the audience – a woman – offered to sing like the dove:

*I am going to the plains,
I am going to the plains
I am going to call Atiel, let me go
The pumpkins she left at home, let me go
Have killed all her twelve children.*

After singing, the audience clapped for her, perhaps appreciating her beautiful voice. Therefore, the narration involves both the narrator and audience participation, which then makes it easy to understand the contextual meaning of the narrative. The very participation of the audience in itself confirms that the audience keenly follows the the narration and understands it, being active participants.

In the Dinka society, the dove is a symbol of peace and harmony; hence its use in this narrative. The dove acts as the messenger of God to the society. In this narrative, the dove helps bring back life to the dead children by delivering the message of their death to their mother who comes back in time to reverse their condition. The Dinka community has so many narratives in which the dove is embedded as the symbol of godly behavior and peaceful coexistence in the society. It is always the messenger of peace, patience and endurance, virtues that are espoused in the Dinka community. It is, therefore, not accidental that this narrative would elect to use the dove; the journey to the plains was long and harzadious and only Dove could undertake such a task. Its ability to sing well also endears Dove to all as a messenger.

2.4.3. Socio-economic context

Oral narratives have some aspects of socio-economic sense and reality. Narratives sometimes reflect people in any given society live together and work for their livelihood. The Dinka narrative 2 in the appendix seems to tell this kind of story:

People began to die because of lack of food in the area.
They then heard that there was food in the plains, very far away from their village
and whoever wanted to live had to go there for food and for safety of his or her family.

In the narrative, the narrator seems to suggest that economic hardship as a part of the life of people in the Dinka society. In this particular narrative, the entire community faces economic hardship that causes death of many people in that area. It is a suggestion that people will in certain circumstances have to struggle for survival. People in the narrative had to travel to the plains (which from the intonation of the narrator's voice signaled a very long distance), in search of food. Indeed the narrative is typical of Dinka family struggles to work for the sustainability of their family and family's continuity. The narrative also perhaps gives some hint to why Dinka families have migrated to different locations. In fact the community uses many ways to get food to sustain themselves from famine that is often experienced in the community as a result of long droughts.

It is instructive that those in the narrative who travel to go and look for food do not seek to get the food from the owners of the farm that has it. Instead:

The man would take his wife and children to go and steal bananas from the Ogre's farm. Whenever they reached there, they would first of all eat all the ripe bananas before cutting down what they needed for home consumption.

The man and his family seem to employ looting and stealing. This is perhaps a reflection of the Dinka culture of cattle raiding for sustainability in case of famine and other natural hazards, as well as for sheer need to accumulate wealth. Indeed, just as the plan to go cattle raiding is kept a secret, the narrative in question does not state clearly how the community members go for the searching of food in the plains, though one will conclude that they loot or steal. It is common for groups of people from a village to go raiding of other communities who have food in their areas. Even though, one shouldn't put a blanket condemnation of the entire community. Many other people genuinely struggle to earn what they want in an honest manner. For example, Atiel the

mother of twelve children in narrative 1 does not resort to looting and stealing when she faces famine. She instead leaves her children at home and goes to the plains to search for food:

Just like others were doing, Atiel decided to go to the plains for food.

Something, however, that one learns from the life and actions of Atiel in narrative 1, is the central role of the women in the Dinka society. The woman is apparently the central pillar in the family's food provision and that is why Atiel in this narrative is the one to travel such a long distance searching for food for her twelve children. We are, though, left wondering what role the father of the twelve children plays in the whole scenario. But one realizes that this is expected in a society where the role of providing food for the family belongs to the women. The women, thus, culturally play an important role in family sustainability among the Dinka.

Based on narratives 1 and 2, one is brought to the reality that economic hardship brings about suffering and death in the society. However, people in this society work and struggle for livelihood regardless of the hardships and rough gears of life. Literally, we conclude that economic hardship is part of the Dinka community's cultural philosophy of life. It can also be interpreted that struggle seems to be part of the Dinka society's way of life in their world. However, they always succeed afterwards in any difficult condition of their lives. They consider economic hardship as a characteristic of being alive and their structure plays a significant role in their world view and philosophy of life. Any living person must suffer to succeed in life. This is the philosophical culture of Dinka community throughout their lives as portrayed in the two narratives 1 and 2.

It is also comes out in narrative 1 and 2 that economic hardship is the central force that pushes people to work. Without hardship people do not work, yet in the culture of Dinka community, people who do not work are not respected in their society regardless of gender or age. That is the reason why the woman travels to search for food for her children in the plains as events in Narrative 1 demonstrate. The woman tries to change the economic fortunes of her family, especially the children without seeking help from other people. In the Dinka culture, artists compose songs to mock people whose family members die because of hunger. Indeed, if the woman, Atiel could on her own undertake such a demanding journey to fend for her family, nobody may have an excuse for not doing the same.

It is clear that hard work is a virtue that is emphasized through Dinka narratives. This is perhaps why Atiel in narrative 1 ends well through her hardships because she tries to work hard, while the lazy man in Narrative 2 (The Ogre's Farm), who wants to solve his famine problem by stealing other people's bananas dies a painful death. Similarly, the girl in Narrative 5 (The lazy girl), is sent away by her husband who cannot just tolerate her laziness. This gives one to conclude that perhaps the practice of cattle raiding that has been associated with the Dinka may not be something that has everyone's approval. This could be the reason why the narratives present favourably those who want to earn a living honestly like Atiel in Narrative 1, so as to end happily while those who want to use the shortcut of looting and stealing like the man in narrative 2 to end badly, not to mention the ending of the lazy girl in Narrative 5. Indeed, those who do not work always face death.

Apparently, those stories that reward hard work are in essence saying that economic hardships shouldn't force people to steal. Of course cattle raiding has been a cultural practice of the Dinka people for a long time. Most Dinka people steal and raid others for cattle. This has at times caused bitter enmity and violent death within the community and beyond. Periodically young Dinka men kill each other in cattle doffing. It appears to be an accepted practice in the community. It may sound unbelievable but any time a Dinka man sees a cow he aspires to own it as people in the community consider cattle in general as theirs, wherever they may be found. They feel justified to take them without the fear of getting punished, contrary to what happens in Narrative 2 where the thief of Ogre's bananas is punished, thus, suggesting that stealing is punishable in any society, which then confirms my earlier hypothesis that the narrator seems to suggest that the Dinka people do not like stealing, even if they are forced by their economic situation.

I tried to interrogate one of my respondents as to why the man who steals Ogre's bananas is punished in the story when generally those who raid for cattle in the community are not punished. From my respondent's response, it can also be interpreted that in the Dinka culture, stealing is a bad practice when one targets simple stuff like food and money; but when one steals cattle, the act earns them admiration. A man who steals cows in the Dinka society is not a thief, for he has only taken what belongs to him. It is as if to say that a man who brings cattle brings life. As they actually say, a man who is killed in the process of cattle raiding, is neither mourned nor ridiculed, for he has died for a good cause. He is instead dignified.

Even though cattle raiding is the man's activity, it looks like women may co-own the cattle. Perhaps this is because cattle, and in particular cattle milk and meat in case a cow dies, make food, which is in majority cases a woman's duty to provide for her family. This makes the women to lay great stake on the cattle owned by the family. The matter of ownership appears to be clarified in Narrative 4 (Deng and his sister Piath). In the story, whenever Deng brings the cattle back home and he wants his sister to open for him, their conversation goes as follows:

On his return, Deng would call out,
The cattle of Deng here come back,
And the cattle of Piath here come back.

This confirms that Piath, Deng's sister co-owned the cattle with her male sibling. But the story also confirms Dinka people's involvement with cattle. Culturally, it would be unimaginable for a real Dinka family to have no cattle. As a matter of fact, cattle rearing is the main job for men in the Dinka community. In the narrative, Deng has to risk his sister's safety to go to the fields to graze their animals. On her part Piath has to do with being locked up the whole day for fear of the marauding Ogre, but must let the brother go to the fields. Indeed, cattle rearing plays a significant role in the Dinka community; it is perhaps the people's only source of economic growth and development. Cattle are everything. This appears to be confirmed by Abraham Mawut Makoi one of my informants during my field visit, when he remarks: "if you have plenty of sorghum, maize and other commodities and you do not have even one cow, then you are a poor person, but if you have cattle, then you are considered rich because with cattle I can marry, buy food, pay court fines and pay for blood compensation if I kill".

We may conclude that Deng in Narrative 4 is so protective of his sister Piath, because the latter could be a source of cattle. Dinka men fight for the safety of their sisters and daughters because they are future source of wealth as they are destined to bring dowry from their future husbands. Based on the Dinka cultural practice, , girls are a very important source of family wealth and pride, for they are heavily paid for in form of dowry when they get married. So girls are highly protected by their brothers and parents in the community. In addition, lack of a sister is a disaster in the Dinka community for one who does not have a sister is likened to a person without a source of water for cattle and people alike.

Besides being a source of wealth, girls are considered to be divine collaborators in the process of human continuity in the world through the human process of procreation. They are placed only beneath God. In fact the Dinka community refers to women as God's deputies because they are the ones whom God uses to continue His process of creation; through them, human beings come to the world. Thus, oral narratives portray some aspects of culture and economic growth and hardship in the Dinka society. These narratives demonstrate the values; norms and some crucial aspects of culture of the people which are passed down from generation to generation through oral narration due to the fact that majority of Dinka people are illiterate.

2.4.4. Socio-political context

History has witnessed many contradictions on the role of oral art in Africa. Oral arts, which here refer to all artistic forms orally presented to an audience, often exalt, but also castigate rulers. Oral art may exhort people to demonstrate strength, courage and prowess and yet lull others into humility and silence before dominant powers. Examples are plenty in oral art which became part

of the colonizing process as it was used to praise the colonizers but was also a tool of the anti-colonial struggle. The status of oral art in Africa has been no less valuable. From a prestigious status as a mechanism for criticizing rulers, and for producing pedagogues and custodians of community values, knowledge and history, oral art also found itself denied a place in world civilization during the era of colonialism and foreign domination (Thiongo 1986, Fanon 19967).

Cultural nationalism, which refers to a sense of national cultural unity and identity, suggests the overcoming of some of these contradictions. Cultural nationalism was an inseparable companion of the political nationalism of post-independent Africa seeking to free the newly independent states from humiliation of belonging to foreign powers. Asserting the power of national identities called for political, economic, social and cultural determination, and national cultural identity. National, political, economic and social structures were seen as necessary to replace ethnic-based systems. A national cultural identity was required to give the citizens a sense of belonging to “the nation”. This accounts for some of the efforts to revive, promote and develop cultural institutions and artistic activities (Mbughuni 1974).

Society and political propaganda are portrayed as intertwined in the narratives as shown in Narrative 3, in which the Fox and Hyena were great friends.

As Hyena was looking the other side, Fox hid his food and took a stone which he threw into the river and deceived Hyena that he had thrown his food away

In this narrative the fox is portrayed as clever, and crafty while Hyena is portrayed as foolish and dumb. This is indeed a situation comparable to what happened in Africa when colonial powers came. What was African: names; language; customs, traditions and practices; oral arts and all

that bore African identity were to be discarded. In the meantime the colonialist (analogized by Fox in the narrative) cleverly preserved his own.

Narratives in the Dinka culture are used to depict the level of intelligence and foolishness of some people in the society. Those who are clever and intelligent play the part of leadership. Perhaps the community considers the clever as leaders because leadership involves tricks and manipulation in managing the society. It also can be interpreted that in the Dinka society, clever and crafty people are put in leadership positions while the foolish and lazy ones just follow the clever ones as the Hyena does in the narrative. Therefore, leadership in the Dinka community is for the crafty and clever people because the people consider cleverness as part and parcel of leadership. This, however, could be a fallacy because cleverness that involves deceit is a vice. The clever Fox could have been a better leader if he had been honest. Honesty in the service to the people is preferable rather than manipulative trickery. Unfortunately, to control is often facilitated by the act of disempowering those to be controlled, as seen in the ways of the colonial powers referred to above. In the narrative, Hyena must now allow himself to be a slave to Fox if the latter has to surrender some of his food. Just as it happened in the colonial context, the African ruled became totally dependant on the colonial rulers.

