

Twic (*East*) Dinka, (Jieng de Twi) and Commemoration of Communal Historical Songs: what do these songs communicate to the contemporary generations?

By: Atem Garang D. Dekuek, Juba, South Sudan

1. Introduction

Monday, 03 June 2024 (PW) -- Twic (*East*) Dinka people, at this juncture of their history, are experiencing an accelerated social change, imposed on them by man-induced disasters, (wars); aggravated by natural calamities, (flood and drought); and propelled by advancement of education and urbanisation. They have been subjected to series of events that triggered massive displacements, which uprooted the population from Twic land and exposed them to different lifestyles and cultures of the hosting communities. They were displaced in 1961-1966, 1991-2006, 2014-2018, and 2020 to date; each episode leaves indelible social imprints on the traditions of the Twic people. Some elements of such social change, are manifested by newly adopted social attitudes, lifestyles, and adapted behaviors. Though, no specialised study that has been conducted on these social changes, there is undeniable evidence for individuals who have witnessed, experienced, and were affected by these social changes. Such individuals, including this writer, constitute reliable reference-book of the impact of the social changes on traditions, customs, and lives of the Twic people, starting from the first displacement. I have plans to trace and document the trend of the social changes, that have remoulded the lives of the Twic people since 1960; and the extent of transformations in the characteristics of the Twic identity!

The influence and impact of this externally imposed social change upon the contemporary Twic community, is rapid and dynamic. The influence of cultures of the hosting communities among which Twic people took refuge, has mainly affected members of the younger generations that grown up in exile. These young people, attended, acquired, and continue to follow their full educational progressions in refuge-lands, in non-Twic social atmosphere, and outside Twic social settings. This situation has produced three groups of elites who possess a *mystified* knowledge about their community, and clench on a *disfigured* Twic's world outlook.

The social surroundings in which the members of each group were socialised and educated are mainly: (a) group educated in refugee camps in the East African countries from 1992 to date; (b) group educated in areas under the control of the government of Sudan, before the independence of South Sudan (1983-2011); and (c) a third group was educated inside Southern Sudan in the IDPs camps in SPLA controlled areas, (1992-2006), and (2014 to date). The members of those groups, constitute the mainstream of the elites of the Twic community.

Additional to the above groups, there is a fourth group, that possesses unadulterated Twic's world outlook, and retains undistorted knowledge of traditions, customs, mythologies, and social code of conduct of their community. This group is comprised of: (a) young people who obtained their elementary education in Twic-land 1994-2020; (b) ageing generations of elites whom were socialised, attained their adolescence and adulthood in Twic-land; got their general and civic education in the then southern Sudan schools before the eruption of the war in 1983. This category of elites, is in the minority.

Meanwhile, the real custodians and authentic representatives of the Twic genuine traditions and customs are the uneducated elders who are now scattered in different directions of refuge; they are the people giving the youngsters glimpses of essence of their heritage and culture; though with painful observation that, the role of grandmothers, *the basic traditional nursery educators*, is eroding away, and is being replaced by kindergarten with alien designed teachings, concepts, and world outlook.

Based on this crafted categorisation, Twic community is destined to face a latent disharmony amongst these enlightened groups in conceptualisation and interpretations of what is Twic heritage, traditions, and challenges facing the community, state, and the country at large.

Considering the impacts of this social change, it is essential and necessary to link the present younger generations to the heritage of their communities. The Twic, being a non-literate entity in the past, its history and the past events were orally passed from generation to the next, which means accuracy might have been seriously compromised. To avoid continuation of such defect, it is logical and obligatory to commemorate and document the existing historical songs or any other aspects; because songs are the only living source of tangible information that the Twic had preserved. Songs could be deciphered to enable us to reconstruct circumstances that influenced the past events, before they are erased from the communal memory. In the light of that, such activity of documenting songs of each clan is a justified initiative and sincerely appreciated.

This article is therefore dedicated to: (a) appreciate the efforts being exerted to preserve events of the past; (b) attempt to explain the social background, historical context, purpose, function, and mode of the songs which are considered ancestral and historical; and (c) encourage young South Sudanese scholars to conduct specialised research in this field.

2. Twic (*East*) Dinka, (Jieng de Twi) and its clans

Twic (*East*) Dinka in Jonglei state, is composed of two major confederated sections: Roor and Lith.

