

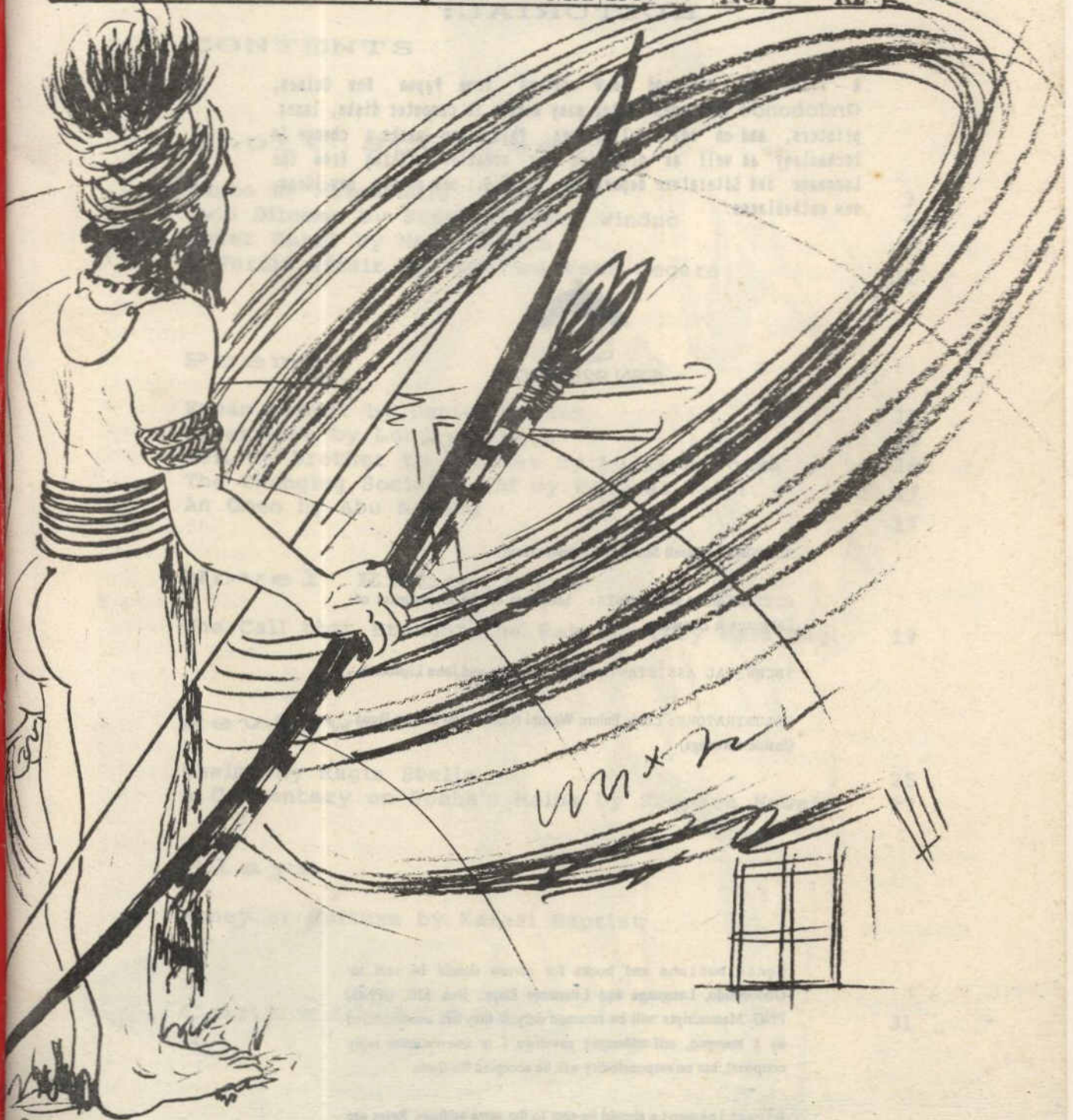
ONDORONDO

A Papua New Guinea literary magazine

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EDITORIAL:

A forum for old and new writers from Papua New Guinea, *Ondobondo* continues after many months in computer disks, laser printers, and on editorial shelves. This issue marks a change in technology as well as promotion for creative writing from the Language and Literature department, U.P.N.G.: new people, new ideas, new enthusiasms.



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EDITORS: Russell Soaba and Patricia Hardy

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS: Members of the Department of
Language & Literature

TECHNICAL ASSISTANTS: Florence Wala and John Lipscomb

ILLUSTRATORS: Louis Palaru Warimi (Cover) and Sibona Buna
(Inside drawings)

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RAMBO

by Malum Nalu

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RAMBO

by Malum Nalu

Patrick stared at the small square box in front of him. Fascinated, he watched as Rambo machinegunned knifed and shot down men with arrows. Patrick just loved that man, Rambo. Of all other actors, Rambo was the best. Even Bruce Lee, Terence Hill, Bud Spencer, even Clint Eastwood were no match for Rambo.

Ever since the video had come into the settlement, Patrick had not missed one night. The video had been installed by a businessman and had become an instant favorite with the dwellers of the squatter settlement. You paid to watch, adults 50t and kids 20t. That was the price to watch three films.

Patrick watched as Rambo, now in a helicopter he had stolen from the Russians, fought his way through enemy lines until he reached safety. The film came to an end.

It was 3a.m. Patrick started walking home. Patrick and his parents, Maria and John, lived in a squatter settlement in Moresby. Patrick was an only son but his parents didn't seem to care much about him. They only seemed to care about their card gambling. The house was dirty, full of rats, nothing like the movies where the houses were so heavenly.

8 a.m. in the morning. Time for school. Patrick woke up, ran to the rusty 44 gallon drum, dipped his hands in and washed his face. Then he ran into his parents room. They were still asleep in bed. He reached into his mother's purse, grabbed a K2.00 note he found and ran off.

Class had already started. He knocked on the door. Mr. Rua, the class teacher, opened up the door. "Now Patrick, why are you late for class?" he asked.

"I was sleeping," replied Patrick.

"What were you doing last night?" shouted Mr. Rua. The whole class was staring at the two. "I said, what were you doing last night!!" yelled Mr. Rua again.

"I, I was watching video," came the reply.

"Ten year old boys, in grade 3, and with no brains at all shouldn't be watching video!" shouted Mr. Rua. He swung his fist at Patrick. Patrick fell down, blood streaming from his mouth. Mr. Rua reached out to get his cane.

"Rambo, Rambo, Rambo," the thought came to Patrick. He stood up and with all his might pushed his head right between Mr. Rua's legs. Mr. Rua fell down, his hands between his legs. "You little bastard," he shouted at Patrick. "I'll kill ...". He had no time to finish this sentence because a rock came flying in, landing with a thud right on his face.

Patrick ran out. He felt like Rambo now. Behind him, the teacher chased, blood streaming down his face and shouting curses you would hardly expect from a teacher.

Patrick ran straight for the bushes. He tied up clumps of bushes to make the teacher trip, and climbed up a tree to watch the fun.

The teacher ran, tripped over, cursed, rose, ran, tripped over and cursed again. Looking down at the bloody face, Patrick knew he would never go to school again.

The teacher, after searching the bushes, gave up and went home. Patrick came down the tree and stalked to the nearest shop.

Patrick thought about what he would buy. He remembered a recent video he had watched. American kids were eating hamburgers, drinking coca cola, and smoking cigarettes so that was exactly what he bought.

After finishing the hamburger and coke, he walked out, lit a cigarette and paraded down the street much to the amusement of passersby.

He watched the cars, looked up at the planes, glared at the faces on the street.

"You fools. Come on. Be like me," he thought.

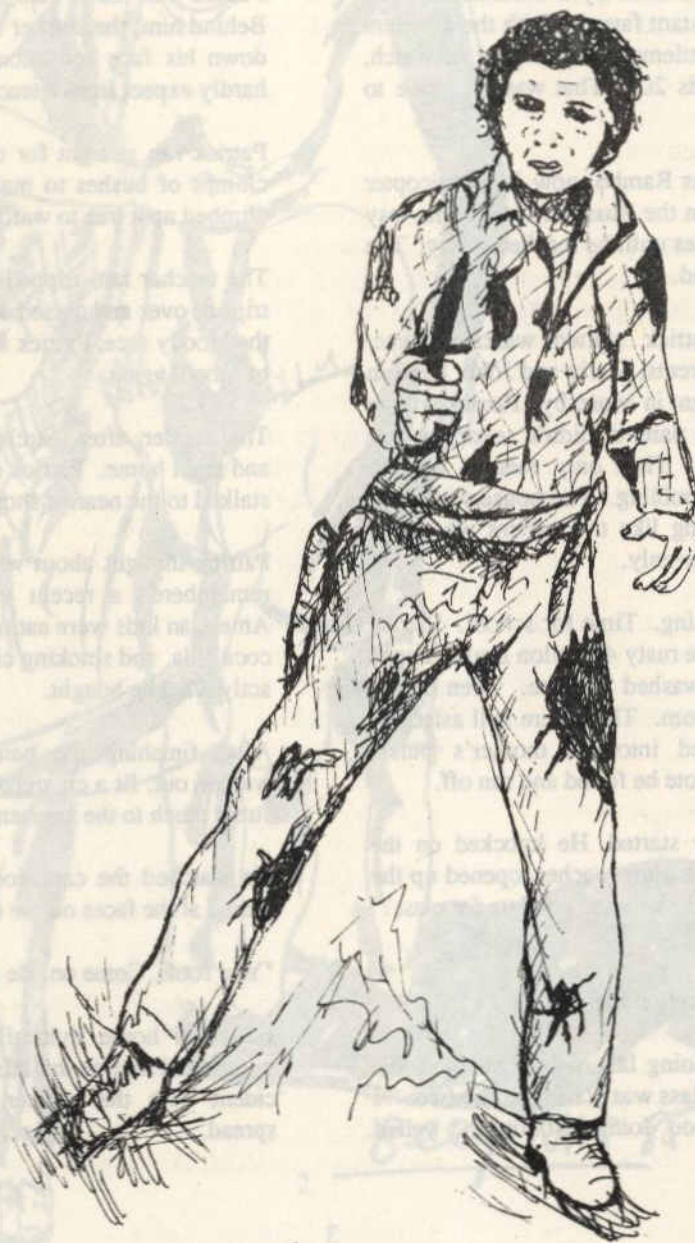
He went home that afternoon. His mother questioned him on the missing K2.00 and the incident with the teacher, of which word had spread.

Patrick admitted taking the money because he was hungry. His mother then proceeded to beat him up very badly.

But then, Patrick was Rambo again. He calmly backed into the kitchen, grabbed a knife and shoved it full force into his mother.

Without any show of emotion, he walked out into the bushes. After all, where else would Rambo go. The bush is home.

The police caught him later that night at the video place ■



TWIN DILEMMA

By Steven Edmund Winduo

Jolomo felt uneasy and queer for being too shallow, and careless, in letting her go. She was someone special, a treasure like his **hembi**. A few branches of betelnuts was all he could give Suaraukha.

He knew his own difficulty and expenses of being a 'Nuahakhu' as she was. He swore to be in that situation. Now, this fireplace became ideal for deep contemplation. However, it was all a series of satisfying experiences alone, rather than being constantly bothered by chores and troubles of married life. He thought of her, Suaraukha. Had she reached Porombe? Will she be safe? She never indicated to visit him again before leaving.

