

## Of a Man Named “Neo”

*By Seif Sekalala*

**\*\*An End\*\***

Twenty years ago, a young man named Neo—and yes, as in, similar to **\*\*that\*\*** Neo [link]—arrived in the United States, with two years left of his country’s high school curriculum. High school had been an unremarkable time for Neo. Thus, having (more or less / in essence, ...) **\*\*failed\*\*** that stage of education, Neo was determined to reinvent himself; to achieve that vaunted American Dream.

And in a way, 20 years later, he has. After all, the man has earned a combination of credentials and work experience that has been described as “rarified.” He has written books, published research articles in decent journals, etc.

But this story isn’t linear. Rather, it’s an eclectic smorgasbord of various unique experiences of—among other elements:

\_\_\_ 1) Time—e.g., similar to the way Christopher Nolan treats it: flashbacks, peeks into the future, and present moments;

\_\_\_ 2) Biopsychosocial stages and corporal-mental states;

\_\_\_ 3) And tangible and intangible—or, physical and metaphysical “things”: achievements, losses, desires, etc.

\_\_\_ 4) And communication, symbol systems, and complex-yet-effective ways of solving problems.

In other words / e.g.: the story features human languages, like English (and French, Luganda, Swahili, Mandarin, etc.); math, coding, and data science; and project management.

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In America, Neo excelled at learning, and he honed a fierce love of the processes of learning and metacognition. He also excelled at becoming a fiercely patriotic citizen of his adopted country—almost (loyal-) “to a fault,” in fact.

Unfortunately, amidst these achievements, Neo seemed to also hit a glass ceiling. Not because he was unqualified; nor even (as some sympathetic recruiters admit to him) because he is “over-qualified.”

Rather, by becoming **\*\*Dr./Prof.\*\*** Neo, the protagonist also ended up evolving into a rather awkward “Jack of All Trades.” And I should quickly add—by the way, that our protagonist is in fact a “Master of a Good Number of Trades.” In any case, as a consequence of this setback, Neo somewhat “lost his voice,” and his self-esteem deteriorated insidiously.

**\*\*A Beginning\*\***

In a recent interview, the protagonist revealed:

\_\_\_ Amidst all that chaos, I just continued putting one foot in front of the other; dragging myself along, one painful step at a time. I continued searching for a professional home.

\_\_\_ But I also kept feeding my Creativity Beast—e.g., using this portal [link: ZX-1 || Note to Ugandan users: You must use a VPN connection to access the site];

\_\_\_ And I kept honing my entrepreneurial spirit. E.g., via this portal [link: ZX-2 || Ditto this link, re: access for Ugandan users].

However, Neo added:

\_\_\_ I suppose I will have to continue (trying to) earnestly demonstrate my potentially unique contributions to various organizations. But in the end, I believe oftentimes, folkx have to be willing to take a chance on some individuals.

\_\_\_ Many individuals can be compared to ugly-looking but priceless rough gems, which demand a special type of cutting, processing, polishing, etc.

\_\_\_ Regardless, one has to nurture a steadfast belief in their ability to survive, to solve problems, and to help improve their world.

**\*\*Here and Now / The Present\*\***

To all these folks, who’ve supported this writer in one way or another along their journey, thank you.

Ultimately, the Neos (/heroes) of such stories are blessed to have shoulders of kind Morpheuses (/giants) which enable them to reach self-actualization. Thank you.