- Roor is a combination of two sub-sections, Ajuong and Pakeer: Ajuong is a grouping of five (5) clans: Abiong, Adiang, Ayoliel, Kuac, and Nyapiny; while Pakeer sub-section is an amalgamation of seven (7) clans: Akonycok, Ajulup, Anok, Bere, Ciir, Hol, and Nöök.
- Lith is constituted by association of six (6) clans, though three of them are referred to as (Nyuak): Awulian, Ayual and Dacuek. The other three clans of Lith are Abek, Adhiok and Kongor.

In other words, Twic is an incorporation of two major sections encompassing 18 clans. A clan (*Wūt*)¹ in the Twic context: *is a self-administered, sovereign, politically federated social setup; composed of multiple autonomous sub-clans; possesses a territory customarily recognised; and adores one divine Deity*. Generally, each clan (*wut*) has (*spiritual trinity*): supreme *divine Deity (Yath)*;² sacred drum (*Lor-yaath*); and a holy cattle camp (*Wun-yaath*). Sometime, some clans may have revered-byre (*Luang-yaath*). Around this *trinity*, the unity, identity, and wellbeing of the clan were pegged.

Each clan has a distinct territory of which the *Toich* is, the most prized section of that territory. *Toich* is a swath of land at the edges of the Sudd, annually inundated during the rainy seasons, and dries when flood recedes. It is utilised for grazing and fishing during the dry season. *Toich* is mainly formed by shallow swamps along Atem and Awai rivers which branch east-north from Bahr el Jebel; west of the Twic-land.

In the past, disputes and conflicts among the clans were mainly triggered by disagreement over the ownership, rights of grazing, and privileges of fishing on a section of the (*Toich*). At present, such disputes have been drastically reduced or eliminated due to two factors: expansion of the swamp

¹ (*Wūt*) is a union of several (*Dhian*) sub-clans; mostly, grouped into three sub-clans, however, more than one (*wut*) may form a confederated-wut. In such case, each sub-wut, though referred to as sub-clan (*dhin*), it possesses features of an independent *wut*; having its own Deity, revered cattle camp, and customarily, a sacred drum.

² See Godfrey Lienhardt, 1961, "Divinity and Experience: The Religion of the Dinka": though his analysis is based on European perspectives, not accurately reflective of Jieng faith and concept of God (Nhialic).

(Sudd) eastwards, which had turned all the *Toiches* into permanent swamps, and are deeply encroached into the heart of the swamp; and the other factor was the establishment of the government in the area at the beginning of the twentieth century, with use of law coercive power, this factor has contributed in containment of intercommunal violence in the Twic-land.

As mentioned above, the spiritual '*trinity*' was fundamental in Twic people's perception about God; before conversion to Christianity in 1980s. It is important therefore, to outline a brief account on this '*trinity*' of spirituality of Twic people, of which its components are central in the historical songs being targeted in this discussion. It is noticeable, that the concepts of the Twic *trinity* is theologically different from the perceptions and belief of the *Trinity* of the new conviction, the Christianity.

(A) Divine-Deity (*Yath*); is holy, divine, and always good. *Deng, Atem, Aleer, or Wieu*, are names for single supreme-being that is between humans and God. It is important to differentiate between (*Yath*) and (*Jòk*); *Jok* is a spirit-being, that is perceived to be between humans and *Yath*; it is of two contradictory characteristics. First group of '*Jaak*,' plural of *Jok*, are of good, peaceful, friendly, and of sainted character, precisely like Angels. For example (*Akoi*) a female *Jok*, is the *goddess* of water, she is responsible for aquatic ecosystem and floods; the custodian of the smallpox. The second group of *Jaak* are devilish and bad in character, they possess similar characteristics of Satan/Devil/Lucifer/Demon in the Christian, Jewish and Islamic belief. However, they can be friended by humans through certain performances; among them are (*deng-mamiem/manhiem*), (*aciengdit*), and (*mabier*) etc.; most of them are associated with fishing folks. A clan would never invoke any (*Jok*) to grant wellbeing to the society, their livestock, and crops. *Jaak* are owned by individuals or families, never owned by a clan or sub-clan.

(B) Sacred-drum (*Loor-yaath*)³, Its function is confined to religious purposes. People dance on its lyric beats once in a decade or more; when pieces of hide covering its top and bottom, and leather cords joining them are to be replaced. To perform this holy event, the process is that: the drum is carried in procession from its permanent guardianship place (*Luang de Loor*), to the revered cattle camp (*Wun-yaath*); where sacrifices of bulls are offered; the drum's old hides and leather strips are removed; and substituted with new ones.

