**Apoto, Apoto, Apoto,**

**We see you waste away before us.**

**What can we do? Nothing,**

**Or perhaps something:**

**We shall tell everyone,**

**Even those who put cotton in their ears, Watch *out***

**Or you will meet a fate like Apoto's, This dreaded illness**

**That everyone in every land fears and calls Slim, Slim, Slim.**

***Lalweny Fanta,* WHEN WE SAY**

**Uganda 2001 Aco**li

**When we say One rat alone Does not dig a hole,**

**We mean**

**Two heads are better than one.**

**When we say**

**A person who heeds not**

**Goes with feces into her mother-in-law's hut, We mean**

**You need to hear others and they need to hear you.**

**When we say**

**Being near the anthill Made the fox turn brown, We mean**

**You reap what you sow.**

**When we say**

A **monkey that remains behind**

**Laughs at the other monkeys' tails,**

**We mean**

**When you laugh hard you might be laughing at yourself**

**When we say**

**A hare's cunning is better than an elephant's strength,**

**SIX RURAL PROTEST SONGS + 423**

We mean

Think with your head, not your hand.

When we pass all these sayings on, from generation to generation,

We pass on our knowledge, we pass on our knowledge,

Our ways, our ways,

Our learning, our learning,

For a better us, for a better us.

Put your five fingers together

And you can lift a pot, You can grip firewood, You can hold a mingling ladle.

Two is better than one; Three is better than two. Let us all put our heads together,

Work together,

For a better us,

For a better tomorrow, For a better community.

***Sarah Atoo,* WITHOUT WOMEN**

Uganda 2001 Acoli

*Soloist:* Without women really,

Which direction would the world take to develop? Which direction would the world take to develop? Which direction would the world take to develop? Which direction would the world take to develop?

*All:* Without women really,

Which direction would the world take to develop? Which direction would the world take to develop? Which direction would the world take to develop? Which direction would the world take to develop?

*Soloist:* It is true what women do cannot be counted.

*All:* Without women, really,

Which direction would the world take to develop?

*Soloist:* It is true that only a foolish man Despises a woman.

**424 ♦ INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (1996-2004)**

*All:* Surely what women do cannot be counted.

**Six RURAL PROTEST SONGS + 425**

*Soloist:* You people, really, without women,

Which direction would the world take to develop? Which direction would the world take to develop?

*All:* You people, really, without women,

Which direction would the world take to develop?
  
Which direction would the world take to develop?

*Solois•* All of us women, let us join hands.

*All:* To develop this world so that our homes are strong. *Soloist:* Aai, development is truly in the hands of women. *All* Truly, the strong gourd should not crack.

*Soloist:* Clansmen, see my drink. Clansmen, see my drink.

*All:* What is that drink of yours?

*Soloist:* My drink is my homestead. My drink is building that school. My drink is casting a vote.

My drink is .

*All:* Seeing that the homestead is not dead,

That the chief's court is not overgrown with grass, That the roads are clean,

That the children 'have uniforms,

So that this world may remain very firm!

***Sarah Atoo,* THE MONSTROUS DISEASE**

Uganda 2001 Acoli

My people, see,

This monster disease has finished us in this world. You see, Slim has finished the world.

It has finished us, the young and the old.

You see, Slim has wiped out the women.

It has wiped women off this world.

**426 + INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (1996-2004)**

You see, Slim has emptied the homestead. It has emptied the whole homestead, really.

You see, graves surround the homestead, really. Graves surround us, really, on all sides.

Shortly I will go to the village chief, eh, eh. He will be down with this disease.

You see the vicar has dried up, really. People, he has dried up completely.

My people, we are confused.

This disease, where did it come from and where is it taking us?

I drink the herbs in vain, really.

This disease has refused, really refused to go. Clansmen, hear my fading voice.

Open your ears to these words.

I am only a woman beseeching you.

Because of this disease which has killed the home, Even if you look down on women,

First, open your ears wide,

Listen to my fading voice.

Let's all put our hands together.

Let's chase this disease, chase this disease. Really, how about you?

What will you do? What will you do to rally against this disease? Really, you women, men, and elders,

Put your hands together for the sake of this disease. Have relations only with those you are married to. If you act like goats in the dry season,

This disease will wipe away all of us.

***Christine Lamwaka,* WE ARE Now EQUAL**

Uganda 2001 Acoli

We are now equal.

My brother, come back home. My brother, come back home.

The world has already defeated Kony. Kony, come back home.

The world has defeated the boy. Kony, come back home.

The world has defeated the boy.

We are now equal. Kony, come back home.

**MY MOTHER, MY HERO + 427**

Kony, come back home.

We are now equal. Kony, come back home.

Kony, come home.

The world has defeated the boy.

Kony, come home.

The world has defeated the boy.

*Translated by Beatrice Lamwaka and Monica Arac de Nyeko*

***Esther Shadrack Mwachiru*MY MOTHER, MY HERO**

**Kenya 2001 Kiduruma**

**The narrator of this text, Esther Shadrack Mwachiru, was born in Kinango, the firstborn of the seven children of Mama Lois Kamwelele Mazera. She is a retired midwife who worked first with the government, and later with the Municipal Council of Mombasa. She saw that all ten of her children were educated. Mwachiru is now a farmer in a township called Pingilikani, in Kilifi District. She is in her late sixties, but still cheerfully attending to expectant mothers in the vil­lage while also managing her farm. She told hei mother's story with enthusiasm, reliving those times when her mother was alive.**

**Mama Lois Kamwelele Mazera's achievements, over her short life, were quite remarkable for her time and place. In the 1950s and 1960s, she** advocated **for women's marital rights and spoke out against early marriages** for **girls. By the early 1960s, through her efforts, early marriages had declined, and later they were outlawed in Kinango. Mama Kamwelele was involved in the local Kinango pri­mary school board, and by the late 1950s, girls had begun going to school, most of them completing the elementary level. She helped to establish Maendeleo ya Wanawake groups and churchwomen's groups, and later she became a sergeant major of the Salvation Army Church at Kinango. She was adventurous enough to take on responsibilities usually reserved for men, exercising them with confidence and winning admiration from the community. She died in an accident at an early age, but more than forty Years later her name is still fresh in the memories of the Duruma people in Kinango, as one who initiated and brought awareness about many programs on development.**

*Sheila Ali Ryanga*

**My mother, Lois Kamwelele Mazera, was a woman who was blest from birth. When the First World War began, she was about ten years of age. Father and mother settled at Kingango. They were initially Moslems. There was famine soon after in Duruma, so father and mother went to her uncle's place in Msambweni. After the famine ended, my father, Mazera, went back to Kinango, and worked as a cleaning person in the Kinango dispensary. He attended literacy classes with the missionaries, *and* when he *could* read and write, they gave him the job of collecting medicines from Msambweni district hospital, for the dispensary at Kinango. The Church Missionary Society mis­sionaries began preaching to him, without much response. But when the mis­sionaries from Salvation Army Church came and preached to him, he soon converted and became a Christian.**

**428 + INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (1996-2004)**

**My father began to talk to my mother about Christianity, but she refused to be converted from Islam until later, when my young brother became sick. He was treated traditionally by medicine men with all the expertise, and yet he died. He was accorded a Christian burial and not the traditional funeral because his father was now a Christian. Mother was impressed by the preciseness of the burial, and she came to believe that Christianity was the better religion. The Christian funeral given to her son did not force her to go through the tradi­tional rigorous rituals of a bereaved mother. This convinced her, and she con­verted from Islam to Christianity in the Salvation Army Church.**

**She studied the catechism until she qualified and was baptized. Then she joined her husband in the literacy classes, to learn how to read and write, and to attend Bible classes taught by the missionaries. My parents were the first in Kinango to know how to read and write. Other men joined the literacy classes, but mother remained the *only woman* within the group. She continued until she could write her own name and read the Bible. My father was rarely home when we were growing up. After retiring from the dispensary, he went to live in Utange, the outskirts of Mombasa, where he had another farm. He only came once in a while to Kinango. So mother brought us up for the most part single-handedly. My father died in 1981.**

