

*Sex and Violence*



## *Sex and Violence in Speech and Behaviour*

There is a whole sphere within the field of human behaviour which very seldom gets mentioned: this is the lower sphere of human consciousness which is dirty, filthy, muddy, dark and essentially disgusting, the sphere which normally remains hidden and is kept private. Why should one speak or even think of the excrement of our mind and of our body? The subject seems to lack totally both interest and significance. Yet, in a paper which aims to touch on all aspects of sexuality, one should almost expect that there is a note not only on sexual terms but also on *sexual language*, that is on the way people use sexuality as a means of transporting particular messages. More than anything else, language essentially informs on social relations and behaviour (to whom do we say what, and what not), but it also reveals purely moral aspects and provides insight into the people's way of approaching certain sensitive issues like, for example, the one of sexuality.

The following examples of the people's allusions to sexual parts or sexual activities as they can be found frequently in songs, in speech (insults) or in sayings are to witness of the people's attitudes towards matters concerning sexuality: sexuality, in Sudanese societies, is not kept away from the people's mind or ears and is shameful only in specific social contexts: even if language (when it comes as an insult) is considered to be bad and unpleasant, it is yet full of positive life, even where it may hurt. Paradoxically, insults are in a certain sense the opposite of a curse: while the latter is secret, destructive and often deadly, insults are open, frank and generally<sup>1</sup> do not kill: The *Zande* custom of a husband's wife to sing "bad", that is obscene, songs when an older relative (for example the father) has died appears to be strange only if one overlooks the creative power of obscene language and its joyful dimensions.

### Scorn and Insults

Insults are, in all cultures, potentially *explosive* matters which need special attention when handled: if certain words and certain types of behaviour are acceptable amongst people of a same age, they are able to destroy a whole relationship within seconds and may cause irreparable damage – a word which has been pronounced can never be called back! What may be special about Sudanese cultures are the crude sexual terms which are used for scorning people, and perhaps also the frequency and intensity of the use of the insults.

*Respect of another person's dignity is one of the most fundamental and strongest values in the cultures of the Southern Sudan:* it is therefore very important to know what kind of language one can use in which context and to avoid to substantially undermine another person's integrity. Insulting someone is like throwing mud on someone – it is not so terrible as long as one does not hit that person's most sensitive and private parts; to insult a person directly is somehow acceptable, but to insult a person's mother is terrible and will be deeply resented.

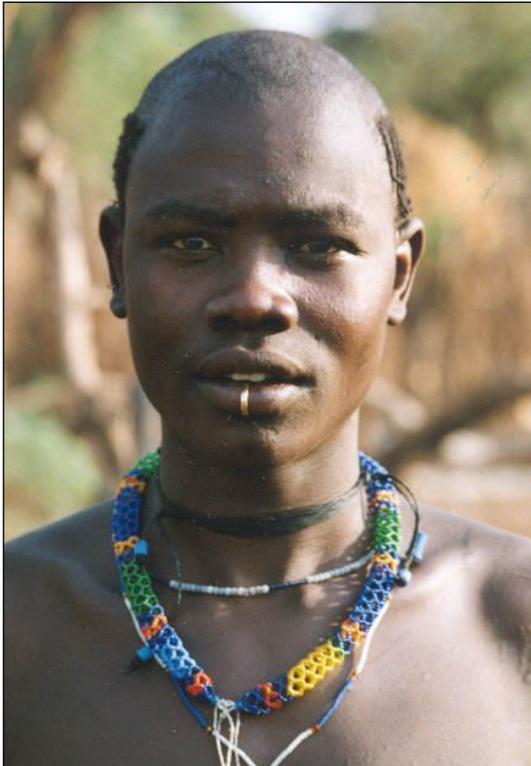
Insults are used by young people only and addressed to people of a same or a lower age-group. While children insult age-mates when they are very angry, adult and married persons are not expected to use bad terms at all and if they do (for example when they quarrel with their wife), there will be fire in the house! Girls have also their terms for insulting men, but of course they are even more careful in using them when boys or adult men are near. It seems that poets enjoy a

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<sup>1</sup> All depends in fact on the person who has been insulted: if it is the "wrong" one (especially in-laws), insults may result in a curse pronounced by the insulted person.

greater liberty in using crude or obscene terms, probably because they use to insult absent people (other villages or other tribes). The following three examples of songs (of *Atuot*, *Anyuak* and *Dinka* origin) have been chosen to show they use of sexual terms and are self-explanatory.