The ceremony is usually concluded with carnivalesque religious adoring spirit; women in adorn attires chant, twist, and sway; elders and youth joyously sing and dance; and people feast pleasurably; all these activities take place in a jubilant socialization; after which, in procession, the drum would be carried back to its sacred abode.

(C) Revered cattle camp (*Wun-yaath*), which is an elevated ground where the clan congregates to perform annual thanksgiving, sacrifices and offerings to their *divine Deity*, usually in January-February; following the harvest of the second crops, and before livestock are driven to the '*Toich*' as the dry season approaches. *Wun-yaath* is where the clan's principal *shrine* (*yiik*) is located. Each clan (*wut*) owns several cattle camp locations, but (*Wun-yaath*) is the prime cattle camp; it is the *capital* of the clan. Each household owns circular portion/s of land in all clan's cattle camps; where cattle are tethered around a central point known as '*dhin*'

One important element of religiosity of *Wun-yaath* in the past, was that if interclan fighting occurred, a defeated clan could retreat to their Revered cattle camp, if it was close to the battlefield; in such case, the victorious clan would not follow them, and the battle considered over!! Daughter from a given clan, wherever she is married to, would always identify, and

³ Ibid, here he describes Kongor clan sacred drum, Mayom. Page 264

refer to herself as: nyan-Panyang, that is daughter of Panyang, or exclaims: *karë Panyang!* That is: Hi Panyang! especially as an interjectory response when puzzled; though occasionally she would yell her clan's name in exclamatory manner, when provoked.

This 'trinity' constitutes solid symbols, pillars, tenets, and basis of psychological oneness, harmony, unity, belonging, and identity of each clan. However, it should be noted here, that the link between God (*Nhialic*) and the humans is through the Divine-Deity (*yath*) who conveys human prayers, and lamentations, to God Supreme-Creator (*Aciek*). But it was usual to pray directly to God on daily basis.

It is worth mentioning here that, some clans have an additional holy component; a *holy-byre*, (*Luang-yaath*). *Luang-yaath* is a large conical structure where the clan congregates when facing looming catastrophe, that requires urgent intervention from the divine Deity for appeasement and divergence; i.e. epidemic disease, locust's invasion, drought, war, livestock plague, crop pests, and other calamities. In such circumstance, sacrifices and libations are offered, bulls and goats are slaughtered; food, and locally brewed beer are provided. Hence, *Luang-yaath* is a *sacred-building* dedicated for episodic prayers and for emergency congregation of the clan. It is constructed and renewed periodically by the whole clan; it is their main *cathedral*.

Below, is a table illustrating generality of the Twic holy 'trinity' of spirituality.⁴

S/No	Clan (<i>Wut</i>)	Divine Deity (<i>Yath</i>)	Sacred drum (<i>Lor-yaath</i>) ⁵	Revered cattle camp (<i>Wun-yaath</i>)	Payam
1	Abek	Deng	Malith	Wangkaar	Lith
2	Abiong	Deng	Nyanroor	Pakwan	Ajuong
3	Adiang	Deng	Ayen	Mading-Aadiang	Ajuong
4	Adhiok	Deng	Mayen	Pakeny	Lith
5	Ajulup				Pakeer
6	Akonycok	Deng	Majök	Pakeeredit	Pakeer
7	Anok	Atem ⁶	Mayom	Wangga	Pakeer
8	Awulian	Atem	Mapior	Pawuoi	Nyuak
9	Ayoliel	Deng	Thiangayou	Wunlier/t	Ajuong
10	Ayual	Wieu	Malual	Pakou	Nyuak
11	Berë	Deng	Akwengweer	Kòp	Pakeer
12	Ciir	Atem	Mayen	Ryien	Pakeer
13	Dacuek	Deng	Mabior	Panyang	Nyuak
14	Höl	Wieu	Akuengweer	Pagwëëk	Pakeer
15	Kongor	Mayom	Mayom	Pabiech	Kongor
16	Kuac	Atem	-	Patulduur	Ajuong
17	Nöök	Deng	Chaap	Paweei	Pakeer
18	Nyapiny	Deng	-	Paleew	Ajuong

3. Commemoration of ancestral songs and heritage.

⁴ Though some clans might not own consecrated drums, while others combine the Deity with their sacred-drum i.e. Kongor clan used to venerate Mayom as sacred-drum as well as an instrument and symbol of Deity; there was no any other specific Deity adored.