According to Barthes (1986), the narrative begins with the very history of mankind (557). “The narrative expresses basic human urges such as fear, aspirations, and dreams. When people recount personal experiences, they create personal narratives, which largely present their perceptions of things and responses to life. The narrative may, therefore, be seen as a genre that can enable one to be in touch with one’s feelings and thoughts towards experiences.” Indeed that

narrative of Fox and Hyena aptly represents the Dinka people's perception of things and responses to life. People abhor foolishness. This perhaps explains why no one in the Dinka community wants to be associated with Hyena. The society compares foolish people among them to Hyena. If you are referred to as Hyena in the Dinka society, then you do not have any socio-political weight, hence people try their level best to avoid the character of Hyena. Of course the flipside of the matter is that the foolishness of Hyena is normally always contrasted with cleverness and 'craftiness' of the opponent, thus, raising the question: Must leadership entail craftiness and manipulation of others? Can an individual in the position of leadership be skillful and influential without being a propagandist?

2.4.5. Spiritual context

Narrative 1 in which a mother uses branches of a certain tree (*cuei*) growing behind her house to beat the dead bodies of her children, thereby bringing them back to life, exemplifies the Dinka people's spirituality. The *cuei* is a special tree actually used in a number of ritual ceremonies. Of course in addition to applying the *cuei* tree branches, the woman also appeals to the spirits of her forefathers. Indeed her prayers are answered because the twelve children, who had died, all come back to life. This depicts how some aspects of African traditional beliefs and religion are used in difficult times in which the intervention of the God of the people's forefathers is sought to solve issues in the society. The narrative portrays the Dinka people as traditionally and culturally religious. In the Narrative, the woman places her difficult situation into the hands of God and prays for the resurrection of her children who have died after eating poisonous pumpkins.

This narrative of the poisonous pumpkins also attests to the spiritual notion of punishment and restitution among the Dinka. The children are punished by death for disobeying their mother by eating the pumpkins against her mother's 'interdiction' (Propp's structural functions of a narrative). However, through the act of forgiveness, they come back to life in the name of the God of the people's forefathers. Apparently disobedience is punishable but it is also forgivable:

As soon as she confirmed it, she immediately went to the back of her house and plucked the branches of a certain plant called *Cuei* which she used to beat the dead bodies slightly; God of our forefather bring my children back to life and then the children came back to life.

The story further confirms that in the Dinka culture, religious activities are carried out by both men and women, as opposed to many African patriarchal setups where only men intercede with God on behalf of the people. The woman in the narrative herself appears to have the right to beseech the God of her forefathers. The woman, Atiel, beseeches God for the life of her children, and she succeeds. This is not really surprising because, as I pointed out earlier, women in the Dinka community are considered as God's deputies; for they are seen as co-creators with God since they carry life in their wombs before coming to the world. Perhaps it would be logical to conclude that God in the Dinka community is not patriarchal; God is, thus, universal.

In addition, this Narrative infers that Dinka society's belief in life after death referred to in the Christian faith as 'resurrection'. The dead children in the narrative come back to life with the help of the divine powers. The woman uses divine powers available through the *cuei* branches to bring her children back to life. Indeed many other items in the Dinka culture carry such powers. Big rivers and tall or huge trees are seen to represent divine powers too; therefore, such features

are highly revered. They are considered as God's abode. The features are, for this reason, respected and honoured as the places where God dwells, so, divine powers exist in them.

But like in every society, the good exists alongside the bad. From the stories narrated, we realize that the benevolent divine exists alongside the malevolent evil. The benevolent divine that brings the dead children back to life in Narrative 1 is contrasted by the malevolent evil in narrative 4, in which the witchdoctor assists Ogre in his mission to trick and kill Piath, Deng's sister. While Atiel and the God of the forefathers in Narrative 1 are engaged in bringing back life, the witchdoctors in Narrative 4 is mentioned as involved in the process of killing other people through evil powers. This is an antithesis in a community that means well for its people.

As it has often been observed, human beings have a tendency to want to take advantage of others. This seems to come out in a number of narratives they perform. In our collection, for example:

- A man steals from Ogre's farm in Narrative 2.
- Fox deceives Hyena to throw away his food, perhaps to make the latter die of hunger, Narrative 3.
- Ogre deceives Piath and eats her in Narrative 4.
- The lazy girl in Narrative 5 attempts to deceive her husband that she works on the farm herself when in the real sense it is her mother's ghost that works for her.
- In Narrative 6 a man always tells lies so as to get what he wants from his fellow cattle keepers.
- Nyabiliny in Narrative 10 uses the law to deny Mayom the custody of his children.

- Cannibalistic animals in Narrative 11 manipulate the meeting until it becomes impossible to put a stop on animals eating fellow animals.

However, in all this evil and manipulation, it appears like there is always divine power that comes to the rescue of the victims. In majority cases evil is punished, if not with death, often with with great regret. For example, the thief of bananas from Ogre's farm is killed; Piath is saved from the ogre whom Deng, Piath's brother punishes by making him surrender all he has; the lazy girl is discovered and divorced; the liar in Narrative 6 is killed for telling lies and Nyabiliny's family becomes impoverished because they have to refund all the cattle that had been paid for their daughter. It is if to say that evil does not last because God who is divine is a just God. He detests evil and will not allow His people to come to harm. So the evil are always punished.

Incidentally even those who hurt others fear being hurt themselves. In Narrative 4, Ogre who had always killed people (is) gets scared when he realizes that Deng, Piath's brother would kill him:

Ogre trembling, begged him (Deng) not to kill him, but he would vomit all the people he had eaten, including Piath.

The plea and offer by Ogre, in essence means that the latter is ready to give up all he has so as to have his own life spared. One guesses that perhaps it is the fear of death that motivates narratives that reverse death and other types of harm. Apparently, if they had the divine power to reverse death, they would be happy to do it the way Atiel does it in Narrative 1. It is not that men have not attempted to install in themselves such devine powers. Many men in the Dinka community – before they go cattle raiding – turn to witch doctors to provide them with mysterious powers so that they can steal cattle from others unnoticed. It is, so to say, a mockery of divine purpose to

seek divine powers to use against other people. Of course some have sought divine powers to beat their opponents in the competition for positions such as being installed chiefs; members of parliament and others. Whereas some have prayed to God, others have approached witchdoctors for such powers, which must then confuse the audience as to the nature, source and function of divine powers.

What, though, comes out clearly is that the Dinka community recognizes that life will have the good and the bad; the divine and the evil. In the narratives, Atiel and Dove in narrative 1 as well as Deng in narrative 4, represent the good and forgiving in society, while Ogre and Witchdoctor in Narrative 4; while the thief in narrative 2 and the liar in Narrative 6 represent what is abhorrent in the Dinka society. One also concludes that in the Dinka culture religion plays both positive and negative roles in the society; it depends on the motive of the person who seeks religious or divine intervention and the nature of his or her interests.

2.4.6. Legal and judicial context

Dinka cultural perspective to legality and judicial system is based on the strength and physical ability of an individual person in their community. This is shown on how Deng confronts the Ogre who kills his sister as portrayed in the narrative 4 (Deng and his sister Piath). Deng in this story seeks justice through his own physical ability to subdue Ogre:

When Deng came in the evening he did not get his sister at home.
He knew that the Ogre had eaten her.
Therefore, he sharpened his spears and went after the Ogre.

Having been subdued by Deng, Ogre offers to surrender all the people he had swallowed including Deng's sister, Piath.

In the current judicial and justice system in South Sudan, one would have expected Deng to seek legal justice. The latter instead decides to take the law into his own hands by going to confront Ogre physically. This approach to seeking justice could perhaps explain why South Sudan as a country experiences the frequent fighting and violent murders of people. Deng in the narrative is representative of people who take the law into their own hands, something that has always created tensions and death in the Dinka and neighbouring Nuer communities.

On one hand, Deng in the narrative is blamed for taking the law into his own hands, but on the other hand one would wish to know if Deng really had any alternative mode of restitution. Could the legal process have given a solution to the loss of Deng's sister? Of course this question brings into focus the efficacy of our judicial systems. It is known that some of the legal systems in certain setups are so weak and so corrupt that they cannot be trusted to give a fair and timely judgment. When a social setup has a weak legal system, weak people suffer most from the strong ones who overwhelm them. This is why the society will prefer to depend on their strong ones like Deng for the security of the community security. People like Deng are even given authority as community leaders. Unfortunately, those leaders who use their abilities and physical power always end up abusing the rule of law because they do not observe or respect legal approaches in resolving conflicts. Yet those really yearning for a solution to their problems may not mind the "Deng" approach as they may feel that 'the end justifies the means'.

But much as we may want to put Deng in the above narrative to task, the legal judicial system may sometimes not really serve the purpose. With the likes of Fox in Narrative 3 getting no reprimand and the likes of Nyabiliny using the courts to deny victims like Mayom access to his own children, taking the law into one's hands could sometimes be a welcome reprieve. One imagines the wife in Narrative 5 (The lazy Girl), using the courts to stay married to the gentleman in that story, when she is a total liability in a society that survives by sheer hardwork. Furthermore, she is not sincere about her inability to do any work. She instead tries to take credit of the work her mother's ghost does for her. The man in this story takes the law into his hands and institutes divorce without waiting for the court with its lessons on 'the rights' of the spouse. And since the lazy girl finds no justification in appealing against her divorce, one concludes that there is perhaps the existence of what one may want to call "natural law".

With the application of "natural law" Ogre in Narrative 2 is justified to kill the thief of his bananas as the theft is confirmed; Deng is justified to deprive Ogre of everything he has as the latter actually admits wrongdoing; the lazy girl deserves the divorce because she is totally unable to add any economic value to her marriage and the liar in Narrative 6 falls prey to his own deceit. In all these restitutive outcomes, there is apparently no window for appeal as that is perhaps the outcome that everyone would have expected; it is the natural expectation; it is the "natural law"; "natural justice".

The question, however, that begs for an answer in the face of "natural justice" is: Can life give one a second chance? Is justice so final? This question is prompted by the fact that in the Deng story, the hero decides not to kill the villain but still gets restitution. Deng manages to recover all

the people that Ogre had eaten including his own sister, Piath, without necessarily resorting to killing the enemy:

Ogre trembling, begged him (Deng) not to kill him, but he would vomit all the people he had eaten, including Piath.
Deng granted the permission.

Deng in this narrative demonstrates that conflicts can be resolved without necessarily shedding blood. Was it possible for the lazy girl in narrative 5 to be given a chance under some caring guidance to learn how to work, without subjecting her to rejection; or the orange thief in Narrative 2 to pay back with his labour instead of being killed? Since death is so final, does the person who is killed for a mistake made learn? And given a chance to correct themselves through paying back in cash or in kind, would it not benefit the afflicted more gainfully while the repentant wrongdoer gets time to reflect and learn from their mistakes? All these are questions one is tempted to ask as they listen to narratives in the context of the Dinka justice system.

2.5 Artistic techniques of Dinka oral narratives

In the oral narrative performance, storytelling appears to be a common artistic strategy/technique used by narrators in rendering their messages to the society. Human beings in spite of their age love listening to stories. This is perhaps because because we see ourselves in the stories we hear and naturally enjoy this self discovery. The strategy of storytelling builds suspense and thus makes the audience listen keenly to the unfolding events in the narratives. This strategy succeeds in addressing actual happenings in an indirect language. Narratology is effectively used by the artists or narrators. Narratology according as explained in my theoretical framework, “is the science of narrative”. Onega and Landa define a narrative as “the semiotic representation of a series of events meaningfully connected in a temporal or causal way” (3).

Their explanation of narratology makes us understand that a story is not just a series of events but a representation of that series and that has the syntagmatic axis which is entirely plot and the hermeneutic axis that represents the depth of each part. In assessing the Dinka narratives, I don't just discuss the plot but I also bring out the depth of every section of the story in the narratives.

Oral narrators in the Dinka community employ artistic techniques in their narration as shown in the appendix 5 in which all narratives demonstrate their settings. The settings are depicted to be many centuries ago into the past. The artists or narrators do that by using the words—a long time ago in their introduction. This way the narrator avoids the responsibility that may come with accounting for the narratives to the present situation and audience. Meanwhile, the story can then also enjoy the mystery of time and place, as opposed to if the story would be placed in the discernible and reachable world. Looking at the use of these words, it is difficult to tell whether it is five, fifty or one hundred years ago, what we know is that those things happened many years back and we cannot trace ourselves back to that time, nor can we find anyone alive to ascertain the accuracy of what the narrator is saying.

