

Beyond the River Yei: Life in the Land Where Sleeping Is a Disease By Binyavanga Wainaina
Beyond the River Yei: Life in the Land Where Sleeping Is a Disease
What is this little book and why for whom? It is to begin with (strangely enjoyably self-conscious) NGO-funded poverty porn photo-advertisement with hand-wringing text for funding of research and treatment of sleeping sickness. It is a story of a Kenyan elite reflecting on his place among the global development elite and among the specificity of Yei as a place with its people and history in rural South Sudan. It is a collection of poetry by and about a cynical dedicated South Sudanese doctor who unassumingly drinks unassumingly devotes his life to Neglected Work and people and in his anger at their global neglect refuses to assume the title Poet. ----A Place Called Addo
Fact is: What you do Reflects your philosophy
Not what you say
So: Invent this thing called A Legal Person
Pharmacorp! To Do Your Dirty Work
Now Pharmacorp Can safely say things That could design genocide
Like: Only Potential Markets Have a Right to Life. This disease has been around in Africa for centuries but kicked back into a bigger problem in the 1990s thanks to conflict-based migration of people through areas populated by the infected tsetse flies. When this book was published they were living through a time where HAT was killing more people in the Sudan than AIDS and the disease was poised to cross over into Uganda and Congo. It is still interesting to read this book as a capture in a moment of time - the writer creates what I believe is a fictional Ajo Diktor who used to be a poet but now is a doctor and his poems and interviews with him are throughout the book. Photographs of people suffering from the disease are interspersed with other photos of South Sudan 8 years before it became its own country but well into the conflict between the south and north. 97 Very interesting way to draw attention to a crisis but also personal about the doctor and Wainaina who allows his writing to be self-conscious as an outsider who in the view of the local people may as well be a white person even though he is a black Kenyan with roots in Uganda--different tribe but not so far removed from the people of Yei. The book is rounded out with photographs by Sven Torfinn as well as a more conventional essay on sleeping sickness but that essay comes at the end after the reader has witnessed how this disease has affected a community of people. Ostensibly it's a chronicle of the author's trip to Sudan* to learn about sleeping sickness (and spread the word to the greater world) but the result is as the foreword indicates a kind of diary that constantly moves between fact and fiction (7). Many of the photographs are of those suffering from sleeping sickness and there's some more straightforward/factual information at the end but much of the book is a hazy wander through Sudanese villages a steeping in communities and confusion and lyricism. He won the 2002 Caine Prize for African Writing and wrote for many journals including Vanity Fair National Geographic One Story Tin House Virginia Quarterly Review Harpers Granta the Sunday Times and the New York Times. He won the 2002 Caine Prize for African Writing and wrote for many journals including Vanity Fair National Geographic One Story Tin House Virginia Quarterly Review Harper's Granta the Sunday Times and the New York Times,

Although sadly this book (booklet?) is difficult to get now: Binyavanga Wainaina was an interesting choice for a journalist to commission to accompany a doctor around a community afflicted by both war and disease--sleeping sickness in particular: I say interesting for two reasons: I would describe Wainaina as irreverent (and I mean that as a compliment) and his writing style is not typical of journalists. I think that combination was perfect for creating this booklet about sleeping sickness: The reader sees the problem in treating this disease more readily than if he reads a more traditional pamphlet, This book is very personal--personal about the people around Yei.

What life is like in South Sudan - and how it has been affected by Sleeping Sickness: It reminds us that poverty and its diseases are violent as war. Is it fiction? It is all that and a little more but short and trailing off; its sum is perhaps less than its parts. 97 When this was selected as one of the selections for a group here in Goodreads I had to resort to interlibrary loan to find a copy of this out of print book: We are focusing on South Sudan for January and February and as you might imagine there isn't a lot to choose from, This is written by a Kenyan writer with photos added by a Dutch

photographer: They are sponsored by a German NGO that in 2003 was working to fight Human African trypanosomiasis otherwise known as the Sleeping Sickness, Thanks to their efforts and others the disease has gone back to under 10000 cases a year since 2009 (the World Health Organization has that data and more.) It still is essential to catch it during stage 1 when it is more easily treated but it is far less of a danger now than when this book was published, What was most striking to me are the stories throughout about how people feel kinship with groups not political lines: How they explain themselves based on who their grandparents are and where they grew up not on which country they live in, Wainaina's irreverence comes through in his little remarks about aid organizations all the while this work was commissioned funded and carried out on behalf of an aid organization: I think such a structure of a book like this was an excellent editorial decision: What to do with this book then? Let it soak in study the photos puzzle over the violence wrought by war and illness, *Southern Sudan in what is South Sudan now 97



Binyavanga Wainaina was a short story writer essayist and journalist, He was the founding editor of Kwani? a leading African literary magazine based in Kenya and he directed the Chinua Achebe Center for African Writers and Artists at Bard College. Binyavanga Wainaina was a short story writer essayist and journalist. He was the founding editor of Kwani? a leading African literary magazine based in Kenya and he directed the Chinua Achebe Center for African Writers and Artists at Bard College. A story with vivid photographs.-----Your eyes are working for you not for Sudan. Truly a shame that this book is difficult to obtain. 97 Touching story and the pictures were especially moving. 97 Curious little quirk of a book. Get lost in language for a while. Puzzle some more.3.5 stars. {site_link}.