⁵ During 1983-1991 all the sacred drums (*Löör-yaath*), and shrines (*Yiik*) in Twic land, were destroyed and burned by Novice Christians in unholy collaboration with the SPLA. None of the destructors was conscious of historical, and ethnographical value that such antiques embodied.

⁶ Each clan could differently name their Deity, while the concept is the same: that Deity is a medium between humans and God, so, Deng, Atem, Wieu or Ayieu/Awiu, Aleer, Mangok, Lierpiou, etc. are names for one holy spiritual-being (*Yath*).

In the last five years, Twic (*East*) communities in South Sudan have initiated a social programme for preservation of their oral heritage. This activity is dedicated to ‘commemorate ancestral historical songs.’ Most of the targeted songs, were composed, by age-sets and generations some decades back in the history of each clan. Some contemporary songs that had gained popularity amongst the Twic communities, are also recorded, and documented. The documentation of this heritage is a recognition to link the past to the younger generations, and a modern handy method for researchers to access this would be well-preserved and archived historical material.

This commitment, is a noble activity; conversely, could it carry with it any unforeseen or undesirable effects on the younger generation that might try to replicate the themes of those songs; and adopt the clan mindset of: (*clan self-cocooning in its little world!*) It was alleged sometime back, that some elites inside South Sudan and in the diasporas were behind certain interclan violence. They are accused of agitation, encouragement, and even funding such hostilities in Twic (*East*) and Bor counties. I hope, all the mentioned hostilities and violence were accidental.

The occasions of commemoration of historical songs so far performed in Juba, are usually, performed in a carnivalesque and euphoric social atmosphere, where gifts offering, honouring of notable personalities, and lavish feasting take place; singing and various styles of traditional dances are exhibited. The social atmosphere on the day of such celebration, is an attempt to recall the pride of the clan some years back; maybe, it evokes nostalgia and flashback for the elderly folks, while for the younger generations is a revelation and a window to glimpse at the past events and history of the clan. Usually, the organisers of such celebrations are elites of variant age-sets using their clan’s elders, whom have memorized these targeted historical songs, to sing and intone them for documentation.

Despite the noble aim of this social initiative, it deserves to be analysed to understand the social value that the songs would add to the wellbeing and peaceful co-existence of the various clans of Twic communities; as well as what if the influence on younger generations is to retrogressively develop reversed-orientation and revise their allegiance from South Sudan to their clans? These days, embracement of tribalism, and clan-based associations among elites from younger generation have been observed, which is worrying!

I will try to highlight on this phenomenon and the impact it could cast on the people of the Twic in terms of information, enlightenment, peace advocacy; and transcend the essence of the songs and clan’s allegiance to love of our country. The background, is that those songs were composed before and during the first three decades of the condominium rule, 1898-1955. Before the coming of the condominium rule there was absence of rule of law and order; violence and inter-tribal conflicts were common and constant. consequently, each clan had to be militant and confrontational, otherwise it would be an easy prey, hence the socialization of the younger members had to be battle-ready orientation; that reality necessitated war hymns to be memorized and sung with specific war passion lyric.

Sustainability of the unity, coherent of an autonomous self-administering and governing clan in the past, was maintained through socialisation of the younger members by inculcating in them, love, respect, observation of traditions, norms, customs, self-discipline, and absolute loyalty and allegiance to the clan. These values and ideals were instilled in the minds of younger generations through codified composition of songs for different purposes such as: (a) war songs (*diet ke Tūp*), which are designed to inflame war and violence passion; (b) religious holy hymns (*diet ke yaii*) that praise and glorify divine Deity (*yath*), and relish spirituality of the members of the clan; (c) Individual songs that encompass several classifications that address diverse characteristics of life; and (d) commonly shared folklore songs accompanying story-telling and children’s games; or mystified history of clan. This

early socialisation and orientation of the youth was aimed to guarantee the readiness and self-sacrifice in defense and protection of the sovereignty, territory, and the people of the clan. So, a clan is therefore is an entity that seeks to secure its independence from encroachment or domination by another clan; though in the past, loose alliances were common among the clans of Twic.

Generally, it is testified that the composers of (*diet ke yaii*) and (*diet ke Tiip*) sued to be middle-aged and elderly people. These two types of songs are communally owned; while the third category, the contemporary songs, or individual's songs, are mostly composed by youths and privately owned.