**She joined church activities, and began to teach other women cleanliness, cookery, and sewing, as she had been taught by the missionaries. Her progress was good and her enthusiasm was felt in the community. By the 1920s, she began to represent the Salvation Army Church in national congresses at Mom­basa because she was the only African woman from Kinango who knew how to read and write. She could find hymn numbers in the hymn books; she could sign documents and read the Bible by herself and during church services.**

**God blessed her with the gift of natural midwifery. If someone was pregnant she could examine her to ascertain if the baby was fine. If the baby was a breech, she knew how to turn it to the right position in the womb, so that the baby would have a normal birth. She attended to any woman of any race who came to her with pregnancy problems. The Indian community in Kinango benefited from her midwifery skills. This was evident at her burial when many Indians**

**came and testified about the assistance and friendship she had extended to them. She helped many women in this regard because, though she was strong in character and a *no-nonsense* person, her heart went to the people.**

**MY MOTHER, MY HERO + 429**

**She was blessed. She was sent as a coastal representative of the Salvation Army Church to major church congresses in Kisii. This was the first meeting that took her far from her home area. There she was shown many different things and was eager to learn as much as she could from other churchwomen. Because she became knowledgeable, she taught others what she had learned. When she came back to Kinango she started women's church groups so that she could teach them what she had so far learned. This was through her own initiative, in an attempt to improve the living standards of other women.**

**Mother was the first woman to be advanced in Duruma. The government noticed her progressive attitude and aptitude. Chiefs and district officers started involving her in development programs. Mother was never a chief nor employed as one, but her progress in church activities and her own efforts in assisting people made her well known to many people beyond Kinango. The district commissioner and district officers in Kwale, the district headquarters, admired her work. In Kinango, chiefs and district *officers* called upon her *to* organize receptions for official government guests visiting the location. She had many household items and dishes for such duties. She used to hold a reception for them in her own house, emulating what she had seen in the Kisii church meetings and elsewhere. The *meetings* would take place, and then guests would come to eat lunch at mother's house. The churchwomen's group she had started often assisted her. She was the first to start a Maendeleo ya Wanawake branch at Kinango, and to organize the building of a social hall for the Maendeleo group, where women could learn to read and write, sew, and cook dishes, rang­ing from local delicacies to cakes and cookies.**

**Soon after his conversion to Christianity, father enrolled his children in school. My late brother died while in standard three; at the time I was in standard two. Mama did not like the idea of her daughter being in school at first, since she was still a Moslem. This schooling also angered her mother, who said that if her granddaughter remained in school, she would no longer be respectful or shy and would be spoilt. She also asked my mother to whom she would give all her ornaments and gold items when she died, since her granddaughter would no longer be the good, respectful girl who would bene­fit from the items.**

**But mother later changed her mind after her conversion to Christianity; and especially after learning to read and write herself She saw to our education on her own because father was often away from home.**

**In 1939 when I, her firstborn child, was in standard two, I was the only girl in
  
school. Other girls *joined* and *left soon after.* Mother encouraged me to go on
  
with school and today I am a retired trained midwife, well known in Mombasa.
  
My parents insisted that I go to school, even against the wishes of grandmother.
  
Mother was fortunate. Because of both her local activities and social service,**

the government recognized her efforts. She began being called to the Court Council meetings to talk about women and development. Since becoming Christian and learning the Bible, she had begun fighting for women's rights in marriage. She talked against polygamy as being against God's laws. She talked against early marriages in which girls were married off at a very early age with­out their consent. She had been such a victim herself, since at the age of between ten and fourteen, she was betrothed to my father. My father had seen mother, liked her behavior, and asked his parents to ask for her hand in marriage. Mother accepted this arrangement, and her father took a number of cows for the dowry. However, before she was to go to her husband, her father died.

**430 + INTO THE TwENTY-FiRsT CENTURY (1996-2004)**

Soon after that her uncle, the brother of her father, secretly arranged a mar­riage with another suitor elsewhere, who gave him more cows than my father had given her father. When the uncle announced his intentions to nullify the first suitor, mother was home alone with her mother. When mother refused to be married off to another man, the uncle literally dragged mother from the vil­lage. My grandmother and mother shouted, protesting her abduction. As she was dragged along the path, sharp sticks pierced her, leaving marks on her body that are still there. Another uncle and neighbors who heard the cries rescued mother and brought her back home. She was soon after that sent to her hus­band's home—that is, my father's.

Her vigilance as a self-made advocate for women was recognized by the authorities. Ultimately the government appointed her to be a councillor in Kwale. She was the first woman to be appointed a councillor there. She never sought to be elected; she was appointed to the position. This was towards the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the1960s, before independence.

When mother became a councillor, she bought a farm at Shimba-Hills set­tlement. That farm was divided into two parts. On one side, she planted her own food crops. On the other side, the farm was used for giving instructions and demonstrations by government agricultural officers. These officers"gave my mother graded cows for demonstration. Hers was to be the model farm for other farmers in the area to learn from. The agricultural officers used to come with groups of farmers to teach them there. They also gave her beans and other cereals for planting in the model farm.

During all these activities with the women's church groups, Maendeleo ya Wanawake, being a councillor, and her progress in educating her children, five girls and two boys, singlehandedly, men feared her. They nicknamed her Muche Mulume [literally, "the She-manl, because of her courage and hard work. They feared and at the same time respected her, because, despite all her public involvement, she cared for her family.

By this time father had long since left Kinango. In fact it was mother who educated us singlehandedly. Father had put us in school, but mother was the one who took care of us and educated us, as well as the children of other rela­tives. Her home had endless visitors. The home was near a hospital, so many people stayed there while visiting the hospital until they were well. Families

who lived far away from Kinango brought their children to stay and to go to school from our home. All important visitors passed through our home. Teach­ers in the Kinango primary school visited her for advice, and to seek guidance in some local issues. She had become a beacon of light.

**LULLABIES + 431**

Soon after Kenya got its independence, the Salvation Artily missionaries left Kinango. Father and mother took over the church leadership. They built the church at Kinango and later other church branches were built in rural areas, though Kinango remained the center of all branches. Within the Salvation Army Church ranks, mother rose to the rank of Sergeant Major, the first African woman with that rank in Kwale, organizing and leading the church programs. In her days the Salvation Army Church at Kinango was famous, and its branches flourished all over Duruma area.

She fought for the education of girls in Duruma, and for them not to be given in early marriages. She educated her children as an example. At the dis­trict officers' and chiefs' meetings, she urged people to send both boys and girls to school. She fought for women's rights, for girls and women not to be forced into marriage. Just before her death, she came home one day celebrating the news that forced early marriages had been abolished in the area. She died in the prime of her life, because of a bus accident while on the way to her model farm at Shimba-Hills settlement. Until her death, she served as a church leader, social worker, and councillor for Kwale County Council. Her legacy in the area has not been equalled by another woman.

*Translated by Sheila Au Ryanga*

**LULLABIES**

Women have sung lullabies to babies all over the world from time immemorial. African women rock babies to sleep while they are strapped to their backs or held on their laps, providing them with a complete sense of security.

The Kiswahili lullabies included here are from Zanzibar, but are similar to lullabies recorded in Tanga in northeast Tanzania. Though they have different themes, all are sung to the same tune and with the same refrain. They indicate either explicitly or implicitly a bond between the singer, usually the mother, and the baby, with references to the singer's own mother, and to the sadness that the child's crying engenders in the mother.