The narratives have got plot too. It is clear that the events being narrated flow in their systematic manner from the beginnings to the end. The stories have characters such as people, animals, dove, Ogre ...etc. The narrators or artists use the techniques of flashback in their stories to engage the minds of the listeners or audiences in their performances. In all these Dinka community narratives, the conflicts are commonly between man and the nature, or between fellow characters. The art of storytelling is employed in all the narratives of Dinka people, like the practice everywhere, to engage all listeners in paying much attention during their

performance. The use of animal characters allows people to participate and involve themselves in the processes of listening and analysing of their meanings at the same time, without carrying the burden of being talked about. As the artists or elders perform the narratives both adults and young ones participate in the events by questioning the reality of such situations as they happen in the narratives. And as they participate as individuals, the narrative ends up acquiring multiple artistic considerations emanating from the varied perspectives adopted by each individual member of the audience. The study of style is important in deducing meaning from all works of art. Muleka (2010) in “On the paradoxes of form and style” observes that it is very difficult to sustain form and style in an oral piece of art. He argues:

The oral analyst does not enjoy the dual advantage of seeing and hearing what is to be analyzed. Instead his/her methodology only entails hearing and perhaps committing it to memory. But given the ephemeral nature of oral performances, a performed phrase will be gone as soon as it is pronounced. In fact its effect just lasts for the period of its performance (63).

This argument presents the challenges that one experiences in attempting to identify the various stylistic techniques that different narrators employ and use in their performances. For the purpose of analysis, a scholar is expected to transcribe the narratives and scrutinizes them in the written form.

The performance elements can only be mentioned as observed and experienced by the analyst. Muleka (ibid) recognizes that style has the power to send the message home—to convey the message in the best possible way ever imagined by the artist. He opines that “to ensure the most effective communication, the writer, or speaker chooses a form or style that best conveys his/her message” (64). This means that style is not just a matter of embellishment: it serves a crucial

semantic role in the performance. For instance, where the narrator elects to use animal characters instead of human characters, the usage still communicates meaning.

Often the narrator of Dinka oral narratives in the portrayal of Dinka culture is characterized by the use of animal characters. However, one always concludes that the animal characters for all purposes actually represent real people in the society. In this culture, animal characters are used in narratives to portray the real situations that happen in the society. These animal characters, like in real life, represent both good and evil members of the society.

One then concludes that the Dinka oral artists or narrators use appropriate techniques of style to put across their intended messages to the society effectively. These messages are crucial for the lives of the Dinka people and portrayal of their culture in narratives affects the way they live their lives as literature in general and oral narratives in particular have a special way of influencing how people view themselves and form their worldview on a number of issues.

2.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, oral narratives are the fundamental tools that thoroughly portray certain aspects of Dinka culture which are molded in their views of the social world. Furthermore, in the Dinka cultural and philosophical context ,elders are the architects and custodians of culture in the society, therefore, they deserve high respect and dignity as long as they give their narratives of their roots to their children and proper heritage based on the their cultural perception of the world. Besides, Dinka narratives adopt some artistic techniques in portraying culture, and their perspectives on preserving culture and identity form the flaming forces of cultural shocks in the

contemporary world faced with complicated social and cultural decay that have become the mark of the world today.

Last but not least, hardship, social bonds, cultural dilemma and the aspiration to reinstate the fast diminishing archetypal practices are perhaps the Dinka people's greatest concern in the present world. As they tell their oral narratives they seem to tell their own lives, for they see themselves in these narratives and wish to better the picture they see. A great number of people live in the rural areas with limited formal education, hence orality is their heritage of preserving their cultures and the society as a whole. The Dinka community controls their unity, identity and culture through oral heritage with unquestionable cultural obligation to obey the societal norms and customs as long as the community remains in existence.

CHAPTER THREE

THEMATIC CONCERNS IN THE DINKA ORAL NARRATIVES.

3.0. Introduction

This chapter makes an inquiry into the thematic concerns in the Dinka oral narratives and their views of the social world within which some aspects of the Dinka culture are made available through narrative performances. In the chapter, I examine some of the narratives that the people perform, and in particular their double role of entertaining and portraying the people's culture, customs, norms and perception of the social world. Besides, the chapter approaches the narratives with the view that their content serves to preserve the people's culture from extinction. To achieve this, the chapter delves into the narration of specific thematic concerns including familial identity and belonging in the Dinka community, property ownership, relationships with outsiders and the state of family relationships today.

3.1. Narrating familial identity in the Dinka society

In the Dinka culture, familial identity is based and established on the father's lineage. Subsequently, the man is considered to own the home and all in it including the women and children. Defining one's family and ownership is by one's paternity and this becomes the first step in cultivating a strong family identity, life and relationships among the Dinka community. Family identity in this community is further expressed through adhering to the family values and traditions and by fulfilling the culturally established individual family norms. There exist central beliefs on how conflicts in the family and the larger community are handled and what specific rules govern marital relationships. There are also beliefs and distinct expectations for men and women in the Dinka society.

The Dinka community of course often experiences and faces some foreign cultural practices that appear to go against these clearly set standards of familial identity and traditions. We can see such predicaments as revealed in Narrative 10. In this narrative a Dinka man goes to London with his family, but due to urban interferences the marriage between the two: Mayom, the man and Nyabiliny, his wife collapses. In the normal Dinka practice Mayom, the father of the couple's two children was expected to remain with the children. But as the narrative states:

When Mayom decided to go back home in South Sudan, the legal authority in London gave the children to their mother, Nyabiliny.

The decision of the court in London to give the children to their mother was a serious affront to the Dinka cultural practice of family identity and belonging. This meant that the two children would no longer be identified with their paternal belonging as they were now to belong to their mother. As one prominent Dinka old man once said: "cultural practices are the backbone of the society, young people should observe culture, norms and customs of the community." This advice seems to directly address the situation of Mayom and Nyabiliny. When I asked Nyibol, a female respondent during my fieldwork how the two young people should have gone about their case, she was quick to condemn Nyabiliny:

Nyabiliny shouldn't have accepted to keep the children. She knew our customs well and she shouldn't have allowed foreigners to deprive the children of their ancestral identity. Now how were the children going to call themselves? Mother's children!

Indeed from the old woman, Nyibol's voice, this was a matter that would concern anybody who believed in the continuity of the Dinka as a community with some focus.

Chukukere (1995) observes that the ideal female character created by male writers often acts within the framework of her traditional roles as wife and mother. Fonchingong (2006) appears to support this notion by saying that social values are so strong that respect and love which a woman earns is relative to her degree of adaptation to these roles. One would, therefore, argue that Nyabiliny fails to be the ideal female character and an ideal woman. She overturns her people's long standing norms, which could invite disaster, going by Nyibol, my respondent's view. Indeed the narrative states:

Mayom closed his mind and committed suicide due to the fact that he had been humiliated by his wife whom he married with his cows.

Mayom's humiliation arose from the fact that the Dinka society does not give the right of child ownership to women but to men, therefore, when Mayom realized that his cultural rights had been violated in London, he couldn't just stand it. Perhaps to Mayom, he saw himself as emasculated. Roles had changed; his wife had become the man to own the children, and him the woman. The shame of a Dinka "man woman" was too much to bear, so the logical action was to commit suicide.

For Nyabiliny, society would perhaps not forgive her. And as if to add insult to injury, she later remarried in London. Culturally, Nyabiliny would be considered an immoral woman who caused the death of her husband. In the Dinka culture, women do not make their choice of marriage, thus, when Nyabiliny put such rare experiences into practice, this would have caused cultural shock and a bad picture of marriage. Mayom and Nyabiliny are of course representative of Dinka young couples in the diaspora who have adopted negative carefree life in total disregard to their society's norms back at home.

Culturally in the Dinka society, Nyabiliny's sisters, if she had any, would not get married to any man. Nyabiliny would have spoilt it for them because their entire family would be considered an immoral one whose daughters wouldn't deserve a place in the community. And to seal the community's displeasure, Nyabiliny's family was ordered to pay back the cattle given as dowry as well as pay fifty head of cattle as compensation for Mayom's blood.

For Mayom's children, the community would consider them as outcasts and simply forget that they existed. According to the culture of the Dinka people, children who belonged to their mother would not be counted as belonging to their people and if they happened to visit their paternal family they would be treated as outsiders without any claim to anything. This, therefore, meant that the two children who remained with their mother in London lost their identity as Dinka children. One would of course want to sympathise with the children who would perhaps also suffer from the feelings of losing their father through their own mother's bad decision, but human suffering is not always as a result of the victim's fault.

Innocent as the beleaguered children would be they wouldn't apparently escape the consequences of their parents' floutation of the community's cultural laws. Apart from loosing their considered true identity, they would also – if they thought of coming back to South Sudan – experience insults from fellow youths who would see them as sellouts. They would even be prevented from expressing their views as individuals, for outsiders have no voice in the affairs of the community. And to make matters worse two children would always be treated as children of an evil woman. Custom would also likely forbid them from marrying from the Dinka community. And if they married outside the Dinka community, this would alienate them

further. The Dinka community or Monyjang as they are rightly to be called consider themselves as superior to other communities in terms of culture, traditional beliefs and social status. They would, therefore, hesitate to welcome children who are not considered as purely Dinka. Of course one marrying outside Dinka community introduces impure blood in their midst.

Another complication that would arise if a child was born into a marriage outside the Dinka confines would be that of naming. Since naming bestows identity, a non-Dinka won't be allowed to bear a Dinka name as this would be equated to bestowing identity to that individual. The Dinka consider names seriously, which perhaps explains why for a long time they have been trying to fight off the community name, Dinka, terming it a misrepresentation. Narratives have been told about the true name of the community that some insist should be reinstated. One such story is narrative 7 (How the name Mounyjang changed to Dinka). As the story goes:

White men who were first visiting found boys whom they asked who they were. The boys introduced themselves as the children of Deng Kaak, then the chief of Mounyjang people. Mistaking Deng Kaak for the clan name of the boys and finding the name itself hard to pronounce they took Deng Kaak to be Dinka, a name that came to replace Monyjang, the community's right name.

Some members of the Dinka community have always borne misgivings about this mistake in the community naming. They view the mistaken title as a kind of community devaluation and cultural disrespect. The only consolation, and perhaps what has made the name tolerable is that it arose from the name of their highly respected and esteemed chief, Deng Kaak, albeit mispronounced. Still many Dinka sub groups use names of their chiefs, such as Yek e Majok Deder, Athoun Chut Dhuol, Kook Majak Malok and Gok Arol Kachuol as their clan names.

Resumption of the initial tribe name “Mounyjang” would apparently be celebrated as kind of reinstating the community to its original status. Literally translated, Mounyjang also expressed as ‘Man from Monyjang’, means “husband of Men throughout the world”. The Dinka consider themselves as the strongest men in the entire world, with good values, traditions and positive culture embodied in the community’s culture. One then begins to understand why the community would consider the change from Mounyjang as a demotion or deprivation. In particular, this demotion from Mounyjang to Dinka becomes even more demeaning having come from foreigners, who later came to take up their land and to rule them. This apparently was actual demotion from being “husband of Men throughout the world” to something “dinkalike”. What if “dinka” meant “women”? Indeed what is in a name? Doesn’t a name bestow identity?

3.2. Narrating leadership in the Dinka culture

As stated earlier, positions of leadership in the Dinka community may be bestowed based on the individual’s demonstration of physical strength. However, there are also other ways through which leadership is recognized. This section deals with how Dinka oral performances narrate leadership.

People with physical strength and abilities may be given leadership positions in the community as is demonstrated in Narrative 11 (Wild and domestic animals meeting). The story narrates how some animals in the forest capitalize on their colleagues’ weaker stature to catch them and eat them as food. The situation in the forest is that of ‘survival of the fittest’. The weaker animals are devoured by the stronger ones because they cannot stand up to the power of the latter. Of course one who holds the key to your life is even more than your boss. A meeting called to stop this

practice bears no fruit because of the very natural dictates of existence. Hunger is cited as an intervening condition that cannot be avoided as there is no way of mitigating its demands. At the end of the meeting it now becomes official that the stronger animals that eat the weaker ones would continue doing so.

A lesson that one learns from this story is that politically, people with different ways of life and interests are not always likely to have peace, unity and love in their lives. We could argue that perhaps it is such disparity in interests that has pitted South Sudanese people against each other. Civil wars have continued to tear the country apart because the leaders, like the animals in the above narrative cannot find common ground as they try to satisfy their hunger. If people have different political opinions or ideology, they cannot experience peace in their lives and even with other communities around them. Incidentally, even among the Dinka as a community, there have been experiences of violent deaths because of fighting over the resources; especially, cattle.

The converse to this leadership by conquest is what one would call servant leadership. In this kind of leadership, one becomes a leader through the willingness to serve others. A sample of such leadership is narrated in Narrative 1:

And after eating them (pumpkins), all the twelve children died. Atiel had reared a dove in her home. And when the dove saw that all children had died, it flew to the plains to inform Atiel. The dove went while singing...