As alluded above, prior to the coming of the condominium rule, literacy was unknown skill in the Twic land, hence the important role of these songs as 'database' for contemporary generations to decipher the trend of the past events. Hence, the following is a brief highlight, on the three categories of the songs targeted for recording, documentation, and archiving;⁷ among many other categories and styles of songs.

- A. *Tiip* songs:** these are war-dance songs, they are sung when performing war-dances on drum lyrics, but could be sung by solo individual without drum lyrics. *Tiip* songs are old and of anonymous authors. They are owned by the whole clan.

Tiip songs, are war inciting and fight provoking, that stimulate violence passion in individuals and inflate their ego! The dancers and chanters of these songs are mostly younger age-sets, the valiant warriors, people who are ready for combat at any time in defense of the clan; elders, both sexes, do fully participate.

The main themes of *Tiip* songs are: clan glorification, recognition, and sanctification; stressing clan lone ownership of (*Toich*), praising sacred cattle camp (the capital of the clan), emphasising on readiness to combat or seize shields and spears when call comes for defense of the clan and its territory, proud of numerous livestock they own, (wealth possessed by the clan), stressing on heroic deeds of the pervious age-sets and ancestors in conserving the unity and wellbeing of the clan; clan enemies are reminded of previous defeats and threatened of potential conquest; the revered drum dignified, and the divine Deity blessing is appreciated.

The tendency of *Tiip* songs in arousing violence passion or war incitement was utilised by the SPLA in its military training centres, in which the SPLA was praised and glorified as the clan (*Wut*) with reference to battalions as sub-clans (*Dhin*), but the lyric was influenced by military bands hymns tune! The SPLA songs were contemplated as morale boosting medium and self-confidence reassurance for the combatants to bravely face the imminent enemy, the Sudan Armed Forces, that they were inevitably to encounter. *Tiip* dance is performed by both gender

Tiip as a war-dance pursuit, has been abandoned together with its songs since 1962 as the law and order brought stability, peaceful co-existence, and harmony among the clans. The other factor in abandonment of '*Tiip*' dance, is attributed to the displacement that occurred in 1961-1966 caused by high flood, known locally as '*Pawëër*.' Twic people were dispersed and families scattered, to different directions and diverse places: such as Nyarweng, Bor, Mandari and around Juba town in Bari-land. Many young people temporarily migrated to urban centres and sugar cane or cotton plantations areas, mainly in the then northern Sudan, (Today's republic of the Sudan), seeking manual employment with aim of restocking their livestock. In such new social environment, war songs, (*diet ke tiip*) were occasionally sung, while the war dance was not performed.

⁷ For farther reading, see Francis Mading Deng, (1973) 'The Dinka and Their Songs'.

B. *Yäii* songs: are religious hymns, which are only vocalized; they are sung during religious ceremonies, or during any other ceremonial gathering officiated by elders and spiritual leaders of the clan or sub-clan. Most of *yäii* songs are too old and difficult to trace their composers, they are sometimes attributed to specific age-set; they are owned by the whole clan. i.e. Communal Copyright!

‘*Yäii*’ songs; recently have been condemned and dumped into limbo and oblivion by the new faith, Christianity, that took primacy during the war of liberation 1983-2005!

In myopic eyes of some Novice Christians, ‘*yäii*’ songs are contradictory to the teaching of their faith, the Christianity, because they were composed in adoration and glorification of a non-Christian faith, so, they should be discouraged and banned.

The functions of the traditional hymns (*diet ke yäii*), have been conceded to the Christian hymns. My observation of the Christian hymns, among the Twic people, there are two types: hymns translated from the ‘Golden Bells’ which are sung in hybrid tones and tunes; the original tunes of the hymn, plus some features of *Twaar* and *Yäii* styles accompanied by drums beats and rhythms. The second type of the Christian hymns, are the ones composed by Jieng converts from, Twic, Nyarweng, Bor, Agar and Ciec; according to my scrutiny, these hymns are sung in tunes and tones that emit influence of *Twaar*, and *Yäii* styles, while seriously rhythming, with the hymns dedicated to *Jok* like *Deng-manhiem/mamiem*; known as *Deng-manhiem’s* hymns (*diet ke Deng-manhiem*). When these Jieng composed hymns are chanted, they generate hysterical sensations and excitement among the participants; people tend to be emotional and passionate; they fell like persons undergoing episode of a well-known female hysteria, called *Garang-diar!* Or *jok-jok* and *zar* cult among other societies in South Sudan.