Lullabies, formed into rhymed stanzas of varying lengths, often seem melan­choly, harkening back to the pain and suffering of childbirth and perhaps to the difficulties of life. Swahili mothers may wish for the child's rapid growth to matu­rity, as well as for the child's extreme grief when the mother dies. Children are expected to be acutely, even violently grieved should a parent die. The Swahili word *kukuwa,* from which the second selection takes its name, means "grow." It is said not only when a child sneezes, but when they do something positive, even an

**errand. Numerous references to both political and cultural happenings of the time—royalty and slavery, seagoing vessels and spices—fix the cultural location of these lullabies.**

**432 + INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (1996-2004)**

**Most Ugandan lullabies, constructed around experiences of the mothers and child-minders, offer insights into economic activities, women's and men's work, and the interests of the mothers and other caretakers. These lullabies come from the Baganda of central Uganda, the Bagisu in the east, and the Acoli and Langi in the north.**

**Characterized by a uniform tempo, which allows the singer to rock the baby slowly to sleep in direct rhythm with the lullaby, most of the songs sung in Zam­bia's seventy-three languages have a marked similarity in tune and meaning. The focus is mainly on the baby's desire for food and sleep. These are brief songs, the stanzas repeated until the baby falls asleep. Words such as *"iyee"* and *" ayiye"* have no specific meaning other than to soothe and hypnotize. The following lullabies from Zambia, transferred through generations, come from the Nyanja in the east, the Bemba in the north, and the Mbunda in the west**

***Saida Yahya-Othman, Nalishebo N. Meebelo, and Florence Ebila***

***Communal,* NINE LULLABIES FROM ZANZIBAR**

**Tanzania 2002 Kiswahili**

***Don't Cry***

**Don't cry, don't cry, you will make me cry too.**

**Reserve your tears for when I die,**

**When you will bang yourself against walls, and be restrained,**

**When you will throw yourself against trees, and be under watch.**

**Ooh, my child, ooh.
  
Ooh, my child, ooh.**

***When My Mother***

**When my mother brought me into the world, she called me Kukuwa.**

**All the Prophet's people recognize me as such. He who is not my creator cannot uncreate me. Ooh, my child, ooh.**

**Ooh, my child, ooh.**

***Grow, My Child***

**Grow, my child, grow, grow big.**

**Grow like the banana tree, the coconut is too slow.**

**Grow like the coconut tree, the banana withers away.**

**Ooh, my child, ooh.
  
Ooh, my child, ooh.**

**Grow, my child, grow, grow big,**

**LULLABIES + 433**

**So I can give you a cattle herd, and a goat herd,**

**So you can drink milk. Ooh, my child, ooh. Ooh, my child, ooh.**

***Chale's Mother Inquired***

**Chale's mother inquired, what do you want with Chale?**

**He has not gone with a begging basket, to Darajani [the marketplace].**

**He has not gone with a basket, to beg at Forodhani [the seafront].**

**Chale took poison and left this world**

**To become a cow, feeding on grass.**

**Ooh, my child, ooh.
  
Ooh, my child, ooh.**

***That Canoe Approaching***

**That canoe approaching, no doubt has something for me. It has beads for me to string, the size of my neck.**

**I will not string them, nor give them to my mate.**

**I will give them to my mother, who shares my secrets. Ooh, my child, ooh.**

**Ooh, my child, ooh.**

***Slave Girl***

**Slave girl, let me send you on an errand, to King Hassan,**

**Who wears a voile tunic, and carries a cane.**

**The mistake I made, who will intercede for me?**

**Only the stars, and the king's son.**

**Ooh, my child, ooh.
  
Ooh, my child, ooh.**

***Hush, Child, Hush***

**Hush, child, hush, onion and frankincense.**

**A snake lies on the path, let's crush its head**

**To let by hewers of wood, and fetchers of water.**

**Ooh, my child, ooh.
  
Ooh, my child, ooh.**

***My Beautiful Child***

**My beautiful child, may God let her grow.**

**When she grows up, I'll send her to school.**

**Ooh, my child, ooh.
  
Ooh, my child, ooh.**

***My Bad Child***

**434 + INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (1996-2004)**

My bad child, she cries shamelessly.

If she stops crying, I'll send her to Europe.

Ooh, my child, ooh.
  
Ooh, my child, ooh.

*Translated by Saida Yahya-Othman*

***Communal,* FOUR LULLABIES FROM UGANDA**

Uganda 2002 Luganda, Lango, Acoli, Lugisu

***Hush Hush*** (Luganda)

Hush, hush, My baby.

Hush, hush, My baby.

Hush, hush, A little baby Does not refuse to sleep.

Baa

The little lamb smoked tobacco.

Baa

The little lamb smoked tobacco.

My mother's baby,

Hush and sleep.

When your mother comes back I will tell her.

Baa

The little lamb smoked tobacco. Baa

The little lamb smoked tobacco.

My baby,

Hush, hush. My child

Hush, hush.

My father's baby,

Hush and sleep.

A little baby

Does not refuse to sleep.

Baa

The little lamb smoked tobacco.

***Hush, Baby*** (Lango)

**LULLABIES + 435**

Hush, baby,

Mother has gone to the well. The babysitters' meal

Is in the earthware container.

***This Mother, Oh*** (Acoli) This mother, oh,

She cooks at night. This mother, oh, She cooks at night.

She says when the meal is cooked:

Bring me my baby, you might break my baby's back

When she sees the meal is not yet ready

She says, "Take the child out to play."

***Olele, Olele, Baby Sister*** (Lugisu) *Olele, olele,* baby sister, I sing for you. Child, your mother will return. Then you will breastfeed.

Then you will breastfeed.

*Olele,* baby sister, I sing for you.

*Translated by Florence Ebila and Ayeta Anne Wangusa*

***Communal,* FOUR LULLABIES FROM ZAMBIA**

Zambia 2002 Chinyanja, Chibemba, Chimbunda

***When the Baby Cries*** (Chinyanja) When the baby cries, it is hungry. When the baby cries, it is sleepy. When the baby cries, it is hungry. When the baby cries, it is sleepy. *Iyee Iyee.*

*Iyee Iyee.*

The baby is crying.

The baby is crying in Dinase's backyard .

***The Baby Cries for Milk*** (Chinyanja)

*Ayiye,*

The baby cries. *Ayiye,*

The baby cries.

**The baby cries for what? The baby cries for milk, Milk from the cow.**

**436 + INTO THE TWENTY-Frasr CENTURY (1996-2004)**

***The Baby Cries for Comfort* (Chibemba)**

***Ayiye,***

**The baby cries. *Ayiye,***

**The baby cries.**

**"Let them put me on their back**

**In my cloth." "Bought by whom?"**

**"Bought by my Father,**

**"Father Matunda."**

***The Baby Cries for Sleep* (Chimbunda)**

***Aaaiyeeee***

**The baby cries.**

**The baby cries for milk,**

**Milk of the cow. *Aaaiyeeee***

**The baby cries. It cries for sleep. It wants to sleep, To sleep on the back,**

**On the back of its mother.**

***Translated by Nalisbebo N Meebelo***

***Miria Matembe*I MUST CALL MYSELF A FEMINIST**

**Uganda "2002English**

**Miria Matembe was born in 1953 in Rutooma village in western Uganda. She was educated at Bweranyangi Girls School, Namasagali College, and Makerere University, from which she graduated with honors in 1976. She also holds a law degree from the University of Warwick in England. She has worked in the Min­istry of Justice, the Uganda College of Commerce, and the Bank of Uganda, and is the mother of four sons.**

**Matembe became instrumental in the founding of the Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA) and Action for Development (ACFODE), a women's**

advocacy organization that grew to become a significant part of the Ugandan women's movement. In 1995, Matembe became a member of the National Resis­tance Council and the Constituent Assembly. She has been a member of parlia­ment since 1989, and in 1998, she was appointed Minister for Ethics and Integrity She was also one of the only two female commissioners on the twenty­one-member Constitutional Commission, elected in 1998. Among Matembe's notable achievements in parliament was her work on the controversial Domestic Relations Bill, aimed at giving women and girls greater equality in matters relat­ing to marriage, divorce, and family property, then in the process of being rewrit­ten by the Uganda Law Reform ComMission.

I MUST CALL MYSELF A FEMINIST + **437**

During the National Executive Committee meeting in 2003, she was one of the few politicians who stood up and openly opposed President Yoweri Museveni over the issue of running for a third term as president, a move that required amending the constitution. She argued that it was better for him to leave power when he was "still loved." She lost her ministerial post in the 2003 cabinet reshuf­fle, but remained a member of parliament, and in the same year she was elected to the Pan-African Parliament, an initiative of the African Union.

*Jackee Budesta Batanda and Florence Ebila*

Up to the time when I went to the UK to get my Master's degree at the Univer­sity of Warwick, I had refused to be called a feminist. The reason was basically that the word *feminist* did not augur well in Uganda at the time. According to public perceptions of the period, "a feminist" was dangerous, a terrible woman. If you mentioned that word, people would distance themselves from you. "She's on the wrong track," they would say, and they wouldn't listen. Part of the reason the term was really looked upon as dangerous was that it came from the West­ern world.

