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Decoding the donor gaze: Documentary, aid and AIDS in Africa

Regina Kessy

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

March 2014

For my two year old granddaughter Tamaya-Regina whom I haven't yet met

‘Einstein captured our epistemological plight with a delightful metaphor:
“Nature shows us only the tail of the lion.”
Unable to see the lion directly, physicists twist its tail this way and that, including experimental roars that are analyzed to produce equations that is mathematical description of the beast.
So they know him by inference, not observation.’

William Ophuls, *Plato’s Revenge* (2011:49).

Abstract

The discourse of ‘the white man’s burden’ that originated in the nineteenth century with missionaries and colonialism still underpins much of the development ideology towards Africa today. The overwhelming assumption that rich Western countries can and should address ‘underdevelopment’ through aid only stigmatizes African reality, framing it to mirror the worldview of the international donors who fund most non-profit interventionist documentaries.

In the ‘parachute filmmaking’ style that results, facilitated by financial resources and reflecting the self-serving intentions of the donors, the non-profit filmmaker functions simply as an agent of meaning rather than authentic author of the text. Challenged by limited production schedules and lacking in cultural understanding most donor-sponsored films fall back on an ethnocentric one-size-fits-all template of an ‘inferior other’ who needs to be ‘helped’. This study sets out to challenge the ‘donor gaze’ in documentary films which ‘speak about’ Africa, arguing instead for a more inclusive style of filmmaking that gives voice to its subjects by ‘speaking with’ them.
The special focus is on black African women whose images are used to signify helplessness, vulnerability and ignorance, particularly in donor-funded documentaries addressing HIV/AIDS. Through case studies of four films this study asks:

1. How do documentary films reinforce the donor gaze? *(how is the film speaking and why?)*
2. Can the donor gaze be challenged? *(should intentionality always override subjectivity of the filmed subjects?)*

Film studies approach the gaze psychoanalytically (e.g. Mulvey 1975) but this study focuses on the conscious gaze of filmmakers because they reinforce or challenge ‘the pictures in our heads.’ Sight is an architect of meaning. Gaze orders reality but the documentary gaze can re-order it. The study argues that in Africa, the ‘donor gaze’ constructs meaning by ‘speaking about’ reality and calls instead for a new approach for documentary to ‘speak with’ reality.

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Glossary and abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ARV	Antiretroviral
DONGOs	Donor Organized Non-Governmental Organizations
GONGOs	Government Organized Non-Governmental Organizations
EEC	European Economic Community
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FFHC	Freedom From Hunger Campaign
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HTP	Harmful Traditional Practice
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
PEPFAR	The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PLWHA	People Living With HIV/AIDS
REPOA	Research on Poverty Alleviation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Organization
SRHS	Sexual, Reproductive Health and Rights
TACAIDS	Tanzania Commission for AIDS
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Aid
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
WHO	World Health Organization
YMEP	Young Men as Equal Partners

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Prologue

For good or ill, this study is approached from four distinct positions that form me as a human being, and therefore to proclaim that my voice does not enter into this dissertation would be a tall order. In fact, my own subjectivity as an African woman, researcher, filmmaker and philanthropist often rose from within and influenced what I read and how I read it. My 'gaze' did direct my choice of methodology, the thesis structure and to a large extent the contents. The concept of 'gaze' as a way of seeing and knowing has always fascinated me as I navigated through my identity as a little girl growing up in a small village called Kilema on the southern slopes of mountain Kilimanjaro. In Kilema there were no black people -only people. We all knew each other's names, knew the neighbourhood well, and the 7pm national news on the radio never mentioned anything about black people or white people.

What I now see as my first formative experience happened when I was nine years old. A strange, white-skinned man perched on a slow moving Land Rover with a loud speaker informed us that after the 6pm Sunday mass, a moving image story (a film) about Lord Jesus would be shown at the church. I do not quite remember the word he used in Chagga, (our local language) but it did not translate as cinema or film. We had no electricity in the village so the projector must have worked off a generator: this was the first film I had ever seen. It was in a language we didn't know so an interpreter informed us beforehand that we would see how our sins made Jesus suffer. We would see the thorn crown we put on his head, and we would see the cross that he carried for us. We did see all that and more during the course of the film, but what mesmerized all the children and adults alike was the priest who owned the Land Rover, the projector and skin, hair and eyes that differed from ours. He was a German missionary priest who had joined our diocese and was to become an object of our curious gaze for almost a decade. But at that moment the significance that he was white, like the Jesus we had seen on the screen, and different from us black children was not something we fully understood. For us he was the Other and we were the norm!

The experiences that formed me as a researcher and filmmaker spanned three continents and thirty years, during which I learned that sometimes I would be the Other myself. My first encounter with an othering gaze was when I was twenty years old and working for a Danish-sponsored project in Dar es Salaam as a secretary and office supervisor. One day I was recruiting a tea lady for the office. There were

several applicants, and my Danish boss told me that I should by no means employ the woman with 'funny sticks in her lips.' One of the people who had shown up for interview was a Makonde woman who had dressed in her best Sunday clothing, as we said in my village, and had impeccably put on her make-up including the lip decoration, which was considered beautiful in her tribe. Obviously, I did as I was told and in the end employed a plain looking man who didn't mind being called *kabakaba*, because that is how the Danish pronounced *kahawa*, which is Swahili for coffee. As a Tanzanian it never crossed my mind that Makonde lip decorations were untoward, and therefore, from that day onwards I was vigilant about other (mis)significations that occurred. There were many, and all because the Danish people were thinking from a different set of 'pictures in their heads' that I was unable to access or challenge.

After two years on the contract, I decided to continue higher education and found myself in North Korea where I was instantly othered as 영어(yongo), which simply means English-speaking person. After almost a year studying agricultural economics in the beautiful Southern coastal city of Wonsan I decided to go back to Tanzania because of the difficulties of being the only black woman in town. This did not go well with the college director who cautioned me that I might starve to death or turn into prostitution if returned to Tanzania. He said that Tanzania was a very poor country with not enough food and that the Great Leader sent eighteen tonnes of maize every year for Tanzanian people. I called his bluff and left anyway because I knew Tanzania better than his narrowed gaze allowed him to find out.

Back in Tanzania, the Danish NGO offered to take me back, but I declined and pursued another scholarship, this time to what was still then the Soviet Union. One evening on the 9th of December, I found myself excitedly sitting with a group of international students and some of our Russian comrades in Baku Azerbaijan, ready to watch a TV documentary about Tanzania because it was customary for the Soviet TV to show some factual/historical information about various countries to mark their independence day. Knowing how beautiful Tanzania is, I was looking forward to 'show off.' Alas, the short film showed the most un-Tanzanian images I had ever seen. Never in my life had I seen so many flies, so many people on crutches, and dust that reached the skies. Only the Tanzanian flag and voice-over mentions of a central Tanzanian town Dodoma, which is known for having many beggars; most of who are blind, made the images relevant to Tanzania. It could have been filmed

anywhere and that made me think about representation. My decision to become a filmmaker was made on that day, and I applied for scholarship change from medicine to journalism and moved to Patrice Lumumba in Moscow. There I quickly learned in just four words that cinema had no history in Africa. *Его там не было!* (it was not there). My MA thesis, *Cinema in the System of Mass Communication in Tanzania* (1989), revealed that to be true: Africa's cinema history is a history of colonialism, power and objectifying gaze where Africans are simply the drum-beaters and background décor.

My years in Western Europe (Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, France and now the United Kingdom) did not mark any significant change in how black Africans are viewed. The objectifying gaze is consistent, and operates by choosing differences rather than similarities. This thesis is an attempt to challenge the differentiating paradigm by suggesting that the 'window on reality' should be wider and more inclusive so that the voice of the represented is included; even when the person being represented is poor and insignificant in the eyes of the ones holding the camera. The reason for this approach is because of the way my philanthropist gaze was formed. This can also be traced to my early life in the village. My mother was a tall domineering figure nicknamed *kifaru* (rhino) because all the children in the village feared her since she didn't hesitate to punish any misbehaving child she could put her hands on. If you happened to be at a wrong place at a wrong time, you started running for your life if someone screamed *kifaru* is approaching. She was also loved for reasons I will explain later. My head teacher father on the other hand, did not enjoy punishing children as such and pupils nicknamed him 'teacher two' *mwalimu mbili* because that was the maximum number of caning he ever administered, usually on the palm of the hands. Ironically, it was from my 'fierce' mother that I learned the importance of helping people in need.

We had a paid house girl *dada* (sister) who enjoyed the same privilege as ourselves and we didn't quite understand why she received wages for doing the same chores as us. It was only later I found out that she was earning money for her poor family. Labourers who helped my mother with coffee harvesting were paid handsomely and they ate with us before going to their homes. Women brought their clothes to mend for free on my mother's mechanical sawing machine, which always stood on the veranda. Children with torn up pants and having no money to go to the proper tailor in the village always came to our house for free repairs. For this and many more altruistic gestures, my mother was a loved figure, and although I

missed her funeral in 1985 by a whole week because the Russian exit visa was delayed crowds of weeping villagers met me and kept the wake with me and my 10-month old son, reminding me how my mother's *utu* (human-ness in Swahili) had touched them. From that day on I decided to step into her shoes to practice *utu* or *Ubuntu* as it is known in other Bantu speaking regions of Africa. As an oral African philosophy, *Ubuntu* emphasizes on sharing, helping and treating other humans as you would like to be treated because tomorrow it might be you. I soon found later in life that 'helping' as practiced by most donor organizations was saturated with power play that diminished the beneficiaries' humanity.

My experience of these four formative positions has enriched my understanding of the key elements examined in this study – documentary and the donor gaze, foreign aid and Africa - which came together in the context of Western responses to HIV/AIDs in particular. My experience of filming HIV/AIDS for my own philanthropic activities has given me a deeper understanding of intentionality on the part of the filmmaker and the ability to recognize when morality and ethics are outweighed by the sponsoring requirements of the donor gaze. As a filmmaker myself, a producer of meaning in cross-cultural settings, I hope I can contribute to the HIV/AIDS story by exposing the dynamics behind that gaze.