Unmistakenly the Kowi returned and perched in its usual place, on the single kapok tree, that struggles in tentacles of the crowd of upreaching coconut trees. Each tree's height told of how old the village was. The grey-feathered kowi testily broke into its usual note, that warns of the approaching night. The emerging distant hills lost in sunset shadows, silhouettes, while the silent traveller took the descent behind those hills.

Sitting with much energy on a **morokle** stool, carved by himself, he laid his hands on his legs. Short-age-eaten hair. Shrivelled and rumpled contours of his brown skin said much about him. The heat of a piece of log burning in the **sumbo** gave him the warmth he wanted, and always it was this **sumbo** that was his nearest companion. Often Jolomo was seen sitting in his solitary mood, contemplating or just watching time fly by. Nothing more than questions about life and death were his central thoughts. He was an old man, a bachelor.

This was one of the afternoons that Jolomo sat watching the sunset curiously. This afternoon he realised that the sun had descended in a blood bathed sky - surreally and mysteriously. As if by an artist the clouds flashed with red, yellow, and black colours across the sky - but immediately to be washed by night shadows, vanishing into

vapours of sorrow the next day was by Nature's delicate brush. There was something unmistakably peculiar about this afternoon's sunset. There was a mystery in it, and Jolomo's heart burnt for that mystery's revelation. It reminded him of the many experiences he had had in life. The sunset began at Porombe and submerged to the blue depths of Paminjin river. Dark, opaque, and unshiftable mountains made lacy silhouettes against the painted sky.

A few hours ago, she had been with him. The old man remembered vividly her arrival. She was too old, shrivelled and still had the remaining strength to make her last visit. Jolomo saw her youth appearing and disappearing in the patterns of sunset streaks across the sky. A youthful figure, well-moulded and disciplined, like a '**nangu yawo**', which many people far and near gossiped likeness and desire to own it, because of the **nangu yawos** content and long-lasting life it gave to the owner.

Suaraukha was in many ways a typical '**numbo wia raukhua nien**'. On her head hung beautiful string bilums, and she performed womanly deeds as required by her society, in excellence. Her life was centered around doing what would bring the best happiness to her and others loyal to her. Often she would visit Jolomo with a harvest of vegetables from her gardens. Other times her visits were just casual.

Jolomo had buried himself in his work. He had been netting his **hembi homui wlu** to replace the old one. Suaraukha and Semkle, her pet dog and companion, with her mother's name, arrived. Semkle rushed into the **rambu**, wagged its tail, and excitedly darted its tongue out to feel Jolomo's presence. To make sure that Jolomo had not changed; still in wholeness and the always Jolomo, they visit. Jolomo caught Semkle in his arm and gave it warm hugs and pattings. Suaraukha arrived and made herself comfortable. She was tired and her face displayed signs of weariness. She looked happy, though. Her wrinkled body told much about her age.

Jolomo had greeted her and asked her of her health, which she answered was fine, except a strong yelisik which occasionally troubled her. For the last couple of months she had not done any heavy work. Most days she spent in her **rambu**. Jolomo discouraged her from torturing herself by walking stretched distances, as from Porombe to

Ulighembi. There were many tree roots running madly across the paths and even worse the descent at Yalim was too steep to climb, for an old woman of her age. She had defended herself saying she still had the strength of a tree which had lost its leaves but still stands.

They had talked of relatives, enquiring after their health and whether each one was doing well in both villages. They talked of changes occurring in each village. Nothing new had happened in either village. Everyone was busy perfecting his daily life. Jolomo was glad she had visited him, but sad too, because her visit was an unexpected one, and he was not able to give her anything to take back. Since a custom of the society was such that when a relative visits another, one is obliged to give a present or grant the visitors request. This was done as a token of trust, lasting relationship and co-operation. There was always a reason for paying a visit.

araukha had left Jolomo as the sun made its way across the sky. She went without Semkle, who had decided to stay with Jolomo for the night until the next day when she would return to Porombe. Suaraukha had left with contentment and satisfaction. She had a feeling this visit could be her last one. Darkness would have gulped her before she reached home, because of her walking speed.

Jolomo slept. But the night was restless and full of beastly mosquitoes. As he slept, Semkle slept on the other side. Each time he woke up to chase mosquitoes away or relight the fires, he would see the figure of Suaraukha sleeping. Disillusionment or ghost? He discouraged himself to believe it.

When morning came, Jolomo took his time to awaken. The garamut echo: "Ke.ke...keti Ketikeketi..." piercing the morning silence. The call was unexpected. The announcement struck the listener. Jolomo, awake now, rubbed his ear to get a good reception. The message was clear: Suaraukha has been found dead a few feet from her rambu. Jolomo could not absorb what he heard. She had been with him yesterday, and he was to go to Porombe with Semkle to see her today.

A single mourn that morning broke the quiescence. The neighbours understood the commotion, and shared the same shock. They too had seen her with Jolomo the day before. A relative burst into tears. The quietness of the

morning was shattered with great lamenting and sorrow.

Suaraukha was Jolomo's twin sister. At their mother; Semkle's death, Suaraukha had been secretly taken to Porombe by a distant relative to be looked after and brought up. And now at this age, Suaraukha was dead, leaving her twin brother alone in the world

GLOSSARY

Nuahakhu: motherless child, orphan

Kowi: a bird, grey in color with long beak

Kapok: a cotton tree

Morokle: traditionally curved wooden seat

nangu yawo: an oval shaped traditional clay pot, specially used for keeping sago for a long time. A sago pot. (used metaphorically.)

numbo wia raukhua nien: a term used to describe women from the mountains, in its possitive sense to mean, hard working, and culturally oriented. A productive young woman.

hembi-homui wlu: flying fox trap, made of strings and hung on poles attached on a tree; in between each pole is the netted trap in a clearing.

yelisik: strong pneumonia, or a kind of heavy coughing.

rambu: traditional resting house, built separately from the main house. This type of house is often not fenced because the roof on each side often reach the ground level.

hembi: traditional basket, usually carried by a man, as part of a man's dressing. It is expected of a *numba wia nduos* (men) that they carry a hembi like a bilum/string bag is to a *numbo wia nauhua niens* (women). The symbol of the story is captured here.

WATER BURST

By Mark Badham

"Clear out! Clear out! Make way. Come on. Move away." A man bulldozed through a throng of onlookers. His white shirt shone in the afternoon sun. Two men followed in his wake. Otto had been expecting him. Ever since the huge water-main had burst out here at Seventeen Mile, Otto had been waiting for his arrival.

The morning had begun as any other Thursday morning for this Assistant City Engineer of the National Interim Commission since nine months ago. But towards three o'clock, his young secretary started receiving phone calls complaining of a lack of water. The first complaints had come from the outer-most suburb, Gerehu. By three thirty, his secretary had burst into his office with a frown over her pretty face.

"I think there's something very wrong, Otto," she had said. "So far ten people have complained of a lack of water!"

"So?"

"They all rang from Stage Six, Gerehu."

"That IS a problem," he nodded, getting up and striding over to the glass window looking out over Waigani. "What else do you want to say?"

"How do you know?" She answered.

He turned around and looked her in the face. "I know you too well, Eliza. You and I have known each other for..."

"Eight months," She blurted, then quickly looked away.

"Eight months," he said, as he walked toward her, "is a long time to get to know someone." Especially someone like you, he wanted to say, but didn't. He stood over her and she didn't budge. He turned away.

"A water main is broken."

"I think. I had one call from Sogeri saying that someone told them of water shooting out of the ground."

"Kava taudia. Did they say where exactly?"

"No. They just said Seventeen Mile."

Just then the telephone rang. Eliza went for it but Otto grabbed it first.

"Hello. City Engineer," he said.

"Hello. There's a pipe burst out here at Seventeen Mile. It looks big. The water's shooting twenty, thirty feet into the sky."

"Can you tell me where exactly?"

"Yep. I'm at the Bluff Inn. But the burst is at, well, coming towards Seventeen Mile the burst is just past the bridge."

"Right, Thanks." Otto hung up.

Eliza was gone, but he could still smell her coconut oil fragrance. He picked up the phone again and rang the maintenance crew.

"Kara hara ga. We're going for a spin. He grabbed his bilum and rushed out the door. Eliza almost bumped into him.

"What the..."

"I'm coming with you." She stepped back and looked up at him. He noticed she had her leather handbag. He hated handbags. Bilums were just as good.

"No you're not," he said and walked past her. She put her handbag down and glared at him. Otto knocked on the boss' door and opened it. The room was empty. Otto noticed a bunch of buai on the table-top. "Tell the boss everything when he gets back - IF he gets back," he told her as he shut the door behind him.

"Listen," he said, melting under the temptation, "I'll see you tonight."

She was still glaring at him as he strode out the room.

The boys were waiting for him. He knew they would. They had improved since he had taken leadership nine months ago.

They had made it to the spot in twenty-five minutes with Otto behind the wheel. The two other trucks had arrived minutes later. The damaged pipe wasn't hard to find. Already there were three cars stopped by the roadside, their passengers milling about. Otto had hoped there would be no spectators. A man with a bright yellow shirt walked over to Otto and hesitated a moment.

"Are you in charge?" he asked.

"Yes," Otto answered.

"Well, I think you might like to know, I saw someone come out of the bush there a while back," he pointed to the gushing water. "He was carrying something heavy. I was driving past and I thought he was in trouble so I stopped. But he put the thing in the back of a truck and drove off in a hurry. He looked cross."

"I see. What did the thing he was carrying look like?"

"Well, I don't know. I didn't really see."

"And the truck?"

I'm not sure about that either. But I'd say it was a Mazda ute. Green. Dark green."

"Right. Thanks, bro. Could you write your name and address down here so we can contact you if we have to?"

Otto radioed Eliza over the CB and told her to contact the police. "Tell them to look out for a dark green ute - probably a Mazda." And he gave her the witness's address.

"Come on," Otto said and. With their yellow raincoats on, they trudged over to the mammoth fountain. It was much bigger than he had thought. Clear water poured out from an opening in the ground, about twenty feet from the road. Already there was a pond a foot deep that extended to the roadside. The water rained down from the sky and the noise was like that of a great waterfall, especially from where they stood beside it. Otto's heart pounded inside him, like the rain on his hard-hat, as he saw the colossal task ahead of him.

"Get the spades," he yelled. "I'll radio for more men." And they ran back to the trucks.

By the time four more trucks arrived, they had dug drainage channels for the water to flow away from the burst pipe. But the pond was still there. More and more water rained down and the hole around the damaged pipe seemed to be growing wider and the noise was painful through their wet ears. The crowd on the road was also growing and some of the on-lookers were helping Otto's men dig channels. The channels had to be deep and wide. The water raining down had to be swept away so that they could dig down to the pipe.

Otto had been weighing the thought around in his mind for some time about whether or not to close off the flow completely; if not completely, then enough to attempt to cement the hole. However, to completely close off the flow would mean a complete shut-down of the city supply. He doubted whether a partial closing-off of the flow would help in the cementing - not with a burst this size! A decision had to be made quickly. A few of his men were looking at him.

He made his way back to the truck and radioed Eliza.

"I'm shutting off town supply. Make the necessary arrangements, will you?" He knew this was asking a lot. But he trusted her. And she knew it! "Okay?"

There was a pause before her calm voice answered: "Okay, Otto. Do it. I'll settle things this end. Make sure you do it right."

"Will do, young lady." There was another pause.

"What about tonight, Otto? It's five o'clock now."

I'm sorry. I'll have to cancel that. It looks like tomorrow night."