Here the dove exercises servant leadership. The dove becomes a leader by sending itself to the plains to call the mother of the dead children. The narrative to suggest that leadership is in fact giving yourself at the hour of need. Twelve children had died from eating poisoned pumpkins and the solution only lay with the owner of the pumpkins, their mother who was a long distance

away. The dove without waiting to be prompted and without expecting to be paid decides to undertake the long and harzardious trip so as to save the lives of the children. Perhaps this is what one would see as noble leadership.

Similarly, Deng in Narrative 4 (Deng and his sister Piath), commits himself, of his own volition to save his sister who had been eaten by the ogre. In so doing, Deng saves all the people that Ogre had eaten. Notably, Deng does not seek a benefit from his actions. On the other hand, he is ready to risk his life at Ogre's mercy to save lives. And most admirable is the fact that after he overcomes Ogre and is able to retrieve the lives without killing the offending opponent, he spares the life of the latter. It is as if to say "two wrongs don't make a right". In a way the narratives performed bring out these lessons on servant leadership without even trying to moralize the audience. Instead the narration is done in a way that makes the listener want to identify with the heroes: Dove and Deng.

The third type of leadership that is narrated through the narratives is to be found in Narratives 3 and 10. In Narrative 3 (The foolish Hyna), Fox comes out as the leader of the group, while in Narrative 10 (James Mayom and Nyabiliny in London), Nyabiliny ends up being the head of her household. Nyabiliny triumphs over her husband and ends up being awarded family leadership and custody of the children, a position that would culturally belong to the man.

In the two instances of Fox and Nyabiliny, the narratives present leadership through deceit and cunning and manipulation. Even thogh Fox appears to get away with his cunningness it may not be long before his actions come to bear. Meanwhile, Nyabiliny who takes over her husband's

leadership and gets married to another man seems to succeed for now, but again one could guess that the consequences of her actions might hurt her children. Already her family back at home comes to suffer great economic loss as they are forced to part with considerable head of cattle. It is observable that as the narrator tells the Mayom/Nyabiliny story he is in a very subtle way cautioning the audience against divorce, a practice that could traditionally not be accommodated but which, perhaps due to external influences, is becoming common. Out of the eleven narratives that were performed in my presence, three hinted on divorce: Mayom and Nyabiliny get divorced in Narrative 10; the lazy girl in Narrative 5 gets divorced by her husband due to her laziness and the thief of Ogre's bananas in Narrative 2 is abandoned by his wife, who goes away with her children and leaves the man to face death in boiling water.

To conclude on leadership, as one listens to the narrator performing, one realizes that these lessons on leadership appear to be what one may want to call "self teaching". It is because the narrator does not appear to be teaching these lessons, but rather, one deciphers the lessons effortlessly in a way that can only be captured through the power of oral narrative performance.

3.3. Narrating social justice in the Dinka community

The question of legal and social justice is one of the most artistically depicted in Dinka oral narrative performance and one in which the narrator always appears to take a stand particularly on the side of the less privileged members of the community or victims of injustice. This lot who include children, women, the physically challenged and orphans are ultimately raised above societal expectations. This position finds semblance in Mwanzi (2005:11), who, in a different context, discusses the Paradox of the lowly in oral narratives. She argues that "the portrayal of

the lowly in our oral narratives is symbolic of our innermost fear of a replication of their plight in our own lives. Because we do not understand what exactly led to their plight, we choose to treat them with awe.” One interprets that Mwanzi argues for an elevation of this group above the rest; they have to automatically outshine their well endowed counterparts later in life.

While Mwanzi’s argument above, sounds logical, it might not be sustained and it may also bring out the narrator as a manipulative artist who brings his/her biases and prejudices into their performances. From my interactions with Dinka oral narratives, the act of siding with the less privileged in the narration didn’t appear to obtain at all. Instead, I found the narrators to give their narrations simply as the logic of the narratives went. I could demonstrate my stand by referring to a number of narratives in my collection:

In Narrative 5 (The lazy girl) the lowly or less privileged is obviously the lazy girl herself. She is underprivileged because she has not been taught any work by her mother, hence, she is not in any way able to fend for herself. The very attempt to depend on her mother’s ghost to do the work for her is thwarted when her husband comes to discover her inabilities. In this story, the narrator does not try to redeem the girl, rather the lazy girl is left to carry the cross of her laziness as she is eventually thrown out by her husband.

If Mwanzi’s argument above was again anything to go by, the poor hungry man in Narrative 2 would perhaps have been saved by the narrator. In this narrative (The Ogre’s farm), the sympathy of the audience is likely to be drawn towards this poor man who has a wife and seven children faced with death because there is severe famine and many people have died as a result. Since the man cannot let his family die as he is watching he decides to enter Ogre’s farm without

the owner's permission. Again the narrator in this narrative allows the man to be killed for stealing, which means the former is only concerned with logical justice of 'crime and punishment'. One would perhaps have wanted the narrator to save a fellow human being from man's perpetual enemy, the ogre, but this does not happen. It is instead worth noting how the narrator saves Ogre from eminent death in Narrative 4. As much as Deng had overpowered Ogre, he did not kill him:

Ogre trembling, begged him (Deng) not to kill him, but he would vomit all the people he had eaten, including Piath.
Deng granted the permission.

Again, given the enmity that has traditionally existed between human beings and the ogre in many African narratives, here was a clear opportunity to take revenge on this perennial enemy. It was in fact up to the narrator to simply allow Deng kill. Of course we already noted the narrator has the power and free will to change the course of the narrative to achieve an end.

I could further demonstrate that the narrator does not necessarily contrive the narrative to favour the disadvantaged, by revisiting the Mayom/Nyabiliny story. It is obvious that in this narrative the disadvantaged one was the man, Mayom. First of all, it is Nyabiliny who instigates the divorce, which places Mayom as the victim. Secondly, Mayom is up against the English judicial system which has neither understanding nor sympathy for the man's cultural expectations on child ownership. The court dismisses Mayom's plea to take the children, because in the opinion of the court, Mayom cannot be a safe custodian of the children; his own country is war-torn, thus, unsafe for the children. Besides, Mayom had paid a lot of cattle for his wife and it was going to be a devastating loss to him. It is, thus, obvious that Mayom is the less advantaged here, yet the narrator does not necessarily bend the narrative rules in favour of the victim. Instead, the

narrator allows the offending Nyabiliny a second chance on marriage, in fact to a wealthy spouse, while Mayom is taken back to South Sudan empty handed and later even allows him to commit suicide.

The few demonstrations above prove that what Mwanzi says about the narrator's sympathies may not be exactly accurate. If this is the situation that obtains in other cultures, the case is obviously different in the Dinka culture, a conclusion I have reached based on a number of Dinka oral narratives that I managed to interact with. Apparently the narrator allows the narrative to take its own course.

3.4. Narrating Gender issues in the Dinka context

The term gender in its general sense signifies differences in the biological make-up of human beings in terms of sex as either male or female. The interpretation of gender in terms of masculinity or femininity mainly arises from the socialization processes of individuals and the community. Every society has its own socialising agents that transfer gender ideology. One such agent is the oral narrative. In the Dinka society's oral narratives, example abound where men are presented as people with immense physical abilities or strength, thus, they always come in to save in moments of danger. Perhaps this position is informed by the fact that the Dinka traditional society is patriarchal, where authority is generally in the hands of men.

Men and women show great resistance to change in area of male and female relationships (Spencer Hahn, 1997). They each try to overshadow the part played by the other hence generating intra-gender wars. According to Musembi intra-family disputes are resolved around

the idea of authority and gender roles. These seem to constrain the open deliberation on facts, and to dictate a resort to idealised statement of custom that necessitate a particular outcome.

Traditionally and culturally, Dinka community is a patriarchal society whose perspectives on child ownership are traced to the man. Women are considered as the property of the men. In this culture, when a marriage breaks up, the children are given to the man's family and the woman goes back to her parents alone. Some have of course argued that this culture undermines the rights and dignity of a woman in the society. This notwithstanding, oral narratives from the community have been used to perpetuate patriarchal ideologies that regard women as fully dependent on men. In this section, a number of narratives have been highlighted to bring out the gender ideology in the community.

It is, however, worth mentioning that the question of gender, gender differences and gender biases is not a preserve of the Dinka community. Writing from a different context, Mineke Schipper (1991:2) captures the relationship between men and women thus: "the superior size and superior physical strength of men and the fact that women are the birth-givers have had far-reaching consequences for the gender history of mankind. In many ways, the male sex has made use of its own gain and benefits." Schipper argues that men are presented as superior to women in almost every sphere of life. She cites the proverbs from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds to illustrate this point. However, it should be borne in mind that language and culture are not static despite what these proverbs would want us to believe. Schipper's views perhaps explain why in a number of Dinka oral narratives, men are presented as superior to women.

Nonetheless, in most of these oral narratives, the narrators and the community in general glorify intelligence but not physical strength. A close examination of the oral narratives reveals that the community has designated certain roles and duties based on gender differences. Consequently, through these narratives, the audience, and the entire Dinka community is socialised to appreciate these existing differences.

A scrutiny of some Dinka oral narratives reveals that the image of a woman is in line with the roles assigned to her. Women, as used in the Dinka oral narratives refers to the entire female gender comprising of girls as well as married and unmarried women. The woman has been assigned roles which affirm her place in the hierarchical arrangement of the society. One of the basic elements that define the female gender is its vulnerability and susceptibility in a world where physical strength matters a great deal. In the Dinka societal context, numerous problems, however, have confronted the attempts to promote oral narratives as the only approach that avail the real Dinka cultural practices on the question of gender issues. In particular, narrative 10 in this collection explores and reveals the reality of the African culture; especially the Dinka societal ways related to men/women relationships.

The life of Nyabiliny provides the reality of Dinka cultural practices on the position of a woman. That is the reason why Nyabiliny in narrative tries to reverse that order of things through the London legal system that later gives her the right of ownership of her children. The legal system in London tries to create equality and justice for the Dinka woman that the Dinka culture designates as mere property to the man. The only option for a woman in this culture is to accept the male authority regardless of its indignifying nature and injustice. Unfortunately, the very

attempt to reverse the status quo also has its loopholes; especially if it means that dignifying the woman results in indignifying the man as it happens in the narrative in which Nyabiliny reaps all the benefits at the expense of Mayom's life.

Nyabiliny decided to break up their marriage through legal system in London.
Her husband did not accept the verdict of their divorce.

As the narrative goes, Mayom, Nyabiliny's husband ends up committing suicide following the decisions of the court in London. One may want to argue that life always presents a situation where there will be someone to give orders and someone to take the orders. Indeed, hierarchy is what causes order in life. This is why an attempt to dismantle a community's hierarchical dispensation could be problematic. The courts in London, to the total disregard of the Dinka people's gender hierarchy, rules on a Dinka man/woman case and causes a crisis that brings about death and total confusion. One would argue that what may be seen as Dinka people's subordination of women, is the people's cultural practice that has from time immemorial afforded the community its order in life. Overturning a people's accepted way of doing things could be tantamount to destroying that community, for it may lead to the fracturing of their perspective of their social world.

Furthermore, Love in the Dinka society is strongly grounded in culture which all the members ought to observe, respect and practice as culturally required by the society. The reverse of this as depicted in the lives of Mayom and Nyabiliny in London in Narrative 10 may lead to irreversible chaos. In the narrative, there occurs family break up, identity crises for the children, death for Mayom and huge economic loss for Nyabiliny's family who have to surrender the cattle they have been owning.

As I have already pointed out, every society has rules that govern the lives of its members and which help to bring order in that society. In the Dinka society, love is not a matter of personal choice. Nyabiliny being a Dinka woman herself apparently refuses to acknowledge this, which in a way would be equated to disowning her people's way of life. Indeed, as one old woman, Deborah Nyibol Makech that I interviewed in the field says: "If you are a Dinka woman you should observe all the cultural practices of the society". She emphasises that culture is the soul of the society; meaning that cultural practices and humanity are intertwined.

As we listen to narratives we come to learn about what a community values. Narrative 10 tries to make it clear what disregard to the community's values could lead to. Dinka narratives educate its members on what to do. The significance of oral narratives in the portrayal of some aspects of culture of the Dinka community on gender relations has become clear. Peter Brooks attests to the power of narrative to portray some aspects of culture. "He argues that the popularity of the terms is due to the recognition that narrative is one of the principal ways we organize our experience of the world; it is a part of our cognitive tool kit for understanding ourselves and our world (Brooks qtd.in Ryan 2007:14)".