Introduction: The documentary nightmare

Until the lion tells his side of the story, the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.
(An African Proverb)

This African proverb captures the theme of this study. My argument will be that orientalist representations in documentary film exclude the perspective of the filmed subjects by imposing First World filters and 'speaking for' reality. According to Edward Said (1978) orientalism is a Eurocentric system of knowledge about non-European cultures that fundamentally misrepresents cultural Others through ontological and epistemological dominating frameworks (1978: 40). These frameworks authorize biased documentary representations that stigmatize reality, instead of balancing the story by genuinely engaging with the subjects who experience that particular reality. In most cases, the seemingly independent speaking subjects on the screen are in fact used as ventriloquist dummies to carry the a priori argument intended by the filmmaker and the sponsors of the production. The study argues that aid and HIV/AIDS documentaries, for instance, misrepresent black Africans, and particularly women, because Eurocentric frameworks mean filmmakers interpret reality through a very narrow 'window-on-reality;' defined in this study as the 'donor gaze.' By speaking through images that convey reality in terms of material and cultural deficiencies the texts align themselves with universal notions of truth and sameness, giving us a particular set of 'pictures in our heads', to borrow from Walter Lippmann (1998: 4) Chinua Achebe warns about the dangers of wrong 'pictures in our heads.'

> After I learned to read, I encountered stories of other people and other lands. I began to read about adventures in which I didn't know that I was supposed to be on the side of those savages who were encountered by the good white man. I instinctively took sides with the white people. They were fine! They were excellent. They were intelligent. The others were not . . . they were stupid and ugly. That was the way I was introduced to the danger of not having your own stories. There is that great proverb—that until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter. That did not come to me until much later. Once I realized that, I had to be a writer. I had to be that historian. It's not one man's job. It's not one person's job. But it is something we have to do, so that the story of the hunt will also reflect the agony, the travail—the bravery, even, of the lions (Achebe, interview by Jerome Brooks, 1995)[1].

[1] Link to interview: http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/1720/the-art-of-fiction-no-139-chinua-achebe. Accessed, June 2012.

The ‘pictures in our heads’ are social-cultural specific and influence how we perceive the world; therefore Eurocentric interpretations on abstract phenomena like poverty and progress can be misleading. John Berger notes in *Ways of Seeing* that ‘the world-as-it-is is more than pure objective fact because it includes our assumptions concerning beauty, truth, genius, civilization, form, status, taste, etc’ (Berger, 1973:11). This study suggests that, since the documentary ‘voice’ establishes *a* truth by speaking about reality in a certain way, it is crucial to ask of the text: who is speaking and why? What guides the gaze seeking to interpret and configure the space of a cultural Other? Why for instance is the ‘voice’ stigmatizing underdevelopment by juxtaposing Third World and First World?

It is indeed problematic to use the same yardstick developed for Europeans to measure standard of life elsewhere, argues Helene Norberg-Hodge (1995:114). In some parts of the world people provide for their own basic need and still have beautified art and music, time for family, friend and leisure but the World Bank categories make no distinction between the homeless on the streets of New York and Bhutanese or Ladakhi farmers. ‘In both cases there may be no income, but the reality behind the statistics is as different as night from day’ (ibid:108). Like many development critics, Norberg-Hodge finds the universalizing filters misleading:

> Born of a Eurocentric science and implemented by Westerners and Westernised elites, development is in the process of reducing all the diverse cultures of the world to a single monoculture. It is based on the assumption that needs are everywhere the same, that everyone needs to eat the same food, to live in the same type- of house, to wear the same clothes (1995:114).

The aim of this study is to situate the ‘donor gaze’ within the development discourse and propose an alternative way of reading cross-cultural documentary films. Furthermore, genealogical connections will be made to illustrate that as a toolkit for documenting the ‘helping’ story, the donor gaze constructs Africa as ‘the white man’s burden’ in the same way as missionaries and colonialists did. As a way of seeing, donor gaze is limiting and controlling, which to some extent affects self-definition of the represented, as pointed out by Ngugi wa Thiong’o: ‘to control a people’s culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others’ (1986: 16). Self-definition is the concern of black African filmmakers and Sembene Ousmane who is considered the father of cinema[2] on the continent once protested to Jean Rouch, the

[2]Sembene Ousmane is the first black African to combine African aesthetics and oral storytelling techniques into a distinct filmmaking style that is inherently ‘African.’ Worldwide, Ousmane is recognized as a major influence in postcolonial filmmaking practices in Africa.

anthropological filmmaker regarding his non-individualizing methods: ‘You treat us as if we were insects’ (Ousmane,1965: 3). Jean Rouch’s methods comprised mainly of using his own narration to ‘speak about’ occurrences that he had proximity to, and in most cases, his gaze usually unearthed the ‘exotic.’

From Rouch’s *Les Maitres Fous* (The Mad Masters) [1955]

Since the earliest years of cinema ethnographic film has been an important tool in representing, constructing and interpreting the colonial Other to the Western audience. As in most ethnographic films, the Other is usually defined through the cultural lens of the ethnographer. It would be irrational to claim otherwise. As Etami Borjan has observed: ‘The romantic aestheticization of the Other is deeply embedded in the Western mind. The history of ethnographic film is thus a history of production of Otherness’ (Borjan, 2013: 25). In *The Ethnographer’s Tale* Bill Nichols says that ‘ethnographic film is in trouble’ because the Others are now able to tell stories and represent experiences in different voices and styles. In the past people explored the works of celebrated filmmakers like Rouch and so on to make sense of the Other, but today, conventional-altering forms of representation are widely accessible to those who have formally been objects (and the blindspot) of anthropological study; women/native/others (Nichols, 1991: 31). As an anthropologist Rouch was ‘speaking about’ the communities he recorded. In 1967, taking advantage of developments in 16mm filming, the National Film Board of Canada invited the inhabitants of Fogo Island, a marginalized fishing community in Newfoundland, to record their own lives. The Fogo Process, as it became known, is thus an interesting experiment in ‘participatory documentary’ and in developing what might be termed the process of ‘speaking with.’ The possibilities and challenges this approach offers for documentary in the twenty-first century will be discussed in the concluding chapter of this study.

This study will show that since ‘helping’ has grown into an imposing multibillion-pound infrastructure it flexes immense financial muscle facilitating unprecedented number of victim hood stories to emerge from sub-Saharan Africa. Thomas Dichter

explains in *Despite the Good Intention* that the 'aid industry' benefits from disempowering images of the 'helped' Other because aid practitioners want to keep their jobs, continue to develop their institutions, and to the fullest extent possible publicize and justify what they do (Dichter, 2003: 110). 'Charity was not only designed to help the poor, it also serves to protect the rich' (Manji and O'Coill, 2002: 570). Such is the architecture of the donor gaze. Epistemologically it is legitimized through frameworks of international donor and development organizations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) whose unilateral definitions and categorizations of human experiences influence how the rest of world engages with Africa.

The World Bank and the IMF together with a multitude of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) form the 'aid industry' (Dichter, 2005). Their goal is to promote a 'universal standard of being, free from grinding poverty, being educated and healthy and having ready access to clean water and sanitation' (World Bank/IMF; Global Monitoring Report, 2013: xi). The joint annual report titled *Rural-Urban Dynamics and the Millennium Development Goals* announces that 'three quarters of the poor still live in rural areas,' asserting that 'urbanization has helped reduce poverty through creation of new income opportunities' (ibid: xi). Addressing the stakeholders the report urges: 'it is imperative that all of us, wherever we are, make a greater effort to help more people escape poverty and improve their overall well-being' (ibid: xii). Such is the basis for engagement and representation of Africa, and 'stakeholders' including filmmakers solicit funds from the aid industry in the well-meaning hope that they can 'empower the powerless.' Neither the colonial nor the Cold War story is valid anymore, so the development story, particularly HIV/AIDS, is the current social-historical reality bringing black Africans into the Western consciousness. Suzanne Franks explains in *Neglect of Africa and the Power of Aid* that 'much of the reporting of Africa which *does* occur originates from within the frameworks of aid and is facilitated by aid organizations' (2010: 82). The aid story is not interested in 'normal' images of everyday life (ibid: 75). The 'picture in the heads' created for the audience from such limited discourse is misleading if not outright discriminating:

> Since the end of colonial rule, Africa has on the whole been inadequately covered by the western media. It is rarely reported except as a backdrop to disaster or as the scene of a celebrity visit. There is an absence of sustained and well-informed reporting about Africa in the mainstream media. And when the media do cover it they often get the story very wrong, partly because there is no ongoing understanding of and engagement with the continent (Franks, 2010: 72).

Franks suggests that a set of negative stereotypes of Africa commonly known as the *'National Geographic Syndrome'* has hardly moved from Henry Morton Stanley's image of the 'Dark continent' (Franks, 2010: 73). This is not surprising because 'the eye is a product of history reproduced by education' (Bourdieu, 1999: 3). *The Invention of Africa* by the Congolese philosopher V.Y Mudimbe maintains that historically and culturally Africa is reproduced through the imperial discourse, which created enduring myths about the inferiority of black Africans underpinned by negative comparisons. 'A dichotomizing system emerged and with it a great number of current paradigmatic oppositions have developed' says Mudimbe (1988: 5). Differences were theorized to confirm the sub-humanity of the black race and the archetypes contributed to the collective imagination that still defines black Africans today (Blanchard et al, 2008: 39). The power over definition and representation of other cultures is what Edward Said's theory of orientalism addresses. Orientalism, writes Said (1978) reinforces a 'textual attitude', assuming that 'the swarming, unpredictable, and problematic mess in which human beings live can be understood on the basis of what texts say' (ibid: 93). Likewise documentary can create or challenge 'visual attitude', the notion that images can speak a universal truth because 'just like an orator or public speaker who uses his entire body to give voice to a particular perspective, documentaries speak with all the means at their disposal' (Nichols, 2010: 67).

The donor gaze is underpinned by the assumption that African cultural, moral and material deficiencies are known and can be communicated visually through a differentiating paradigm and clever juxtapositions. Donor gaze goes even further by emphasizing the humane and moral superiority of Western countries; portraying them as 'once again' saving Africa. Alex de Waal (2006: 63) claims that such texts carry a 'salvation agenda' because they present underdevelopment as a problem to be solved by the developed First World. This inherently polarizing agenda firmly places the development story in the hands of technologically advanced countries on the top ladder of the development hierarchy. Their role in the 'helping story' is stated in the *Dictionary for International Donor and Development Organization*:

> Development aid and expertise have assumed special significance for the countries of the South vis-a-vis their resource constraints and lack of capacity to plan, develop and implement projects and programmes. The role of donor and development agencies thus becomes pivotal as they help the developing and the under-developed world overcome their obstacles to socio-economic progress (COMSATS, 2007: i).