## Songs



### *Left Alone* .<sup>2</sup>

(a song from the *Atuot*)

I am left alone

The words find me alone

I am the poor man without cattle

I find myself amidst the enemy.

O foreigners again!

Ancient hatreds are falling on me.

The enemy *whose mother's vagina is pink*.

I have a word with father.

The enemy is coming again

And I am left alone

The words find me alone.

### *That of a Frog* (Extract of a *Ngok-Dinka-song*)<sup>3</sup>

I call upon the Creator

*Give me the vagina of a frog*

That I may save my mother from mortar

That I may save my mother from grinding the grain.

When my guests come home

O, when my guests come home

My mother is in the house

Only grain is boiling.

I wish I were born a girl in the clan Pajing

So that I may save my mother from mortar

that I might save my mother from grinding the grain.

### *Girl and mother argue...* (*Anyuak Guitar-song*)

The girl is arguing with her mother.

"Yours smells, young lass, it is yours which smells,  
you who came from scaring birds.

Yours smells, dear lass, it is yours which smells,  
You who came from the dance."

The child argues with her mother.

"It is yours which smells, yours is smelling,  
you who came from carrying weights."

The child argues with her mother.

"It is yours which smells, it is your vagina  
which smells, you who cook food."

<sup>2</sup> Published by Francis Mading Deng in "The Dinka and their Songs"; there, he explains the background of the song: "During the Turco-Egyptian period, Thany, the riverine Dinkas who own no cattle and who must live on fish along the Nile, were often exposed to the enemy, whose only thoroughway to the South was the Nile.

According to the story, another cattle-owning tribe called Awan would begin a fight with the governmental troops and then disappear with their cattle into the hinterland, leaving the Thany to fight the war alone. In this song, they mourn their fate".

<sup>3</sup> See Deng, *The Dinka and their Songs*, p.175. Deng explains the song: "Unable to marry because of lack of cattle, the singer, being without a sister, wishes he were a woman to assist his aged mother in house-keeping."

The child argues with her mother.  
 “It is your vagina which smells, lass,  
 it is your vagina which smells,  
 you who have intercourse in the fields”.  
 The child argues with her mother.  
 “It is yours which smells, it is your vagina  
 which smells in the bed here.”

## Insults

Strong insults are uttered in direct speech and the person pronouncing them will be sure to get a violent reaction... Different are more public insults when some persons are scorned through songs – most of the time for their sexual behaviour or some shameful disease. There exists also a great number of political songs in which the enemy (another village, another tribe etc.) are badly insulted when put in contrast with the own bravery and military strength.

### *Direct insults*

Insults are a good source of information about what is important in a specific culture and what kind of characters and behaviour are rejected (for this, see especially the list of insults provided by our *Suri* interlocutor); one could also meditate about the importance and significance of colours (red and green) or, as mentioned before, ask why people like to insult somebody by abusing their mother.



- *Nuer* boys insult the girls by saying that they have “*a loose vagina*” while the girls make jokes about the boys long penis. Circumcised people are very badly insulted (“*dit ngenga*”).
- *Päri* men get insulted by women by “*linguye!*” (“you arsehole”) while the men abuse girls by saying “*tongi!*” (“your vagina!”)
- The chief of the *Suri* was pleased to enumerate a considerable number of insults, such as *ngawulukide* (“your mother’s arsehole”), *lagade chingaw unu* (“your mother’s vagina is red”) *kula-une* (“your penis is tremendous”), *chok-jong* (“fuck your mother!”), *Dongu* (“Vulture!”), *Comarra* (“witch, wizard”), *Boyogi* (“Orphan!”), *Gula* (“Hyena!”), *Orsak* (“Dog!”), *Lollu!* (“Your mother is a prostitute!”), *Loloyaki* (“you are selfish!”), *Kadokac!* (“Rapist!”), *Dallik* (“you are foolish!”), and – said by women only - *Ilel* (“you are impotent!”), *Gonga* (“lazy!”) and *Agudi geso oro* (“Drunkard!”).
- The *Jiye* girls may insult the boys by saying *waro engok* (“you are a dog”), *lothilongot* (“your penis is enormous”) or *lothithowut* (“your testicles are huge”), *engok kalanyut* (“lazy dog”), while the boys abuse the women by using the terms of *amany thomon* (“I fuck your mother”), *napuz wezin kanati wezin* (“your mother’s vagina is green”), *kanati denguen awezin* (“your mother’s vagina is huge) or *lokawareny lokakumoch* (...).