Meanwhile, Asenath Odaga postulates that literature acts as a carrier and transmitter of culture as well as moral values (1985). This is even more true when it comes to the society's oral narratives. The artist uses language as a tool to communicate images that reflect the society artistically and aesthetically. Oral narratives in this study portray the historical and cultural aspects of Dinka society and roles assigned to members of the community, especially the youth. The behavior of an individual and the whole society is influenced by oral narratives that

determine and portray aspects of culture in the society and perception of things or views to life and the general social world.

3.5. Narrating foreign concerns and the Dinka context

The British government that colonized Sudan did not show interest in the South earlier because they looked at it as an unusable region due to difficulties in the region. The South, taken as an unusable territory, therefore, was only put under special control. The aim was just to ensure that peace and stability were maintained but neglected any kind of economic development and education. In order to get rid of some of the concerns for at least some education, the Catholic mission was allowed to expand, because they had always emphasized this sphere of life Oduho (1965).

In the state schools, however, Arabic language was introduced and taught to the southerners. Simultaneously Arabs encouraged the promotion of Islam through education in the South (Robertson, 1946-1947). Therefore, Southern Sudan was founded on foreign education systems which had and continued to have a negative impact on the Dinka culture and the society. As a result the local languages and cultures were almost dying out due to the fact that both the British and Arabs discouraged the local languages and culture. These were replaced with their own languages and cultures of “civilization” according to the British and Arab based systems of government.

Narrative 9 (Ahmed Deng) presents the kind of scenario that the people from the South found themselves in. Deng in this narrative is a victim of the education system in Khartoum embodied in Islamic faith and Arabic culture, which he has to adopt in order to acquire education which he needs the most. He later suffers the consequences of his decision that leads to his being ostracised from his community. The influences of foreign religions causes a devastating impact on the Dinka culture and identity. Ahmed Deng becomes the victim of the two diverse and strict cultures. He loses his identity as a Dinka man with dignity and high respect. The society considers him a homosexual, based on their own perception of the Islamic faith and Arabic culture. Although Ahmed Deng does not fully accept Arabization, Islamization and assimilation into the Arabic community, he faces the reality of his double identity in the two communities, both of refuse to fully accommodate him. His marriage outside his own Dinka community, to a Muslim woman makes matters worse. This renders his values, identity and cultural orientation questionable in the Dinka society. Even his children cannot enjoy the dignity and values of their community of origin; the Dinka society. They remain always considered as foreign blood by the society.

Besides, formal school education does not necessarily give one respect, dignity and recognition. The Dinka society instead considers one's background and family cultural values; which Deng in our narrative comes to lose. Hence, Deng's family continues to face discrimination and ridicule. This is because Ahmed Deng's family is seen to represent foreign education, marked by a carefree and uncultured life. There are gaps between the educated class in the Dinka community with the un-educated. Both groups consider each other with suspicion; they view each other as a category of people with different views on life and the social worlds in general. The educated

class considers the uneducated class as a group of people with outdated values, traditions and cultural practices. The conservative un-educated class on its part considers the educated class as a group of rootless people who have lost good values, culture and the traditions of their community. Therefore, to the Dinka people, education with foreign values, tradition and socio – political influences are a threat to the good Dinka cultural sense.

As already hinted to, apart from education, the issue of religion was another major dividing factor in the Sudan. Having obtained independence, the fears of the British administration and Christian missionaries became a reality. Islam was made the states religion. The only way to obtain an occupational and social status was to convert to Islam J. Oduho (1963: 46-47) frequently it was done according to the rule of an already accomplished fact or by pressure. This was accompanied by the expulsion of Christian missionaries or at best, their activities were considerably restricted.

The brutal ways of governance by the Islamic Khartoum authorities towards the people of South only has made the pre-existing conditioned division deeper. It is easy to understand the Dinka people's stand when we take into consideration the fact that the method of enforcement of power in the South was to set houses ablaze, carry out public executions and imprisonment of people, this shows how Arabs can deal with the “infidel” J.Oduh, W.Deng (1963).

Islamic and Christian faiths have strong influences on the Dinka culture and the society as a whole. These two religious faiths and institutions have been used by both imperial powers i.e. the British and the Arabs have used Christianity and Islam, respectively as the basis of their political,

social, economic and cultural influence on the Dinka society's culture. We can in fact see their negative impacts through the life of Ahmed Deng in Narrative 9, in which the question of spirituality (Moslem faith) is in the same package as Arabic culture, meaning that once Deng became a moslem he automatically started to practice Arabic culture.

“He wanted to join school there but he was refusal a vacancy because he was not a Muslim, therefore, he decided to name himself. Ahmed Deng and became a dedicated Muslim”

The double world of a member of the Dinka community who embraces foreign cultures is also narrated in the life of Maculiny in Narrative 8. Makuliny who moves to the North where he embraces Islam and marries a Muslim woman is literally thrown out when he attempts to visit his clansmen in the South. It also does not escape notice that when he plans to visit his people his in-laws in the North do not allow him to go with his twelve Islamized children. This forms a case of the educated and Islamized northerners discriminating against the southerners who too are considered unfitting to mix with them. Maculiny ends up going back to his people without his children, but his own people also send him back because they perhaps don't see him as one of their own. The in-between world that Maculiny finds himself in could be said to deny him a definite identity and clear sense of belonging.

3.6. Preservation of the Dinka culture from extinction

Accoding to Cambridge advanced learner's dictionary (2008), an oral tradition is belief, principle and way of acting which people in a particular society or group have continued to follow for a long time. Interestingly, the nature of the Dinka tradition or culture is largely oral, which means it was not always recorded in any form other than in people's memory and committed to the lips of the custodians as it passed down from generation to generation orally. It is only preserved and

passed down from the elderly to the younger generation through oral narratives. Since this society traditionally had no form of written culture; they only preserved their cultural practices through oral narration.

Gouche, Le Guine and Walter (1998) describe oral tradition as the oldest system of cultural memory. According to them, written system of cultural transmission are less than 6000 years old. But orally transmitted cultural knowledge date back from the time human species became capable of speech and communication. This is relevant to developed nations because written records came to Africa during colonial era in Africa. In the Dinka society since people speak, they share their cultures orally; even in this age of computer; oral tradition remains an important means of preserving the society's cultural values.

The importance of culture in either the developed or developing country is evident in the lives of the people. Culture is the binding force among the people, as people are united through cultural identity. So Dinka people identify themselves through their cultural norms, customs, narratives and dances; and in all these practices, they preserve their culture.

In Africa, cultural values are transmitted from the elderly to the younger generations orally. This is done in form of folklores, folktales, stories, and songs among others. It presents in-depth the meaning of what people believe and it binds them together. Mirja (1999) opines that culture has a special role in building up the modern society. Therefore, the Dinka community's elderly use their narratives as the only strong basis of preserving their cultures from foreign influences. They (Dinka community) pass down their practices, traditions, norms and customs from generation to

generation. For the Dinka people, oral tradition is the only pure aspect of cultural preservation in the contemporary Dinka society. The Dinka society considers their educated members (Dinka intellectuals) as people with foreign hearts and thoughts which they see as a threat to their culture and society. We can see this in the case of Ahmed Deng in Narrative 9 who gets education in the Northern Sudan and adopts Muslim culture. What happens to Deng in Narrative 9; Maculiny in Narrative 8; and Mayom in Narrative 10, are a kind of caution to those who want to sidestep their cultural roots. It is as if to fulfill the saying that goes “One’s mother remains one’s mother regardless of her age or appearance”. This suggests that one cannot replace their mother with someone else. This view, however, might be self-defeating in today’s world with its social, cultural and technological dynamism. As they say, we now live in a global world in which no one may afford to be an island. This means the Dinka like every other global community will have to embrace other practices. This does not by any chance mean blind and blanket embracing of other cultures. There are always those elements that make one who they are; those elements that accord one an identity as an entity in the global space, while at the same time giving them a sense of belonging. These are the values that appear to be narrated in the Dinka oral narratives.

Indeed as Taban lo Liyong (*ibid*) points out, a people should avoid the rootlessness that comes with abandoning of one’s own to embrace what is alien and often out of reach. But as I have pointed out, life is a kind of give and take. This notwithstanding, we may conclude that this culture of rejecting members of the society with foreign ideologies is another form of preserving a people’s culture from extinction. Dinka people do this as seen in their narratives.

3.7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Dinka society suffers a great deal from the imperialist forces in all aspects of their lives ranging from culture, identity, legality and many others. This society is the victim of foreign world views and their own views of the social world.

It is apparently clear from this study that both British and Arabic cultures, languages, legal systems and religions are valued and imposed on the Dinka society by the two imperial powers that governed the Sudan for many years. The minds of Dinka youth and individuals are confused by their western and eastern civilizations to the extent of devaluating their own culture and views to the social world. It is the devaluation and undermining of the constitution and supremacy of South Sudan, therefore, foreign legal and political influence affect the culture of Dinka society. And this caused socio-political tensions and conflict between two families in South Sudan of which the lady family became the victim of Dinka society cultural practices. Oral narratives are the fundamental tools that thoroughly portray some aspects of Dinka culture which are molded in their views of the social worlds.

Furthermore, in the Dinka cultural and philosophical context ,elders are the architects and custodians of culture in the society, therefore, they deserve high respect and dignity as long as they give their narratives of their roots to their children and proper heritage based on the their cultural perception of the world. Additionally, Dinka narratives form some artistic techniques in portraying culture, and their perspective of preserving culture and identity from the flaming forces of cultural shocks in the contemporary world with complicated social, or cultural decays throughout the world.

Lastly and not the least, hardship, social conditions and culture are the genuine conditions of success in the philosophical context of Dinka society. A great number of people live in the rural areas with limited formal education, hence orality is their heritage of preserving their cultures and the society. Dinka community controls their unity, identity and culture through oral heritage with unquestionable cultural obligation to obey the societal norms and customs as long as the Dinka society is in existence.

Dinka people preserve their cultures and practices through oral tradition (oral narratives) from generation to generation on their lips and heads as a storage memory. Elderly members of the Dinka society are the custodians of culture and tradition, therefore, they are always consulted by the youth as the only sources of knowledge and information of past in the community.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

4.1. Challenges encountered in the field during the research

Quite a number of challenges were encountered while carrying out the field research. For instance, I underestimated the cost (budget) of my research project during budgeting time, and the amount almost doubled the initial cost. Some of the electronic equipment later on malfunctioned causing extra expenditure in the editing of the voices in the audio data collected. My initial computer (laptop) burned and totally damaged during the research report stage, therefore, I had to buy another computer. My computer did not have the actual alphabet systems, so, I had to use the English alphabet to equate the Dinka language sound, and this took me time to match the two language systems for the comprehension of research work to me and the readers. I also faced difficulties in terms of transports due to the fact that roads were rough in the South Sudan, a distance of five hours could take three days. I also experienced some sort of insecurity as some security personnel had not understood the meaning of academic research. They perceived and related it to security issues in the war torn country until later on their senior officers helped explain my situation and allowed me to continue with my research work. However, I had to cope with those conditions for the success of this study.

4.2. Summary and findings of the Study

This study set out to investigate the artistic techniques of oral narratives of Dinka community in portrayal of culture and to interrogate alien influences on the Dinka society. The objectives of the

study were to investigate the artistic techniques of oral narratives in portraying some aspects of Dinka culture, preservation of culture and identity.

The scope of this study was to focus on the portrayal of culture of the Dinka through oral narratives that influence their way of life. The study was limited to the artistic techniques of oral narratives of the Dinka community, preservation of Dinka culture, and identity in the contemporary society. The findings of this research have attempted to contribute to scholarship in African oral literature in respect to oral narratives that preserve some aspects of the Dinka culture. On literature review, a corpus of data was reviewed in an attempt to examine the knowledge gap in my area of research.

The study applied the theories of Ethnopoetics, Narratology and Sociological theory that helped in transcription, translation and interpretation during the study. Ethnopoetics, as a theory aided or helped in literary interpretation of the oral narrative performance and methodology of transcription and analysis of the collected data/text, especially on the literary strategies deployed by the artists and its impact on the society.

In addition to that, the theory of Narratology helped me examine how the narratives in the Dinka community are packaged and how artistic techniques impact on the narrative structure, plot, character, and issues raised. BAL singles out the narrator as the most important component of narration. Oral narratives are the fundamental tools that thoroughly portray some aspects of Dinka culture which are molded in their views of their social world. Furthermore, in the Dinka cultural and philosophical context, elders are the architects and custodians of culture in the

society, therefore, they deserve high respect and dignity as they give the narratives of their roots and heritage to the children based on their cultural perception of the world.