In *Hope and Impediments* Chinua Achebe warned of the epistemic weaknesses in the development story claiming that 'experts' and foreign correspondents 'replace or simulate dialogue' to satisfy Eurocentric frameworks (1990: 25). The Darwinian worldview contrasting primitive and modern, through which black African reality is often stigmatized, is shaped by 'myths created by the white man to dehumanize the Negro in the course of the last four hundred years' (ibid: 23). Authentic African voices to balance the story are hardly solicited because 'the white man sends one of his fellows to visit the land or the mind of black people and bring home all the news.' Historically, 'this has included every kind of traveller: priests, soldiers, bandits, traders, journalists, scholars, explorers and novelists' (ibid: 25).

Despite a diversity of truths, and the flexibility of cinematic technology to capture them, reality is still shaped by the epistemic biases of predominantly white, male and middle class 'experts.' Depictions of black African women or girls performing normal daily tasks, (fetching water, collecting firewood, cooking, washing etc) are often taken out of cultural context to speak about poverty in terms of material comfort compared to the West, or vulnerability and oppression vis-à-vis gender equality. One of the paradoxical questions guiding this study is why a Western documentary filmmaker without adequate cultural competence or ethical responsibility towards the subjectivity of the subjects should choose sub-Saharan Africa as a location for filming. Sembene Ousmane's point about black Africans being treated as if they were insects is quite relevant in aid stories because the power hierarchy between the filmmaker and 'helped' subjects allows any imaginable reconstruction including (un)dressing, crying or any other credible mise en scène to authenticate proper helplessness as understood in the West.

Why documentary?

My argument is that documentary film offers a unique possibility for truthful representations because it can empower the film's subjects to 'speak with' their own voice and, for good or ill, cast doubt on the authority of the 'expert's' version of truth vis-à-vis development. Jay Ruby notes that, 'speaking with' represents a major shift in attitude about where to look for authenticity, recognizing that the opinions of filmmakers and experts need to be tempered by the lived experience of the subjects and their view about themselves (Ruby, 1991: 54). The truth, however, is that the relationship between the filmmaker, representing the interests of the donors, and the film's subjects, who tend to be beneficiaries of some kind, is embedded with power inequality, raising fundamental ethical questions regarding the authenticity of what is

said, who is saying it, why they are saying it and most importantly, how it is said. Analysis of the production of *Talking About Sex* [2008], in chapter four will demonstrate how the donor gaze establishes a hierarchical relationship between the filmmaker and the subjects, automatically turning the subjects into one-size-fits-all truth templates to support the film's argument. In a straightforward way the aid industry owns the gaze, and in most cases both the filmmaker's voice and that of his/her subject are compromised in the need to 'butter the bread': as John Grierson rightfully warned, 'the first rule of filmmaking is don't pistol whip the hand that holds the wallet' (Evans, 2005: 32).

Realizing the power of documentary, the international donor community routinely sponsors documentary films addressing socio-cultural aspects of development because documentary has the unique possibility of delivering a message about the conditions of Africa. Documentary transcends illiteracy and is closer to traditional oral communication, which makes the medium an ideal tool for participating in development initiatives and cross-cultural understandings. Documentary films aimed at challenging 'harmful African traditions', combating HIV/AIDS-stigma or solving other black African problems are routinely funded by various NGOs because of documentary's educational/propagandist capacity. However, when those texts that are created with the benevolent intent of 'empowering with voice' end up on transnational media platforms like YouTube, Internet and cable TV, the context is mostly 'lost in translation' and black Africans are once again reduced to problematic templates. Interestingly though, there is a lack of an adequate framework for textually analyzing such texts because most academic discussions about documentaries tend to focus on the aesthetic values of the text with less concern for the ethics of the gaze and power regimes that authenticate truth.

Films in the foundational documentary canon, like *Nanook of the North* [1922], *Moana* [1926] and *Man of Aran* [1934], are usually heralded for their visual achievements and routinely used for various theorizations without mentioning the power hierarchy between Robert Flaherty and his subjects, who were in fact directed to appear in the film according to Flaherty's imperial imaginations. Such a glaring omission seems rather deceitful because it obligates admiration of the 'emperors new clothes', which, to say the least, is irrelevant from the point of view of the ones represented. Brian Winston has paved a way for analyzing cross-cultural documentary by interrogating the very canon upon which the documentary tradition is founded. In *The White-man's Burden: The Example of Robert Flaherty* Winston

points out that 'Flaherty's influence - his choice of and attitude to his subjects, above all his manner of working – casts a pall over the entire documentary tradition and is among the major factors in documentary's flawed methodological and theoretical foundations' (Winston,1984: 59). Winston exposes Flaherty's motives claiming that 'Flaherty's was an imperial career –a career almost entirely spent in the far flung corners of empire or domestic backwaters, in the pay of governments or exploitative commercial interests… Flaherty was a child of the last age of imperial expansion, and beneath the veneer of sympathy and understanding for the people he filmed there is only the strong whiff of paternalism and prejudice…In every part of the world, Flaherty found similar objects of study…the poorest of the poor' (ibid: 59). Both *Nanook of the North* and *Moana* are full of reconstructions and fakery; for instance the real name of the man who played Nanook was later revealed to be Allakariallak. The fact still remains that 'it is to Flaherty that the documentary tradition owes the notion of divine right of film-makers' says Winston. He cites Robert Flaherty's comment regarding shooting *Man of Aran*:

> I should have been shot for what I asked these superb people to do for the film, for the enormous risks I exposed them to, and for all the sake of a keg of porter and five pounds apiece. But they were so intensely proud of the fact that they had been chosen to act in a film which might be shown all over the world that there was nothing they wouldn't do to make it a success (Winston, 1984: 59).

Drawing on Winston's example, this study will incorporate the director/producer's perspective/motivations in the analysis of the texts in order to shortcut otherwise universalized aesthetic speculations of what the images might be communicating and to whom. The gaze of the text will be revealed by asking who is speaking, how, and why in order to show that only an inclusive paradigm of 'speaking with' can open wider the 'window-on-reality' to allow negotiation of the preexisting truths through epistemic and ethically correct lenses. It is especially important particularly in the socio-historical context of aid and HIV/AIDS activism because many *helper-as-documentary filmmakers* - to borrow a term from Erik Barnouw[3], another Flaherty critic - tend to foreground the 'salvation agenda' of the aid industry. They ignore the common-sense that 'only the wearer knows where the shoe hurts' by making their voices louder and more valid than those of the 'voiceless' subjects they seek to 'empower with voice.'

[3] Barnouw, E. (1993) *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film,* discusses Robert Flaherty's dubious methods branding him explorer-as-documentarist.

Why Africa?

Following a similar line, a Nigerian film theorist, Nwachukwu Frank Ukadike, discusses some key documentary texts to interrogate the gaze of the filmmakers in what seems justification of Ousmane's point that Western filmmakers objectify black Africans as if they were insects. In *Western Film Images of Africa: Genealogy of an Ideological Formulation* Ukadike argues that during the heights of imperialism, a cinematographic invasion of Africa by foreign filmmakers was motivated to meet the escapist requirements of European investors and the Western audiences, keeping the whole world from African reality by providing a false paradigmatic perspective through which the continent was to be viewed (Ukadike, 1990: 30). This tendency continues, even in 'progressive' films. The experimental film *Reassemblage* [1982],[4] which the American-based Vietnamese filmmaker and theorist Trinh T. Minh-Ha shot in Senegal, claims to 'speak nearby' African reality but it meets sharp criticism from Ukadike. The film uses many extreme close-ups of the sagging breasts of Senegalese women in tattered clothing pounding mortars to present *the-way-things-are*. Supposedly this was to challenge the negative stereotype of African women in the First World, but Ukadike remarks: 'I have never seen so many close-ups of naked breasts in any other film, fifty-one shots in a forty minute film, rivaling the most explicit pornographic films of modern times' (Ukadike, 1990: 43). *Reassemblage* is a 'taxidermic' representation that 'expands on perpetuation of the reductionist romantic and paternalistic treatment of Africa' (Ukadike, 1990: 42). 'Why Africa?' asks Ukadike: 'Trinh T. Min-Ha could have found similar subjects to study in her native Vietnam' but then decides to reach Western audience by 'interweaving exoticism with nudity in a semi-pornographic blend' (ibid: 43). Minh-Ha's First World experimental stance not only exploited stereotypical images of black Africans: it also exploited the documentary form to authenticate her 'demystifying' quest for how-things-really-are.

Stefan Andersson writes in *Orientalism and African Development Studies* that Western interests have shaped and continue to influence the representation of the African continent:

> The period following the 1884 – 85 Berlin conference and the carving up of Africa into European colonies is characterised by reductive repetition in its more 'classical' form. In this era traditional justifications for colonial rule predominate. They are based on a mix of racial hierarchy, 'scientifically' infused by dubious means of transplanting Darwin's ideas into the social domain, an unabashed sense of Western cultural superiority and a strong paternalist approach towards the subjects of European imperial rule (Andreasson, 2005: 974).

[4] Film available on: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cc5G2-rTKis. Accessed, June 2013.

The reductive repetition, explains Andreasson, becomes ‘an effective tool with which to conflate the many heterogeneous characteristics of African societies into a set core of deficiencies’ (Andreasson, 2005: 972). According to him, the diversity of African historical experiences and trajectories, socio-cultural contexts and political situations are conceptualized as unsolvable internal development problems; ‘*deus ex machina*’; that require an urgent solution originating externally (ibid: 973). Documentary representation follows this path and rarely ventures outside the Third World/First World theme. In fact the Mauritanian filmmaker and writer Med Hondo points out in *What is Cinema for Us* (1986) that Western cinematic products seldom represent African personality, their collective or private way of life, their cultural codes, their specific art, way of thinking and communicating or indeed African history and civilization (Hondo, 1986: 47). Maj Palmberg puts it this way: ‘without blinking, “Africa” is talked about as if all its parts were interchangeable’ (Baaz and Palmberg, 2001:198). The underlying assumption is that ‘one African is all Africa’, and that ‘a picture of any African stands for all Africans – with neither name nor place’ (ibid: 199). In this way: ‘a Tanzanian woman working the soil in a savannah landscape becomes *the* African peasant’. Palmberg asks, for instance, why is it that the picture of the pyramids is never shown with captions like ‘An African Pyramid’? Is it because ‘we’ know that pyramids are cultural monuments, and ‘we’ know that Egypt had culture, whereas ‘we’ are not so sure about the rest of Africa? (ibid: 200).