- *Murle* insults are (amongst others!): *lavaric chitathun* (“anus of your mother”), *lavaric chitathun* (“Arsehole!”), *lagereny* or *lagernyak* (?), or, for men insulting women *leti orozak* (“daughter of a dog”) or *leti angelak* (“daughter of a poor/simple family”)
- the *Anyuak* insult use very strong insults, which – in my view – do not always make much physical sense: *ngwiny mero* (“your mother’s arsehole”), *tiewi kwar* or *tiewi mar* (“your sperms are red or green”), *remi tar ngwiny* (“your – menstrual – blood is white arsehole), *tiewi ngodhongodha* (“I shall fuck your sperms”), *remi ngwiny y angodha* (“your sperms, I will fuck your arsehole”), *ngwiny war ongwiny* (“anus you son of anus”), *thare cul ngwinye* (“buttocks, penis, arsehole ») etc.

#### *Songs in which people are scorned*<sup>4</sup>

In the Southern Sudan, songs are the only way people can express their own views or relate their experiences in public, in sexual as well as in other matters, and unlike newspapers, these stories are not thrown away but, on the contrary, they are learnt by heart and travel with the people from home to work, reaching even up to other villages and far distant places. The songs are relating deeds, express sorrow and are complaints about a person’s conditions. Often, people are praised, but occasionally people get also scorned, because of a mistake, because of their bad personal conduct or because of a disease they carry around... In what concerns this latter problem, we know from the *Shilluk* and the *Murle* that they have a song about the only well-known sexual disease: “*This one has contracted gonorrhoea, keep away*” (in *Murle*: “*Logoze gibal dichai dorongwanikutura*”), the song alerts the people. “*She got exhausted by the whole village*” (“*Logoze gibal dichai dorongwanikutura*”), is a key-sentence in another *Murle*-song, scaring away the people from a certain girl. The *Lotuho* sing a song where someone is asking a girl “*You have slept with a man who has such a big head, why...*”, and someone else wonders publicly “*Why did you sleep with so many...!!!*”. The *Suri* blame the women more generally for “*atala dima*”, for “selling their vagina”, but the boys are not forgotten as well, as for example in a *Murle* song where they are rebuked because “*lagereny kangak othok*”, “their penis is opening its mouth”.

The following song composed by a *Dinka Ngok*<sup>5</sup> shows that reactions to insults do not always be violent:

#### *May the Creator be cursed*

Our herds destroyed the crops of the Tuic  
 And girl from the Tuic insulted us;  
 Sister, do not insult me  
 Daughter of my mother, we are age-mates.  
 Do not make me insult you with a big insult  
 You will make me insult you with what the Creator gave me  
 Even if it be small, you will not blame yourself<sup>6</sup>  
 You will not scorn it, it is a thing created by the Creator;  
 The Creator has bewitched me

<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, the samples of insult-song which were written down for me by some of my *Zande*, *Shilluk* and *Dinka* informants and supposed to reach me later were “forgotten” or just “disappeared” somewhere on the way.

<sup>5</sup> From: Francis Mading Deng, “*The Dinka and their Songs*”, p.135-136.

<sup>6</sup> Deng’s footnote on op.cit.p.136 reads: “*She will be so satisfied despite the size of his penis that she will not regret having slept with him.*”

He gave my age-mates a good share and then gave me a poor share,  
The Creator has bedevilled me, may the Creator be cursed,  
I would have taught the girl of the Tuic a lesson  
I would have stuffed her with my thing  
She would have hated the Ngok forever.

### An Anyuak tale on possible consequences of an insult...

This tale is showing what consequences an insult may have, - especially if it the insult comes from an in-law and if the insulted “person” is very powerful. One may note that the story relates also a failed attempt of adultery with the young sister of one’s wife...

#### The elephant killed his sister-in-law

There was a girl who flirted with an Elephant. The Elephant took one of the special calabashes which belonged to the girl’s father from her hands. The girl reported this to her father who told her to go and to look for it. The girl followed the Elephant and begged him to give back her father’s calabash. The Elephant replied that he was ready to give her the calabash, but only under the condition that she would come back. The girl assured him that she would return. She got the calabash and brought it back to her father. Then she went back to the Elephant in the wilderness. They made love together. The girl decided to become the Elephant’s wife, and they married.

