

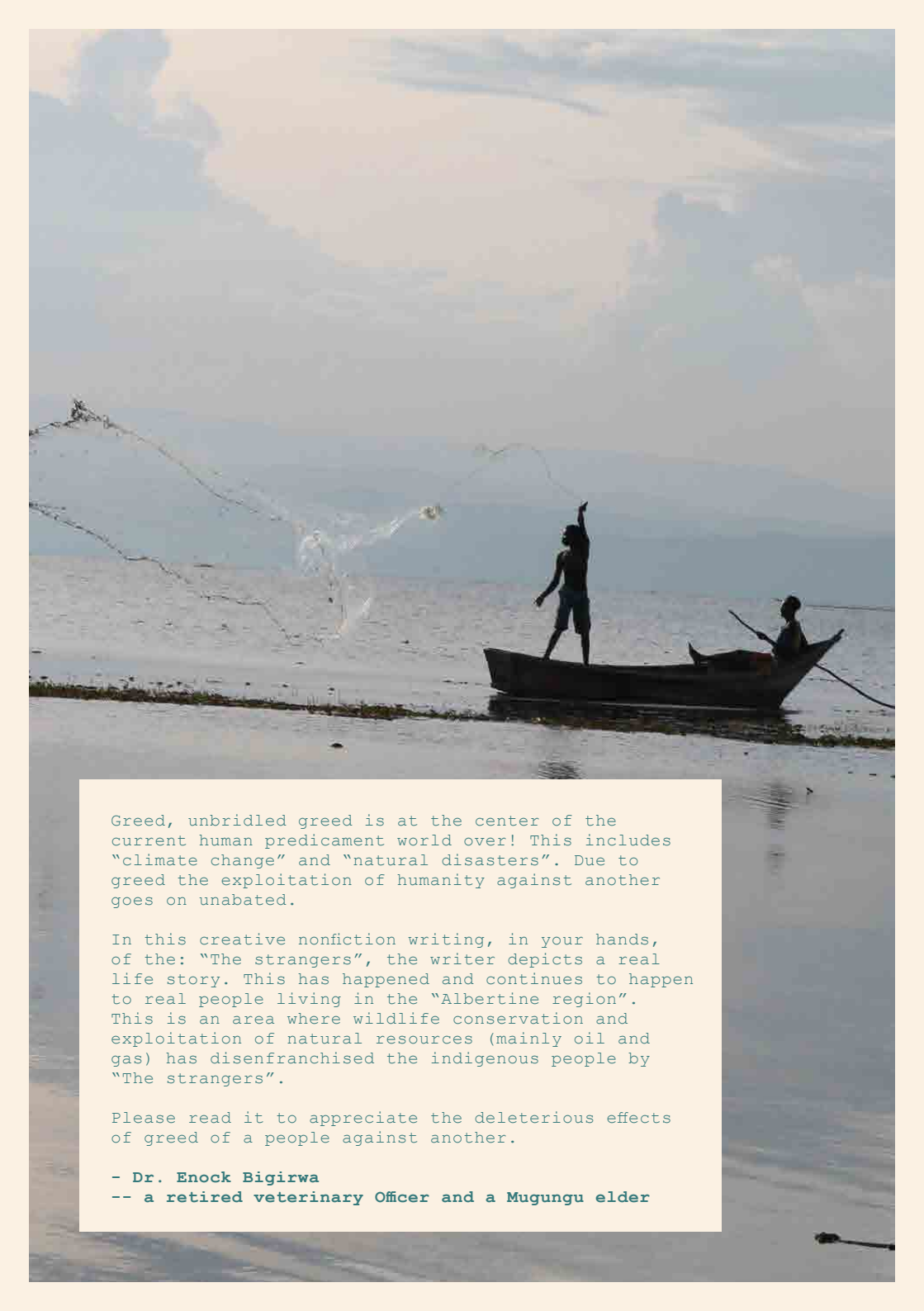


KIIZA WILSON THE STRANGERS

The removed history of
my People, written by my
People

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Greed, unbridled greed is at the center of the current human predicament world over! This includes "climate change" and "natural disasters". Due to greed the exploitation of humanity against another goes on unabated.