Why the ‘donor gaze’?

Michel Foucault’s concept of the ‘medical gaze’ as explored in *The Birth of the Clinic* explains how seeing came to exercise power over the origins of truth (1994: 4). Giving the example of the ‘medical gaze’ during the enlightenment when science demanded validated proof, Foucault explains that visual observation of a patient authenticated the doctor’s truth about illness. In such a setting, it was no longer a gaze of any observer but that of a doctor supported and justified by an institution and the doctor was endowed with the power of decision and intervention (ibid: 89). There is a profound similarity between the donor gaze and the medic’s gaze because they both function to identify, categorize and differentiate. Whilst the medic’s gaze is authorized to define and present disease, the donor gaze legitimizes our definition of poverty, asks us to see our reality in a certain way. To put it simply, the ‘donor gaze’ can be defined as a way of seeing that governs documentary representation in films sponsored by aid agencies in the West. As an approach in documentary film making, donor gaze totally or partially silences the authentic voices by reducing the filmed

subjects to common stereotypes that are known in the West and can be easily recognizable. Nichols explains:

> When both filmmaker and social actor coexist within the historical world but only one has the authority to represent it, the other who serves as subject of the film experiences a displacement. Though bodily and ethically absented, the filmmaker retains the controlling voice, and the subject of the film becomes displaced into a mythic realm of reductive, essentialised stereotype, most commonly romantic hero or powerless victim (Nichols, 1991: 91).

Donor gaze productions necessitate a special kind of relationship between the representer and represented, which is inherently orientalist in nature. The documentary filmmaker automatically stigmatizes the subjects as different and a hierarchy is immediately established with the filmmaker representing the donors and the subjects taking the position of the 'needy.' In Kiswahili the word *mfadhili* (donor) is embedded with financial power and cultural superiority. Beneficiaries of donor projects, who are usually subjects in front of the camera, normally adopt the 'helpless' stance in order to benefit. Under the gaze ethics take another form, and impartiality, confidentiality and other issues like release forms or place and duration of broadcast are seldom discussed with 'victims' in the aid story. The well-meaning intentions of the text seem to remove the filmmaker's guilt in the exploiting images of misery and suffering. Often, a token amount is paid to the 'victims' in such productions because many participate in the hope of being helped by the *Mzungu* (Swahili for a white European). The subjects rarely question how the images are recycled in the West or indeed suspect the extent to which their 'acting' in the film benefits the donor's cause or indeed the filmmaker's career and wallet.

Why HIV/AIDS?

A British photographer Ed Hooper recalls with misgiving how he captured a famous AIDS campaign photograph of a dying mother and son, *Florence and Ssengabi.* Hooper was one of the first reporters to photograph AIDS victims in Africa, later claiming that he 'participated in something of a media rape' (Hooper, 1990: 48). After days of debating whether recording sickness and death was suitable for public consumption, he nevertheless photographed the dying woman and her son 'from every angle, with every lens. Cameras clicked and whirred, pausing only for the changing of films' (ibid: 48). Hooper notes that the little money he paid her somehow eased his conscience and that 'it was certainly something that we could afford' (ibid: 49). The woman and her son died a month later, but her iconic photo launched the humanist tradition in representing HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa according to a

2007 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) study by Roland Bleiker and Amy Kay. They claim that humanist photography 'hinges on the assumptions that images of suffering can invoke compassion in viewers, and that this compassion can become a catalyst for positive change' (Bleiker and Kay, 2007: 139).

From:
Representing HIV/AIDS in Africa:Pluralist Photography and Local Empowerment
Bleiker and Kay (2007:147)

FIG. 1. Florence and Ssengabi. Source: Hooper (1990).

Florence's destitution and trust for the authority of the *Mzungu* photographer who, she rightly hoped would pay her a fee for being photographed, can be extended to the experience of most people living with HIV/AIDS confronted with a chance of 'telling their story' in exchange for help. In fact many Tanzanian women have been compelled to disclose their HIV status just to access ongoing donor programmes because sometimes it is harder to get help from local NGOs who prefer to keep the money to themselves by imposing rigorous processes for dispensing it to the ones who need it.

An HIV positive woman, Veronica Kijazi, who is the subject of my short film *Vero* [2004] unhesitatingly decided to tell her own story to me in the hope that it would reach *wafadhili* (donors) in Sweden so that she could receive help, which was not readily available for her in Tanzania. Veronica's story revealed another layer of truth vis-à-vis hierarchy, bureaucracy and AIDS politics, and allowed me to understand what Tanzanians mockingly sneered at as 'fat' and 'thin' AIDS. The 'fat cats' who dispensed the money lived good lives whilst the dying thin victims kowtowed to whatever programme was concocted in order to stay alive a bit longer. The 'AIDS industry' says Dennis Altman, 'provides expensive travel for the AIDS elite' to AIDS

conferences that do not serve any genuine purpose rather like an ‘academic treadmill’ (Altman, 1998: 243). He adds, ‘the underlying reality of the AIDS industry was pointed to in a plenary speech by Katherine Nyirenda of Zimbabwe, when she said that the cost of bringing her to and housing her in Vancouver could keep her and her children for a year back home’ (ibid: 244). The subject of my film Veronica was diagnosed with HIV infection in 1998 and knew that her deceased employer who had raped her in 1987 had infected her. Since then four men she had had relationships with had died, which was the reason she went for screening and she was saddened that she had unknowingly infected them. *Vero* is non-judgmental, non-voyeuristic and was shown to a single viewer; a Tanzanian philanthropist who promptly agreed to support the family and today Veronica is economically independent. Images from her private life would have seemed shocking and extremely distressing if shown to Swedish ‘helpers’ as she originally requested. Her husband’s rotting right leg, swollen and filled with unsightly writhing worms might have become an object of horrified spectacle in Sweden but the medically trained Tanzanian philanthropist correctly diagnosed the condition as river blindness and arranged immediate treatment.

A Western documentary filmmaker seeking to universalize this might have structured and used Veronica’s story differently, which is also paradigmatically correct, as stereotyping is sometimes the ‘necessary evil’. That is why in interrogating the gaze it is important to include the perspective of the filmmakers, to understand why they frame the subjects in a certain way, and most importantly why they choose sub-Saharan Africa or HIV/AIDS as a historical actuality to document. Bill Nichols emphasizes that an inspection of the gaze will reveal ‘how filmmakers regard, or look at their fellow humans directly. The documentary is a record of that regard. The implication is direct’ (1991: 80). ‘The camera gazes’ says Nichols. ‘It presents evidence destined to disturb.’ This evidence however, ‘cries out for argument, some interpretive frame within which to comprehend it’ (ibid: 81).

By accurately capturing Veronica’s reality and staying close to her truth I foregrounded her subjectivity, which might otherwise have been lost in the overwhelming labyrinth of a standard template ‘helping’ story aimed at fundraising for ‘others like Veronica’. I saw Veronica as an equal human subject whose misery could be my own, and my ethical approach was to individualize the story and use the images to mobilize help for her family, which is first and foremost usually what ‘victims’ of donor gaze productions hope their stories will achieve. My experience of

filming HIV victims in Tanzania is that the majority would not wish to be used as 'visual representations' of the pandemic if they were given the choice. On the other hand, it is hardly conceivable that such a personalized approach to philanthropic filmmaking is sustainable because suffering images of 'biblical proportions', as Nichols puts it, are an important element in the aid story in order to achieve a wider impact.

Bleiker and Kay (2007:146) argue that photography plays an important part in 'neo colonial practices of domination' and that the Western stereotypes about Africa render the problem of HIV/AIDS more difficult than it is already. They also point out that photography can play an important role in overcoming stereotypes and creating alternative images of HIV/AIDS and a new way of understanding and discussing it, but instead donors and development workers rely on 'stereotypical, reproducible, recognizable, and self-affirming views of Africa' that contain only 'token roots in the actual, domestic reality of the land beneath' (ibid:146). Humanist photography has a mission they say. 'It aims to use photography in the service of human cause' (ibid: 146). Genealogically, the filters through which African reality has been represented clearly indicate that filming black African subjects had/has less to do with their reality and more to do with what is important for the dominant hegemonies. Kenneth Cameron notes that 'the real Africa has little or no reality for America,' similarly, 'postcolonial Africa appears to have no reality, or at least no accessible filmic imagery for Great Britain' (Cameron, 1994: 201).

The donor gaze lacks a motivation for allowing African reality to speak-as-it-really-is. That would entail a genuine human curiosity about the Other, which would permit filmed subjects 'speaking with' their own voices. 'There is a profound difference between knowledge of other people and other times that is the result of understanding, compassion, careful study and analysis for their own sakes' and 'an overall campaign of self-affirmation and belligerency' (Said, 1978: xiv). Representing the 'biblical proportions' of HIV/AIDS subscribes to the latter and has become a bread and butter activity for many pragmatic filmmakers and quasi documentarists who use African space and talking heads exclusively as part of 'ritual of verification.' This approach seems to be popular perhaps because the dynamism of the transnational audience includes elements of nostalgia for the 'silent savage' who can be understood only in Euro-American terms. The donor gaze mode provides a justification for the continuation of an orientalist construction of the 'helpless' Other whose voice is totally irrelevant in the development story.

Since the donor gaze is mainly concerned with one-size-fits-all representations the filmed subject is not seen as an individual but as a stand-in for a particular problem that needs to be addressed. Stereotyping as a tool for the donor gaze may serve as a 'necessary evil,' particularly in instances of humanitarian crisis, however an a priori documentary representation is motivated by other dynamics that need to be interrogated. Unlike the Griersonian 'victims' who were able to articulate their concerns, victims in Sub-Saharan aid and HIV/AIDS story are not trusted to speak for themselves.