One day, the Elephant paid a visit to the home of his wife’s parents. The Elephant deceived his parents-in-law: he told them that he had been sent by his wife to see her sister Ajullo; he should bring Ajullo to his wife.

Ajullo’s father agreed and allowed Ajullo to go with the Elephant. They left together. When they reached a tall tree on the way, Elephant suggested that they should have a rest and eat. They sat down under the heglig tree which was standing on the riverbank. They ate, and after having eaten they went to take a bath in the river. When Elephant had undressed and was completely naked, he asked Ajullo: ‘*Sister-in-law, am I beautiful or not?*’. Ajullo answered that he would surely be beautiful, if only his buttocks did not consist out of big veins only...

The Elephant got very angry. He killed his sister-in-law and threw her up to the top of the tree.

The Elephant proceeded to his home where he told his wife that his sister Ajullo had refused to come with him.”

## Sayings

Sexual parts or activities occasionally appear in proverbs as well; impolite as they are, they are only said under very specific circumstances, that is when men are of a same age and not in company of women. Often, the sayings are taken out of tales and therefore only understandable for people knowing them.

Here a few examples of obscene (mainly Anyuak) sayings:

- “*It is open like the vulva of a woman begging for milk*”: the weather is fine
  - “It is closed liked the anus of a man milking the cattle”: the sky is dark, it is raining...
  - “I have no testicles to cover my anus”: to stress the difference between men and women (men use to cover their anus with their testicles), perhaps also to show that women are deprived of certain powers.
- “*Did I strike your penis?*”: Why are you getting upset for nothing?
- “*My grandmother farts with her vulva*”: ?
- “*Is this the “Cong Gok” (hunger of Gok-village) which was in your father’s arsehole?*” : a very strong complaint about bad food)

- *"I see it like the vulva of my relative"*: ...that is: without much interest (because relatives can't marry).
- *"Any woman can fuck the anus of her husband who had done it to her before"* : ? (perhaps: what you did to me, I can do to you?)
- *"It never happens that a man has intercourse with his own mother"* (Murle) : something which is just impossible to ask for.
- *"Kooc math cam anguon kek"* (*"People who are friends are eaten by one hyena"*): "said when flirting with girls. As two of them are always walk together in friendship, one can say that one would like to make love to all of them...! For real friends share everything, good and bad, together. ..."<sup>7</sup>
- *"Weer cieth acin yol"*. (*"At night walks the tail-less"*) -under the darkness of the night anything can happen, anything that should not dare to show itself during the day can appear: sexual activities, ambushes, witchcraft, stealing etc.<sup>8</sup>

## Language causing misfortunes, sickness and death: the Curse

Even though this kind of (very particular) language has basically nothing to do with sexuality, it is to be mentioned here because it is directly connected to violence, death and in fact to all kind of accidents and disease. Disease and illness (including those of a sexual nature) are often understood as being caused by such language, and that's why people naturally tend to look rather for remedies against those (people) who have brought the disease than for purely physical relief. Curses can emanate from any person, living or dead (ancestors), who is believed to have been offended and who has no physical means to revenge himself and is therefore acting on a spiritual level; if the existence and the real power of curses may be disputable, its effects on a (sick) person's psychology cannot be denied. The belief in and the power of curses will diminish as soon as modern medicine has reached even the most distant of places and when it will be able to successfully defeat the terrible kind of illness and disease which are so abundant in the Southern Sudan.

## Domestic violence

Domestic violence, when it happens, is very violent indeed, spectacular: "there can be extremely violent fighting between the man and his wife: the man fights with sticks and knives, the woman with clubs or stones, pouring sometimes burning hot water over him...", a *Ndogo* man relates. Men are very brutal: *"at the slightest suspicion (of adultery) a woman would be flogged, cut with knives, bound and tortured to make her confess the name of the lover"* (Seligman:516), but the women usually defend themselves rather well and hit back as much as they can.

The usual reasons for quarrel are

- women suspected by their husbands to have committed adultery
- women suspecting their husband to have another girlfriend
- women quarrelling their husband because of his bad behaviour (to come home late, to be drunk etc.)