"Promise?"

"Promise."

"I hope you'll be okay."

"No worries. Just take care of things there. Ga be ai do lau itamu."

He replaced the mike and suddenly felt very tired. The sky was growing darker. He'd have to radio

for more men, food, and, of course, lights. The tiredness was creeping up on him. He'd have to step on it. The city relied on him.

The man in the white shirt was the boss and Otto was expecting him. His boss was mad, though Otto didn't know why. He had a wine stain down his shirt front that showed clearly, even in the afternoon's dim light. He had brought the electric lights and was well-informed of the situation, apparently.

"So, Otto," said his boss as he spat buai from his mouth with a sound like milk squeezed from a cow's udder. Then he glared up at him. "What have you done in these past two hours, eh?" He stood a foot under Otto.

"Sir, I've cut off city supply. It had to be done. But the problem now is that the hole is so big we can't just cement it. We have to cut the pipe and fit another pipe into it."

"Mumph," he said, and wheeled around to his two waiting henchmen. "Get some coffee," he grunted, "... and a stool," he shouted as they wiggled into the crowd.

Otto returned to supervising the cutting of the cement pipe and when he later had a chance to gaze about, he saw his boss sitting uncomfortably on a stool, sipping at a cup, and he was lit up brilliantly by one of Otto's lights. Otto turned back to his work. The time was 6.45 pm. The crowd had not long disappeared as the night ebbed in. The only people on the site now were his men and a few pestering NBC men. However, they kept out of the way after he shoved one into a mound of mud and slush. The pressure of the situation was taking its toll. The high-powered cement cutter didn't help any. Its whine pierced the night like a woman in child-birth.

Otto trudged over to the boss camped a healthy distance away. Something had been bothering him since his arrival.

"I've been wondering, sir," he began as he looked around for a stool. "When I got here the damage wasn't too great and I saw some chunks of cement piping lying about." He perched on the boss' fold-up table.

"So?" replied his boss.

"So I have a feeling someone deliberately dug into the pipe."

"Sabotage? Naah. Why would anyone do that? No. Those chunks were dislodged because of excess water pressure. Those pipes were laid about ten years back, you know. They're old."

"Still, you've heard about those threats to stop the city water supply." He didn't mention the man with the dark green Mazda.

"Yes I have," snapped his boss. "But nobody would actually do it. Unless he's a maniac."

"That's just what this man sounds like. Someone threatened to stop the city supply if a million kina was not deposited into a PNGBC bank account. Now that sounds like a maniac if you ask me, boss."

"Humph," was all he could say as he turned to his two assistants standing in the dark. "Bring more coffee from the truck, boys."

The cement cutter stopped screaming for a few seconds, then started again. In that momentary silence the two men sat staring at the workers huddled over the gaping hole in the earth. In the reflection of the powerful electric lights they looked like ants pouring in and out of a wound. Otto's boss suddenly reached a hand into his shirt pocket and extracted an envelope.

"For you," he said, handing it to him. "Forgot to give it to you before." His eyes kept away from Otto's.

It was from Eliza. It read: "Dear Otto, The police were quick. A sergeant I know VERY well just phoned. He said they've arrested a man driving a dark green Mazda ute. They spotted the ute at the Boroko Post Office and saw the driver come out of the phone booth. That was about 5.45 pm. I received another of those threatening phone calls at about that same time. So I think there's a connection. The sergeant is getting in contact with your witness now. So it looks like all's well that begins tragically - OR DOES IT? See you tomorrow. Love, Eliza."

P.S. I knew you wouldn't want Grumpy to know."

Otto looked up at Grumpy. He was sipping his coffee. "All's well that begins tragically," Otto

mused. "Not quite, my girl. Don't count your chickens before..."

"Otto!" someone yelled from the hole. Otto ran across.

"A few miles up past the closed valve the pipe's sprung a new leak. A report just came in."

"Unai paipa be ede bamona ma koiamomo! It's the pressure up beyond the closed valve," Otto yelled. "We'd better hurry with this before it gets worse. Grumpy was right: the pipes ARE old."

They completed the cutting and fitted the new pipe in. This had to be done with the help of two cranes. They then cemented the joints with supporting steel rods. By the time water was flowing through it, the time was five in the morning. However, the other problem of the new leak further up had to be dealt with. This proved less complex and, with the city population waking to find still no water in their taps, for the water supply had to be closed off again, this time further up, they worked more quickly under the pressure of Port Moresby's anger. They took turns during the night to take short rests and Otto was thankful for the coffee. Grumpy had gone home towards midnight saying that Otto should be able to handle the situation and that, if he needed him, he shouldn't hesitate to ring. He knew, of course, that Otto wouldn't ring, not even if the dam burst open. Grumpy would have had a fitful sleep.

By eleven o'clock Friday morning the second burst had been plugged with cement and steel and Otto's men began opening the valve, slowly at first, for Otto had grown wary of these old pipes and so respected their age. By 12.30 pm the water was flowing at three-quarter strength and Otto left someone in charge to gradually open the valve to full strength by three pm. Otto wasn't taking chances.

On the long trip back into town he radioed the police, asking about the suspected ute driver. The sergeant answered.

"He's the one Mr Thoa. Your witness was strong on that. He came over straight away to identify him. So did my... so did Eliza. The sergeant paused and Otto became disturbed. He continued. "She listened to his voice over the phone and she said it was the same voice as the one who called your office those other times."

"I see. Thanks. You sound like a professional."

"Well, if you ask me, Mr Thoa, you're a professional yourself. You're a lucky man."

"What do you mean?"

"Eliza's a hot girl, Mr Thoa."

"Yes she is, sergeant." He paused. "How do you know Eliza?"

"She's my sister, Mr Thoa."

Otto got a good four hour's sleep that afternoon. And he had an even better night - at the Travelodge with the sergeant's sister, and her leather handbag.



A SORDID AFFAIR

By Sorariba Nash
Gegera

Boring speeches from the invited guests but the mumu had gone well. The programme had to be pushed through all the way because they were behind schedule; typical of Melanesians as they often say. Outside the dancing hall at the Popondetta police station, there were chairs scattered here and there under the trees. The place where the dance was being held was, in fact, a police club, although it was always used for big functions as long as permission was given by the station Commander.

The occasion for celebrating was Oro Provincial Government Day, an occasion to commemorate the establishment of Provincial Government for the Province by the National Government. Similar functions were being held throughout the town, but this was strictly for the youths - organized by the provincial Minister for Youth. It was a time for disco, and that neck-twisting break-dance, performed mostly by teenagers. The hall was packed and there never seemed enough space to dance. People were laughing, shouting, swaying and shuffling with the ear-splitting beat of the music. Sometimes one wonders if sweating and muscle strain are nothing to discoers and the punishment is only that received by the ears and lungs for fresh air.

A couple, sweating and puffing - starving for fresh air, pushed their way through the mass of moving bodies with shiny faces. The man almost dragged the girl out of the gate and onto the lawn where it was darker but had lots of fresh air. They moved further into the darkness to escape the loud music and the jostling crowd. The young man replied to greetings from calling friends here and there in the dark. He was tall and slim, wearing one of those colourful Hawaiian shirts. He was leading a stunningly beautiful female, who was also tall and dark with a neat Afro hairdo. They headed straight for the darkened shadows of a huge rain-tree.

"John," the girl called softly following the man.

"What?" he retorted irritated.

"Where is your wife?" Joycie asked.

"I told you, she went to the village," he said with disgust.

"Are you sure?" Joycie asked searchingly.

"How many times am I going to tell you about Nancy and the children," John faced his mistress angrily.

"Why don't you try and understand, Joycie," he began. "I love you very much. I want us to get married because I'm going to divorce Nancy." He felt like a school boy out on a first date.

"You told me that when we first started going around together three months ago. Let's drop the whole business. You are a married man," Joycie said without hesitation.

"Just shut up and come," John said impatiently, pulling her by the hand.

"All you think of is sex, John, nothing else," the girl complained as they started moving.

"I won't say anything until we get to your room," John told her stubbornly.

He twisted around suddenly and caught her in a surprise hug and kiss. Perhaps it was meant to stop her from saying things he was afraid to hear. She thumped him playfully on the head and they walked on, this time together walking side by side.

The moon shed its light as far as the eye could see. Here and there the toads hopped about. Not many of the sounds of the night could be heard. Music and the noises of humans drowned the sounds of nature. Over the sharp untidy roofs of the PNGBC men's quarters, the weakened glory of the partly covered moon, illuminated the outlines of buildings. The place was very quiet except for those who liked celebrating on their own in their own homes, justly known as anti-social in such a small town as Popondetta. A drunkard swore loudly and smashed some glasses three houses down the street. John and his mistress were safely locked away in Joycie's room.

A few minutes passed and they heard a drunkard weep openly. The couple in flat number five made



love again to the beat of somebody playing 'RED RED WINE' by UB40 at full volume on his stereo set. Time passed and the naked couple danced, as the sweet odour of perfume swallowed the clean air. It is said that such night dances follow the heart-beat, and the heart-beat breaks its own track record! Somewhere down the row of houses within the government compound, a woman was screaming with pain - accompanied by slapping sounds. She was mumbling and sobbing something about 'Children's school fees'. A deep male voice was heard commanding, saying 'so many at once' with madness, a husband perhaps too drunk to realize he was killing his wife. Another side of love - an act of hate.

Nancy entered the crowded dancing hall clutching her small bilum. She spotted her cousin among the wild crowd that was swaying and girating to the beat of Oro Flames.

"Alfred! Alfred!" she called amidst the deafening noise.

Alfie was certainly drunk and having a good time dancing. But running out of patience, Nancy walked over, dodging the crazy souls. Eventually she got hold of Alfie by the shirt from the back. "Hey, watch it!" He swung around violently and faced his cousin sister. "Nancy - why, what are you doing here!" he shouted at the top of his voice. Alfie excused his partner and led his cousin away from the crowded floor towards the main entrance.

"What is it - where did you leave the kids? I know you are looking for him," he said almost out of breath.

"That's what I want you to tell me Alfie - you know why I am here. So don't ask me what it is. I can't take it anymore!" cried Nancy through a gush of fresh tears. "The Kids never see their father when it is Fortnight Friday like this," she continued. "Every day is the same to them. We live in poverty - as though John never works for money. They have no new clothes. Bobby is in grade six but we still haven't paid his fees." She was crying more.

Alfred fished out a twenty kina note. "Okay sis - you go back to the house and stay with the kids, I'll find him," he volunteered.

"Not this time Alfred! - I'll find him! And I think I've got a good idea where he is, and what he is doing at the moment!" Nancy said with anger. "But tell me, did you see him here earlier in the evening?"

She'd caught her cousin by surprise. He wanted to lie but at the same time he felt sorry for his cousin who had led this type of unhappy marriage for eight years. Alfred wanted to tell her that he had seen John buying beer at the counter earlier in the evening. He too had a fair idea where John would be at this time. This was not a new thing. Nancy had fought Joycie at her flat or at the movies or dances when she was in the company of John.

"So Alfred. You are going to drive me back to the house to pick up my sisters and then drop us at the Bank flats - And don't say no," she commanded.

Alfred was suspicious when they got to the house. None of Nancy's sisters or wantoks were around. The house was completely blacked-out except for two security outside lights. Dogs from nearby houses chorused a challenge as Alfred turned the ignition off.

"The house is silent," he said to Nancy as she got out of the ute.