Tanzania's Nightmare: An example by way of explanation

A documentary film *Darwin's Nightmare* [2004], by the Austrian director Hubert Sauper, exploits the victim-hood tradition and treats Tanzanians as voiceless 'laboratory subjects' to illustrate his anti-capitalist indignation about unfair fish trading between Tanzania and Europe. 'Laboratory subjects', 'scientific specimens' and 'insects' are terms used by Teshome Gabriel, an Ethiopian-born film scholar to explain how dismembering the subjectivity causes the subject to become an object (Gabriel in Russell, 1999: 222). *Darwin's Nightmare* does precisely this. The film treats the subjects as one overwhelming objective proof that a majority of Tanzanians starve to death or survive on maggot infested fish skeletons whilst tons of premium fish fillets are exported to Europe. *Darwin's Nightmare* boasts many awards in Europe, and in the US it was nominated for an Academy Award in the Best Documentary category. The film is unquestionably well meaning because it exposes global inequality and critiques greed and exploitation of the weak by the stronger, but this is done by constructing Tanzanians as voiceless victims, if not outright unintelligent beings who can only be spoken for by an uncorrupt white saviour. In a 2013 interview, the director told me that the film is not about Tanzania. 'It just happened to be in Tanzania' (Sauper, 2013, interview: 1). However, his 'artistic' interpretation of space is not forewarned in various promoting materials for the film. The film carries a 'documentary' stamp, and the DVD wrapper for instance, reveals the geographical location and implies that the audience is promised a truthful journey into a Tanzanian reality:

> Forty years ago, a voracious predator was introduced into the waters of Tanzania's Lake Victoria where it quickly extinguished the entire stock of native fish. Impervious to the ecological devastation this caused, the Nile perch quickly became keenly sought after, prized for its tender, succulent fillets, and struggling to meet demand at many prestigious European restaurants. To satisfy this hunger huge, foreign cargo planes fly in and out exporting the lake's gourmet bounty, taking out 55 tons of processed fish every day. In their wake, they leave starving villages to scrounge a meal out

> of the discarded fish heads and rotting carcasses. With the local population living amid epidemic, raging civil war, crime, homelessness, and drug-addicted children, the question which the film seek to ask is: what do the 'empty' planes deliver to this destitute community? The answer is as shocking as it is devastating, and Darwin's Nightmare becomes a nightmare for all mankind (DVD cover, *Darwin's Nightmare* 2004).

Voicelessness

The documentary 'voice' of *Darwin's Nightmare* is structured through opinions and images of drunken prostitutes, arrogant Russian pilots, homeless children high on glue-sniffing, a limbless hungry orphan hobbling aimlessly, a half-blind woman scavenging in maggot infested skeletons, an emaciated AIDS patient returning back home to die, unruly local fishermen and a few other local actors that his limited window-on-reality required. Sauper chooses 'victims' who fit the existing stereotypes in the First World, and although his film is not financially supported by the aid industry his orientalist stance allows him to indigenize his own voice and use the same differentiating paradigms as the donor gaze. He claims, however, that fundamentally he rejects the 'slimy NGO perspective of victimizing Africa and showing Europeans as the big white missionaries' and also disagrees with the 'Walt Disney truth' favoured by African politicians and tourist industries that 'romanticises sunset, beaches and smiling people' (Sauper, 2013, interview: 3). He therefore chooses to 'speak about' Tanzania with his own politically-motivated voice: 'I don't owe a report to any government. I am expressing a universal truth and I don't owe any balance to anybody. I get money because I am a film artist. I use my political motivations to make my comments' (ibid: 2).

The director is aware that that he used his victims as ventriloquist dummies for his own voice but maintains that their 'little voices' were a glue to patch up a global story. 'I think I am one of the last people in our civilization that can really express own voice in a large scale because many others are controlled by whoever is sponsoring them. It's my decision to stay close to my truth' (Sauper, 2013, interview: 3). But Sauper, like many other practitioners of the documentary tradition, is not guided by any concept of what 'documentary' really is. To him documentary is 'art of information' (ibid: 3). I find such intangible approach to documentary filmmaking quite alarming because, ideally, documentary representation is a dialogue between the filmmaker's vision and the living reality of the filmed subjects.

The film's gaze

Interestingly, *Darwin's Nightmare* adopts a very narrow and even darker 'window-on-reality' than the donor gaze by 'selling' the argument through nineteenth century stereotypical constructions of Tanzania. His style, he says, is to let pictures speak for themselves. 'I give them ropes so they can hang themselves.' (Sauper, 2013, interview: 1). Unfortunately for Tanzania the pictures speak of one dark entity, populated by extremely miserable black people without agency and greedy Indians factory owners who alone benefit from the fish business with the European Union. Sauper succeeds in creating a visual equivalent of Joseph Conrad's 1899 book *Heart of Darkness*, which also uses distinct strong textual commentary to differentiate between 'savagery' and 'civilization.' Not unexpectedly, Sauper acknowledges that he had read the book (ibid: 4). In fact judging from some of his expressions, both in the interview and in published promotional materials for the film, Sauper seems to consciously idealize Conrad's style of using unsightly visual descriptions for his own anti-capitalist crusade. Conrad's strong textual expression aimed at showing that 'the conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much' (Conrad, 1999: 34).

Joseph Conrad might have had noble intentions, but for many black Africans, the text is inherently racist, and therefore idealizing him in the twenty-first century will prompt black Africans to speak back. Chinua Achebe wrote that '*Heart of Darkness* projects the image of Africa as "the other world," the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where man's vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality' (Achebe, 1978: 3). On the official website for *Darwin's Nightmare* a section titled *In the Heart of Darkness* shows Sauper vividly mimicking Marlow: 'forced idleness became a dull routine. We would sit in the merciless equatorial sun surrounded by a million Nile Perch skeletons, the local's food, trying not to go mad.'[5] Metaphorically speaking, the fish story was 'manna from the merciless equatorial sky' because having failed to trace a trade in weapons in Tanzania Sauper was eager for another story to unfold. His personal philosophy is that, 'behind every story there is another story. Everything is secondary' (Sauper, 2013, interview: 4). His initial motivation for tracing the arms trade in Tanzania was a 'eureka' moment that happened upon him whilst filming in the 'stinking jungle':

[5] Source: http://www.darwinsnightmare.com/darwin/html/film3.htm. Accessed, September 2013.

> The idea of this film was born during my research on another documentary, KISANGANI DIARY that follows Rwandese refugees in the midst of the Congolese rebellion. In 1997, I witnessed for the first time the bizarre juxtaposition of two gigantic airplanes, both bursting with food. The first cargo jet brought 45 tons of yellow peas from America to feed the refugees in the nearby UN camps. The second plane took off for the European Union, weighted with 50 tons of fresh fish.
> I met the Russian pilots and we became 'kamarads'. But soon it turned out that the rescue planes with yellow peas also carried arms to the same destinations, so that the same refugees that were benefiting from the yellow peas could be shot at later during the nights. In the mornings, my trembling camera saw in this stinking jungle destroyed camps and bodies.
> First hand knowledge of the story of such a cynical reality became the trigger for DARWIN'S NIGHTMARE, my longest ever cinematographic commitment.[6]

Like the explorers and ethnographers of the imperial past, Sauper stands on the privileged cultural platform of representing an Other because he was there 'to bring home the news' as Chinua Achebe said of orientalists. As Edward Said has noted: 'the scientist, the scholar, the missionary, the trader, or the soldier was in or thought about the Orient because *he could be there,* or could think about it with very little resistance on the Orient's part' (Said, 1978: 7). The official press release that promoted *Darwin's Nightmare* worldwide uses the orientalist formulation in lumping together Africa, Tanzania and Mwanza's fishing community as one deprived dark entity. 'Heart of Africa', and 'dark center'[7] are used in sensationalizing promotional material in order to mystify Tanzania and belittle her inhabitants. *Darwin's Nightmare* cleverly juxtaposes eclectic scenes to communicate social Darwinism in a compelling way that is helped by the fact that the film is 'documentary' and therefore truthful.

However, the film abuses the authority of documentary by convincingly structuring *a* truth through prevailing stereotypes of Africa to continue the 'four horsemen of apocalypse' (conquest, war, famine, death) portrayal of black Africans: The fundamental message asserted in the film, that fish fillets exportation is ongoing while Tanzanians starve, is disputable as misleading. Traditional methods of storing food by drying or smoking which makes food accessible and cheap is not suited for *sangara* (Nile Perch) because of its enormous size (up to 200 kilograms), and therefore local consumers prefer other smaller, tastier fish like *tilapia* and *dagaa,* which were the local staples before introduction of the predator fish. Furthermore, preferred food staples in Tanzania vary from province to province and coast to coast.

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[6] Source: http://www.internationalfilmcircuit.com/darwin/pressbook-screen.pdf. Accessed, September 2013.
[7] Source: http://www.internationalfilmcircuit.com/darwin/pressbook-screen.pdf. Accessed, September 2013.

The *Review of African Political Economy* has denounced *Darwin's Nightmare* as 'an ethically dubious piece of journalism that exploits the power imbalance it claims to critique' (Molony, Richley and Ponte, 2007: 599). When I pointed this out to Sauper he retorted that it was 'propaganda' and strongly maintained that most Tanzanians would prefer to 'buy a chunk of fresh fish and then cook it' (Sauper, 2013, interview: 9). He maintained his conviction that his voice is truthful:

> I have to say that the strange debate about truth after *Darwin's Nightmare* made it clearer than ever to me that it's important to make such films. They are vectors of truth, a hyper version of veritè and therefore painful and contested by establishments. It's ultimately a compliment for an author to be hated by powerful individuals whose crimes need to be seen and understood. (Sauper 2013, Interview: 9)

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that, Sauper's gaze like that of many other cross-cultural 'documentary' filmmakers 'speaking for' and 'about' Africa is shaped by a cultural tool-kit that positions the Western voice above that of black Africans. Orientalist representations about sub-Saharan Africa seem less bothered with ethical issues of stereotyping because the 'pictures in the heads' of the Western audience are largely informed by stereotypical representation. The extent of stereotyping is explored in a research report, *The Live Aid Legacy: The Developing World Through British Eyes* (2002) commissioned by Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), which found that 80% of Britons associate the developing world with doom-laden images of war, famine, debt, starving people, natural disaster, poverty, and corruption (VSO, 2002, report: 5). The report states that 'victims are seen as less humans' because by definition they are inferior to 'us.' 74% of the respondents believe that the helpless victims 'depend on the money and knowledge of the West to progress.' The relationship with the developing world was seen from the point of view of 'us' 'the powerful, benevolent givers' and 'they are grateful receivers.' 55% of British people however said 'they want to see more of the everyday life, history and culture of the developing world, and some felt 'misled' or 'conned' by media and 'occasional development charities, who are seen as the main source of information' (ibid: 3).