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<sup>7</sup> From: Dr.Bellario Ahoy Ngong: "Dinka Wisdom in Proverbs, Idioms and Metaphors": K.6.68

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. W.6.134

- lack of respect and insults (including insulting relatives)
- woman who protest of not getting affection and sexual satisfaction
- men who get angry because their wife refuses to prepare food for him (she does it as a sign of protest against his sexual passivity)
- men who are unhappy about their wife's behaviour (if she is always quarrelling with other people, always in a bad mood, dirty, careless about the food-stock etc.)
- The *spoiling of important things* is also a relatively frequent cause for quarrel, especially if these things are heirlooms or items which are part of the bride-wealth (and which nobody, not even in case of starvation should sell: but men do it sometimes in order to get beer...). Amongst the *Anyuak*, to give just one example, the *eating-pot of a husband* is so important that a wife who has accidentally broken the pot will run away to her parents' home and will obstinately refuse to go back; the parents will need to convince her to return to her husband anyway and to ask him - by presenting a goat - for pardon...

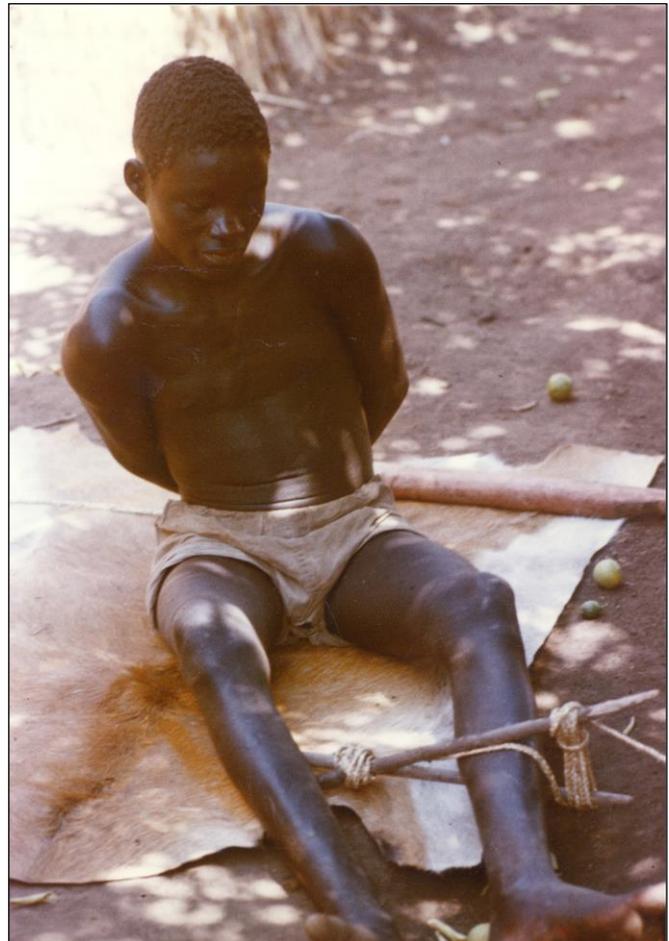
In *Dinka* or *Atuot* communities, a husband who has seriously injured his wife would be taken to court and be fined heavily (ten cows or more); such 'incidents' could moreover lead to divorce, even though a woman's family would prefer to settle the matter without breaking the marriage.<sup>9</sup>

## Violence related to sexual offences

Everywhere in the world, sexually offended people tend to show violent reactions: in the Southern Sudan, the most usual offences concern *adultery*<sup>10</sup> but even issues related to behaviour (lack of respect for the in-laws, insults etc.) can have sexual connotations. If *torture* is a common means to extort "the truth" from prisoners or from girls who obstinately refuse to name their lover, the idea that the moment of delivery could be used as a kind of natural "torture" for getting information on a woman's sexual relations is very amazing indeed; even more astonishing is the fact that this "method" is known and apparently practised by all the ethnic groups we have spoken to...<sup>11</sup>

### *Castration*

Unlike the more natural problems occurring on the way to human procreation, castration of a male person is exceptional: as a cause of an



<sup>9</sup> Divorce is always a lengthy and complicated process: see the chapter on "Marriage and Divorce".