It is interesting to note that, in Uganda, men and people in general are encouraged to take up new ideas and innovations from the West. Many things from the Western world are promoted as progressive. However, patriarchal society, fearing its downfall, designates new (progressive) ideas about gender relations as "foreign" and "not suitable" for Africans. While the latest ideas about quantum physics, astrology, computer technology, etc., are welcomed, the idea of gender equality is most likely to be condemned.

Under the circumstances, I didn't want to be called a feminist. Many of us )yho were women activists knew that identifying ourselves as feminists was counterproductive. To do this would hurt our cause. Besides, I had my own way of defining myself. For some time, I had been wry clear that I was fighting for women, so' I would say, "Me, I'm not a feminist. I'm a self-styled advocate for women's rights." That's what I called myself. But when I went to Britain for my master's programme, I came to understand that a feminist is a person who is struggling to uplift women, someone who is challenging systems and structures that oppress women. There in Britain I decided, if that is the proper designa­tion, then I must call myself a feminist.

**There is another reason that I have now accepted this designation. These days women in Uganda have reached a certain stage in public life so that we are able to say that we are feminists, and it doesn't get us into trouble as it did a decade ago. In the beginning of our struggle, it was a good strategy to vehe­mently deny you were a feminist and call your activism something else. If you can imagine, in those early days we didn't even use the word *equality.* Even that word, *equality,* sometimes caused us problems. So we would say something like, when women are doing many things for the family, for the community, for the country, surely let them be entitled to certain rights.**

**438 + INTO THE TVVENTY-FIRST CENTURY (1996-2004)**

**When our point of view started to be accepted, the foundation was laid. These days we are in a different position. Yes, we can now say we are feminists without doing damage to our cause. Using that term now is not auguring badly because people have seen that, although we are feminists, we are doing certain things that need to be done and talking about things that need to be talked about. Don't you see? This change indicates that we have broken through and that many people now accept what we are saying and what we are doing. Most people are no longer scared of the word. So now I can say, easily, openly without fear, "Yes, I'm a feminist."**

**There is another issue closely related to the one I have just described. When I went to do my Master's programme, I had a reluctance to take up feminist theory. I was aware that theory, any theory, is not some kind of truth that pro­vides answers to life's most difficult questions, but rather that theory serves as a framework within which to investigate something and then analyse your find­ings. Yes, I knew that. However, I remember being concerned that I might get confused by someone's line of reasoning, and that the result might be that I would be disassociated from my rural women. I was not willing to go in that direction.**

**Instinctively I knew what I wanted, a straightforward manner, in some form. When a class I took began to take up some theoretical questions, about for example, how to define exactly what a "woman" is, I was not willing to fol­low that line of inquiry I knew which women I was talking about. I was talking about the rural women of Uganda, my mother, my rural aunt, my rural women who were suffering. I wanted these women to ,enjoy rights over land. I wanted them to inherit property. I wanted them to have rights to education, training and jobs. I wanted them to assert themselves and to follow their dreams as I had followed mine. I felt those kinds of things were what they wanted also, but that they might not be enlightened and empowered enough to speak about these things for themselves. I felt that they had paid fees for me through their suffer­ing. Therefore I felt I must take up the work of articulating for them.**

**At some point I told one professor that I didn't want to be confused by the­ory devised by others which might or might not fit our circumstances in Uganda. I told her that I came there to take a Master's in law and development, specifically because I wanted to do research about how law could be used as an instrument for the development and liberation of *women,* and I wanted *to***

**maintain my particular focus. I had certain questions that begged for answers, such as the following: How can we use law to liberate women from all this bondage that denies them the chance to fulfil their potential? What kinds of laws are needed to enable women to empower themselves? How can law protect women from the worst abuses of patriarchal society?**

**THE FEMALE HUSBAND + 439**

***Ruth Meena*THE FEMALE HUSBAND**

**Tanzania 2003 English**

**Ruth Meena was born in 1946 and *received* her early education near Moshi, in the Kilimanjaro region. After she completed her studies at the Ashira Middle Girls Boarding School, her father wanted her to take a teacher training course, while she aspired to higher education. Financial assistance for needy children was available from the local government council, but only fathers could present requests for assistance for their children. Lacking her father's support, Ruth Meena confronted the council and pleaded her own case. She thus learned early to fight for individual and collective rights. She was given assistance to attend secondary school and attended the H. H. Aga Khan High School in Dar es Salaam, and then the University of Dar es Salaam, where she successfully pursued three degrees.**

**Ruth Meena has been a feminist political scientist and professor in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration of the University of Dar es Salaam, from which she has recently retired. She is an articulate and com­mitted activist on human rights, environmental, and gender issues not only in Tanzania but throughout the eastern and southern regions of Africa. In 1991 she joined the Southern Africa Political Trust (SAFE) as coordinator of its gender unit, her work there culminating in the 1992 book *Gender in SouthernAfriar The­oretical Issues.* The book set out to contrast the nature of feminism in Africa with that conceived by European and American scholars. She has been instrumental in mobilizing for gender mainstreaming at the institutions of higher learning in Tanzania and especially at the University of Dar *es* Salaam, where she has also introduced the first course in gender and politics.**

**In 1995, Meena founded and became chair of the Environmental, Human Rights, and Gender Organization (Envirocare), whose objectives include *enabling* people, especially women, *youth, and* children, to access information critical to fighting poverty and illiteracy, to closing the gender gap, and reducing environmental degradation. Besides her work with community organizations in Dar es Salaam, Kilimanjaro, Mara, and other parts of the country, she has worked closely with such national organizations as the Tanzania Media Women Associa­tion, Tanzania Women Lawyers Association, and the Gender Dimensions Task Force. Collaborating with the Tanzania Gender Networking Program, she also worked on the Gender Budget Initiative, which analyzes the impact of public**

spending priorities on men, women, and children, and encourages public partici­pation in the national budget process. The initiative has become a model for other countries on the continent.

**440 + INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (1996-2004)**

Among the Kurya people in the Mara region of northwestern Tanzania, where Ruth Meena has worked, there is a traditional practice called *nyumba ntobo* that allows women to marry other women. In many cases, women who have no chil­dren of their own and have also acquired some status and wealth—mostly in the form of cows—may marry other women, who are usually younger, upon the pay­ment of dowry. The female husband, whose status is transformed into that of a male, controls the pair's resources and assumes male responsibilities and privi­leges, while the other woman's status is that of a conventional wife. The inequities between, the two partners mimic those of traditional male-female unions. The female husband chooses sexual partners for the wife, and the children from such unions belong to the female husband, who has usually entered into the marriage in order to have sons, who provide both heirs and security in old age. More often than not, such marriages are organized between the father of the bride and the female husband-to-be. It is not unusual to see young girls forced out of school to be married, and early marriages reportedly contribute to the Mara region's low enrollment of girls in primary schools and high dropout rates, The many sexual partners that the young women are forced to submit to make them vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. For the few who have managed to escape, their lot is the street far away from home.

In Meena's short story "The Female Husband," the speaker is a mother who laments the plight of her daughter, destined to be trapped as a wife of a female husband. She castigates not only the society that allows such practices to be sus­tained by a culture of silence, but also chastises herself for her role in perpetuating the practice. Meena, however, is not interested in portraying a woman who is merely a victim; rather, she focuses on the conscious need to stop those cultural practices that undermine women's rights. At the end of the piece, the voices of the fictionalized character and the writer merge in a call to action.

*4mandina Lihamba*

I am black and beautiful but bruised and battered.

I hail from Mara region, a land that produced the first president of this Repub­lic. I am proud of this origin, which associates me with the liberation of my coun­try and the continent. Black and beautiful, yes! Proud of a fighting culture that liberated this chained, bruised, and pained me. Yes, I am also forced to pretend that I love to be brutalized since it is supposed to be an expression of affection.

I was worth a couple of cows, which this man had to part with, the price of which I am paying heavily! Daily battered, insulted and deprived of choices, this is what I have had to pay for those cows, which my father added to his own stock! Do not advise the to walk out of this battered relationship!! AHAA! Where will I go? Who will be my host? Definitely not my father nor my broth­ers, since they are not about to part with a single cow that came as part of my

dowry. I have a feeling I shall continue to pay this price! For how.long? Do not ask me, as I do not see a flicker of light on this in the near future.