"The kids are at home with their grand parents," she said as she closed the door.

"And the sisters?" Alfred asked, also getting out.

"Not here. Back home. I came to get something. You just drop me off at the PNGBC flats," Nancy said angrily.

Alfie shook his head in disgust. He was undecided about what to do. Of course he knew that Nancy wanted to take on Joycie again. And he was sure his brother in-law was in his mistress' room - perhaps naked he thought. Alfred closed his door slowly. He began to wander towards the house, smoking.

Inside the house, Nancy wrote two short letters - one to her big brother in Mount Hagen and the other to her parents.

Dear Donald,

I know your wife Asuntha is a good woman. She will take care of my Bobby. Bobby is for you to bring up besides your own three children - and most important of all, please ensure that he finishes his education and grows up to be like you -- not like his father. That is all I ask of you Donald if you love me like a sister.

Love to Asuntha and the kids,

Nancy.

She closed it quickly and addressed it to Donald and placed it on the table then began to write another letter.

Dearest Mum and Dad,

I know I owe you both everything and I can never repay. I am sorry I did not listen to you both. You both wanted me to marry Lester. But I was stubborn and made a terrible choice to marry John. My marriage has never been happy. Take care of Junita and Brian to remind you both of me until Debbie gets married. Bobby is Donald's son. You know Mum and Dad, I just can't bear it anymore. I think I will be happy this way.

God Bless you all,

Nancy.

Carefully, Nancy then unhooked the nappy line from its decorative position and rolled the nylon rope and pushed it into her bilum. Then she made her way outside. Tears streamed down freely. She switched the lights off and locked the door.

Alfred felt very sorry for her and angry at John. 'I'll get him soon for all this,' he told himself as he started the ute. As soon as Nancy settled in and closed the door, he said.

"I wish you were asking me to drive you home instead of going over to PNGBC flats."

"Do it this one time; I ask you Alfred. After this I won't bother you again. I promise."

"Com'on Cus. You are my father's sister's daughter. You can always rely on me. Don't worry. But I wish you could leave John and his mistress alone for tonight. Me and the boys will handle him good and proper tomorrow".

"No Cus. He is my husband. I am legally married to him by our custom. That is why I am going over for him, not for the girl." She was angry and tired.

"Okay, but I'll wait for you at the road side."

"No, don't worry - It's not your responsibility. I'll make him take me home."

"He might hurt you, you know that?"

"Yes. But I won't die. I'm used to being beaten up."

Alfred shook his head. He slowed down and stopped.

"I am going back to the dance. But I'll come around with the boys and check the house. If you both are not there, we'll come back here, even if it's three or four in the morning." Alfred reluctantly drove off.

Nancy stepped onto the verandah of Joycie's flat. Dull red lights were on inside. The soft whining sound of a ceiling fan could be heard. She could also hear the creaking of the spring bed inside.

Nancy wanted to break the door down. To scream at the top of her voice. To strangle Joyce and stab John with a knife. Blood ran into her brain. A giggle and a groan caught her picturing John naked.

"Ohoo - Joycie" came a hoarse, familiar voice. The voice of the man she loved, her children's father.

"John - Joh-n-nn" a female voice sang out in sweet agony.

Tears clouded Nancy's eyes and flowed down, but she tried to contain her uncontrollable sobs. The creaking noise and the voices got louder. Nancy bit her lips hard and set to work on the rope. With a new found strength, she climbed silently and threw the rope over the metal structure supporting the roof. She made sure the rope was secure, would hold her weight. She created the loop of her destiny and let it fall around her neck. She rested on the highest plank protecting the edges of the little verandah. From here she estimated that her feet should hang three-quarters of a meter above the floor.

And then, to the beat of the squeaks, squeals and groans from inside, Nancy's body jerked involuntarily. She swayed back and forth until her own heartbeat broke its own track record.

THE ENGAN LAMENT

By Daniel Kumbon

Translation

Ki krae Nee-le Ne-ele o o o
Ki krae Nee-le Ne-ele o o o
Ki krae Mandyee alo o o e paa mo
Ki krae Ogo o, Enda a a ma a nyu u
Pato. Lau la mo o o

Ki krae Ya li, ka nan o
Ki krae Ya li, ka nan o
Ki krae Na-bangu mu nu ta da pu u ma u
Nam--ba Aiu kaegi ma ma u
Ki krae Yaliae yaliae.

Translation

Ye krae A paining sensation o o o
Ye krae A paining sensation o o o
Ye krae Message came of drowning o
Ye krae That is my mother o
Ye krae Gone already o.

Ki krae I feel pain
Ki krae I feel pain
Ki krae My heart is broken
Ki krae My beloved my mother
Ki krae I feel pain.

THE EXPATRIATE

By Loujaya Kouza

He was what folks called
an expat-ri-ate
And when he came to visit
chose to sit on mother's mat
And called it ex-qui-site.

He didn't eat taro, fish or rice
Just sat and said,
"the food looks nice".

He refused every drop
of what we gave him to drink
he doesn't take water
I solemnly think.

Until at last it was time to go
he bowed and said thank you
for so and so.

Mother quietly whispered and said,
he didn't touch a thing I cooked
nor take a drop to drink
there's something awful queer
about these expat-ri--ates
I think.

TELL ME

BROTHER TO BROTHER

By Loujaya Kouza

Tell me my brother
does the ostrich know
Whither and whence
events do flow?

Alas my brother
Why! Can't you see
his head is buried
hip and knee.

They tell me brother
It is best to kill a man now
than to fatten him with choice food
and make him feel there's hope in it
what good is that
he knows he'll die anyway.

And what of you my brother
What do you intend?

Do not embarrass me brother
reasons and actions I can't comprehend
bureaucracy and red tape
and why the ostrich choose to gape
if you love life brother
play it safe.

How am I supposed to know these things brother
all I know is I'm working on an order
What happens next
don't blame me brother.

The ostrich has its eggs to lay
let's rest this matter
another day.

One down
two to go
the ostrich doesn't even know.

Tell me brother
do you know
Why the guria has flown
and left her nest
where ravens dare?

I am no eagle to know
Such things, brother
Neither one with flight and wings
why bother me with such
natural things.

When the sun has died
low in the west
the guria will return
and take her rest.

Alas my brother
you are wrong
I cannot abide her for long
for now I know and can see
Ostrich and guria cannot agree
for both have wings
and one can fly
but the other chooses to believe
a lie.

And then, in the heat of the squawks, squawks and
grunts from inside, Nancy's body jerked
spontaneously. She swayed back and forth until her
own heartbeat broke its own track record.

THE CHANGING SOCIAL WORLD

By Paschal Waisi

Translation

Ki kratei uf liti ki
Ki kulu ye ratei oporo
Ki kratei uf liti moli
Ki kulu ye ratei oporo kolo

I live in my village
I saw you live well
I live in the white man's village
I saw you live not -- well

Ki kratei uf liti ki
Ki kulu ye yetei etei tilis nempleye
Ki kratei uf liti moli
Ki kulu ye ire moto yetei tilis nempleye

I live in my village
I saw only you sleep in one bed
I live in the white man's village
I saw you and your wife sleep in one bed

Ki kratei uf liti ki
Ki kulu ye ila eple fien fien
Ki kratei uf liti moli
Ki kulu ye ila eple watopire leta biti winem

I live in my village
I saw you born children by some space
I live in the white man's village
I saw you born children like the ladder of the house.

Ki keitef kitei
Ye ratei olomen?
Leso ye ratei oporo kolo

I ask myself
You live -- how?
That's why you live not -- well.

Ki keitef kitei
Ye ingitef mi lirpefyee?
Leso ye ire moto yetei tilis nempleye

I ask myself
You listen to who told you?
That's why you and your wife sleep in one bed.

Ki keitef kitei
Ye aloimen?
Leso ye ila eple watopire leta biti winem.

I ask myself
You eat -- what?
That's why you born children like the ladder of the house.

In Olo language, Lau'um dialect of W. Sepik (Of the Laufis people)

AN OMEN

By Abu Nagong

Dusk gathers
As last fingers of light
Claw against the dark

Underworld spirits
Seek out innocent blood

Suddenly
A chill.
A shrill cry shatters the night.

THE CHANGING SOCIAL WORLD TELL ME

By Paschal Waisi

Translation

BROTHER TO BROTHER

By Loujaya Koma



A still cry shatters the night.
Voice of the "So" ngwing
Messenger of death.

THE CALL THAT BROUGHT RAIN

By Toby Waim Kagl

Chapter 1.

Dusk had well set in. The trees and bushes on the hills near the plateau provided statue-like silhouettes against the fast fading light. Soon, like the mountains and hills further out, they would be covered in the blanket of darkness. Occasionally, at uneven intervals, sudden gusts of wind blowing from the south west, broke the tranquility, only to subside to a peaceful quiet moments later.

Unlike other places around the plateau, there was a certain warmth during the early part of the night. That happened when the sun shone all day. When it rained, that warmth was felt for a shorter period, lingering on as if purposely wanting to embrace and ease the onslaught of the cold air that descended on the plateau. The mountains and hills surrounding the plateau enclosed the warm air during the day, allowing very little to escape. And in the night it protectively enveloped the inhabitants.

When rain came, usually in torrents and about once every four days, the humidity would be just fine. During the wet season, the rain fell continuously for two or three days at a time. This was not a new experience for the inhabitants of the plateau, for they were used to seeing their plans for gardening, hunting, fishing and other activities disturbed by the continual heavy downpour. Occasionally, as if the flood-gates of heaven had been let loose, the rain would fall for days without stopping.

When that happened the inhabitants, like the people who lived farther out and beyond the hills and mountains, stayed indoors. They would build neat cosy little fires and let small talk dominate

their discussions. Those who had important business to attend, cursed the rain for incapacitating them from their kogwun. Others would just idle along expecting the rain to stop. Sweet potato - kaukau - the staple diet - and other food items kept for emergency use would be either boiled or roasted in the hot charcoal for the ever hungry mouths in the women's houses - the Ambu-Ingu. Correspondingly, those in the men's houses - the Yagl-Ingu - would demolish carefully tied sugarcane and bring some back to be devoured by the expectant men.

Towards the left and about two kilometres from the extreme top of the plateau, a small valley opened up to take in the vast expanse of the Wahgi Valley. Down that great awe-inspiring valley, the Wahgi River meandered slowly in a lazy, almost absent-minded manner amassing great strength and power from the numerous tributaries that continuously fed the mainstream. During torrential rain, the Wahgi's over-flooded banks were a source of fear to those who frequented its banks or lived near. The flooded Wahgi whisked away anything - even careless humans - that got in its wake.

There was a small creek that ran through the plateau itself, its source further up than where the plateau began. The creek was clear but not so crystal-like as when it did not rain, but not so muddy as when it did. In some parts the creek cut deep into the relatively soft soil, exposing rudimentary rocks and very tough clay. In other parts there was very little disturbance. The small volume of water from this creek was deposited into the larger Wahgi River a little further down.

That small creek acted as a natural border between the local inhabitants who lived on the right side of the creek and the provincial high school, Wahgi-Wenda, so named because of the close proximity to the Wahgi River, which was situated on the left. The land the school stood on had once been owned by the people who lived near. It had been sold for a few shells and beads to the first group of missionaries who walked in and wanted to settle there. How the present generation regretted that their forbears had been unaware of the future value of land!