By building on the existing 'pictures in the heads' of the Western viewers, documenting black Africa is indeed an easy task for most activist filmmakers, because of prevailing visual and textual assumptions regarding the developing world and particularly Africa. As John Grierson noted in *First Principles of Documentary,* the job of romantic documentary is easy in comparison with the realist's task. It is 'easy in the sense that the noble savage is already a figure of romance' and has

‘already been articulated in poetry. Their essential virtues have already been declared and can more easily be declared again, and no one will deny them’ (Hardy, 1966: 151). Blanchard et al express it fittingly in *Human Zoos*: ‘in the nineteenth century, the West was attempting to make sense of the world, while in the twentieth it more obviously constructed it according to its own models, beliefs and interests’ (Blanchard et al, 2008: 16). ‘The Other is no longer a “still-savage” defeated figure, but a “pacified native’, enthusiastically rushing forward under the leadership of his or her benefactor to follow the path traced out for him towards “progress”’ (ibid: 38-39).

What about truth?

It is also important to add that the ‘pacified natives’ are now active consumers of transnational media channels where they can witness distorting images that are extremely disempowering. Interrogating ‘documentary’ representation becomes even more crucial because the text wears the respectable truth cloak. Interestingly, some professional documentary filmmakers like Hubert Sauper ignore the ethical responsibility to the film’s viewers, vis-à-vis how they engage with the asserted truth. In his own words:

> I don’t give a shit if audiences see it, or if they buy it or go and see it. If they don’t like my movie they don’t have to go and see it. I didn’t ask anyone to sit for two hours and watch the movie. It’s one of millions of movies out there (Sauper, 2013, interview: 2).

I pointed out to Sauper that such an attitude is arrogant because the ‘truth’ stamp on the film to a certain extent does affect how the audience relates to the film. My first encounter with the impact of *Darwin’s Nightmare* on audience was in 2008 at the Red Cross media school in Stockholm where some of the students broke into tears and many were visibly shaken and lacked words to express their feelings when the film was over. It was a nightmare for myself. My attempt to explain verbally that there was another perspective of reality known to me through my lived-in experience as a Tanzanian could not compete with Sauper’s striking images. The students had unwillingly entered Tanzania through Sauper’s Conradian inferno, and what those images communicated my words could not override. Images say more than words, as John Berger elaborates: ‘seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak… It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it’ (Berger, 1973: 7).

That Swedish audience overlooked the constructed-ness nature of 'documentary' as perhaps did other audiences across the globe because of the prevailing notion that what Western 'experts' say about Africa must be true. The critical reviews of *Darwin's Nightmare* demonstrate this point. *The New York Times* asserts that the film gives an objective portrayal: 'Mr. Sauper has produced an extraordinary work of visual journalism, a richly illustrated report on a distant catastrophe that is also one of the central stories of our time'[8] whilst the *Los Angeles Times* applauds Sauper's methods: 'Filmmaker Sauper put himself in harm's way numerous times to get so inside the situation, and the intimacy of his technique, his willingness to avoid hectoring voice-overs and simply talk quietly with his subjects, adds compelling believability.'[9]

A BBC reviewer Tom Dawson completely agrees on truthfulness, and also implicates Tanzania in regional arms trade:

> The West's plundering of the natural resources of Third World countries may not be a new story, but Austrian director Hubert Sauper's compelling documentary succeeds in revealing the subject in a memorable new light. Focusing on the fishing community of Mwanza on the shore of Lake Victoria in Tanzania, Darwin's Nightmare follows its impoverished inhabitants who export their catches to Europe and Japan in return for Russian cargo planes full of arms and ammunition destined for civil wars in neighbouring countries.[10]

According to Sauper's bad versus evil motif, 'going after the big bad guys' is a joy for him and producing an anti-capitalist film at a time when capitalism reigns is indeed a brave initiative, because not representing the 'bad stuff' is 'politically dangerous' (Sauper, 2013, interview: 5). However, he expresses this other side of reality by exploiting the weak of the society because it benefits his 'artistic expression.' It is therefore futile to analyze activist films such as *Darwin's Nightmare* without interrogating the gaze of the filmmaker, power structure and relationship between filmmaker and subjects. Sauper claims that he wants to portray the other side of reality because truth has multiple layers. The question is, whose reality? What truth? Why should Sauper's truth and aesthetics guide the understanding of the film, which simply put, intrudes upon and insults Tanzanians? As a big country, spread over almost one million square kilometers, with over 45 million in population and more than 120 tribes, Tanzania has multiple versions of reality and truths that are

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[8] Source: http://www.metacritic.com/movie/darwins-nightmare/critic-reviews. Accessed, October 2013.
[9] ibide.
[10] Source: http://www.bbc.co.uk/films/2005/05/03/darwins_nightmare_2005_review.shtml. Accessed, October 2013.

fragmented but valid, and therefore imposing one interpretation framed ad hoc in a small community and referring to it as Tanzania, or in some cases 'Africa,' is to say the least orientalizing.

Lost in translation?

Sauper's text presents a glaring gap in the theorization of cross-cultural documentary because the Eurocentric visual literacy is taken as universal. Sauper for instance expects viewers to understand his post-modern thinking, that, the story is universal and it could have been set in New York or Vienna (Sauper, 2013, interview: 1). He expects viewers' neutrality to the configuration of the cultural space whilst at the same time bombarding them with visual proof to 'speak about' power, about exploitation, about ignorance, about lies, about problematic relationships between North and South, problems between poor and rich.' (ibid: 1) Interestingly, he imagines that he does not make any distinction between 'us' and 'them' because 'we' are all part of the global story; 'we have big definitional problems between who is 'we' and who is 'them?' (Sauper, 2013, interview: 3). A noble intention, perhaps, but 'lost in translation' because of varying visual literacy.

Sauper's sensational promotional material. The image is a still from the film showing an old woman sorting maggot infested fish skeletons for consumption by 'starving' Tanzanians.

The dilemma this study addresses is the lack of an appropriate framework for analyzing texts such as *Darwin's Nightmare* because most academic literature focuses on the form and aesthetic values of a documentary with less concern for the gaze, despite the common-sense knowledge that 'different cultures make different value judgments about things' (McKee, 2011: 5). Bill Nichols, the leading academic theorist of documentary, is not helpful in this instance. His overall summary of *Darwin's Nightmare* is generally approving: 'it casts no moral judgment and offers no

solution.' It does convey powerfully, he says, the full impact of a series of actions in which no one takes responsibility for the long-term consequences of day-to-day decisions' (Nichols, 2010: 87-88). The universality implied by Sauper, is not detected by Nichols who limits the story to Tanzania: 'the film shows interdependencies of governments, businesses, workers, and their dependents that have led to disastrous market in Nile perch from lake Victoria' (ibid: 87). On the other hand, Jean Baudrillard finds *Darwin's Nightmare* orientalizing, in a cynical kind of way. In *The Agony of Power*, he writes:

> Images, even radical-critical ones, are still a part of the crime they denounce, albeit an involuntary one. What is the impact of a film like *Darwin's Nightmare,* which denounces racial discrimination in Tanzania? It will tour the Western world and reinforce the endogamy, the cultural and political autarky of this separate world through images and the consumption of images. …This new hegemonic configuration (which is no longer the configuration of capitalism at all) has itself absorbed the negative and used it to leap forward through meanders of cynical reasoning (Baudrillard, 2010: 60).

In a 2013 interview[11] regarding misrepresentation of Africa, Nichols pointed out to me that the truth held by Americans is created not by face-to-face encounters, but by the media. This truth is equally valid because the American media prefers to only portray African disasters when they reach 'biblical proportions', and in a backhanded way such a reality is taken as representative by an audience whose proximity to Africa is limited or non-existent. Recurring stereotypes of the African Others serve as shorthand 'knowledge' about black Africans because they agree with the 'pictures in the heads' of the viewers created by the dominant media images. In *Representing Reality*, Nichols maintains that the Other 'rarely functions as participant in and creator of system of meaning and that hierarchy and control still fall on the side of the dominant culture that has fabricated the image of the Other in the first place (Nichols, 1991: 205). Most Tanzanians would argue that *Darwin's Nightmare* is misrepresentation of *their* reality although it does record *a* reality existing in their midst. The *Review of African Political Economy* demands a serious debate about the film, and about representation and ideologies it embodies and shares with other films about Africa:

> *Darwin's Nightmare* has not yet been taken seriously as a discursive construction of particular ideologies of development, nor has it been subjected to the scrutiny necessary in order to understand film's power to confirm, for a popular audience, much of what they think they know is 'true'

[11] I interviewed Bill Nichols on the 16/08/2013 at Filmhuset in Stockholm where he attended the 20th anniversary of the Visible Evidence conference. Among other things, Nichols agreed that Eurocentrism is endemic in representation of black Africans in American media and that films such as *Miss HIV* by an America white-male filmmaker emerges from such infrastructure.

> about Africa and how such a representation can be both problematic and dangerous (Molony, Richey and Ponte, 2007: 598).

A word on methodology

Close reading cross-cultural documentary film presents a great dilemma. As I suggested earlier, to refer to textual analysis as a methodology is a serious shortcoming. According to Alan McKee: 'The "term" methodology can have scientific connotations' implying that the procedure is standardized, repeatable, requiring no creativity or originality. Textual analysis is not like that because it does not provide a universal template that 'anybody can follow and come up with the same answers every time' (McKee, 2011: 118). If two researchers were given the same question 'how are women represented in Western culture' for instance, and asked to use textual analysis to answer it, they would produce different answers. The researchers draw on their own knowledge of the culture within which the texts circulate as they attempt to guess the likely interpretation of those texts (ibid: 118). The fable of the blind men and an elephant provides a good analogy that delimits any inquiry that wants to come near to the truth. Each of the blind men touched the elephant but they all touched different parts:

> 'Hey, the elephant is a pillar,' said the first man who touched his leg.
>
> 'Oh, no! it is like a rope,' said the second man who touched the tail.
>
> 'Oh, no! it is like a thick branch of a tree,' said the third man who touched the trunk of the elephant.
>
> 'It is like a big hand fan' said the fourth man who touched the ear of the elephant.
>
> 'It is like a huge wall,' said the fifth man who touched the belly of the elephant.
>
> 'It is like a solid pipe,' Said the sixth man who touched the tusk of the elephant.[12]

This study adopts an epistemic attitude that is both exploratory and cautiously interrogative because the structure of aid and HIV/AIDS documentary calls for falsifications, stigmatizations and disempowerment as means to an end; for good or ill. Just as there is no universal way of making documentaries, there ought to be a realization that there is no universal way of reading them and therefore, the methodology involves my own journey as an African woman, philanthropist, documentary filmmaker and researcher.

[12] Educational stories: http://www.jainworld.com/education/stories25.asp. Accessed, October 2013.