However, Deity (*Yath*) that is praised by such songs, is superior to Saints and Angels in the conviction of the people who used to adore hem, because Deity is a conciliator between humans and God (*Nhialic*). Divine-Deity like ‘*Deng*’ was never considered by its followers as Creator (*Aciek/Duciek*) or Initiator (*Baduòòl*) or being the final Superior-Being, but rather a medium that conveys human prayers and supplications to God the Creator, the Initiator; (*Nhialic* is ‘*Aciek/duciek*,’ and ‘*Baduòòl*’); because God ‘*Nhialic*’ is the initiator and creator of anything existing on earth and in the universe! ‘*Deng*’ has no totem symbol, it is a supernatural spiritual-being; no any other mystical power between him and God! *Deng* followers, believe that between him and human beings, there are sainted-spirits of the ancestors; customarily, they are petitioned to soothe the Deity (*Yath*) to convey to God (*Nhialic*) the earthly requirements of their living descendants.

One important core practice of believers of ‘*Yath*’ is that they never evangelized their faith to anyone through usage of any method, being peaceful or coercive; they do not demean other people’s faiths. They think, God is one; conceived and named differently by human beings in accordance with their languages.

C. Individual songs: they are owned by their composers, the theme ranges from praise and magnification of own family, sub-clan (*Dhin*), clan (*Wut*); wealth, love and friendship, beauty of pride-bull, bravery, generosity, and self-glorification, etc. Under this category of songs there are many types, each type with distinctive purpose and message to convey. They include: *Twäär*, *Waar*, *Còng*, *Ayakyak*, *Piöny*, *Këët*, and songs composed by women.

- (i) ***Twaar*** songs are intended to inform contemporary generations of experiences of the clan or individuals, and to impart wisdom, philosophical interpretation, and purpose of life of human beings on earth; also, to strengthen community doctrines and unity.

Twaar songs, are usually composed by talented middle-aged and elderly persons. They are vocalized songs with especial tune that have elements of *yaii* songs. Sometime in the past, they were usually chanted by the composers or by their sons when a calamity or disaster befallen; or during funeral rites; at eve of religious observance; when a dispute is quenched; when composer is aggressed, humiliated, or subjected to injustice; and they were sung during marriage occasions. Many of these songs do address, in general terms, the paradox of human existence and the challenges of life and beyond.

Through *Twaar* songs, Dinka wisdom, adages, parables, philosophical thought are expressed; and mythological traditions are widely quoted and referenced. They are composed in standard classical poetry language. Some *Twaar* songs are styled in funerary tone that generates a mournful atmosphere and stir gloomy sensations!

When an elderly person sings his *Twaar* songs, especially at night, people would be seriously concerned, worried, and speculating the reason that might have irritated him; people would be expecting unpleasant information. *Twaar* songs are fading away as the generations of the early composers are passing-on; while the younger generations rarely compose meaningful *Twaar* songs. They will soon disappear and follow the doom of *yaii* and fate of *Tiip* songs. This is how a culture dies and disappears from existence.

Social change, is inevitable in human societies, but the pace and rapidity of such change is what concerned people specially when the change is imposed externally. Change is embraced when it replaces traditions that keep customs with obsolete functions and harmful impacts, or condone injustice; and all that are replace with new ones that still preserve the identity of the society, and avoid cultural assimilation.

- (ii) ***Waar***: these are songs composed by young men, usually in praise of song-bull, girlfriend, social status of the family; figurative description of beauty of the nature; gratitude to sub-clan and the whole clan. Songs dedicated for dance are selected from this sub-category of songs.

Every adult is usually expected to compose his own songs, in praise of his bull in figurative style, where if a young man has a white bull, he would depict the characteristic of anything that is white and the same to any other color or combination of several hues.

These songs are popular among the urbanised Twic composers as the songs are relatively easy to invent; some of these songs were previously played on musical instrument known as (*Thom*) possibly ‘bowl lyre,’ it used to be made from turtle’s shield, which the urbanised Twic musicians have substituted it with Western musical instruments. Twic music instruments are numerous, but most of them are being abandoned and Western music instruments took the stage.

- (iii) ***Còng songs***: these are purely dance songs. They are intoned rhymes that are harmonious with drum lyrics and rhythms. Drums are the basic musical instruments

fully utilised. On rhythms of these songs, mothers, or any other adults, play young babies on their laps, mimicking dances, while singing those *cong* songs. These songs are in decline.