The school, Wahgi-Wenda Provincial High, was the oldest of the six high schools in the province. Initially, when the land was first bought, it was intended to serve as a missionary base. After the local inhabitants had been subjected to the pacification process, the missionaries intended to move West. But the early missionaries had built a school - a crude variety - where elementary subjects in Maths, English and those with practical application, like carpentry, were taught to the few children who enrolled, when solicited. Later, more and more children enrolled - tribal warfare had been subdued through vigorous campaigns by the kiaps trying to eradicate it completely - the school was upgraded to cater for a new but very genuine demand that had been long foreseen: to seriously educate the sons of the 'native New Guinean' to come to terms with what was happening outside their small valley.

Forty years after the school was first established, the record of success for Wahgi-Wenda High School was a very pleasing testament for the efforts of those who endeavoured to make the school become what it had become. Early recruits - especially boys who had endured the tough conditions - were now holding senior executive positions in government. One was the Chief Ombudsman, another was an ambassador. Many had become national government ministers.

It was quite dark. The people moving around in the clearing were indistinct from the darkness that engulfed them. The only lights that could be seen were from those houses that had their doors open. The tranquility which encompassed those inhabitants on the left side of the plateau, was in direct contrast to the hive of human activity going on in the school. Many people, a few children, and all the teenagers, some with rusty kerosene lamps, were moving in the direction of the school's hall for the week-end's only entertainment: to watch the film show.

Two students walked into the hall with the projector and box of film reels, set up the device in its usual place and unpacked the box silently. Those students sitting nearer to the stand strained their necks to learn the title of the film to be shown. Others, sitting further out, just joked or let time pass slowly with reading materials. A good

number, from time to time, glanced towards the side where the female population sat. A big giggle would go up from the males' corner if a girl came into the room in her jeans. And the girl would scramble for the nearest safe place to hide the embarrassment that followed.

A few drops of rain could be heard falling on the roof as some of the senior girls came inside. More girls came blushing into the hall which, by now, was nearly full. Due to the foresight of the principal, the building was large enough to accommodate the five hundred students and staff of the school and still have room to spare for another two hundred. The senior male students walked into the huge hall - some in groups and others individually - with an aura of seriousness on their beardless faces, obviously assumed for their junior counterparts. Among themselves, these same characters would laugh and joke their hearts out, even for the smallest of jokes. But then, when the right atmosphere prevailed, they made their dominance and seniority felt by subordinates.

The evening wore on as the student congregation conversed in low but excited tones and waited for the principal. At seven o'clock - when almost all were inside - the principal strode into the now packed room. Everybody clapped upon his entrance and he smiled his banal smile at the young audience. There was a reason why the week-end films were screened in the principal's presence: he distributed the week-end mail.

Within the school hierarchy, those who had been delegated the responsibility of distributing the incoming letters to their rightful owners had made a mess of the whole enterprise. Those students who had been entrusted with the task had, using the privilege, promoted their own interests among the students - particularly among the female population. The principal had rationalised that the person most suited to take on the job - if the students were not responsible enough - was himself. He would instill some order in an otherwise simple undertaking.

Among the last group of girls to walk into the hall was Jennifer Ambai. Her friends simply called her Jean. But the rest of the school referred to her as Ambaiya - dwelling on a local hit popularised by

the Wahgi Hellcats band of Mt. Hagen called Ambai Yah.

Jean Ambai was unusually slim for a girl of her origin. The life that she was used to in her village had not characterised her growth like her peers and others before her who were plump and muscular. The mountainous terrain and the undulating countryside where she had grown up, neither conditioned her to be like her sisters in the school nor like those back in the village where they were of medium build and well proportioned around the legs. Jean was slim and tall, fair of complexion, and, undeniably, one of the prettiest girls in the school. She was more relaxed but less sociable than the average female student in the school - a matter keenly noted by the girls' Deputy Headmistress.

Jean, being a girl in a co-educational institution, observed and kept all the regulations of the school, just like the majority of the female students. Shy, with a keep to yourself personality, she never encountered problems with the principal nor the girls' Deputy Headmistress. Her record at that point in her life was without blemish. She had been in the school for the last three years and was now in her final year. Two more terms and she would leave to work in the local bank, which was recruiting school leavers with good passes in their School Certificate. Jean had, during the term holidays, befriended one of the junior officers of the bank. The young man was from a village close to that of Jean's and it was he who had brought up the idea of Jean joining up later.

Yosep Gand, Jean Ambai's banker-friend, was barely twenty. He had the physical good looks and a temperament that drew girls to him like flies. He had been working in the bank for the last two years. Yosep bought Jean many gifts and was always ready to give her money. Jean had only to ask Yosep and he took care of everything. Among the things Jean had in her room were a radio cassette, a digital watch, a silver Parker pen and a photo album with pictures of Yosep Gand and his friends randomly arranged with a few of Jean's inserted either next to or opposite where Yosep's were neatly placed. To divert any suspicion on

herself, Jean would create imaginary uncles and aunties to account for her fine collection of gifts. All had been bought by Yosep Gand.

Since Jean Ambai kept an innocent profile, her people had a very high regard for her whenever she went home. In their eyes Jean was a shy, easy-going person who had a kind word for just about everybody that she came into contact with. Except for Yosep Gand, Jean acted with indifference to any young man she came across. This behaviour was contrary to what the simple-minded villagers wanted. Jean's own family loved her for her fine manners and personality.

Jean had barely sat down when her name was called. The letter was the first to be read from amongst a considerable number of letters, parcels and other items. All eyes turned to where the girls sat. Jean generated enough confidence, walked briskly to where her letter had been dropped, picked it up and came back. Some students rushed for their letters but the principal gave a fatherly warning to calm the situation down.

When the main delivering episode was over and the noise had subsided, the principal, after being satisfied that everything was to his liking, walked out. The lights went out simultaneously and all eyes turned to catch the first glimpse at the magic screen. The technician's voice echoed in the dark.

"Excuse me."

A prolonged hush followed as the students urged each other to be quiet. When there was a little quiet, the technician said once again. "Ladies and gentlemen, the film tonight is about - cowboys ..."

"... and indians," added the students with a deafening roar. One could feel the anticipation and excitement heightened. The students, especially the juniors, loved western movies. Tonight was going to be one of those infrequent nights when they went to bed with memories of gunmen, gunfights, and horses printed on their swiftly acquiring mental faculties. Some would talk about the film for the next few days. Others would act out episodes. The fancier ones would attach

nicknames to their own names and publicise these among friends.

The film turned out to be a very memorable one. It was about a faultlessly executed bank robbery in a town somewhere on the frontiers of the United States of America. The only twist in the film was that, instead of sharing the loot, the robbers ended up gunning down each other. In the end only the two leaders were left. Everybody enjoyed it; the junior students the most.

When the film was over and when everybody was in his dormitory, Jean took out the letter she had received earlier. On the addressee's side was written: Jennifer Ambai, Wahgi-Wenda Provincial High School, P.O. Box 301, KUNDIAWA, Simbu Province. It was typed. The sender's side had neither name nor address but one word: Yaglkinde - a fictitious name that refers to an unscrupulous-type person. It could also mean a person of very exceptional qualities. That was all.

Jean quickly tore one side of the envelope and took the letter neatly written on a special blue paper. Among the contents was a photo of Yosep Gand and a new twenty kina bill. There was also a greetings card attached with the bank's emblem on the front. Jean hid the photo with the money underneath her self-made pillow case. After reading the contents, Jean showed the rather short letter to her room mate, Patricia, who was reading a letter she had also received.

Patricia looked up from her bed and smiled at Jean. She was, like Jean, in her fourth year. Yet, at seventeen, six months older than Jean, she was putting on a little excess weight, a sign of being more relaxed and confident in her own destiny. At times she would act tough but was always ready to reconcile matters with the girls. Patricia put her own letter down on her bed and looked up at Jean.

"Jean sweet, what did you say?" She asked.

"I want you to see the letter I got tonight."

"Who wrote to you? Is it interesting? Let me see," she added in one mouthful as she took the letter her room-mate extended. After reading it,

she moved over to Jean's bed, gave a pat on Jean's back and said mockingly. "You know what?"

Jean lifted her eyebrows but remained silent.

"That boy seems to know you - probably through a third party," Patricia continued with a smile this time. "The letter isn't really as bad as the one I got from my boyfriend in Goroka. Why don't you write him in Port Moresby?" she further suggested. "At lease the letter shows that you have an admirer around. It should make you feel good really."

Jean smiled to herself. Her heart, momentarily, took on a rhythm that was above normal as she further questioned Patricia. "But Pat, I don't want to write in case the principal finds out. I don't know what he might do."

"Come on, Jean," encouraged Patricia. "You know girls in the school are getting letters from outside, from boys! That means they must be sending out letters from here. I receive letters from my boyfriend and reply to them."

"But, you see..." Jean stammered.

"Here - you read my letter and you'll have no more doubts," laughed Patricia and handed her letter to Jean. Jean took it without comment, read the content with a fast sweeping glance, and presently looked up at Patricia.

Jean said, "I never thought such letters got through to the girls. If the principal..."

"Well, you have to use your imagination my sister," replied Patricia, this time in a serious tone. "You have to try and avoid suspicion. That's what the girls have been doing precisely. I think the senior boys are doing the same, which is, of course, quite natural," she added.

"That's news to me," said Jean.

Any further questions Jean wanted to ask were cut short by a very sudden knock on their door. Both girls stopped and held their breath. The duty teacher, a middle-aged lady from Kerema in the Gulf Province, opened the door and came inside. She greeted the two in the room. The lady teacher

BOOK REVIEW

had decided that, instead of putting the main switch off, she would pay individual visits to the girls' rooms to make sure none was out. Having been satisfied, she left as suddenly as she had entered.

The two girls reluctantly got into their beds, bid each other good night and then let sleep overtake them.

Jean's subconscious mind went to work. The young man who had written to her, Yosep Gand, was walking Jean around a small town. The day was particularly hot and they had bought some refreshments and were having a good lunch underneath a shady tree when Jean suddenly became aware that the people were eyeing them with particular interest. Even though a good breeze was blowing, Jean could feel perspiration getting the better of her. She turned around slowly to find an exit but there was none. People were watching them.

Fear suddenly gripped Jean. She tried to get a hold of herself but realised with regret that something terrible was going to happen shortly. The people - all bearded - seemed to be moving in a slow rhythm and were dancing around Jean and Yosep. Every movement they made brought them a step closer to where the two sat, now quite petrified with terror. Those spectating, surged forward with force to view the commotion.

Then Jean realised that many of her own people were among the spectators; but not a soul came forward to ask her why she was the subject of the commotion. Everyone of them looked on with an indifference Jean thought was uncharacteristic of her people. She opened her mouth to talk but no words came out. She pleaded with her eyes to be saved but no help was forthcoming. Then Jean, with mounting terror, saw that they could not move: they were tied firmly to the very tree they sat next to and the dancers, some of them grotesquely dressed, were performing a kind of sacrificial dance. Jean and Yosep were going to be offered as a sacrifice to an unknown diety. Jean had reached the point of insanity.

The dance intensified with the dancers moving in a rhythm around Jean and Yosep. A loud and

prolonged chant that sounded like "Yuh-yuh-yuh-yuh..." added vigour to the dance. The dancers now acted as if they had gone mad. After one more chant they were suddenly silent. From amongst them, a long, thinly-boned dancer, with eyes about to pop out of sockets - obviously the sacrificial priest - took a step forward. The step was deliberate and well calculated. He took another, and then he was directly looking down on the two helpless people. The priest produced a very sharp axe. Jean could not take it any more. Her clothes were wet. And as the sacrificial priest lifted the sharp, ready-to-take-life axe, Jean screamed with all her might and sprang up, still holding onto her forehead where the axe was to have landed.