**THE FEMALE HUSBAND + 441**

But I am also a custodian of a culture which often forces me or my daughteh to cohabit with another woman, whose social status has beeti transformed by wealth. She plays a male role! Yes, she can pay the "dowry" and this is the price for my freedom. Yes, my husband colluded with a headmaster, whose name I am not going to mention, to indicate in the school register that my daughter had died, since there was a woman who was able to pay the dowry. As! my daughter was walking out of my home, I was saying to myself, it is the end of her sweet laughter, the end of her beautiful skin, the end of her elegance!

But I am not supposed to express this pain. **I** have to be hard; if she comes back beaten and brutalized I have to force her back to the "prison." This is our way of life, and who is she to defile "this culture"! Yes, I am not about to admit that I did not socialize her into this role! Even if she comes back bleeding, hurt, and humil­iated, I have to demonstrate hardness and I am not going to let my emotions betray me. As I bleed inside with pain, I shall have to assume the iron lady char­acter when it comes to dealing with my battered daughter! Yes, she will under­stand why I am as cold as a stone, expressionless, and yet full of love and affection. My daughter will understand when 'she grows to have her own daughters!

Yes, *Nyumba Ntobo is* a culture which gives her no freedom to choose whom to father her children. She will dare not say no to the suspected HIV positive guy who has been the choice of her supposedly female husband. And yet, she will be expected to be proud of her culture. Yes, it's cultural and it's African. And who dare say that what is African and cultural is wrong! Not me, as I shall be accused of being a "Western stooge" copy cat, petite bourgeoisie, sell out, or Western feminist! I fear labels. I have to pretend that my schooling did not transform my mind set, the constructed Africanness and femaleness!! I have to pretend that I am not what I am; I also need acceptance, recognition and iden­tity. But what a price am I paying!

I know I have no choice but to endure the daily beatings, the daily insults, the hard work in the fields and in the home. Call me *"Ma Endurance."* That is my culture. How long.is it going to be sustained, do not ask. But somehow, I have a dream that this culture will one day be questioned, if not by my children, by my grandchildren, or great-grandchildren. Yes, one day they are going to redefine it from their own viewpoint, they are going to say no more beating, no more insults, no more sexual slavery, no more *Nyumba Ntobo* and no more dowry. This is the time when those who enslaved us, who continued to chain us will have to pay the price which I am paying. Yes, proud, beautiful and black! Call me Ma endurance, that is my culture!

Hello, fellow women, how long are we going to protect the brutalities in our diverse cultures, in their diverse forms? Brutality is not part of the African way of life, and there is no beauty in being battered or mutilated, or sexually exploited! We could pick a voice from every cultural context with more or less the same message. Rise up and say NO! ENOUGH is ENOUGH.

**Culture is a dynamic force; let us use it to challenge the culture of oppression which reduces women into sexual objects, into beasts of burden and into second-class citizens. The advantage which we have is the very fact that we are and we shall remain custodians of our cultural heritage. We remain the main socializers of boys and girls into adulthood. Let us use the influence we have on our children to impart upon them values and norms that challenge oppressive norms and val­ues, particularly those which-positkmwornen and girls into low social status.**

**442 + INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (1996-2004)**

**There is a lot we can do to impart an alternative culture. Let's call a spade a spade'. Human rights language is now a politically correct language accepted by a very masculine internationally defined standard. Let's make the most out of this space to demand protection from torture and to demand accountability from the duty bearers for abuses against our fundamental rights as human beings. Let's search for a culture that has peace, love, and equality; a culture that defines civility from our point of view. After all, we women constitute the majority of world citizens.**

***Martha Qorro*LANGUAGE IN TANZANIA**

**Tanzania 2003 Kiswahili**

**Martha Qorro is a prominent lobbyist for the movement to change the medium of instruction in Tanzania from English to Kiswahili. Born in 1952, Qorro is a lecturer in English at the University of Dar es Salaam, and former head of the Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics. She has campaigned tirelessly for both improvementin ..the teaching .of English, and the use of Kiswahili, the language best understood by the nation's children, as a medium in secondary and higher education. Because of her work, she has recently been appointed to the National Kiswahili Council, a body that oversees the creation of new Kiswahili terminology and generally provides support for the advancement of Kiswahili.**

**In 1997; Qofrro collaborated With Zaline M. Roy-Campbell on *The Language Crisis in Tanzania: The Myth of English Versus Education,* which reports on research into reading failures in Tanzanian secondary schools. Her doctoral work focused on writing problems of secondary school students. Recently, Qorro has been involved in the LOITASA (Languages of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa) project, which conducts research on introducing African languages into teaching.**

**A debate on the appropriate language of instruction has been raging in Tanzania for the last three decades. A few years after independence, in 1967, the Tanzanian government took the then-revolutionary step of declaring Kiswahili the language of primary school education, and successive governments have considered instituting Kiswahili as the medium for the entire educational system. In spite of the evidence provided by Qorro and other scholars and activists, the movement toward change has encountered opposing pressures from the West, including the policies of the**

World Bank and International Monetary Fund and such organized efforts as the English Language Teaching Support Project, funded by the British government. To date, English continues to perform a gate-keeping function, which excludes the majority of Tanzanians from educational and employment opportunities.

**LANGUAGE IN TANZANIA + 443**

The text below is a translation of a talk ()ono delivered to members of the Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM), the ruling party in Tanzania since independence, on the importance of the language issue to national development, particularly agriculture and industrialization.

*SaidaYabya-Othman*

It has been remarked that the standard of education in Tanzania is low and needs to be uplifted, for good-quality education results in an improved econ­omy, better standards of agriculture, and more productive industries. The important question is: How can we attain better education, or how can we transform the low quality of education now prevalent? In other words, wherein lie the problems that result in poor education? One can point to numerous problems, including shortages of properly trained teachers and educational equipment, inadequate classrooms, and an inadequate medium of instruction. Since I am a language teacher, I will talk about the last problem, first noted in 1967 and still unsolved. Further, if we were to succeed in solving all the other problems but this one; the standards of education in the country would con­tinue to remain low.

I will begin by reviewing numerous pieces of research on the medium of instruction in secondary schools in Tanzania, and the findings and recommen­dations emanating from that research. Later, I will offer suggestions about what can be done to raise the standards of education and thus improve the economy and revolutionize livestock-rearing and crop-farming.

How is it that we go on complaining about low levels of education while we ourselves set up the policies, and are reluctant to adapt them to fit with the times?

The teaching environment in schools is deplorable. For instance, at a semi­nar in April 2002, a head teacher of one of the secondary schools pointed out that out of fifty teachers in his school only three were proficient in English. This is tantamount to saying that the other forty-seven taught in bad English. That is, mathematics, civics, history, and other subjects, as well as English, will be taught in bad Engligh. What kind of English would the pupils have learned at the end of the day—good English taught by the teacher of English, or bad English spoken by the other nine teachers? With this in mind, can we really say that our children are being educated? Will children really learn English in such circumstances? We have continued the same language policy for twenty-seven years, although the first research findings laid open the language problem. Still, we are surprised that educational standards are low! We are surprised that pupils have no command of the English language, nor do they know Kiswahili! Where and from whom are they supposed to learn under such deplorable

**circumstances? Are such circumstances conducive to better education and bet­ter economic conditions for the majority of Tanzanians? Are we likely to revo­lutionize crop farming and livestock rearing under such circumstances? Why do we go on with this self-deception?**

**444 + INTO THE TwENTY-FIRST CENTURY (1996-2004)**

**We were earlier given food for thought when the question was posed: Why do Tanzanians, or educated Tanzanians, speak with such meekness? I do not have a definitive response to that question, but it could be that we, the edu­cated, are not confident of the real meaning of what we are talking about sim­ply because we have gained our education through a language that we have not properly grasped.**

**Someone has remarked that our children do not know their history. I entirely agree with him. But we need to ask, How can they learn the subject if it is taught in a language they do not comprehend? How can they learn science if it is taught in a language they do not understand?**