My original intention was to research anti-stigma documentaries after a successful film about a Tanzania AIDS orphan *Mikidadi* [2005] made an impact on Swedish school students and is still used as pedagogical tool for anti-bullying in Birkaskolan, Stockholm. I wanted to use empathy in representation of HIV/AIDS 'victims' in order to contribute in combating stigma affecting Tanzanian orphans. However, a pilot study in Dar es Salaam in 2010 revealed that HIV/AIDS stigma was blown out of proportion because the easy availability of funding from the donor community had emphasized stigma research worldwide. I began with a focus group of 23 women in a rural community Mlandizi near Dar es Salaam giving them an option to watch (1) *Talking About Sex*; a film about gender equality, (2) *Hyena Square*; which addresses HIV stigma and (3) *Biogas in Mamba*; a film about women in an economic project in Kilimanjaro. Unanimously they chose the Biogas film, arguing that what they needed was to find ways of making money to feed their families and that they found 'groomed' donor-sponsored filmmakers 'thoroughly tiring.' Regarding stigma, they informed me that one of them was infected and that the baby I was playing with was also HIV positive but that did not mean they should not be loved and respected. 'Why should we discriminate Mama xxx while we know she is not a prostitute? Everyone knows that her deceased husband infected her', they told me. This story was narrated to a Tanzania-based Swedish media anthropologist Minou Fuglesang who agreed with the women saying that it is indeed futile to 'preach' to hungry people.[13]

Another media consultant, Gideon Shoo, informed me that if Tanzanians had been allowed to teach stigma in a cultural-specific way, it would not have seemed so 'thoroughly tiring' because before HIV/AIDS the Swahili word for stigma, *unyanyapaa,* was dormant and simply meant to disrespect or reject another person because of their disability or misfortune. 'Now why would you want to do that?' We are all taught at a very early age and in some tribes, laughing at misfortune invoked a curse so perhaps anti-stigma campaigns could have drawn on this fundamental respect discourse instead of designing universal toolkits for all 'Africa.'[14] This prompted me to explore worldviews (gaze) and interrogate why the discourse of the donor organization affects documentary representations. It compelled me to examine

[13] On July 21/2010, at 13-14hrs, I video interviewed Minou Fuglesang in her head-office in Dar-es-Salaam to find out more about her methodology in engaging with Tanzanian youths because of her popular HIV campaign TV show/programs *Sema Naye* (Talk with her/him) and SIDA-sponsored glossy magazine FEMINA

[14] Dr. Gideon Shoo was interviewed later in the afternoon the same day and since then he has continually emailed comments for my research blog. www.africaimages.wordpress.com

the documentary voice to understand how and why underdevelopment is stigmatized to justify the importance of the aid industry.

This study will investigate the 'speaking' position of the text to reveal a definite hierarchy between the filmmaker and the subjects, which allows the authentic voice to be divorced from the speaking subjects. To do this, I found it particularly important to include the perspective of the filmmakers of the chosen case study films in order to shortcut the speculation about their intentions. Interviewing them gave me an insight into their 'window-on-reality' and how they related/exploited their subjects and or the 'underdeveloped' locations. Edward Said emphasizes in *Power, Politics and Culture*, that 'to read literature outside its political context and origins in the name of aesthetic appreciation produces only false or incomplete reading' because one should not 'turn a blind eye to the vital conjunction between aesthetics and power' (Viswanathan, 2005: xvi, Interview with Said).

About the chapters

Chapter one *Documentary Theory and Methods* reviews the literature in the field and engages with various documentary concepts to explore the challenges facing cross-cultural representation.

Chapter two *The Differentiating Gaze: Construction of black Africans in Western texts* takes a backward glance into the nineteenth century texts to trace the origins of negative comparisons that cause orientalisation in documentary representation of black Africans in order to locate its various manifestations prevailing in the donor gaze.

Chapter three, *Aid industry and 'the white man' burden*' discusses the problems of 'selling' disempowering images of needy as part of the aid story. It explores various textual and visual texts to illustrate how black Africans are made to appear 'properly helpless' by well-meaning 'helpers.'

Chapter four, *Encountering the donor gaze* gives an empirical account of the process of framing the donor gaze through my personal involvement in the production of *Talking About Sex* [2008]. It reveals the power inequality/dynamics that control not only the filmmaker's gaze but the way the subjects of donor-sponsored narratives relinquish their voice and subjectivity.

Chapter five *Donor gaze in action: Whose voice?* analyzes three documentaries to demonstrate how the gaze (re)orders reality through its speaking position. *Miss HIV* [2007] 'speaks nearby' and reveals the multiple truths behind AIDS politics and

situates the little voice of the HIV victims in the correct insignificant position it occupies in the polarized battle of ideologies. *Hyena Square* [2006] on the other hand 'speaks about' HIV/AIDS reality in a simplistic manner and recognizable stereotypes, whereas, *Life Goes On: Voices From Cape Town* [2008] 'speaks with' the voices of the subjects and offers a pluralistic view on the human story, indicating that such approach might challenge the donor gaze.

Some final reflections suggests that challenging the donor gaze is almost impossible as long as the gaze of the Western documentary filmmaker is imprisoned by First World filters and largely framed by the aid and AIDS industry, who own the 'development story.'

Chapter One: 'Documentary' Theory and Practices

Introduction

> *Many Europeans have made enormous contribution towards the understanding of Africa in Europe... But what we are talking about here is dialogue, which requires two people and cannot be replaced by even the most brilliant monologue.*[15]
>
> Chinua Achebe

Cross-cultural representation in documentary film faces a fundamental challenge today, not least because the very term 'documentary' is resistant to universal definitions and lacks a clear epistemological orientation, free of irrelevant conceptualizations and generalizations. Furthermore, the global documentary audience presents another urgent problem concerning the 'way of seeing' images and spaces of cultural Others. The question of whether the reality as lived by Others can be truthfully represented by dominant cultures is the central theme addressed in this study. The issue concerning the nature of 'reality' and how it is represented for various audiences becomes even more vital because 'documentary' is still considered by many as an important source of truthful 'knowledge'. In *Representing Reality,* Bill Nichols suggests otherwise by pointing out that 'documentaries do not present *the* truth but *a* truth (or, better, a view or way of seeing), even if the evidence they recruit bears the authenticating trace of the historical world itself' (Nichols, 1991: 118).

My main argument is that the 'way of seeing' constitutes a specific 'gaze'; a filter for interpreting reality that is shaped not only by the conceptual and epistemic map of the filmmakers but also the ideological orientations of their sponsors. 'The camera gazes. It presents evidence destined to disturb' (Nichols, 1991: 81) and perhaps it is also destined to distort reality too, particularly when inequality between the representers and the represented allows the 'voice' of the representer to be foregrounded. Misrepresenting the reality of others can be traced back to the origins of the term 'documentary' when John Grierson's review of Robert Flaherty's *Moana* [1926] hailed it as 'a visual account of events in the daily lives of a Polynesian youth,'

[15] Chinua Achebe (1990: 25) explains that monologue stifles the voice of the Other.

which had a ‘documentary value’ (Hardy,1966: 13). In fact it was not a true account of their daily lives. It was actually Robert Flaherty’s romanticized reconstruction of a disappearing ‘primitive’ life. Discussing why he made *Nanook of the North* [1922] for instance, Flaherty confirms that his subjectivity was foregrounded:

> What I want to show is the former majesty and character of these people, while it is still possible –before the white man has destroyed not only their character, but the people as well. The urge that I had to make *Nanook* came from the way I felt about these people, my admiration for them; I wanted to tell others about them (cited in Barnouw,1993: 45).

Erik Barnouw (1993: 50) categorises Robert Flaherty as the founder of the ’explorer-as-documentarist’ tradition, whose keynote was self-glorification. The Nigerian-born film theorist Nachukwu Frank Ukadike elaborates this further in *Black African Cinema* explaining that ‘since the simultaneous inventions of the motion picture in Europe coincided with the height of European imperialism’ films ‘served to justify “military escapades” and “white man’s” “civilizing mission”’ (Ukadike, 1994: 35). Tobing Rony (1996: 11) notes that, although historians hailed Flaherty’s films as revolutionary because of their aesthetic qualities both *Nanook of the North* [1922] and *Moana* [1926] focused upon the racialised body of the Other, whose race is an immediate marker of problematic difference. The term ‘documentary’ as proposed by Grierson might be said to have opened the ‘genie bottle’ that now haunts documentary theorists and filmmakers alike because of the power over representation embedded in the founding texts. Sivio Carta’s article *Orientalism in the Documentary Representation of Culture* (2011) brings up the fundamental epistemological issue of documenting human encounters, focusing on the question of ‘authentic’ and inauthentic’ representations and particularly the ‘epistemic attitude’ of the documentary approach.

In ‘*What is Documentary for Us’* (1986) Mauritanian filmmaker Med Hondo explores the concept of the Euro-American cinema and its irrelevance in representing African reality, arguing that this ‘alien’ cinema has imposed itself on dominated people. Likewise, V.Y Mudimbe’s anthology ‘*The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge*’ (1988) critically examines the negative tendency of Western and African interpreters to apply ‘categories and conceptual systems which depend on a Western epistemological order’ (Mudimbe, 1988: x). In my own case, for over two decades I have been working on a cultural-specific approach to documentary that can ‘truthfully’ reflect the historical reality of the HIV/AIDS crisis that is disproportionately affecting Africa. My experience as an African woman,

philanthropist, documentarist and researcher puts me in a privileged position to explore documentary's gaze by focusing on the ethics of the 'voice'. Many well-meaning Western documentary interventions get 'lost in translation' because the authenticity of the 'voice' is obfuscated by 'epistemic attitude', informed by a priori assumptions. It is indeed problematic that, due to technical and financial reasons, documenting the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa has so far been a task predominantly taken up by Western filmmakers in the service of the aid industry.

Entrenched in a worldview that essentially stigmatizes 'underdevelopment' the majority of Western filmmakers interpret the HIV/AIDS historical reality using the lens of 'helper-as-a-documentarist', thereby reinforcing the discourse of 'the white man's burden' and self-glorification, just like the explorers, missionaries and colonialists before them. In protest, Diawara (1992: 10) claims that the racist context in which the African film history unfolded was blind to African aesthetic tastes, and that the risk of aesthetically misrepresenting African cultures is reduced only when an African director makes the film. Mhando (2009:1) similarly proposes that to avoid privileging European positions that dictate terms of representations it is important to clarify the socio-historical interactions between production and interpretation of texts. Mai Palmberg a cultural researcher/theorist at the Nordic African Institute in Uppsala, Sweden points out that the skewed representations are in stark contrast to what those of us who have experienced Africa have seen when visiting, working or living there (2001: 1). Palmberg's longitudinal research, *Cultural Images in and of Africa*, focused on the 'relationship between the subject (we), the object (them), and reality' (Palmberg, 2001: 10).