In this creative nonfiction writing, in your hands, of the: "The strangers", the writer depicts a real life story. This has happened and continues to happen to real people living in the "Albertine region". This is an area where wildlife conservation and exploitation of natural resources (mainly oil and gas) has disenfranchised the indigenous people by "The strangers".

Please read it to appreciate the deleterious effects of greed of a people against another.

- **Dr. Enock Bigirwa**

-- a **retired veterinary Officer and a Mugungu elder**

An existential war, being on the map

I write to summarise the historical facts about the land of **Bugungu**: before, and after the arrival of foreigners from continents across big lakes. It is an account of injustices and a story of resilience on the side of the Bagungu People. You can call it poetry. But to me it is pain on paper.

- Kiiza, 2024





1.

There lived a village that was so fertile. People grew enough crops and they were happy. Both wild and domestic animals dotted the area. The villagers lived by fishing, gathering and hunting. Nature was providing for them everything they needed; food, medicine, building materials and scenic views.

The community lived harmoniously with nature; trees, lakes, landscapes, animals, reptiles and birds. The land was sacred and it was treated as something that had life. They never killed animals for fun or for their body parts - they killed them for food and a few for rituals.



2.

One day, strangers came to their land and convinced them that elephants did not need their tusks (ivory) and hippopotamus did not need their teeth. These brown strangers tied their heads with a scarf and had long beards. The villagers embarked on hunting down the elephants to satisfy the desires of these strangers.



3.

A few decades later, another group of strangers arrived and these required the villagers to change their ways of life. They introduced their religion, garments and language. Compared to the first strangers, these ones said it was not good to hunt animals even for food.

The villagers were worried that these new strangers had strange behaviors. These new strangers sometimes hosted strangers who looked exactly like themselves.

Whenever these strangers visited, the villagers went to carry luggage for these strangers.



The strangers visitors were well protected and escorted to the villagers' former hunting grounds and they shot at animals and removed off elephants tusks and other parts and left the carcass just like the first visitors had done.



4.

One day, the new visitors called all the men and told them that because of the prevailing epidemic, sleeping sickness, all people were to be taken to a new place to save them.



5.

Years later, when the villagers asked to be allowed back home, the new visitors did not accept. After persistence, they were allowed to return but the new visitors told the villagers that they could not occupy the whole village like it was the case before except a small part of it.

The villagers protested, but the new visitors did not budge. They were told that, the big part of the village was reserved for the wild animals. The villagers wondered what had happened to living harmoniously with animals like they had done before the coming of the strangers to their land.

The villagers' inquiries were met by the threat of being evacuated again. They lived on this small land but things changed. Whoever dared to go hunting was arrested or shot dead. The place reserved for the wild animals became unmarked graves for the villagers who dared to go hunting.





6.

That was to continue even after the visitors had left. Moreover, wild animals were free to roam in the village while domestic animals were not to cross into the territory preserved for the wild animals. Villagers' lives became harder.

Years later, the villagers got to know that these strangers were the British. And then the villagers were informed by the British that they belonged to a territory known as Uganda.

A century later, the villagers' descendants were told that their houses were sitting on oil and gas and therefore they needed to surrender their land so that oil and gas could be exploited. The villagers who had gone to school began connecting the evacuation of their ancestors with the current events of dispossession.



A pipeline route crossing a seasonal stream



The oil and gas is being exploited by the descendants of the strangers who had evacuated the villagers and gazetted the national park. Whereas the locals were prohibited from taking anything from the national parks and kept away by the armed rangers, the oil and gas companies are operating in the same territories clearing vegetation as they wish.





While the lake water floods us with
increased frequency

About the author

Kiiza is a Ugandan researcher and a cultural heritage enthusiast who has interest in the rights of the ethnic minorities, cultural restitution, repatriation and reparation. He is the founder of Bugungu Heritage and Information Centre. He has done an extensive research on the history and cultural heritage of the Bagungu People. Kiiza is also an amateur photographer specialising in photographing people (cultures) and landscapes.

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