Additionally, Dinka narratives use specific artistic techniques in portraying culture, and in so doing preserve culture and identity from the flaming forces of cultural shock in the contemporary world that presents a complicated and always changing social and cultural atmosphere throughout the world.

Last and not the least, hardship, tough social conditions and culture are the genuine conditions of success in the philosophical context of Dinka society. A great number of people live in the rural areas with limited formal education; hence orality is their heritage of preserving their cultures and the social identity. Dinka community controls their unity, identity and culture through oral heritage with unquestionable cultural obligation to obey the societal norms and customs as long as the Dinka society is in existence.

BAL defines narrator as “an agent that tells a particular medium, such as language, imagery, sounds, building, or combining thereof” (18). By looking at the choice of narrator, the study examines the story constructed in the narrative context.

Sociological theory is partly concerned with the role of literature in a society; it focuses on how literature influences the society and how society influences literature. Sociological theory is defined as a set of interrelated ideas that allow for the systematization of knowledge of the social

world. This knowledge is then used to explain the social world and make predictions about the future of the social world.

Merton theorizes that ‘abundance of empirical findings in the fields as propaganda and public opinion, reactions to unemployment, and family responses to crises suggest that when persons are confronted with an ‘objective stimulus-pattern’ which would be expected to elicit responses counter to their “initial predispositions,” their actual behavior can be more successfully predicted on the basis of predispositions than of the stimulus –pattern’ (473). The objective stimulus in for the case of narrative is the society. This theory shows that as much as the society influences the art produced by the artist, the art also influences the community or society’s perceptions. These three theories aided my study of Dinka oral narratives and based on the scholarly corpus which I had reviewed during the initial stage of this research project. I also used the theories to ground my research on the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of literature.

4.3 Recommendations for further research

This research confined itself to the study of artistic techniques of Dinka oral narratives in portraying some aspects of Dinka culture, preservation of culture and identity of the Dinka society in the contemporary world and the thematic concerns. While in the field, a number of male informants privately and confidently explained that women are somehow marginalized by the patriarchal Dinka society in the process of power sharing and home chores that need to be shared by both sexes in order to achieve equality at homes. This position is shared by some scholars especially in the field of Anthropology and musicology (Gomm: 1975: 530, Harris 1957:433).

This study recommends further studies to be amounted on the elements of women marginalization in Dinka oral narratives. Also to carry out further research on the portrayal of Dinka culture through other cultural media /approaches like dancing, songs, poetry, marriage, as well as Dinka oral narratives in relation to other communities neighbouring the Dinka such as the Nuer community.

4.4. Conclusion

In my conclusion to the study, I can state that impacts of foreign influences on the lives of Dinka society are numerous and weighty and quite confusing. The Dinka society has experienced threats to their cultural life as a result of colonialism and neo-colonialism affecting all aspects of their lives ranging from culture, identity, justice and many others facets. The Dinka society could be said to be a victim of foreign world views and their own views of the social world.

Alien religions and commercialised economic systems have made inroads into the people's lives and these seem to create confusion in their cultural life. These inevitable institutions have served to fundamentally alter the authentic and distinct cultures, values, traditions and identity of the African communities in general and the Dinka in particular. As one story narrates, when James Mayom decided to come to South Sudan with his two children, his ex-wife sued him citing that he wanted to take her children to South Sudan where there was war and daily death. The legal authority of London gave her the right of taking care of the children until they reached the age of eighteen years after which they would decide either to be with their mother or father.

Eventually, James closed his mind and committed suicide due to the fact that he had been humiliated by his wife whom he married with his cows. When the relatives of James heard the fate of their son, they sued the parents and relatives of Nyabiliny in South Sudan. The Dinka customary court ordered the return of the deceased's cows to his family. The same court also ordered the parents and relatives of Nyabiliny to ask her to come with the children so that the case of their children would be settled in her presence in South Sudan, but she refused to come to South Sudan. This story is only but a hint on how life in the Dinka community has been impacted by alien practices.

This defiance of Dinka culture in London led to the death of James Mayom whose ancestral culture and traditions have been violated according to him and his community culture. Dinka community does not give the right of child ownership to women as a kind of preventing divorce in their society because a woman cannot easily leave her children no matter how life seems difficult for her in that marriage. A woman will suffer for the sake of her children. Therefore, foreign policies appear to erode such solid ideologies upon which the Dinka community has always depended, thereby ensuring peace and tranquility.

It is apparently clear from this study that both British and Arabic cultures, languages, legal systems and religions are values that have worked in the Dinka peoples lives to the detriment of many of their own esteemed values. The minds of Dinka youth and individuals appear rather confused by their Western and Eastern civilizations to the extent that they tend to devalue their own culture and views about the social world. It is by extention the devaluation and undermining of the constitution and supremacy of South Sudan, seen as the work of foreign legal and political

influences which have affected not only the culture but the entire life of the people of South Sudan in general and the Dinka society in particular. This can be estimated to partly having contributed to the socio-political tensions and conflict between the communities in South Sudan.

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APPENDICES:

APPENDIX 1: Dinka words in the study related to portrayal of culture through oral narratives.

Hooth: removal of the six lower teeth.

Pale rhak: graduation from the task of milking that solely remains female task mean while the boys graduate from it.

Gheer e nhom: engraving of deep cut marks with a knife on the forehead, which leaves permanent scars of a particular pattern across the young men foreheads

Kutkut: cooperation in work or putting hands together

Tukul: Hut or grass thatched house

Koch e nhom: Marrying for dead person or standing the head of the deceased person in the Dinka society.

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES.

This section provides a set of questions for informants

1. Who performs narratives in the Dinka community and why?
2. When and where are these narratives performed?
4. Has the context of performance undergone any changes? Explain.
5. Do the Dinka narratives have any messages touching on non Dinka people?
6. Do these narratives comment on day today activities? Explain
7. Comment on historical and cultural vales of Dinka oral narrative performance
8. What is the audience composition in the Dinka oral narrative perormances?
9. Does the composition of the audience in narratives contribute to the understanding of the narratives?
10. What are some of the issues commonly brought out in the Dinka oral narratives?
11. Do theses narratives comment on the way the Dinka community relate with other communities?

APPENDIX 3: ANALYTICAL GUIDE

Title of Narratives	Target Audience	Social function	Thematic concerns	Perception on communal coexistence
The woman and poisonous pumpkins	General audience	Encouraging bravery and responsibility	Economic hardship in the society	Respect for work and responsibility
Ogre's farm	General audience	Social evil and fate	Famine and death	Social roles versus evil acts
The foolish Hyena	General audience	Needs to shun pride and arrogance	Cleverness and foolishness	Respect for people regardless of status
Deng and his sister	Young men and women	Needs to shun responsibility	Evil people in the society	Respect for human lives
The lazy girl	Young men and women	Encourage work	Evoke laziness	Promote works
Rewards of lies	General audience	Encourage truth	Evoke lies	Shun truth
Name changed	General audience	Encourage heritage	Needs appropriate naming	Respect for naming in the society
Makuliny in Khartoum	General audience	Encourage cultural practice	Needs culture and spirituality	Respect for culture and religion
James and Nyabiliny in London	Young men and women	Encourage culture, legal and fair justice	Familial ownership	Respect for culture, heritage and humanity
Wild animal meeting	General audience	Shun evil and fairness	Social justice and responsibility	Respect for human lives

**APPENDIX 4: Letter of introduction for doing research from
UoN.**



**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF LITERATURE**

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Telephone: (254-020) 318262
Fax: (254-020) 245566

25th March 2019

Mayor's Office
Rumbek Municipality
Western Lakes State
South Sudan

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter serves as an introduction for **JOHN JURKUCH WAL ATEM C50/6839/2017**,
a student in the Department of Literature at the University of Nairobi.

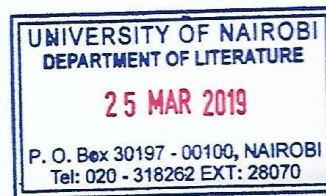
The said student needs to undertake the Oral Literature Field work as part of the requirement for
the degree programme in Master of Arts in Literature.

I appreciate your organization's support and cooperation to mentor our student.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alina Rinkanya'.

Prof. Alina Rinkanya
Chairperson, Department of Literature



APPENDIX 5: Narratives in Dinka and English translation

1. Tik Amajook awook.

Hon theer chi lo, ke tik e col Atiel e to. Atiel e long mith ka theerku rou. Na hon ke cok bo piny ciengke thin, congdit cie koc nok ne liu de miith pinyden ciengke. Go koc kut areet thou ne cok. Go koc ke ye pinyne go ke lo goor e miith pinyde thong nhom to te mec ke pinyden ciengke thin. Kuat de raan goor be piir acie lo goor e mith camke.

Na ci Atiel ye ting ke koc ke baai lo goor e miith, go lo eya lee goor e miith keke mithke piny mec thong nhom. Wen ngot yen ke ken go jal bai, go mithke yook ye cike amajook awook kol jak bie cam keliu bai duke bi thou te camke ye. Hon ci Atiel lo ciengwei ne tha beeric, goo mithke Amajook awook cam. Wen ci ke ye cam, go mith kedhie ka theer ku rou thou e man tonge cam ke yen

Kuke long guuk to bai ke keek, go guuk kac ring te to Atiel thin bi lo nek thon ci mithke thou bai ke liu ne caam cike Amajook awook cam.

Hen lo piny thong nhom ba Atiel lo nek thon ci mith ke thou baai.

Hen lo piny thong nhom be Atiel lo nek thon ci mith ke thou bai, co ha lo ba lo nek wuk ci awajook wook mith ken ok bai ka thieer ku rou.

Go guuk lo ke ring ke ket dit ye jam ye Atiel mith kedhie ka ci thou bai ne caam ci ke Awajook Awook cam ke yi liu bai ne wet de cok neke. Goo Atiel wet ping ne guuk thok ku ring baai bi thon ci mithke thou lo ting. Go ke yok ke ke ci thou kedhie ka thieer ku rou ne caam ci ke amajook awook cam ke liu bai. Wen ke lo ne baai thok ku tet yith ke tiim ku yen ke mith yugop go mith rot jot ne thououc bik beer piir kedhie.

Translation in English

The woman and the Poisonous Pumpkins

A long time ago, there lived a woman whose name was Atiel. The woman had twelve children. After sometime, the land where the woman lived experience a severe famine. People began to die because of lack of food in the area. They then heard that there was food in the plains, very far away from their village. And whoever wanted to live had to go there for food and safety of his or her family.

Just like others were doing, Atiel decided to go to the plains for food. But before her departure, she instructed her children not to cook and eat the pumpkins which she planted in her compound because they were poisonous. But when Atiel took long time to return, the children decided to cook and eat the poisonous pumpkins.

And after eating them, all the twelve children died. Atiel had reared a dove in her home. And when the dove saw that all children had died, it flew to the plains to inform Atiel. The dove went while singing the song below:

I am going to the plains, I am going to the plains

I am going to call Atiel, let me go

The pumpkins she left at home has killed all her

Twelve children.

The dove went while singing this song until it reached Atiel. It reported the matter to her and she hurried back home. When she reached there she truly found her twelve children dead. As soon as she confirmed it, she immediately went to the back of her house and plucked the branches of a certain plant called (Cuei) which she used to beat the dead bodies slightly,; God of our forefathers bring my children back to life and then the children came back to life.

2. Dom de Ajuong

Hon theer ke cok e ci pan tok lony,.....go koc kut thou. Go raan tok dong ke ken thou ke paande, ting de ku mith ke keek dhorou. Ne ye paane loom, ke Ajuong ee long dom den de Bap roo ye luok ku camdiet ke. Go raan wen cie poth ne thouic, go lo cuer ne bap roo ka Ajuong ke ting de ku mithke dom de Ajuong.

Go Ajuong gai areet ne ke ye dom de gak kual yic ne Bap rooke . Hon ne kool tok, ke moc and paan de lo cuer dom de Ajuong ci man den dhie ye ke lo kual thin ne Baproo ka Akuong ke kuc.

Ku te wen dhuk ke bai , go mith cath k eke cam Bap rook ku yeke mieth de Baproo cuat piny keke cath lo bai. Go Ajuong mieth ci mith cuat piny bothic agut bi het bai.

Go Ajuong moc ku pande jot ku le ke mec pande. Ku yook tik ye bi meth tok ye cup ne kool tok. Ku ye lo goor miith ke moc ne Akol kedhie.