<sup>10</sup> See the chapter "Sideways and Stigmas"

<sup>11</sup> The type of psychological violence exercised on women at the moment of birth-giving will be described in the chapter on "Pregnancy and Birth".

accident, it sometimes happens, but otherwise it was done intentionally in relation to a crime considered to be extremely serious. In the *Zande*-speaking regions, adultery was considered to be such a serious crime: “*A man committing adultery could be and often was ferociously mutilated*”, *Seligman:516* states, “*his genitals, ears, upper lip, or both hands being cut off*”. To our knowledge, however, mutilation of a human person was exceptional (it could be avoided by paying a heavy fine); for sure, it would be rejected by the *Nilotic* peoples (the *Nilotes* would always concentrate on compensation for a mistake and not on the physical destruction of an individual; if it ever was to happen, it was surely for political and not for judicial reasons).

I would not have imagined that a Sudanese woman could think of castrating a man, but the following song composed by a *Dinka* from the *Tuic*-section<sup>12</sup> relates exactly that... To understand the girl’s action, one should know that the boy was sharing a room with two girls and attempted to have intercourse with one of them... With the help of her friend, the girl succeeded in attacking the boy at a place “where it hurts”<sup>13</sup>... We note that the young man is not pretending to be innocent and that his fundamental complaint therefore is not so much about pain or humiliation but about his present incapacity: the fear of never getting any heir is worse than anything:



*She Held the Club where it Hurts*

Paguek, our clan,  
 I have withdrawn  
 The marriage of Akuol Aduot  
 It has turned itself away  
 I am a man who has remained in the cattle-camp.  
 Ajok has killed me out of scorn  
 Akuol has killed me out of scorn.  
 O Dau Kuacnyiel, it is the weakness of the heart  
 Which made me reach the river Lol  
 To go and find experienced girls;  
 Ajok Arob is an experienced girl  
 Akuol Aduot is an experienced girl  
 Ajok who has remained unmarried  
 Akuol who has remained unmarried  
 They have remained gazing on men  
 They have known the areas of pain  
 Ajok has known the areas of pain.  
 When she woke  
 She held the club where it hurts  
 And my (future) children became perturbed.  
 She bent my limbs  
 And I went out of breath,  
 Ajok Arob  
 Halt  
 Akuol, daughter of Aduot Dau  
 Halt, halt.  
 Camp of Ater, let us gossip  
 I do not blame you all,  
 You, clan Parum  
 It is not you all  
 Even you Awek e Ring

<sup>12</sup> Published by *Francis Mading Deng* in his book “*The Dinka and their Songs*”, Oxford 1973, p130-132

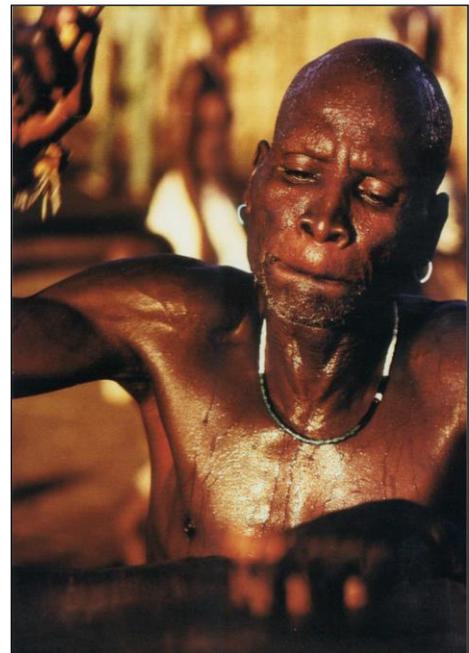
<sup>13</sup> See Mading Deng’s explanation op.cit.p.129

It is not you;  
 In clan Paguet, I have a word,  
 But it is not with all the people of Aguet  
 It is with the two girls  
 They gang up against me in a war of sex.  
War of sex is like magic  
It is left to a person alone  
 And people keep away.  
 Deng Kuac Nyiel,  
 I only think of what will become of me  
 In Nyang Agher  
 Shall I be sterile because of Ajok,  
 Ajok who knows the area that kills?  
 What if I should be sterile in this land  
 And Akuol stands  
 And Ajok stands?  
 The world of today  
 Is not the world of yesterday.  
*A man hopes for two children;*  
*three, I no longer can,*  
*two, I am no longer sure.*  
 Ajok of my mother  
 You refused to hold us apart  
 And you refused to be a witness;  
*You made me impotent.*  
 My children will flow away in the grass  
 My people will flow away on the plains.  
 The daughter of Arop has pulled me apart  
 I do not know whether I will give birth  
 Nyang e Col  
 The daughter of Maper Adiel has castrated me.