- (iv) ***Ayakyak songs:*** these are songs that are sung at dance procession as preparatory stage of the dance. They are songs for warmup for the dance, and to alert all dancers to come and join the dance. They are few and changing in tune according to change of the dance's style.
- (v) ***Pjöny Songs:*** they are songs wholly dedicated in praise of individuals, family, clan. The bright side of the praised subject is emphasised such as: generosity, kindness, bravery, richness, etc. previously, *piony* songs were part of *twaar* songs. This type of songs is mushrooming currently among the Twic urbanised youth, as *piony* has been profit-oriented or commercialized now a days.
- (vi) ***Këët songs:*** these are defamatory and derogatory songs that are composed by individual against individual, or family and the author is responsible for his verbal violence. But if the songs are composed and directed against other clan (*wut*) or sub-clan (*dhin*), in this case, the composers are not accountable individually in case such verbal abuse and hostility against other clans have been authorised and permitted by the clan or sub-clan of the composers.

In the past, *keet* used to be between antagonised agemates or estranged families versus each other; any random *keet* was considered offensive and court case was usually pursued, and the composer was fined and the aggressed individual or family compensated to avoid physical confrontations.

- (vii) ***Women's songs:*** there are two types of women's songs. The first type, are songs composed by women but owned by the whole women fraternity of the clan. These songs are dedicated for especial play-dance known as (*dany*); which is exclusively females recreation activity. It is performed on rhythmic tune of singing and handclapping, the dance is done in turns of one pair of players. The songs focus on various aspects of the clan, i.e. glorifying God, praising clan, prudence of the family and appreciating deeds of outstanding personalities. The second type of women's songs, are lamentations composed mostly by women who had experienced injustice such as forced marriage, broken marriage, unfulfilled promise of marriage; or expressing gratitude to her matrimonial family. Individual women's songs are sung to soothe babies, though *Tiip* songs are the most used for quietening babies.

Some women's songs intended for soothing babies, are vocalized, accompanied by lyrics of gourd maracas or shaker (*ayiek or ayiyiek*), emitting pacifying relaxing sensation. This type of songs is diminishing and dying like many other traditions, that are victimised by the social change, which has enabled traditions and social values from other cultures to have primacy. Women used to sing, *Tiip*, *Twaar*, *Waar* and *women's songs* when grinding grains on wooden-grinder for meals; some specific songs, sometimes could deliberately be sung to convey codified messages to some members or addressing unresolved issues within the family.

- D. ***Anonymous Songs:*** these songs are not among the songs targeted for documentation; though they deserve to be reenacted and documented. They are common and shared among the Twic people. They are retold by any person in Twic-land with the same contents, purpose, and

teaching; even if there are slight variations in version, but the message is one. They are anonymously composed in the past, probably by sages, and grandmothers as they used to be the traditional nursery educators. These songs are of two kinds, children's game songs; and folktale songs; and below is a briefly outline:

- (i) *Children's game*⁸ *songs*: these are songs purposely predestined for children; they were composed by anonymous ancestor singers; and commonly shared across Twic-land. Some are for entertainment and amusement purposes, while others were meant to socialise children for good behaviour, psychological patience, physical endurance, leadership, and cultural identity. Many children's game songs are philosophical and educative; they are presented in wry and humorous varieties.

Children's games are designed to fit with each stage of child development and gender. Some games are suitable to category of those approaching adolescence, the games are meant as preparatory exercises for future combat rather than being for mere entertainment; i.e. Training to dodge spears; accuracy in casting spear; mastering stick wielding and usage; shield handling; and athletic exercises: jumping, swimming, wrestling, hockey 'adièèr,' dancing etc.); singing and even hunting and fishing.

A game, known as (*Duiet*), is an example of psychological endurance coaching. In the rules of this game, the loser would be awarded with demeaning and ridiculous song; composed by anonymous forerunners! All songs of this game are prearranged in sequence, beginning with briefest humorous derogatory song, and ended by a lengthy insolent and disrespectful songs. None of the participants might take it as being targeted and offended; because, the participants know in anticipation that the loser at game round ten, for instant, would get song number ten; no any song is repeated from the series nor the order and sequence of the songs could be altered. When the last song is awarded to the last loser, the game is concluded.

Similar rules are true of a game called *Anyö/p*, (sausage-tree's fruit); by which the children simulate elephant spearing or hunting. A sausage tree's fruit is attached to a long rope secured onto its top, and with the other end of the rope held by one participant who would swing it around and around, mostly anticlockwise, and about one metre above the ground. The sausage-shaped fruit is the object cast at and pierced with sharpened small green twigs; the spinner charges at the hunters, and the one who fails to jump over the rope or run away in time, if stroke by this object, he would be booed by singing a contemptuous song that belittling his village or family.