**One of the announced aims of secondary school education in Tanzania is to enable pupils to learn both Kiswahili and English. Theoretically, bilingual edu­cation should not use two languages at once, but should use each of the lan­guages in separate domains. A recognized pedagogic principle holds that one should teach pupils in the language most familiar to them, and at the same time, teach a second or foreign language as a subject rather than a medium of instruction. This pedagogical principle is the one applied for teaching a second or foreign language in all the developed countries. I have said "developed coun­tries," because these countries "developed" through the use of their own lan­guages as media of instruction, resulting in the majority of their people having access to education and thus contributing to national development. We are erring in thinking that developed countries have managed to use their own lan­guages as media of instruction because they were already developed! Why can't we see the logic in the fact that no nation can attain development through edu­cating its people in a language they do not understand?**

***Translated by Abdulbakim Yabya and SaidaYabya-Otbman***

***Monica 4rac de Nyeko*IN THE STARS**

**Uganda 2003 English**

**Born in 1979, Monica Arac de Nyeko comes from the Kitgum District in north­ern Uganda, which has been affected by war since 1986. For twenty years, resi­dents have been trapped between the rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army and the government forces, many of whom had once been guerrillas themselves and**

were often equally brutal. The fourth child in a family of five, she studied 'at Shi­moni Demonstration School in Kampala and at Gulu High School in northern Uganda. At the peak of the war she was forced to study in Luwero, in the south of the country, where she completed her secondary education. She later attended Makerere University, earning a bachelor's degree with honors in education with a specialization in teaching literature and English language.

**IN THE STARS + 445**

Her growing concern about the war and the suffering and death among her people, the Acoli, inspired her to go to the University of Groningen in the Netherlands to study for a master's degree in humanitarian assistance. She believes that her studies will enable her to work with women and children in war zones like that of her homeland. Since completing her master's degree, Mac has worked for international humanitarian organizations in Italy and Sudan, and now in Kenya.

Monica Mac began publishing stories and poems while still in her twenties. The Ugandan Women's publishing house selected several of Arac's stories and poems for anthologies. A collection of her poems will be published by Poetry International, and a novella, *The Last Dance,* by Fountain Publishers in Kampala.

In 2003, "In the Stars" won the Women's World contest, "Women's Voices in War Zones," cosponsored by The Nation Institute with support from the Puffin Foundation. Women's World—Women's Organization for Rights, Literature, and Development—is a global free speech and advocacy network of feminist writers, based in New York. The contest was designed to bring forward voices not being heard in the current discussion of war and terrorism, particularly those of ordinary women trapped in military, political, economic, and domestic war zones. "In the Stars" was first published on the Women's World Web site.

*Beatrice Lamwaka and Florence Ebila*

**Where does your hope or security lie?
  
In the stars.**

My mother used to talk about him; my Uncle Oryema. How she begged him not to become a soldier. "He didn't listen," she always said and swallowed hard like she never forgave him for disappearing from our grasp like *raa* smoke. He was so far away from home, somewhere in the jungles, holding his rifle when death beckoned. A man brought the news to my grandma. Said the gunfire had been heavy. Her son had been shot in the stomach. That he had tied an old green army uniform to hold his bowels together and fled for his life. The man offered to go back to search for our Uncle Oryema with another uncle who later joined the army, to fight the demons that haunted him of his brother's death. They combed *Kituba* trees where they say spirits live, the long grasses of the blazing Kitgum wilderness with scorpions and snakes. Uncle Oryema would now remain a memory in our hearts. On his "grave" grandma laid four large stones to show where we should have laid his body.

Of the many things I remember of him, it's the toffee sweets he brought me when he returned from college, and told Ma he was going to fight. That day he

**took me to the cinema. My first time ever to see motion picture with images the size of our city council house.**

**446 + INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (1996-2004)**

**I went to the family cemetery yesterday. There was Ma lying beside Uncle Oryema; she had joined him seven years later. At least she had not been struck on the head with an axe or set ablaze in a hut. Meningitis took her.**

**Sitting there and staring at their graves, it was hard to think of Ma and Uncle Oryema as ancestors. Worry had drained Ma's spirit. She carried memo­ries. She suffered the pain of knowing the past and future. Tears never stopped. When she followed Uncle Oryema into death, I wished that perhaps she would learn to forgive him. She would learn not to worry about this war. But she had died knowing we would never go to school because it was always bullets and bombs. Our virginity would fall prey to wicked savagery. We would be abducted and forced to fight. Our bodies would rot in the wild.**

**The 1986 war against The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Northern Uganda started as only as a joke, but it has eaten away Acoli. It's like an imaginary-tale. Children are trained to be lethal massacre weapons. Sometimes they flee back home to seek what was taken from them, but they discover they cannot stay because their minds think of blood and killing only. They tell of the urine they drank from the unbearable thirst. The young girls, our former schoolmates, have been sex-slaves and loathe male company. Many, we will never know what happened to them.**

**We are a generation of thorns. Memories of nights in rain and gripping fear creep into our dreams. Sleep should be the only place where there is no worry. It should be dreamland, hope land. But our sleep knows not the vague images of paradise created from longing; there are images of ghosts of dead friends and relatives. The ones we watched *pangas* hack. Those we heard from our hiding places flogged to death. Those we see headless, limbless, noseless, lipless when we blink.**

**It's sad that the situation is hopeless and there is nothing much that we without power can do. Our government has been fighting futilely for sixteen years but they will not talk serious peace. Our president Y.K. Museveni calls Joseph Kony the rebel leader a jigger that can be dealt with in an instant. But numbers of Acoli civilians dwindle in cheap talk. They say in every news bul­letin, "the war will end real soon." Soon has become sixteen years.**

**We have learned to survive and say our prayers before trying to sleep. In case we wake up in another world it has got to be Heaven, vague as it might seem to atheists.**

**We have learned to seal our lips and pretend we know nothing of what goes on. We cannot trust anyone. The rebels do not care whether we live or die. We do not know why, they fight. We know nothing of treaties signed by important men. We know not what words like *terrorists, victims* and *universal declarations of human rights* mean. But we know that we are going to die, from bullets, hunger, or hopelessness.**

The low-ranked government soldiers, who are *sent* to *protect us, run* and hide in their brick-walled barracks to protect themselves when the rebels come. They return when it's calm to rape our grandmothers, light our huts for pure pleasure and in the evening we hear the radios say, "Look what the bloody rebels did again, take heart brothers and sisters in the north, and ,try to under­stand; that the government is liberating you." But we cannot try to understand; there is nothing to be understood.

**THE STORY OF WACU +** 447

For the army majors, as long as the war goes on, there will always be countries willing to donate large monies. Then they can buy banks, government property, and own the entire nation. Their wives can own massage parlors and designer boutiques to serve foreign diplomats in Sheraton, Equatorial or Grand Imperial Hotels; their children can go to international schools and play Barbie doll.

When heaven seems so far off sometimes, we dream and wait for miracles and look at the stars. The twinkling of stars far off in the sky and the lone silence of the night's presence remind us that one day we shall smile, because the stars will twinkle only for us.

The immortal stars whisper that they watch over us as we await fate. So we place our hopes, not in the rebels or our government or the United Nations, but in the night sky, where the stars twinkle bright.

***Margaret Wangui Mwerna*THE STORY OF WACU**

Kenya 2004 Gikuyu

In this version of the tale ofWacu, an ill-treated wife receives the providential gift of meat. In other versions of the story, Wacu is a child privileged by her rich father, the owner of many animals, who allows her to eat meat. In that version, she is, through her youth, a shunned tomboy, for she herds the animals as her father does, and spends time with him listening to his advice and stories. She grows as strong and capable as the boys in the village. When she comes of age for marriage, she is not popular, but eventually she meets and marries a man from another village before he hears of her reputation. She seems to conform to village custom, but she continues to eat meat secretly. She has many children, all boys, and when she feels comfortable about her life, she openly eats meat as part of a protest. Healers cannot cure her, though they advise her husband to prevent her from eating his meat. Nevertheless, she either buys meat secretly or she curses her husband when he refuses to give her any of his. In the story's conclusion, a feast of Gikuyu elders all male, of course—is the occasion for the eagle's appearance. The bird steals the elder's meat and drops it into the arms of Wacu. Young men find Wacu and the meat and report back to the elders, who then "resolve to give their women the right to eat meat in their homesteads." One version of the tale ends with this sentence: ***"'Ciakorire Wan' mugunda'*** [meat found Wacu in the field] is a common joke when one meets some luck without much effort."