Go tik youm ke lei ya kuut yic ku loi k eke ye mieth de Ajuong and thiin meth tok ne kuric agut be mith ke thiin kedhie. Hon cie Mith thok ne thin kedhie, go Ajuong tik yook ye rot juer ke ye mieth de yen Ajuong. Go yuom kusic ku loi ci man dhie ku thiin rot ne kuric ke mithke.

Hon ne koldet wen ci tik ku mith thok , go Ajuong moc yook yebi rot lok juir ci man ci tik mith ku rotde juir. Go moc tiit agut bi tha de cam ben, juir piu, ku wic bi rot cuat thin, go rioc dom ku keec ne tony loom. Go tik ben ku yook ye bi rot tou k eke ne kuric, go moc tik wai ku yook ye yin bai guel Ajuong len cin ye wet nyin.

Ne kaam thin, go Ajuong ben ku yok moc ken rot juir ku dom cuat ne piu ci tucic ku cuet ke de.

Ku cok tik rot kaul ke mith ke dhuk ke panden wen ci Ajuong lo goor e miith ke.

Translation in English

The Ogre's Farm

A long time ago, there was a severe famine in one area which killed many people. There was a man who had a wife and seven children. In that area, there was an Ogre who had a farm of very good bananas. The bananas would get ripe and birds would just eat them. So, the man who had survived up to that time would take his wife and children to go and steal bananas from the Ogre's farm. Whenever they reached there, they would first of all eat all the ripe bananas before cutting down what they needed for home consumption.

The Ogre always wondered who was stealing his bananas. One day, the man and his family went to steal the bananas from the farm. As usual, they first ate the ripe ones and cut down what they needed for home consumption. Unfortunately, as they left the farm, the children went while eating the ripe bananas and dropping the inner linings on the way. When the Ogre went to the farm, he found out that his bananas had been stolen. But when he moved around, he saw the footsteps of the thieves. When he followed the footsteps for a while he saw the linings of sweet bananas dropped all along. The Ogre went to their home and took them to his home for punishment.

The woman was instructed to cook one of her children each day for the Ogre while he goes to look for food in the plains in the companion of the man every day. The woman would collect bones and prepare the ogre's food and hide her child in the nearby big stone. She did this each day until she hid all her children in the stone. After she had hidden all her children, she was told to prepare herself as food for the Ogre the way she did to her children. She collected bones and cooked them for the Ogre as usual. Then she hid herself in the stone with her children.

The next day the man was instructed to cook himself as his wife did to herself and the seven children. The man waited until the time for lunch. He put water into a big drum so that he could throw himself into the boiling water, but he feared to jump into the drum. The wife came out from the stone and told him to hide with them in the stone, but he was not happy that the woman deceived the Ogre. He said he would tell the Ogre about her deception. When the Ogre found him alive, he was very angry and threw him into the boiling water in the drum. And later the woman escaped with her seven children.

3. Angun kuc kang.

Hon theer, ke Awan ku Angui a ke cieng k eke meeth dit apei. Awan a nyic kang areet awar angui ne nyic. Go Awan Angui ye gak ke wet bi luoi ke rac and co gum ne gum dit gok.

Hon ne kol tok, go ke lo cath ne cath baric lek ke piny mec ke pande cieng ke. Ku ne mec mec ci piny lek ke thin, go ke muk ne miith bike lo cam kuer, ngek ke mithde. Go lony dhol ne bak de piny ke piny ngot ke col ne wet de mec de piny le kek thin. Go ke cath agut te yok kek war diit nongic piu. Wen dai Angui ne wer agor tui, Go Awan mithde thian ku kuany dot ku cuat weer ku yook Angui ye an ci mithdie cuat wiir dol bi koc wo dol ke wo ye aparaakdit nhiam ku muk miith kuer.

Go Angui mithde cuat wiir ku leke dhol den de cath. Na wen ke Awan lo ye cin cou wiir . Go Angui ye cin cou eya. Go Awn yook ye bak ngo cam yin yi cin cou? Go Angui yook ye ku ye ngo yin yi cin cou eyade? Go Awan mithde beibei ku cam, ku ci Angui yik bak ne ke ci yen mithde cuat wiir ne kuny kuc yen kang. Go Angui puou dhieeu ne wet ci Awan ye wet nyin bi mithde cuat ne weric.

Ku jo Angui cok gum kuer agut te het ke bai.

English translation

The Foolish Hyena.

A long time ago, the Fox and the Hyena lived as friends. The Fox was craftier and more cunning than the Hyena. On several occasions the Fox tricked the Hyena and put him in trouble.

One day, they planned to go on a long journey. And because the journey was long, they needed to carry food. The Fox and the Hyena each had his own food for the journey. They began the journey early in the morning. They travelled until they came to a river. As the Hyena was looking the other side of the river, the Fox hurried and quickly hid his food and picked up a stone. He threw that stone into the river and deceived the Hyena that he had thrown his food into the river. He told the Hyena to do the same with his food. The Hyena foolishly got his food and threw it into the river.

They continued with their journey until they came to the next river, the Fox went in and washed his hands. When the Hyena saw Fox wash his hands, he went in and washed his hands. Then the Fox asked him, you are washing your hands, what are you going to eat? Hyena also asked Fox: why have you also washed your hands, what do you want to eat? Then the Fox replied that I want to eat my food, then he got his food and began to eat it. When the Hyena asked him for something to eat, Fox refused, saying you threw your food into the river.

Hyena said, so you hid your food and deceived me that you had thrown your food into the river? The Hyena had to go hungry until they reached where they were going.

4. Deng ku Piath

... Hon theer, ke Deng ku nyankene col Piath ake cieng piny ci Ajuong rot wath piny ke ye ran ku ye koc jam. Go Deng nyankene Piath ye thiok hot te lee yen hok roor. Piath aye nyan piath areet .te ye Deng dhuk thiaan ke hok ke , kekee coot jam ye Deng abo ke hok ke, Hok ke Piath abo bai. Te ci Piath ye ping ke cot, ke ka liep hot thok bi ben hot ke hok. Go Ajuong ye goor bi Piath cam ku cin te yen ye thok thin, ne thiok yen hot thiook thok ariel.

GO Ajuong te de ran de jok bi rol de cot de war, bi cit ke de Deng, go ran de jok yook ye bi cuk ciam agut bi het bai. Ku na ye het kuer dhiel her ting ke par, go ked om ku camke. Na het bai ku coot, go Paith yook ye ke rol de Deng yekene. Go Ajuong dhuk ke ci pouou dhieu. Hon ne kolde, go dhuk te de ran de jok. Go ran de jok yook ye bi cuk ciam kuer agut be het paande yi Deng ke Piath. Go Ajuong long ci lek e muk nhom agut hetde bai ku coot, go Piath hot liep thok, ku dom Ajuong ku cam.

Na hon thiaan ke Deng bo ku ci Piath yok bai, go nyic ke ci Ajuong cam ku cuet. Go Deng tongke lom ku le Ajuong goor bi nok. Na wen ci yok, go Ajuong yook ye du a nok hen bi nyankui ku koc ca ke came kedhie ngok bi ku du wei ci nyai yin leng. Go Deng gam ku yook ye ngokkeek kedhie ku yin ba cu nok te ngok yin nyankai koc ke baai kedhie ca ke cam. Go Ajuong koc ngok kedhie koc cie cam.

Na wen ke tingdiit to jam ye aduwalde ke ci dong wei co a lo ba lo loom , go Deng yook ye loor loom ke duhoot. Go Ajuong Deng lim bi ye nyang ye tingdit tong bi reer ke ye, go nyange. Go tingdit cuk beer ben bei. Ku lok Ajuong ke de cam.

English translation

Deng and his sister Piath

Once upon a time, there lived on the land a man named Deng. The man had his sister named Piath. That girl was extremely beautiful. At that time, there was an Ogre that devoured and ate people. That made Deng always to lock up his sister in the house whenever, he went to graze his cattle. On his return, Deng would call out, the cattle of Deng here come back, and the cattle of Piath here come back. Piath would then open the door. That made it hard for the Ogre to get Piath.

Therefore, the Ogre decided to seek help from the witch doctor in the village. The witch doctor prepared everything and advised the Ogre not to eat anything on the way back. The witch doctor assured the Ogre that once that was observed, he would call out a voice similar to that of Deng and Piath would open the door.

Unfortunately, on its way back, the Ogre found the white ants flying and ate them. When he reached the home of Deng and Piath, he called out:

The cattle of Deng here come back, the cattle of Piath here come back. The voice was very different from that of Deng and Piath could not open the door. She replied from inside—

That voice is not the voice of Deng, my brother.

Then the Ogre went back to the witch doctor for further preparation advice. He again prepared everything and advised him not to eat anything on the way back. The Ogre observed that and eventually ate Piath.

When Deng came in the evening he did not get his sister at home. He knew that Ogre had eaten her. Therefore, he sharpened his spears and went after Ogre. Ogre, trembling, begged him not to kill him, but he would vomit all the people he had eaten including Piath. Deng granted the permission to vomit all people. There was an old woman who said she had forgotten her tobacco pipe .She requested to go back for it, and she was granted permission. The Ogre asked permission that the old woman would remain with him. That request was granted to him. The old woman did not come out.

5. Nyan ci luoi bai

Hon theer ke ting tok e long nyanden ye peen luoi bai ne paith piath en areet. Go nya dit ke kuc luoi ne ke kene man ye piooc ne luoi bai ku domic. Go koc ke baai ye yook be meth piooc ne luoi ci gam be nyande piooc ne luoi de domic ku ke baai kedhie, ye ke yook nyan ka piath areetic, yen ace koor bi yaa luoi.

Go tik tu ya lo domic nhiak dur ku nyeng nyande piny ke nin agut be dit ke ci luoi bai ku kuc pur domic ku cumde miith ye ke cam ne koc eben taitai

Hon akol tok ke tik thou ku dong paith de ke cie luoi, na hon ci ye thieek ne ran kuc cuk luoi de, ke moc tui gai ne kuoc kuch e ting de luoi de ke baai.

Na ci lo pur domic, ke ka lo but ke dhieu domic ne kuny kuc yen ke be loi. Go atiim de man wen ci thou ya ben pur dom agut be te dit pur domic, go moc rot tou ku ting ke atiip ye been be bee pur domic. Go mony tui tik yook be ke nyai ku be dhuk paan den.

Na them nyabe moc thic be lek ke yen ye cup wei, go cum gam be jam ke ye agut bi nyan tui ke loom ku dhuk paanden

English translation

The lazy girl

Once upon a time, there lived a woman. The woman gave birth to a baby girl. The woman did not train her child to do work as she grew up. People would tell her to teach her child but she objected saying her child was too beautiful to do work. Every morning she went out to work in the garden alone leaving behind her daughter sleeping. That girl grew up into a mature person without knowing how to do any kind of work at home and in the garden, Time came and her mother died. One youngman married her without knowing her laziness, but later discovered that his wife did not know how to do anything. Whenever, she went to the garden to dig, she could just cry. One day, as she was crying, the ghost of her mother appeared. It began to dig for her while singing----. Hahaha , hahhha--, Hahhha- your friends dig like this. Within a very short time, the ghost had dug a very large portion and the girl went back home. Later on when the husband went to the garden and saw the portion which had been dug, he was surprised. The following day, he hid himself in the nearby bushes to confirm whether it was really his wife who was doing the work.

As he watched, the ghost of his dead mother in –law appeared and began to dig. After the ghost had finished digging, the man went home and waited for the return of his wife. When she arrived, the man told her to pack her belonging and return to her father’s home, The girl tried to ask why but he could not speak until she took her belongings and left.

6. Ariom de Lueth

Raan a to hon raan ye gak ke toor kuc lueth wutic, be ye gak ke luel wet ci yic, go kuatde maan e ben ku cin te yeke jo luoi ye ne ke yen raan ruai ke keek. Hon akoltok ke lo roor , lee cath. Go nhom de raan ci thou ci riel aci gaak ol yok. Go toor ne ye cok . Ku yook nhom ci gaak, ye mour diit e nek de nhiamdu. Go nhom ci gaak jam, yook agut yin yin bii ke de nhiamdu beer nok aye. Raan gai ku kat ring wut bi koc lo lek ke ci yok roor ne wet cen jam ke nhom ci riel.

Go koc wut cuk gam ne ke yen raan nyic ke ye koc tor lueth.

Wen teer yen koc, go wun koc wut yook ye kuath ke roor te to nhom thin ku na ci nhom lo jam ke ye ke du ke beer lo bei, lo nek eti be lueth ke guut. Acin raan den de kuatde ye koc toor lueth. Go raan gam ku jam ye na ci nhom lo jam ke we nek ke a.