She was soaked with sweat. The darkness of the room made her aware that she had had a nightmare. Also, she was very much alive. She collected herself, offered a prayer for consolation and then fell asleep again.





BOOK REVIEW

By Regis Stella

WHELMA:

By Uma More,
Published by Web
Books 1984.

Whelma, Uma More's first published collection of poems is rather contrary to what many people know him to be. For one thing, the words of his poetry are tranquil and often sentimental, at times evoking nostalgia. This is in contraposition to his known personality in the student political arena, where he is an outspoken and fiery critic of many issues of importance. Branded by many as a radical young man, especially after his 1985 masterminding of student unrest, he projects a different image in this book. His three poems, "Whelma," "Blame it on Civilization" and "All Dad's weren't Mine," are fiery and vociferous, an echo of his outcry, his disillusionment, his strong denunciation and his rebellion against the imposition and intrusion of western civilization, for that matter western education, which has continuously alienated traditional Papua New Guineans from their own roots.

...The kaukau you eat now will be unwanted tomorrow. The kumu you eat now will be tasteless either. Yours is somewhere abroad. Yours are somewhere in the imaginary world...(P.16)

This exemplifies a poem of rebellion, although mild in tone. The particular poems which I have mentioned above should have been given a much heavier load, with fiery words, with force and rebellious overtones to illustrate the author's revolt, mutiny and discontent, as is traditional in poems of rebellion. In particular the author blames western civilization for making him an outcast, an alien and an exile from his traditional roots.

...Why am I isolated from my people?

Why am I not sharing the problems confronted by my people?

Why am I facing many unknown diseases?

It's 'cause of civilization. Blame civilization. (P.11)

One notes the continuous usage of the words "Papa" and "Mama." This is very significant, the fact that our parents are our primary shapers, shaping our characters, our behaviours, our relationship to one another. In a PNG society especially, our parents mean almost everything to us and More's usage of "Papa" and "Mama" is a mirror of something with profound meaning.

The second category of poems deal generally with life. Here the author tries to express the notion of Death, how death handicaps one, especially when a loved one is taken away.

During the first night when my papa was outcasted. I mean put outside our hut mum and I were alone bathing under the tears of our eyes....(P.6)

All the stanzas evoke a sentiment of sadness, sorrow and loss. For many of us whose parents and loved ones are still with us, these poems sadden us when we daydream and visualize what will happen to us when death claims one of our loved ones. For others who have experienced what the author is talking about, they will reminisce about what happened.

...I just want to rest my weary soul on the soil where he left his last footprints. I will go back...(P.29)

More's other poems such as "Mountain Stream," "Day" and "Mausgrass" touch on nature. "Miss Misunderstood" is comical in a sense. It expresses a love based on material wealth which, of course, is shortlived.

In two of his poems, namely "The Upright Boy" and "His Own rejected Him," More expresses his allegiance to his christian beliefs and stresses his christian upbringing (He is an active member of the S.D.A. church). In these two poems the author

expresses and exposes his acquaintance with the Golden Book.

The most skillfully woven of his poems is the one which he titles, "You must be Somewhere". This particular poem is flamboyant with beautiful imagery.

Naturally you are growing like a wild lily
in its pond just for my hopes and
treasures. You must be somewhere.

Flourishing with your incredible natural
beauty, fed with wisdom and
faithfulness, possessing a kind and tender
loving heart. You must be
somewhere...(P.20)

Naturally love poems tend to be colourful with beautiful imagery similes and metaphors. A love poem is something woven from deep within the heart and More's poem here is no exception.

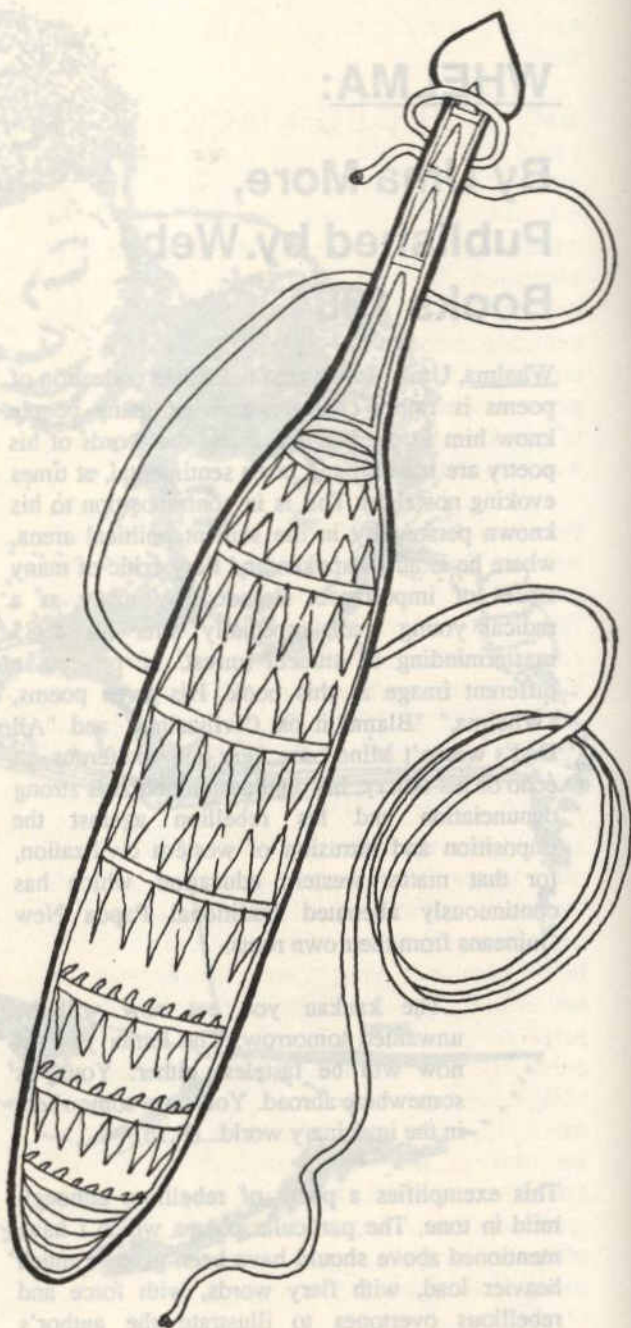
The last poem in the book is appropriate and significant as a finale. This poem more or less sums up the issues which are highlighted in the book. There are two issues which are highlighted in the closing poem: the first is literally the death of his Papa, the protector, the provider and the guardian. The author expresses his sympathy, his loss of filial affection. The second which is less-exposed is the issue of what the death of his Papa means. It means simultaneously the death and disappearance of his traditions and customs, because of the infiltration of Western civilization.

All in all, the author expresses the fact that Western civilization, for that matter education takes one beyond the bounds of one's tribal lands to faraway foreign lands. Upon his return to his tribal land, he finds change taking place all around him and gradually a complete overhaul of his traditional society. Even he does not realize that his outlook of things has changed greatly because of the complete overhauling of his mentality by Western civilization. In other words, Western civilization has partially blinded his pupils.

"If he comes home tell him I'm gone"

That was the last word left by my Papa.
When I was down the coast after Western
civilization...(P.30)

Mr. More's first collection of poems is an achievement for the author. The poems are easy to comprehend and there are very few obscurities for the reader to stumble on. Let us hope he follows this collection with a second collection.



A COMMENTARY ON SOABA'S MAIBA

By Sampson Ngwele

Maiba is Russell Soaba's second novel after the controversial but little-understood *Wanpis*. The novel *Maiba* in the main speaks of a superimposition of a regime which is alien and intrusive upon a rightful dynasty, which necessarily challenges its intruders. In the story of the Makawana village, Doboro Thomas and his 'army' abuse and attempt to conquer the village's rightful dynasty which ruled the land prior to the story. *Maiba*, the female remnant of this chiefly tribe openly challenges Doboro Thomas and his boys. In the end, the intruders fail and disperse in fear. In contemporary Papua New Guinea and the Pacific as a whole, this phenomenon reflects and focusses on colonialism; neo-colonialism, imperialism and the foreign institutions therein that perennially plunder the indigeneous masters. Along the surface of things *Maiba* appears to be a feminist-type of a novel; yet beneath that surface one clearly sees the underlying elements that are the author's intentions, in this case Yawasa Maibina, "meaning the Parable of Life". Even before the story begins, Soaba kindly informs us that "*Maiba*" is an expression of truth through parables and riddles, a common form of communication in Anuki, and throughout the Melanesian region for that matter. Because *Maiba* is a parable, it is multi-dimensional and multi-functional. Parables and riddles in Melanesia are often used by the elders to teach; to rebuke or to fore-warn. In *Maiba*, Soaba does all three. He teaches patience and long-suffering through Mr Wawaya; he teaches justice through *Maiba*. He rebukes corruption and evil through *Maiba* and fore-warns through Doboro Thomas. He cautions us to be wary of characters like Doboro Thomas who is a risk to social stability and internal security.

Maiba is a novel within a novel in that, unlike most Third World male writers (including South Pacific Writers like Albert Wendt) who choose male heroes, Soaba chooses a female heroine. This is a digression from his first novel, *Wanpis*, where male characters are predominant. In South Pacific literature, it is a move away from the aggressive Sione; the all-rounder Aimbe, the adventurous Hoiri Sevese and so forth. As such female readers will no doubt respond to *Maiba* readily.

Maiba, *inter alia*, brings out the feminine aspect of our society. In Melanesia, we know that women play a primary role in subsistence production, animal-rearing as well as family-raising. It is the females who put the family together. Thus in the novel, Mrs Wawaya and *Maiba* are always in the centre of the Wawaya family affairs. In such characters, a home is born and cemented together.

"Continuity" is another element in *Maiba*. Melanesians who are matrilineal undoubtedly appreciate *Maiba* because she represents continuity. We are told that *Maiba* is a remnant of the Wawaya-Mogura dynasty. In her, there is hope for the future of her chiefly clan. The story ends in tragedy as Mr Wawaya dies from bullet wounds but *Maiba* appears at the end of the story, witnessing her uncle's death. Will she take revenge? Will she take over now as the new chief and rule as her ancestors did? Perhaps no. Perhaps yes - She, personally or through her children and her children's children. In this respect, *Maiba* correctly represents the continuity of a remnant dynasty.

Symbolically, *Maiba* could be a country. Normally a country is referred to as feminine. Thus, *Maiba* represents a country facing an outside dominant power symbolised by Doboro Thomas, who is closely assisted by Koboni and his companion. It is interesting to note that Koboni and his silent companion both wear green army shirts: Koboni in a "U.S. Army" one while his companion has one with the inscription "From U.S.S.R. with Love." Koboni is a ruthless character who carries a gun and fires whenever he wants to intimidate the poor villagers. He is an adulterer as well as a rapist. Soaba did not tell us where Koboni's gun is from, but presumably it is a "Made-in-France" rifle, or is it Australian-made?

The subject of violence is quite prominent in the novel. Even Jennifer Evans who briefly reviewed the novel in *The PNG Writer* (Vol.2) noted: "Male violence.....hangs like a shadow over the book, and finally threatens to tear the village apart as the men prepare to take revenge for the rape of Christine. Throughout the novel Maiba is threatened by male violence" (p.71). Of course Jennifer Evans was right, and speaking as a woman she sees violence in the novel as "male violence" because male characters are involved throughout.