**Margaret Wangui Mwema lives in Thilca, Kenya. She learned the story of Wacu, along with other tales, from her mother and grandmother, who told stories to Wangui and her siblings at night before the children went to sleep. In turn, after she married, Mwema. was a nursery school teacher for twenty years and often told stories to the children she taught, as well as to her own six children. Margaret Mwema is married to Lawrence Mwema, who transcribed and trans­lated the story of Wacu for this volume.**

***Ann Biersteker and Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye***

**Once upon a time there lived a woman by the name of Wacu. Wacu was mar­ried. Her husband had two wives, of whom Wacu was one. Unfortunately, Wacu was not the favorite wife: The other woman was much loved and she too disliked Wacu. So Wacu lived the life of a humiliated wife.**

**One day Wadi's husband invited his friends to come and eat a roasted goat at his home. He brewed beer and slaughtered a fat he-goat for them. They had a big feast.**

**Just as the slaughtering of the goat started, Wacu quietly took her farming knife and a basket and she walked away to her garden of sweet potatoes. The sky was heavy with rain clouds as Wacu was busy working in her sweet potato garden. She took her time in the garden cultivating and picking some sweet potatoes for her dinner.**

**Back at her home, the men were drinking and anxiously awaiting the appe­tizing meat roasting on the grill. Wacu, who was famished, found shelter under a dry fig tree as„the.rain continued..to pour down.**

**All of a sudden an eagle carrying a burden landed on the fig tree. The eagle dropped a huge goat sausage. Wacu did not hesitate when she sensed what had just happened at her home. The carousing men had waited, expecting to share the huge goat sausage,\_butthe hungry eagle had snatched the juicy chunk of meat. As the eagle had landed on the tree, it had dropped the meat as it tried to bite it.**

**Wacu picked up the meat at once and sat down to eat all of it. Hence the popular proverb, "Wacu's lucky find." Wacu ate and ate until she was satisfied. She wrapped what remained in aThinana leaf and placed the parcel of meat in her potato basket.**

**Wacu was happy thinking of how lucky she was that day. She thought, "They did not remember me, but God has. I've eaten to my satisfaction. Thank you, God."**

**When she reached home, Wacu finished eating the sausage. She did not tell her husband anything about what had happened that day.**

**This reminds us that our God loves even those who are held in contempt by others.**

**My tale ends there.**

***Translated by Lawrence Mwema***

**448 + INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (1996-2004)**

***Wangari Maathai*NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LECTURE**

**NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LECTURE + 449**

Kenya 2004 English

Wangari Maathai is the first feminist, the first environmentalist, and the first African woman to be awarded the Nobel- Peace Prize. As a scholar, an activist, and a teacher, she is an advocate for the environment, for women's rights, and for social and political justice. Since 2002 she has been Kenya's Assistant Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources and a Member of Parliament fOr Tetu District, in central Kenya. In 2004 she was declared by Kenya's parliament to be Kenya's envoy to the world for the environment, human rights, and democracy. She was elected the first president of the Economic, Social, and Cultural Couhcil of the African union in 2d05.

Wangari Maathai was the first woman in Eastern and Central Africa to earn a PhD and was the first woman to chair a department, Veterinary Anatomy, at the University of Nairobi. She did her undergraduate work and earned an MA in the United States. She did. her PhD work at the University of Nairobi. Wangari Maathai established the Green Belt Movement in 1977 while active in the National Council of Women of Kenya. The Green Belt Movement plants trees to prevent soil erosion and to provide wood used in making charcoal, the primary cooking fuel in rural Kenya. Central to the movement's goals has been the involvement of rural women in sustaining the environment that provides their livelihood. The movement has established 6,000 local nurseries and has planted over 30 million trees in Kenya. It has,also beefi successful in encouraging commu­nity mobilization and environmental activism. Wangari Maathai led the Green Belt Movement in struggles to secure public spaces and forests in Kenya. The movement was successful in preventing the construction of a skyscraper in Nairobi's Uhuru Park and in preventing private takeover of the state-owned Karuna Forest. The Green Belt Movement also holds seminars to encourage international reforestation efforts.

In addition to the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Wangari Maathai has been awarded the French Legion d'Honneur, the Goldman Environmental prize, the UN's Africa Prize for Leadership, the Edinburgh Medal, the Jane Addams Con­ference Leadership Award, and the Golden Ark Award. Williams College, the University of Norway, Hoba:rt and William Smith Colleges, and Yale University have awarded her honorary degrees.

Wangari Maathai's publications include two editions of *The Green Belt Move­ment: Sharing the Approach and the Experience* and her 2006 autobiography *Unbowed.* She has also published articles in a wide range of international publica­tions including *The Christian Science Monitor, The International Herald Tribune, The Nation, The New York Times,* and *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly.* In addi­tion, she often contributes, articles on environmental, social justice, and feminist issues to *The Nation* and East African newspapers in Kenya.

*Ann Biersteker*

**Your Majesties**

**450 + INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (1996-2004)**

**Your Royal Highnessess**

**Honorable Members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee**

**Excellencies**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**I stand before you and the world humbled by this recognition and uplifted by the honour of being the 2004 Nobel Peace Laureate.**

**As the first African woman to receive this prize, I accept it on behalf of the people of Kenya and Africa, and indeed the world.**

**I am especially mindful of women and the girl-child. I hope it will encourage them to raise their voices and take more space for leadership. I know the hon­our also gives a deep sense of pride to our men, both old and young. As a mother, I appreciate the inspiration this brings to the youth and urge them to use it to pursue their dreams.**

**Although this prize comes to me, it acknowledges the work of countless individuals and groups across the globe. They work quietly and often without recognition to protect the environment, promote democracy, defend human rights and ensure equality between women and men. By so doing, they plant seeds of peace. I know they, too, are proud today. To all who feel represented by this prize I say use it to advance your mission and meet the high expectations the world will place on us.**

**This honour is also for my family, friends, partners and supporters through­out the world. All of them helped shape the vision and sustain our work, which was often accomplished under hostile conditions. I am also grateful to the peo­ple of Kenya—who remained stubbornly hopeful that democracy could be real­ized and their environment managed sustainably. Because of this support, I am here today to accept this great honour.**

**I am immensely privileged to join my fellow African Peace laureates, Presi­dents Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the late Chief Albert Luthuli, the late Anwar el-Sadat and the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.**

**I know that African people everywhere are encouraged by this news. My fel­low Africans, as we embrace this recognition, let us use it to intensify our com­mitment to our people, to reduce conflicts and poverty and thereby improve their quality of life. Let us embrace democratic governance, protect human rights and protect our environment. I am confident that we shall rise to the occasion. I have always believed that solutions to most of our problems must come from us.**

**In this•year's prize, the Norwegian Nobel Committee has placed the critical issue of environment and its linkage to democracy and peace before the world. For their visionary action, I am profoundly grateful. Recognising that sustain­able development, democracy and peace are indivisible is an idea whose time has come. Our work over the past 30 years had always appreciated and engaged these linkages.**

My inspiration partly comes from my childhood experiences and observa­tions of Nature in rural Kenya. It has been influenced and nurtured by the for­mal education I was privileged to receive in Kenya, the United States and Ger­many. As I was growing up, I witnessed forests being cleared and replaced by commercial plantations, which destroyed local biodiversity and the capacity of the forests to conserve water.

**NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LECTURE + 451**

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

In 1977, when we started the Green Belt Movement, I was partly respond­ing to needs identified by rural women, namely lack of firewood, clean drinking water, balanced diets, shelter and income.

Throughout Africa, women are the primary caretakers, holding significant responsibility for tilling the land and feeding their families. As a result, they are often the first to become aware of environmental damage as resources become scarce and incapable of sustaining their families.

The women we worked with recounted that unlike in the past, they were unable to meet their basic needs. This was due to the degradation of their immediate environment as well as the introduction of commercial farming, which replaced the growing of household food crops. But international trade controlled the price of the exports from these small-scale farmers and a reason­able and just income could not be guaranteed. I came to understand that when the environment is destroyed, plundered or mismanaged, we undermine our quality of life and that of future generations.