## Celebration of sex and violence in dances

### *The Anyuak "Aganya"-dance*

The *aganya* dance of the Anyuak celebrates anarchy, lawlessness and violence. Completely asocial, the dance takes place outside of the village, "in the sphere of the outlaws". Because of its violence, this dance has been forbidden by the government authorities (English at the time) and consequently disappeared completely. It was once an important feature of Anyuak society, giving evidence to the more brutal and violent aspects of the Anyuak character, its joyful aggression. In this dance, men are chosen by girls, but the dancers are chased with sticks by those boys who were left out... Killing was not exceptional, and because the *aganya* dance seems to have been understood as real fighting (for sexual power), there was not even any blood-price to pay.<sup>14</sup> The dance took place around eight small drums standing in the centre and it was inspired by obscene insult songs.



<sup>14</sup> As the dance was held in a sphere of complete illegality, any legal actions could not be taken.

## Rape



*There is always a lot of violence in the action of love...*  
DIDINGA

Hold yourselves  
I have not hit her with a spear  
It is only with a club, a club,  
Girl of the Baggara, we are on the ground  
'Dinka, gently, gently'.  
I do not know 'gently',  
I put it right in.  
I caught her back and cries arose at Jaabatein.  
Mine does not sleep  
It tosses the thighs.  
We were in haste  
And when my shorts were wasting my time  
I tore them, We were in haste  
I laid her on the ground  
I put it in again  
My ox, curve-horned Magak, I have caused an accident.  
*(Song by a Ngok-Dinka)<sup>15</sup>*

When discussing issues concerning rape, one has to distinguish between rape of members of the own community and rape of non-members of the own community. The two situations are entirely different. Sexual violence within one household will not be considered here, even though it must exist: on the question concerning rape, a *Didinga* man answered somehow reluctantly by saying “*Well, it is rare... But then, there is always a lot of violence in the action of making love, you have to throw the woman to the ground...*”!!! And from an *Acholi* we learn that violence is even expected to be part of sexual relationship: “*Even once a girl has agreed to sleep with you, still there will be fighting! The girl will defend herself by all means, as she does not want to appear to have given in easily: she does not want to be considered to be loose! The second time, the way to love may be less violent...*”. As if this information was not already stunning enough, our *Acholi* interlocutor wants to assure us: “*with educated girls*”, he states, “*there is less violence.*”...!!!

### Rape of members of the own community

“*Men need women*” (*Toposa*) is probably the most unemotional explanation for the existence of rape. When a *Murle* argues that “*Rape is naturally existing*”, he most probably thinks as well of the men’s urgent desire to get sexual satisfaction; but he yet does not think that rape is something which should be considered to be normal: “*those who practise it are not normal*”, he says, “*because it is not so difficult to agree with any woman to have sex!*”... A young man from the *Jur-Bel* reminds of the fact that some boys do not have the necessary bride-wealth to marry and that “*this may lead to rape*”. Also, he says, “*there are men who do not know how to talk to girls, and even this can lead to rape*”. Often, however, it is not just sexual needs which push a person to commit rape: it is rather alcohol which makes people to loose their mind. “*Under the influence of alcohol,*”, we are told in *Yambio*, “*a drunk person who meets a girl is likely to rape her. It is very frequent nowadays.*” Amongst the *Acholi*, “*rape is rare*”, “*it is due to drunkenness and one*