But when delving deeper, we discover that Soaba is trying to bring out something new. He talks about both the negative side and the positive side of violence, but dwells mostly on the negative side. On the positive side, he tells us of Boas' bravery when he wrestles with a wild boar and drowns it in a river with his bare hands (p.101). He also informs us that the villagers want to take revenge for the rape of Christine but they are stopped by the evangelist, Boas. Soaba says nothing more on positive violence. But on the negative side, Soaba speaks of violence throughout the novel: little school kids repeatedly attack and attempt to rape Maiba; Koboni and his mate intimidate and try to rape Maiba; Koboni cruelly rapes Christine, and so on. These types of violence do not have a just basis. They cannot be morally or legally justified. Rather, they are criminal acts which traditional society and modern law condemn. Typical African writers such as Chinua Achebe like to treat violence as a positive, justifiable force. Thus Okonkwo kills an interpreter who is a traitor to his own race. In the Pacific, Albert Wendt treats violence quite naturally. Some one comes home hungry and finds no food, beats his wife.

In *Maiba*, Soaba presents violence in its negative form so that the reader is made to denounce the violent act himself, through his emotions and rationale. This is Soaba's artistic way of denouncing negative violence. A negative form of violence does not benefit anyone, therefore Soaba is warning us against these types of violence. Picking fights with women, raping innocent school girls, attacking helpless orphans are degrading according to this Anuki writer.

For some people, *Maiba* is an extension of *Wanpis* which is studied at UPNG by

existentialism students. Quoting Jennifer Evans on this topic, she writes: "As in his earlier novel, *Wanpis*, Soaba is again exploring existence as the terrible reality of ultimately having to face the world alone. For Soaba's characters, family and community have failed". (p.71).

In *Maiba*, the idea of existence is firstly portrayed by the orphanage of Maiba herself and her continuous struggle to survive individually in society. Throughout the story, Maiba struggles against terrorism, intimidation, humiliation and conquest. Being an orphan, she has no one to look to. In times of sorrow she has no one to comfort her, apart from random consolations by her cousin Siril. In times of trials, she has no one to depend on. In times of persecution, she has no one to turn to. Even Siril, her "defender", could not be relied upon after being bribed into Doboro Thomas' camp. Ultimately Maiba has to face this rough world alone, *wanpis*. On the whole Maiba has done well. She has survived physical handicap after her father's death. She has undergone harsh treatment from her uncaring aunt, Mrs Wawaya. And she has withstood male arrogance. As a result she is respected and even feared by persons such as the ruthless Koboni and his companion.

Maiba, from this angle, portrays a new kind of justice. Justice not through might or through the barrel of a gun, but through open, challenging words against evil motives and practices. Maiba knows she is in the right so she does not hesitate to challenge Doboro Thomas' corruptive regime. After all, she is the rightful ruler of the people, including Doboro Thomas. Maiba is prepared to die for her people without fearing Koboni's gun. What makes it more intriguing is the fact that she is a female, an orphan whom her very own have continuously rejected. What a pity.

Secondly, the most outstanding existential part of the novel comes after Mr Wawaya is wounded. When he stands blank before the cement cross on that fateful Sunday morning. He stares at the cross but there is darkness in it. The idea here is that Mr Wawaya is revolting against God, represented by the cross. In Mr Wawaya's greatest time of need, he feels abandoned not only by man but also by his Maker as well. Thus for Soaba's characters not only do family and community fail, but also God fails. There is no humanity among men nor is there a God who cares. One is born alone, one exists alone, and

one dies alone. This piece of work could be an extreme case of existentialism in the Pacific, and to a marked extent, in the world.

Mrs Veronica Wawaya is one of the main protagonists in the novel. It is therefore a worthwhile characterization exercise to find out what type of woman she represents. On East Ambae, women are broadly categorised into four major types:

- 1) The "godly" woman who is perfect, industrious and independent,
- 2) The "forgetful" woman who needs to be reminded all the time,
- 3) The "attractionist" who laughs loudly so as to attract attention, and
- 4) The "extra-industrious" woman who on top of normal duties, quickly slides away from public eyes, fulfills her hidden desires and then re-surfaces as though nothing has happened.

From these categories, let's examine Mrs Wawaya to see what type of a woman she is. We are told that she is quite a religious person. She goes to church, reads her Bible and instructs her children to be good. On the other hand, she treats Maiba in a non-Christian manner. She loves talking and she is not loyal to her husband. Once we are told that she disappears quickly behind the garden-house and within minutes is seen with her lover, Koboni, in the mangroves. Surely Mrs Wawaya has a dual character. She would fall into the third or fourth category. With such people there is little to be desired in them. In them, there is little sense of morality. They do not have any sense of guilt and they can become quite dangerous-especially if they are used by people such as Doboro Thomas against respected elders like Mr Wawaya. The allegory of Mrs Wawaya is undoubtedly a moral lesson for us all.

Maiba is the other female protagonist in Soaba's novel. In fact she is the main protagonist in the whole story. She is made an orphan at an early age, and becomes a part of the Mr Wawaya household. She is a university 'push-out' and later becomes a full-time villager.

Throughout Maiba's childhood, the novel reveals that she is abused, intimidated and humiliated by various forces - school kids,

Koboni and Mrs Wawaya. At primary school, little kids attack and attempt to rape her. Later she faces opposition from bigger persons, namely Koboni and Mrs Wawaya. Throughout her experiences as an orphan, Maiba is physically and psychologically dealt with harshly. These conditions rather than breaking her, mould her into a tough, fearless woman who will not let evil triumph.

Maiba is a godly woman who works hard, cares for her younger cousins, maintains the home and even buys food for the family - all on her own initiative and she's seldom told what to do. She is admired and well respected by her younger cousins who address her as "elder". She is even feared by men such as Koboni after the failure of Doboro Thomas' little "military-coup". Maiba represents the idea of speaking out against corruption and suppression. Further more, Maiba's godly character presents the idea of true independence and completeness of man. In such characters there is a sense of security and a feeling of hope to continue.

The problem of dualism is also inter-woven into the novel. Thus upon chief Mogura's death, Maiba immediately enjoys normal life. Upon reaching safety, the wounded Mr Wawaya dies. But a more serious problem of dualism lies in the main male characters of the story. Let's look at Mr Wawaya and Doboro Thomas as two dualistic beings. Mr. Wawaya is a silent character who works hard, hunts and fishes for his family. He practises patience and long-suffering. He brushes aside gossip, negative violence, and adultery as trivial matters. For Mr Wawaya, family and work are the more important.

Mr. Doboro Thomas on the other hand, does not seem to be a hard worker. He sits and talks a lot and indeed he is the village's great orator. He appears to be more concerned about the political affairs of his people. He has received a fair bit of education as we are told that he once sent a play for a radio programme. But Doboro Thomas' weaknesses are that he is ideologically confused; he craves for power and is irresistible to corruption.

These two characters seem to be perfect opposites. But not quite, because they both have their own strengths and weaknesses from which we could learn. Mr Wawaya is an envied

personality but silence seems to be his main weakness. We do not know whether to depend on him or to fear him because he keeps quiet all the time. He is surely a poor indicator. Doboro Thomas is a great orator and he does care about the culture and modern political issues relating to his people. However, his weaknesses mentioned above turn him into a corrupt, mad dictator. In the final analysis, Soaba is perhaps asking us to look beyond the confines of a "bad" or "good" human framework. We must not accept people at face value because their "shadow characteristics" are those we may be looking for, or, which we must be careful of.

To conclude, I would say *Maiba* is a great Pacific novel. It is a commentary on the current social, political and economic affairs of the people. In the Melanesian context, justice and freedom could be achieved through genuine, fearless people like Maiba who stands out and speaks openly against corruption and suppression. Mr. Doboro Thomas is typical of many of our leaders who appear to be concerned about our welfare but later get themselves confused and let their selfish motives take precedence. For those who are silent like Mr Wawaya, this could become a weakness which 'cowboys' like Koboni could capitalise on. We are thus left with only one virtue: that of coming out openly and calling corruption by its right name. Like Maiba, we must come out and speak against evil openly. In fact *Maiba* itself is a voice against corruption and suppression by foreign set-ups on our soil.

Maiba, as Jennifer Evans' review warns us: "..... is not a novel to which you should turn to if you are looking for light entertainment. Unravelling the riddle of *Maiba* is a serious business" Indeed as stated in the beginning of this commentary, the parable of *Maiba* is multi-dimensional. Thus once you unravel its riddles, there is certainly a lot to chew. And like quinine, the more you chew of it, the more it becomes bitter - but perhaps better for the ailment .



MONEY OR CULTURE

By Kafafi Baptist

CHARACTERS:

MARX:	University student on vacation
LUCY:	Ordinary Village Woman and Marx's mother
WILSON:	Ordinary Village Man and Father of Marx
PLATO:	Village Chief
RICE:	The Village Idiot
MORE:	Police Constable of the Village
SHAW:	P.R.O. of Timber Company
BURLAND:	Consultant from the Government
SERVICE:	Provincial Politician
MAN I:	Ordinary Villager
OTHER VILLAGERS:	Men, women and children

PLOT:

The government has decided to set up a timber logging project in the Athens area of Greece. But the final decision is left to the people. A university student on vacation is caught up in the issue and tries his best to save his people's land. They are obviously uneducated and have been misled in the past. His mother, an ordinary village woman, is in favour of the project. His father is totally ignorant of the whole issue. Instead, he spends most of his time lazing around and is always hungry. After a quarrel in their house the couple decides to attend a compulsory meeting summoned by the Chief of the village.

During that meeting no agreement is made, so the chief adjourns the meeting. The following day a group of officials from the town come to the village to do some studies and hold a meeting with the Chief. However the chief has been bribed by one of the officials, the Provincial Member for Athens, into agreeing that the project should go ahead. Marx, a radical university student, catches them redhanded and questions them in the meeting. There is a vicious exchange of words between Marx and the politician. The story ends in a fight with the villagers rushing in and beating up the officials including the chief.

SCENE I: Village House

Kitchen Space: A fireplace in the middle. Bamboo water containers lying on the ground floor, left of the fireplace. An old aluminium cooking pot is on the fireplace supported by three large stones. Bunch of coconuts and bundle of firewood on the ground to the right of the fireplace.

It is evening, father and son are sitting beside the fireplace busy chewing betelnut and smoking. Enter the mother with two bilums, one with firewood and the other one with kaukau.

WILSON: (Surprised) "Hei!, man yu kam bek long garden nau? San ino go daun yet na kam bek hariap tru".

LUCY: (annoyed and struggling under the weight of the two bilums) "Pasim traipela maus bilong yu na kam rausim ol bilum long het bilong mi. Tupela bilum i hevi nogut tru na het bilong mi raun ya".

WILSON: "Eh Lucy, yu tok isi ya, mi nogat planti yau bilong harim. Mi gat wanpela yau tasol ya, narapela bipo yu brukim long stick bilong garamut".

MARX: "Em ya mama, kam bai mi rausim bilum long het bilong yu. (Stands up from where he was sitting and removes the bilums from his mother's head) Em nau, yu sidaun na kisim win pastaim".

LUCY: (Sighing with relief) "Eh pikinini bilong mi, yu gutpela man".

WILSON: (Persisting) "Lucy yu tok, olsem wanem na yu kam bek hariap tumas?"