Na het roor ke koc te to nhom ci gaak thin, goo raan wen nhom wecic ku yook ye mour diit e nek de nhiamdu, go nhom cum jam. Go koc wut raan tui nok ne luethke nhiim. Na wen aci yuiik ku ci thou, go nhom jam, ku yook ye yin ci ke de nhiamdu beer nok aye,

Go koc wutic dhuk wut ku lek ke koc lek jam ci nhom ci gaak jam wen ci raan thou.

Go alueth thou ne lueth ke nhiim ku dong koc ruai ke ye ke dhieu puouc ne neng ci ke raanden nok ku jo nhom jam.

English Translation

Reward of telling Lies.

Once upon a time, there was a man who used to tell lies in the cattle camp. One day, he travelled alone in the wilderness. There he found a dry head of a human being in the wilderness. He pushed the dry human head with his feet and said, a big bull who was killed by his own evil acts. The dry human head replied to him that you will also be killed by your own evil deeds of your head.

When the man heard that, he ran to the cattle camp to tell others that he had talked with a dry human head in the wilderness. When he reached there, he told his story of conversation with a dry human head. People could not believe his narration because he always told lies. But he insisted that he really talked with the dry head.

When he insisted firmly and strongly, the cattle keepers took him to his father. Unfortunately, the father told them to take him to where the dry human head was lying in the wilderness. The father also instructed them to kill him if that dry human head would not talk to him in the wilderness in their presence. The man also agreed to be killed if the head would not talk with him in the presence of others in the wilderness.

When they reached there, he pushed that dry human head with his feet again and told it, the big bull who was killed by his own evil acts, the head did not reply. Therefore, he was immediately killed as agreed.

After he was killed the dry human head told him, “you have also been killed by your own evil acts”.

Eventually, the cattle keepers went back home down Hearted because the dry human head spoke after having had their kinsman killed because of his usual lies. They later narrated the story to the rest of the cattle dwellers. And that was the reward of his lies.

7. E Rinke Dinka bo yi die

Hon theer bi yi koc her pande Jeng, go ke mith yok keke bionk hok roor. Go koc her Mith ciic yake mith ke nga? Go mith Dhuk ye wo ye mith ke Deng e Kaak. Go koc her got ke Dinka. Raan e Deng e Kaak e beny e bai. Ku muony Jang a ye rot col benyken. Yen A ye mith jam ye wo mith ke Deng e Kaak.

Wen ci yen lo ne waragak ke koc her yic , go rink e jeng du maar a re bi ye got e ka ke jeng ye wo ye koc ke dinka.

Muongjang , e ye kuatdit pande ,junup e thudan, Yen arinic ba ke doc yok thook ku bi wet tok dec matic. E kene aci rin ci rin ken cok dooc rot ne ke koc.

Dinka e rink e benyde bai, keek ka ci rin ke Muonyjang.

Koc ke muonyjang, e ye benyrieu areet a re abik rot ya col e rink e beny. Rin ke beny a ye Dinka koc rieu.

English Translation

How the name Muonyjang changed to Dinka.

Long time ago, five white men came to the Mounyjang land. Those white men found some boys who were grazing their cattle. The men called the boys and asked who they were, the boy then said they were the children of Deng Kaak. Deng Kaak was a chief and Mounyjang honor their chief by calling themselves using the name of their chief as the head of their community.

However, the white men mistook the name Deng Kaak as the name of the tribe. They misspelt the name Deng Kaak as Dinka. This name automatically became the name of the tribe. Most of the Dinka people do not accept this name as the name of their tribe. Dinka community is widely known as Mounyjang [Men of the people]. But this name Dinka was imposed on them by white people during the exploration of Africa.

Dinka community is scattered to many places of the Dinka land and they do easily sit and discuss how their name changed wishing that their tribe name would be restored back to the original name Mounyjang.

8. Raan col Makuliny

Makuliny e ci lo Khartoum ke long run ka theerou. Yen ac lo leng run juac ku lee lo ne cieng de jalapic bi lo ye macilim. Ku lee thieek ni nyan de jalaap ye col Kadijah. Na hon ke dhieth mithke thieer ku rou. Ku jo mith dit k eke nyic ceing de jalap ku piir gaau ye tok.

Go Makuliny tak bi dhuk Rumbek ke koc ke, go pa ruuaide cuk gam be jal ke mith ke, ku yook ke be cath ke tinged ye tok ku dong mith wei. Wen het ke bai, go koc ruai ke Makuliny cum loor ne ke cen ben ke tingdiit ci dhiop cin mith.

Hon ci leng niin reen dieek, go ke dhuk Khartoum. Hon Makuliny go goo lo thou ku dong mithwei ke ye mith ke Jalaap ci ceng de jalap nyic ku rink e Dinka ne ke koth.

English Translation

Makuliny in Khartoum

Long time ago, a man by the name Makuliny left Rumbek when he was 20 years of age. He spent many years in Khartoum and adopted to the situation in that city. He became a committed and dedicated Muslim. When the time came for his marriage, he married a Muslim girl by the name Kadijah. They had twelve children who could only speak Arabic and practised Arabic culture. Makuliny one time decided to come to South Sudan after spending more than fifty years in Khartoum with stricken Arabic culture. His in-laws refused to let him go with the children, but only allowed him to go with his wife through the legal system. However, the relatives of Makuliny did not receive him well because he only came with an old woman without children.

After few days, they went back to Khartoum where Makuliny later died and the children became Arabs in the North with Dinka names.

9. Raan col Ahmed Deng

Ahmed Deng Raan col Deng aci lo ceng Khartoum. E jal ke long run thieer ku bet. Go goor be lo ne thukulic, wen ke kocke thukul jai bik gam ne ke yen raan ken Nhialiny ye ke door gam. Go Deng rot gam ke bik ye col Ahmed Deng.

Hon cien thukul thaap, go ke gam caata long yic rin ka Ahmed Deng. Go Rink e Ahmed ye rum bi koc juac ye cool ne keek.

Na bi Junup, go koc ye yook Deng acii Jalaap lo gut hoi ne ketim de Nhialinyden, ku ye koc dol guop.

Go Ahmed Deng cum thiek agut be dhuk Khartoum be Nyande Jalaap thieek ke ye Tingde ku jo lo dhuk Rumbek ke ye.

Hon bi yin goor ne beny de baai go koc jai ne ke yen Macilim. Ahmed Deng aluoi ke ye tajir e maan ku pioocde ac ye ku ye cienic.

Mith ke ay karethanoi kedhia ne ke ci yen ye be goor bi mithke beer gum ci ye ne kuatden yic.

English translation

Ahmed Deng in Khartoum

Long time ago, there was a man by the name Deng who went to Khartoum while he was eighteen years old. He wanted to join school there but he was refused a vacancy because he was not a Muslim. He then decided to name himself Ahmed Deng and became a dedicated Muslim. After his education, he was given a certificate bearing the name Ahmed Deng. When he came back to Rumbek, his relatives and colleagues used to laugh at him saying that he had been Islamized and his right hip had been stamped as sign of Islamic faith.

When he experienced such a situation, he decided to get married so that he could go back to Khartoum with his wife, however, people refused to give him their daughters as they considered him a lost man who discarded their culture and traditions.

Eventually, Deng went back Khartoum and spent many years there. He married a Muslim lady there. Both had seven children. Ahmed Deng came back to Rumbek after the independence of South Sudan. His children are all Christians because he does not want his children to experience his own situation again.

10. Jamith Mayom ku Nyabiliny

Raan col Jamith Mayom ace lo cieng Aher pande London. Go weu juac loi ku bi bai ku thiek nyan col Nyabiliny ku leke London. Na wen ke Nyabiliny lo cengde London ting ke ye ceng nhom lau yee tik ke den ce tak loi, go monydet lo loom ku jai ke ci beer ya tinged Jamith Mayom. Go Jamith Mayom lo ne lukic, go koc ke London yook ye tik along yic bi monyden ci tak loc ku loom , yen yin cin yic ba jai.

Wen ci Jamith Mayom ye ting ke cin ke leu , go tak bi dhuk baai, ke Mithke aka rou. Go Nyabiliny Jamith dom ne luke, yook koc ke luke raan akual mith bi ke dhuk ne tongic Junup. Go koc ke luke Jamith yook ye yin cin yic ba mith dhuk Junup pande tong. Go Jamith puou dhieu ku dac rot.

Go koc ke Jamith koc ke Nyabiliny dom bai ne luke ku dhuk ke hok ken cen ku yook ke luk de Junup koc ke Nyabiling bik nyanden co bo ke mith be Makam be thaap baai. Go Nyabiliny jai bi cuk bo Junup ku jai a kumat de London aya. E kene yenke thon ci Jamith Mayom thou.

English translation

James Mayom and Nyabiliny in London.

A long time ago, there was a man by the name James Mayom who went to London for studies. He made money in London after his studies and came back to South Sudan. He married a lady by the name Nyabiliny. After their successful and happy marriage, both went to London for their children education. They were there for some years but their marriage experienced problems in the city due city life and freedom of choice in the city. Nyabiliny decided to break up their marriage through legal system in London. Her husband did not accept the verdict of their divorce, but the lawyers could take his refusal saying that a woman had her rights to reject him and marry a person of her choice.

When James Mayom decided to come to South Sudan with his two children, his ex-wife sued him for her children arguing that they there was war in South Sudan, so the children could not there. The legal authority in London gave her the right of taking care of the children until they reached the age of eighteen years after which they would decide either to be with their mother or father.

Eventually, James closed his mind and committed suicide due to the fact that he had been humiliated by his wife whom he married with his cows. When the relatives of James heard about the fate of their son, they sued the parents and relatives of Nyabiliny in South Sudan. The court returned the deceased's cows to his family. The court also ordered the parents and relatives of Nyabiliny to ask her to come with the children so that the case of the children would be made in her presence in South Sudan, but she refused to come to South Sudan. The legal system of London also rejected the request of South Sudan legal system citing that South Sudan is a war

torn country, therefore, their citizens should not go there. That was how James Mayom died and his legal fate between two countries with different cultures and legal systems.

11. Amat de Lai Roor and Lai baai Kedhia

Hon theer ke lai a ke ci amat cool bik ke nhiim thong ne ke bik loi. Ke mat lai e bik caam ye kek rot cam pul. Go mat ye bik caam de rot pul ne thok da amat den. Ku luelke ye len bi yok ke lai kok, yen abi lei kedhie dum ne ke com ereke bi thou. Go lei gam kedhie .

Go len tok ye cin jat nhial ku luel, ye cuku cok mat amatic atene? Go lei jam ye wo ci thaa da nok eten ne luethic. Ku jo lei rot goo gol caam amatic.Cok aken lei co mat k yic bi yee tok ne chiengdenic.

English Translation

Wild and domestic animals meeting

Once upon a time all animals in the forest wild and domestic called themselves for a general meeting to address and solve their problems amicably without interference from people.

The agenda of the meeting was to stop eating each other with effect from the date of their meeting and all animals were happy and agreed to stop eating one another in their animal kingdom. They agreed that if an animal was found to have breached this agreement, it must be put to death by being trampled on until death.

However, when the meeting was about to end, one of the animals began to raise its hand and asked whether they had invited Mr. Hunger to the meeting or we shut up our mouths with a padlock in order not eat again. Therefore all the animals said we have wasted our time in this meeting. They started eating each other on the spot and their meeting ended badly. Hunger couldn't allow animals to get united in their kingdom.

APPENDIX 6: Pictorials



Artist Abraham Mawut Moakoi with the researcher in Rumbek



Artist Deborah Nyibol Makec's huts in Rumbek snapped during the fieldwork



h

Deborah Nibol Makech's home visited and snapped by the researcher in Reumbek area during the fieldwork



D

Artist Deborah Nyibol sat outside her compound waiting for the researcher



Dinka women dancers who listened to the narratives and went on dancing after the narration of narrative 5 and 6 during the my fieldwork



Artist Ezekiel Majur Majok with the resaecher under a tree in Rumbek during the fieldwork



Dinka women dancers after a artist Nyibol 's granddaughters marriage celebration during the fieldwork in Rumbek.



Dancers taking their daughters in law home after marriage celebration in Rumbek



Women dancing and enjoying their sister's successful marriage in Rumbek at the artist's home



Artist Rev.Ezekiel Majur Majok and Artist Mr. James Kon Chadhor with the researcher in Rumbek during the fieldwork



Artist Deborah Nyibol understanding in front of her hut in Rumbek after the researcher listened to her performance during the fieldwork