The songs accompanying this game are humorous, but irritating to the loser as the songs are satirical and sarcastic about the family or mainly about loser's village. Against every village of the clan, there are ready satirical songs composed to mock the losers in this game from the village. This game is mostly played by children aged 15-18 years; adults of 18-25 do play it though with vigorous velocity. The composers of the songs are anonymous.

It seems to me, that the function of the songs dedicated for children's games were devised for psychological endurance of verbal attacks or defamatory jargons that the growing young people might encounter throughout their lifespan.

⁸ There are over 20 games, that are performed or played by children; some games continue into adulthood: such as wrestling, racing, jumping, swimming, and *mancala* (*Tok-ku-reu*) which is the most favoured game by elderly people

Note that, playing ground, location, number of participants, time (night/day,) and season (dry/wet), do dictate the type and range of games to be performed; i.e. some games which are performed in fishing camps, tend to be played in water, the space is limited; in cattle camps, games are multiple, due to large open spaces; while games played at homesteads incline to be limited in number of participants, though they are next to games played in cattle camps.

Some children's games, specifically the ones devised for girls, are designed to be non-ridiculous or vigorous; they are mostly pacific and gentle. These types of games are mainly intended to instill patience, community values, virtues, and roles of future ideal mother. Some games do tend to accustom girl-child fingers for artistic handicrafts; handling of future matrimonial family; and her societal role when she is an adult. observe that, there are many children's games which are unisex, which are played jointly by boys and girls or segregated.

Some children's games are orally or verbally performed. They are intended to impart poetic and standard language, and develop child's ingenuity through riddles, puns, alliterations, and other linguistic wordplay.

(ii) Folklore songs: these are songs associated with legendary stories that contain reasoning, (*justification*), and rationalisation of why certain things are in the way they are appearing in life, society, nature, universe and beyond death! Many lessons for younger people are embodied and sandwiched in these stores, so, they are the reference books to consult when need arises throughout the journey of one's life. Most of the folklore stories are accompanied by song and some seem like they might have been epic tales in the far past!

Among non-literate community, such folklore stories are the instrument through which the ideals and stereotypes of the community are inculcated and instilled into the younger members, as well as a ready correctional reference for deviant behavior of any member regardless of sex, age, or prestige.

They are songs of anonymous origin, some are attributed to fairytale animals, such as fox, hyena, lion, and others. They are short and precise songs but meaningful, effective, and unforgettable; they convey their message and teachings wisely and cleverly.

Folktales in Twic-land are, mainly narrated by grandmas, women, and age-mates at nighttime specifically. The intense intermarriages across and amongst the Twic clans, had preserved the originality and coherence of these folktales, and kept them the same in style, substance, purpose, interpretation and understanding.

Many taboos and stereotypes among the Twic people are, sourced out from early teaching of this: *School of Thoughts, The Folklore Stories!!*)

4. Conclusion

The above brief introductory account is, aimed to: apprise ourselves of the social composition of Twic (*East*) or (Jieng de Twi) people; highlight on the rapid social change, and focus on the contemporary challenges facing them. We have emphasised on the importance and significance of recording and documenting these ancestral historical songs. We have also, categorised the songs and outlined the

purpose, objective, and role of each category in maintaining the unity and harmony of the people of Twic-land.

Final aim of this article is, to invite younger researchers to make more specialised investigation on any aspect of life of the Twic people; i.e. impact of displacement on their lives and traditions, as well as other South Sudanese communities; and the complexity of influence of the traditional beliefs on the newly adopted faith, the Christianity.

South Sudanese traditional beliefs had been greatly disfigured through works written by European anthropologists, Christian missionaries, Muslim convertors, and colonial administrators, such misrepresentation is imperative to be corrected and reconstructed through new research that should reflect the accurate religiosity of the people before their conversion to the new religions, Christianity or Islam.

I invite my agemates from Duk and Bor counties to highlight on this field for the benefit of the younger generations.

THE END

Reference

1. Godfrey Lienhardt, 1961, 'Divinity and Experience: The Religion of the Dinka' Oxford University Press Inc. USA, New York.
2. Deng, Francis Mading, 1973, 'The Dinka and Their Songs' Oxford Library of African Literature; Oxford University Press, UK.
3. See <http://redalyc.org/articulo.oa>