LUCY: (Still catching her breath) "Orait bai mi tokim yutupela (pause). Meri bilong Plato, tultul bilong yumi ya, i tokim mi olsem, bai i gat wanpela kibung tete nait long haus kibung, bilong ples. Em i tok olsem, man bilong em i gat sampela bikpela samting long tokim yumi olgeta manmeri bilong ples".

MARX: (Curious) "Mama, wanem kain toktok tru ya, yu save?"

LUCY: (Quietly, almost whispering) "Shh, toktok isi dispela samting ya, em ol waitman bai kam na katim ol diwai long bush bilong yumi na karim igo. Tasol noken wari bihain bai ol i givim mipela ol meri na tu yupela ol man, planti mani tru".

WILSON: (Getting up, not caring about the news) "Ah, maski long bulsit nambaut long hia. Toktok bilong yupela ol meri na pikinini ino save stret liklik. Harim tokwin nambaut long wanpela i save kolim em yet long Mrs. Sif na yupela bilip tru pinis".

LUCY: (Annoyed and angry at Wilsons comment) "Yu save long wanem samting, nogat wok bilong yu. Wok bilong yu long pulamapim bel na pekpek tasol".

MARX: (Annoyed) "Orait, mama, papa inap nau. Bai yumi go long miting tete nait na harim wanem samting bai tultul i toktok long dispela samting. Maski long singaut nambaut olsem of pisin i panim kaikai".

WILSON: "Tru ya, toktok na mi hangre pinis, Lucy, wokim sampela kaikai na yumi strongim bel bipo yumi go long miting".

End of Scene I

SCENE II: Village Meeting House

Large room space, two hurrican lamps burning on the floor. One up near the front and the other down near the back. A stool for the chief is in the front.

Village people already in two groups, are seated and chatting quietly among themselves. Murmurs die down as the chief enters and walks towards his stool. He stands up and begins his speech.

PLATO: (Seriously) "Gut nait tru ol pipel bilong mi. Tete nait mi gat bikpela amamas tru long tokim yupela olgeta i kamap. Mi gat wanpela bikpela toktok long tokim yupela. Mipela nau igat wanpela nupela kain pasin i kamap long peles bilong yumi. Wanpela kampani bilong katim diwai, bilong of waitman i gat laik long kam insait na katim ol diwai long bus bilong yumi. Taso yumi ino givim orait yet long kam insait or nogat, long wanem yumi ol papagraun. Olsem tasol na as bilong dispela miting em bilong kisim laik bilong yupela wanwan man na meri. Em tasol.

MAN: (Standing up to speak) "Ah yes, gutnait nau olgeta, long bekim toktok bilong tultul na bikman bilong yumi, mi laik tok olsem dispela samting bai helpim yumi tru. Tingim hamas mani bai ol i givim mipela long katim diwai bilong yumi. Na tu bai yumi gat ol gutpela haus ol i wokim long simen na kapa tasol. So mi laikim yupela mas givim sapot long toktok bilong mi na bai yumi kisim olgeta ol dispela samting. (Sits down as soon he finishes).

MARX: (Stands up, really annoyed) "Yupela olgeta noken harim wanpela pipia toktok dispela welpik i tokim yupela long em. Dispela kain ol man em oli laik tingim ok samting bilong nau tasol. Ol i no gat tingting long graun bilong ol na pasin tumbuna bilong ol moa. Pes bilong ol, olsem bilong mani stret. Dispela kain ya pikinini meri bilong ol dispela ol man bai salim ass long ol whitman. Taim mi mangi i kam inap nau, mi save harim long maus bilong yupela olbikman yet, olsem, ol yangpela man na meri bilong nau ino save long pasin bilong peles. Ol ino save long wokim haus, wokim garden, singsing or paitim garamut. Ol i save long raun raun tasol na sut long-long long laik bilong ol. Na nau mi laik askim yupela olsem, yupela i laikim tru olsem bai ol i katim bus bilong yupela na bagarapim sidaun bilong yupela or nogat. Yupela laikim bai yumi lusim olgeta pasin tumbuna bilong yumi. Bus graun em i olsem wanpela kain mak bilong stap or existence bilong yumi long dispela graun, God i givim long yupela. Sapos ol i rausim yumi bai yumi go stap we? Tingim gut". (Sits down, murmur increases. Chief adjourns the meeting and people go home).

SCENE III: Village Square

Bare: the village idiot is sitting in the middle of the square on the ground. He is going through things in his basket. He stands up and tucks his basket under his arms as the officials from Town approach him.

SHAW: "G'day mate, how the devil are you?"

RICE: (Grinning, doesn't understand a word, but tries answering) "Ah i stap".

SHAW: (Did not quite catch what Rice said) "Sorry, can you speak up a bit".

RICE: (Still doesn't understand a word) "Ol samting bilong mi we. Yupela kam nating ah?"

SHAW: (Confused and bewildered) "Hold it, hold it (Calls service the provincial M.P.) Mr. Service, could you handle the translation for me please?"

SERVICE: Sure (calling village policeman) Constable, yu kam na tanim tok, yu save long liklik English, you traim".

SHAW: "Everything fine, Mr. Service?"

SERVICE: "Ah, yes the policeman will do all the translating, he is quiet capable."

SHAW: "Well okay constable, first ask him for his name."

MORE: "Wanem samting tru ol i bin kolim yu taim yu kamap?"

RICE: "Rais"

MORE: (To Shaw) "Rice Sir"

SHAW: (Hurriedly) "No, no, I don't want to know what he wants to eat. I want his name."

MORE: "Well then you try sir".

SHAW: (To Rice) "Okay hotshot, name belong you?"

RICE: "Tinpis, mi less pinis".

SHAW: "Tinfoish, okay tinfoish now..."

RICE: "Nogat, mi Rais.

SHAW: (Becoming fed up) "Rice, okay Rice, question. How old are you?"

RICE: (Laughing) "Hellow long mi, hellow long yu tu".

SHAW: (Laughing) "You want work long timber company?"

RICE: "Yes mi wantok bilong timber company."

SHAW: "Okay, see you Rice, er tinfoish, er Rice".

RICE: "Okay karim i kam long haus bai mi hatim wara i stap". (Rice leaves as Shaw leaves).

SCENE IV: Chiefs House

Room space. A small awkward table in the middle and 4 awkward chairs, seating the P.R.O. the chief, the Provincial Member and the Consultant, around it.

The officials are busy at looking at their papers while the chief relaxing, chews a betelnut.

SERVICE: (Puts his papers on the table and stands up to speaks) "Okay gentlemen, I would like to open the meeting by welcoming you all here, as I am the elected representative of this area, I therefore declare this meeting open. I understand you all have something to say, so I shall start by calling upon the Public Relations Officer of the Sparta Timber Company, Mr. Shaw".

SHAW: (Standing up) "Thank you Mr. Service, gentlemen. I would like to give you the outlines of my Company's plan for the future of the Athenian Forest. Firstly, the forest has the best trees for logging and for that matter my Company is deeply interested in that. Our plans are to log timber for the overseas market at a good price. As you all might know, the price of good quality logs on the Mediterranean market, has gone up incredibly, especially with the Egyptians big interest in building a dam across the Nile. Also good quality logs are hard to come by nowadays. Therefore we are hoping also to sell some back to the villagers for a good profit. We also plan to build roads, an airstrip and an aid post. We also will incorporate a replanting scheme to replaced felled trees. And that gentlemen are the plans of my Company." (sits down)

SERVICE: "Thankyou Mr. Shaw. I would like to now call upon Mr. Burland the Government Consultant on Social impact. Mr. Burland."

BURLAND: (Standing up) "Thankyou, Mr. Service. As you know I just completed my studies on the Social Impacts that a project such as this will have upon the people of Athens. Well firstly the population will increase by one thousand people in the next year or so. This projected forecast will be due to the influx of Spartans coming in as employees of the company and hence intermarrying with the local women, which to me, are easily susceptible. Anyway so much about that, the next point is that there will be a decline in traditional dances, celebrations and gatherings due to the inevitable fever of rock and roll music, which is of course already, the heart of the Spartans and the Incas, and is most likely to be passed on here. Finally there will be a rise in criminal activities, because a lot of the local men will be without and hence will be preying on the women and the old. Well, that is all. (sits down)

SERVICE: "Thank you Burland, I would now like to call upon the Chief of Athens who will confirm that agreement given by the people of Athens. Chief Plato..."

MARX: (Enters Suddenly) "Hold it you sons of bitches. Who authorised the agreement to log our forest. Was it you honourable slob of a chief? or you, blabbering pussy face of a politician (pointing to Service). Who? To the best of my knowledge, no agreement was reached during our first meeting. Yet after the meeting most of the people mentioned to me verbally that they would rather not have their forest cut down. So who the hell authorised the agreement?"

SERVICE: (Jumping up and point to Marx) "I demand that you leave this meeting at once. It is solely up to the chief and myself to decide whether or not to go ahead and yes we both agreed in the best interest of the people of Athens and not for one loud mouth kid like you".

MARX: "Hold it Mr. Wankpot, you're not getting away with this. You purposely for your own ends, bribed this old man (pointing to the chief) into agreeing, so that you can have a fair helping of this venture. Oh yes I know your kind very well. They sit in the suites inside glass skyscrapers all day long for years and as soon as something important goes on in their areas, they scamp off to get there first and pretend to be busy organising stupid meetings of this sort.

(There is a commotion outside the chiefs house as the village people get frustrated. Someone breaks the silence. It is Rice)

RICE: "Pulim ol kam autsait na paitim ol".

(All at once people rush in)

VILLAGERS: (Chanting) "Killim ol, killim ol!" (Rushes in and clobbers the official party and the chief included).

End of Play.

CONTRIBUTORS

Bodham, Mark : from Port Moresby. Studying at James Cook university, Queensland.

Gegera, Sorariba Nash : from Northern Province. An announcer and Journalist for NBC.

Kafafi, Baptist : 1986 PY student.

Kagl, Toby Waim : from Western Highlands. Completing degree in Literature at UPNG. Novel pending.

Kumbon, Daniel : from Enga. Journalism student at UPNG.

Kouza, Loujaya : from Lae. Music student at the National Arts School.

Nagong, Abu : from West Sepik.

Nalu, Malum : Journalism student at UPNG.

Ngwele, Sampson : from Vanuatu. UPNG Economics graduate now working in home country.

Stella, Regis : from North Solomons. Honours student in Literature at UPNG.

Wamma, Metone : from Morobe. Lecturer in ESL at UPNG.

Waisi, Paschal : from West Sepik. Post-graduate student at ANU, Canberra.

Winduo, Steven Edmund : from East Sepik. Literature student at UPNG.

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BOROKO, N.C.D.	KAVIENG, N.I.P.	LAE, M.P.	BOROKO, N.C.D.	GOROKA, E.H.P.
PHONE: 25 7576	PHONE: 94 2086	PHONE: 42 4368	PHONE: 25 8136	PHONE: 72 2041
25 7599, 25 7559				

ECHOING SILHOUETTE

A girl I see.
Beautiful. Poor. Weak.
She calls out, "Stop!"
No one hears.
"Stop and listen," she feebly calls.
But stands a silhouette in the setting sun.

A man I see.
Hurrying, Rich, Powerful.
Oblivious to the girl's plea
'Wait' she warns. 'Danger'.
DANGER ... Danger ... echoes
Her unheeded plea.

Ethics is the girl.
Development is the man.

- Metone Wamma -