<sup>15</sup> From: Francis Mading Deng, “*The Dinka and their Songs*”, p.134

does it alone". The Avukaya rapist do it alone as well, "on the road, at dancing- and at drinking-places", and a Baka gives almost identical information, adding that "rape was always there! It is committed by young persons. Later on, people go and fetch the boy...". The Sere acknowledge the occasional existence of rape in their culture: "Previously, it was done by one man only, but nowadays it is also done by a group of men, especially by soldiers: after the rape, the woman is often left unconscious on the ground...". "Yes, this happens at places inhabited by the Balanda as well", we are told: "five men participate in the rape, but up to ten men could join.... Often, the girl is left without consciousness on the ground. It happens by night...Alcohol is a frequent reason why such things happen". Amongst the Toposa, there are "plenty of cases of rape." Fornication happens with girls on the women's ways... Previously, the woman was hold by one or two friends, but nowadays there may be up to ten youngsters to hold the girl: all of them would abuse the girl!!". For the Suri, "Rape is, considered to be shameful. It happens only sometimes. If there is pregnancy, it is a serious matter". If reported, rape is always a serious matter and a big offence, "but then", a Nuer tells, "the friends of the girls may advise her not to report the matter but to marry the boy instead, - this in order to avoid that the girl's reputation would be spoiled and she would remain with a bad record...". The situation he refers to concerns "a girl you love but she does not like you... So you may call your friends and they will come and hold her down on the ground and you can fulfil your desire. It happens especially during the rainy season...". Even if another Nuer means that with his people, "rape is rather rare", one can yet wonder how it is possible that a boy could so easily find friends to help him to execute his shameless plans. Yet, rape is socially a dangerous thing as it can lead to serious fighting between the relatives of the boy and the relatives of the girl. The Moru informant was the only one telling that rape would not happen at all, *except* when it is committed by soldiers.

#### *Punishment for Rape:*

If the case is discussed at court, there will be a punishment which is generally equal to the one to be paid for adultery; if the girl is pregnant, the man will have to marry and to pay a fine which is not necessarily taking into consideration when the bride-wealth will have to be paid.

With the *Murle*, one would have to pay seven cows (the woman will marry normally), with the *Toposa* also seven (one of them would have to be killed as a sacrifice), with the Nuer six cows (the adulterer would have to spend one month in prison), and with the *Jiye* three cows, or, if the girl is pregnant, seven cows. The *Belanda* put a rapist into prison (no fine?) and the *Päri* would kill the offender straight-away (that's why it is said that rape is very rare amongst them).

#### Rape of non-members of the own community

This concerns people who commit rape during an armed conflict. One does well in distinguish between *traditional conflicts* and *the modern type of armed conflict*:

In traditional conflicts, rape did – according to our informants - not happen. Even in *Toposa*-culture where rape was apparently more frequent than elsewhere, "rape was not part of the

*traditional conflict*". One can only speculate<sup>16</sup> about the reason for this attitude: traditional fighting did, most of the time, not result in the occupation of a territory; villages may have been burnt down and sometimes enemies got caught in the event, but to have prisoners would not mean to be allowed to abuse them sexually, for female captives would first of all belong to the victorious group as a whole before later on becoming the wives of someone. Also, people would, in spite of the exceptional circumstances of war, still remain members of their group and would have to respect its cultural values; amongst these values were the general respect for women and the strong disapproval of rape. Even if we don't know what could have happened exceptionally, it is quite certain that a traditional conflict did not include sex in general and rape of women in particular.



During armed modern conflicts, rape appears to be frequent. This has been confirmed by all our interlocutors: *"It is a common phenomena"*, an Acholi says and a Balanda stresses that; *"Soldiers do it frequently"*, explaining that *"about 10 men could join in the rape. Alcohol is a frequent reason for rape.."* A Moru underlines that in his place, *"rape happens only with soldiers: especially in the beginning of the war rape by soldiers was a frequent happening"*. The statement of a Dinka: *"Rape happens during the times of war. It is done mostly by soldiers"* reminds of the fact that times of war are times of general unrest and that many other people are separated from their cultures, physically but also spiritually. Alcohol being one very common "reason" for raping, it is obvious that not only soldiers lose their self-control when in situation of stress. Note that the soldiers, refugees and other displaced people we are here talking about are *not foreigners* but all Southern Sudanese and thus share (more or less) same cultural values. It is this an additional horror to all those who have witnessed instances of rape: to realise that the *own* people could lose its dignity to

such a degree that they behave like animals (or worse, because they are, after all, conscious human beings).

#### *Punishment for Rape committed during armed conflicts:*

During traditional conflicts, rape would not happen. I am not sure what would happen if someone would nevertheless commit rape: if a woman does not "belong" to someone, there may be nobody to ask for a punishment. Soldiers found guilty of rape are - since some years back - supposed to be executed; this was the official reaction to the many cases of rape which occurred in the earlier years of the war and which did not make the liberation-army especially popular amongst the civil population.

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<sup>16</sup> Like so many other topics, this question of rape during traditional conflicts would not thorough investigation; there must be considerable differences between the behaviour of different ethnic groups. Here, I am "speculating" about the Nilotes whom I know best.