Tree planting became, a natural choice to address some of the initial basic needs identified by women. Also, tree planting is simple, attainable and guaran­tees quick, successful results within a reasonable amount of time. This sustains interest and commitment.

So, together, we have planted over 30 million trees that provide fuel, food, shelter, and income to support their children's education and household needs. The activity also creates employment and improves soils and watersheds. Through their involvement, women gain some degree of power over their lives, especially their social and economic position and relevance in the family. This work continues.

Initially, the work was difficult because historically our people have been persuaded to believe that, because they are poor, they lack not only capital, but also knowledge and skills to address their challenges. Instead they are condi­tioned to believe that solutions to their problems must come from "outside." Further, women did not realise that meeting their needs depended on their environment being healthy and well managed. They were also unaware that a degraded environment leads to a scramble for scarce resources and may culmi­nate in poverty and even conflict. They were also unaware of the injustices of international economic arrangements.

In order to assist communities to understand these linkages, we developed a citizen education program, during which people identify their problems, the causes and possible solutions. They then make connections between their own

personal actions and the problems they witness in the environment and in soci­ety. They learn that our world is confronted with a litany of woes: corruption, violence against women and children, disruption and breakdown of families, and disintegration of cultures and communities. They also identify the abuse of drugs and chemical substances, especially among young people. There are also devastating diseases that are defying cures or occurring in epidemic propor­tions. Of particular concern are HIV/AIDS, malaria and diseases associated with malnutrition.

**452 + INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (1996-2004)**

On the environmental front, they are exposed to many human activities that are devastating to the environment and societies. These include widespread destruction ,of ecosystems, especially through deforestation, climatic instability, and contamination in the soils and waters that all contribute to excruciating poverty.

In the process, the participants discover that they must be part of the solu­tions. They realize their hidden potential and are empowered to overcome iner­tia and take action. They come to recognize that they are the primary custodi­ans and beneficiaries of the environment that sustains them.

Entire communities also come to understand that while it is necessary to hold their governments accountable, it is equally important that in their own relationships with each other, they exemplify the leadership values they wish to see in their own leaders, namely justice, integrity, and trust.

Although initially the Green Belt Movement's tree planting activities did not address issues of democracy and peace, it soon became clear that responsi­ble governance of the environment was impossible without democratic space. Therefore, the tree became a symbol for the democratic struggle in Kenya. Cit­izens were mobilised to challenge widespread abuses of power, corruption and environmental mismanagement. In Nairobi's Uhuru Park, and Freedom Cor­ner, and in many parts of the country, trees of peace were planted to demand the release of prisoners of conscience and a peaceful transition to democracy.

Through the Green Belt Movement, thousands of ordinary citizens were mobilised and empowered to take action and effect change. They learned to overcome fear and a sense of helplessness and moved to defend democratic rights.

In time, the tree also became a symbol for peace and conflict resolution, especially during ethnic conflicts in Kenya when the Green Belt Movement used peace trees to reconcile disputing communities. During the ongoing re­writing of the Kenyan constitution, similar trees of peace were planted in many parts of the country to promote a culture of peace. Using trees as a symbol of peace is in keeping with a widespread African tradition. For example, the elders of the Kikuyu carried-a staff from the *thigi* tree that, when placed between two disputing sides, caused them to stop fighting and seek reconciliation. Many communities in Africa have these traditions.

Such practises are part of an extensive cultural heritage, which contributes both to the conservation of habitats and to cultures of peace. With the destruc-

tion of these cultures and the introduction of these new values, local biodiversity is no longer valued or protected and as a result, it is quickly degraded and disap­pears. For this reason, the Green Belt Movement explores the concept of cultural biodiversity, especially with respect to indigenous seeds and medicinal plants.

**NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LECTURE + 453**

As we progressively understood the causes of environmental degradation, we saw the need for good governance. Indeed, the state of any country's environ­ment is a reflection of the kind of governance in place, and without good gover­nance there can be no peace. Many countries, which have poor governance sys­tems, are also likely to have conflicts and poor laws protecting the environment.

In 2002, the courage, resilience, patience and commitment of members of the Green Belt Movement, other civil society organizations, and the Kenyan public culminated in the peaceful transition to a democratic government and laid the foundation for a more stable society.

Excellencies, friends, ladies and gentlemen,

It is thirty years since we started this work. Activities that devastate the envi­ronment and societies continue unabated. Today we are faced with a challenge that calls for a shift in our thinking, so that humanity stops threatening its life-support system. We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own—indeed, to embrace the whole creation in all its diversity, beauty and wonder. This will happen if we see the need to revive our sense of belonging to a larger family of life, with which we have shared our evolutionary process.

In the course of history, there comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness, to reach a higher moral ground. A time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other.

That time is now

The Norwegian Nobel Committee has challenged the world to broaden the understanding of peace: there can be no peace without equitable development; and there can be no development without sustainable management of the envi­ronment in a democratic and peaceful space. This shift is an idea whose time has come.

I call on leaders, especially from Africa, to expand democratic space and build fair and just societies that allow the creativity and energy of their citizens to flourish.

Those of us who have been privileged to receive education, skills, and expe­riences and even power must be role models for the next generation of leader­ship. In this regard, I would also like to appeal for the freedom of my fellow lau­reate Aung San Suu Kyi so she can continue her work for peace and democracy for the people of Burma and the world at large.

Culture plays a central role in the political, economic and social life of com­munities. Indeed, culture may be the missing link in the development of Africa. Culture is dynamic and evolves over time, consciously discarding retrogressive traditions, like female genital mutilation (FGM), and embracing aspects that are good and useful.

**Africans, especially, -should re-discover positive aspects of their culture. In accepting them, they would give themselves a sense of belonging, identity and self-confidence.**

**454 + INTO THE i'VVENTY4IRST CENTURY (1996-2004)**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**There is also need to galvanize civil society and grassroots movements to catalyse change. I call upon governments to recognize the role of these social movements in building a critical mass of responsible citizens, who help main­tain checks and balances in society. On their part, civil society should embrace not only their rights but also their responsibilities.**

**Further, industry and global institutions must appreciate that ensuring eco­nomic justice, equity and ecological integrity are of greater value than profits at any cost.**

**The extreme global inequities and prevailing consumption patterns continue at the expense of the environment and peaceful co-existence. The choice is ours.**

**I would like to call on young people to commit themselves to activities that contribute toward achieving their long-term dreams. They have the energy and creativity to shape a sustainable future. To the young people I say, you are a gift to your communities and indeed the world. You are our hope and our future.**

**The holistic approach to development, as exemplified by the Green Belt Movement, could be embraced and replicated in more parts of Africa and beyond. It is fOfthiikeagoif that I have established the Wangari Maathai Foun­dation to ensure the continuation and expansion of these activities. Although a lot has been achieved, much remains to be done.**

**Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,**

**As I conclude, I reflect on-my -childhood experience when I would visit a stream next to our home to fetch water for my mother. I would drink water straight from the stream. Playing among the arrowroot leaves, I tried in vain to pick up the strands of frogs' eggs, believing they were beads. But every time I put my little fingers under them they would break. Later, I saw thousands of tadpoles: black, energetic and wriggling through the clear water against the background of the brown earth. This is the world I inherited from my parents.**

**Today, over fifty years later, the stream has dried up, women walk long dis­tances for water, which is not always clean, and children will never know what they have lost. The challenge is to restore the home of the tadpoles and give back to our** *children a world of* **beauty** *and wonder.*

**Thank you very much.**

**CONTRIBUTORS**

**CONTRIBUTORS + 455**

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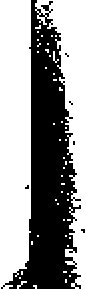
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**PERMISSIONS ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND SOURCES**

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**Sultan Fatima binti Muhammad Mkubwa, PEACE AND SECURITY**

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**Mwana Kupona binti Msham,** *FROM* **A MOTHER'S ADVICE AND PRAYER: AN EPIC POEM**

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**Emily Reute, aka Princess Salma of Zanzibar, A ROYAL CHILDHOOD IN ZANZIBAR**

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**Martha Thabi, MY GOD, WHY HAVE You FORSAKEN ME?**

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**Jessie Nyagondwe, LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED Text from the National Archives of Malawi, Zomba.**

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**Bwanikwa, TEN TIMES A SLAVE**

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