Ideally, those experiencing a particular historical phenomenon are best equipped to represent their 'reality' but even that can be problematic as 'reality' is a very unstable phenomenon. Pierre Bourdieu cautions that even shared material conditions of existence do not necessarily guarantee that people will have the same experiences in the same order (1977: 85). Bourdieu's warning calls for epistemological humility, which is also a subject discussed in detail in Wangari Maathai's book *The Challenge for Africa* (2010) with an appeal for an end to 'epistemic violence' in order to reclaim culture. Appropriating the same epistemic frameworks that marginalized African cultures is to be 'caught in a vast Stockholm syndrome', to borrow Jean Baudrillard's expression (Baudrillard, 2010: 37).

This chapter will examine various documentary conceptualizations to create an overview of documentary film as a conscious ideological medium with power to either reinforce or challenge a 'way of seeing': the 'gaze'. The ontological status of the photographic image claimed by André Bazin is of particular significance because the aid and AIDS documentaries addressed in my study rely on the power that realistic and strong imagery communicate to the viewer through the familiar 'voice' of development versus underdevelopment. Brian Winston has argued that for 170 years we naively tended to believe that the camera did not lie because of its 'original positioning as an instrument of science, and one consequence has been the possibility of the photograph being considered evidence' (Winston, 2008: 1). He therefore challenges Grierson's widely accepted definition of documentary as 'the creative treatment of actuality' by calling for cultural specificity in ways of seeing: 'So: 'creative', 'treatment', 'actuality' –on what cultural maps can such terms be found?' (Winston, 2008: 17). Perhaps Jean Baudrillard's explanation of power dynamics in the transition from domination to hegemony might shed light on Winston's question. In *Agony of Power*, Baudrillard points out that, 'power is now the final form of representation: it only represents itself' (Baudrillard, 2010: 42) or as Nichols puts it more clearly:

> Our access to historical reality may only be by means of representations, and these representations may sometimes seem to be more eager to chase their own tails than be able to guarantee the authenticity of what they refer to (Nichols, 1991: 7).

'Documentary': In search of a definition

According to John Grierson, the term 'documentary' was a 'clumsy description' first used by the French to mean travelogue because it gave them 'a solid high-sounding excuse for the shimmying (and otherwise discursive) exoticism' (Hardy, 1966: 145). Notwithstanding this, Grierson's own appropriation of the term was prompted by Flaherty's exotic interpretation of other cultures. Grierson's memorable definition of documentary as 'the creative treatment of actuality' addresses what documentary *does* and therefore poses a different set of epistemological reflections concerning the possessor of the gaze. What 'actuality'? In whose 'eyes'? How 'actual'? Grierson believed that 'documentary proper' could achieve the ordinary virtues of an art by passing from the plain description of natural material to the arrangement, rearrangement, and creative shaping of it (Hardy, 1966: 146). Brian Winston, however, dismisses Grierson's definition on the ground that 'the supposition that any "actuality" is left after "creative treatment" can now be seen as being at best naïve and at worst a mark of duplicity' (1995: 11). Winston's criticism is directed towards

what he sees as a contradiction in the formulation, and he argues that Grierson's attempt to claim documentary's artistic and scientific legitimation at the same time has left many 'film-makers and theorists in a confused and ambiguous position not only as regards the status of their images but also as regards their personal moral position vis-à-vis those they filmed' (Winston, 1995: 242). For Winston, documentary is nothing more than 'the structuring (or narrativizing) of recorded aspects of observation' (2008: 290). What is more, with current digital technology the claim for a privileged take on actuality, 'will stand no chance at all' (ibid: 286).

Stella Bruzzi, on the other hand, claims that 'reality does exist and that it can be represented without such a representation either invalidating or having to be synonymous with the reality that preceded it.' Documentary to her is a hunt for the most authentic mode of factual representation, while at the same time she realizes the impossibility of such a pursuit (Bruzzi, 2000: 4). Like Winston, it would appear that Bruzzi is concerned that the increasing sophistication of audio-visual technology raises worries over the authenticity and evolution of documentary: 'technological limitation certainly influenced the kind of documentaries that were feasible in the 1930s when Grierson was first writing' which is no longer the case today (Bruzzi, 2004: 5). She therefore argues that rather than blaming documentary's 'contradictions' on technical limitations, we should address the 'expectations loaded on to it by theorizations,' and that 'filmmakers themselves (and their audiences) have, much more readily than theorists, accepted documentary's inability to give an undistorted, purely reflective picture of reality' (Bruzzi, 2004: 6). Documentary for Bruzzi is therefore 'a negotiation between reality on the one hand and image, interpretation and bias on the other' (Bruzzi, 2000: 4).

Bruzzi's insightful reflection regarding negotiation between reality, image, interpretation and bias requires a high level of ethical attitude and what Carta (2011) refers to as epistemological humility. Jim Hanon, the director of *Miss HIV* [2007] explains that he had to negotiate not only his own biases as a white male American representing black African women but also the interpretation of the central question of HIV/AIDS crisis and his funder's ideological interest. Hanon explains:

> Just as a film interprets the subject, it also interprets the central question that the funders of the film are interested in. Sometimes the two are compatible, and sometimes they are not. This isn't confined to the donor gaze, but also extends to the prejudices of ideology and interests of media distributors and marketers who are invariably owned by large corporations who are known to apply their own filters to the lens of the filmmaker (Hanon, 2012, interview: 1).

In '*Representing Reality'* Bill Nichols argues that, 'documentary as a concept or practice occupies no fixed territory' and therefore, 'the term *documentary* must itself be constructed in much the same manner as the world we know and share' (1991: 12). The ontological finality of a definition, that is how documentary captures the 'thingness', is of lesser importance; therefore the focus should be on how documentary 'locates and addresses important questions' in the past and the present. He argues that, 'rather than one, three definitions of documentary suggest themselves since each definition contributes something distinctive and helps identify different set of concerns;' the three perspectives being the filmmaker's, the text's and the viewer's (1991: 12). Each starting point will lead to a different, yet not contradictory definition, demonstrating that how we constitute our object of study determines the process of the following work. Nichols warns against defining documentary strictly in terms of the filmmaker's control over variables such as preparation, shooting and assembly because this will sidestep the social issues of power, hierarchy and knowledge between filmmaker and the subject due to forms of sponsorship and distribution (1991: 13). He argues that;

> 'Control' does define, in a backhanded way, a key element of documentary. What the documentarist cannot fully control is his or her basic subject: History. By addressing the historical domain, the documentarist joins the company of other practitioners who 'lack control' over what they do: social scientists, physicians, politicians, entrepreneurs, engineers, and revolutionaries (Nichols, 1991: 14).

A lengthy definition is then offered by Nichols (2010) who warns beforehand that it is 'mouthful'. He proposes modifying the three commonsense definitions of documentary (a) about reality and something that actually happened (b) about real people (c) about what happens in the real world, into something like this.

> Documentary film speaks about situations and events involving real people (social actors) who present themselves to us as themselves in stories that convey a plausible proposal about, or perspective on, the lives, situations, and events portrayed. The distinct point of view of the filmmaker shapes this story into a way of seeing the historical world directly rather than into a fictional allegory (Nichols, 2010: 14).

Nichol's definition is not only 'mouthful' but ignores the epistemological complexes arising from the 'control' and power mechanisms that he discussed in *Representing Reality* (1991) It presupposes that the filmmaker alone has the deciding role shaping the final text. In practice, most documentary films do 'speak about' situations and events depending on their epistemological orientation and attitude, but to offer a definition reflecting this epistemological arrogance is to sign a death sentence to

portrayal of human dignity. The notion of 'speaking nearby' or 'speaking with' should be taken more seriously if documentary is to keep on the objectivity robe. 'Speaking nearby' as opposed to 'speaking about' is a position a filmmaker can take 'that does not objectify, does not point to an object as if it is distant from the speaking subject or absent from the speaking place' (Chen, 1992: 87). 'Speaking about' is in some way the monolithic voice-of-god camouflaged in different forms by the images chosen, the talking heads (experts), the mise-en-scène and many other communicative strategies that seek to 'structure' the observable, as Winston so aptly describes it. 'Speaking nearby' or 'speaking with' on the other hand is an attempt to include the point of view of the represented, even though that is inadequate according to the Kantian position that, it is impossible to represent another thinking being. According to Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reasons*, for a representation to be truthful the representer would have to be both the subject and the object.

> It is obvious that, if I wish to represent to myself a thinking being, I must put myself in his place, and thus substitute, as it were, my own subject for the object I am seeking to consider (which does not occur in any other kind of investigation) and that we demand the absolute unity of the subject of a thought, only because otherwise we could not say, 'I think' (the manifold in one representation) (Kant, translated by Kemp, 1929: 336-A354).

Kant's reflections resonate well with the common sense message in the English proverb *only the wearer knows where the shoe hurts,* which is hard to dispute. 'Speaking with' the subject's voice might bring us closer to truth as opposed to the point of view of the documentary itself, but documentary practice, and to a certain extend its theorization is mostly concerned with the aesthetic achievements of the text, and less concerned for the voice/gaze asserting the truth. In *Philosophy of Film and Motion Pictures* Noel Carroll writes that, the word documentary is to a certain extent problematic and proposes that we replace it with 'films of presumptive assertion' (2006: 163). Carroll's suggestion is based on the premise that the audience treats the meaning communicated by the film as assertoric intentions, because although the filmmaker's camera brings with it the 'historical trace' of actually existing phenomena, dissimulations may occur. The notion of images as 'historic traces', in turn, involves entertaining the thought as asserted that the images in the film have originated photographically from precisely the source from which the film claims or implies they originated' (Carroll: 163). Carroll implies that the audience will relate to the contents as truthful 'according to the author', believing that he or she was committed to the relevant ethics of producing the evidence. The 'assertoric stance' is influenced by 'press releases, advertisements, television interviews, film listings and TV listings, previews, critical reviews, and word of mouth' (ibid: 167).

His proposed definitional reform is hesitantly explained like this:

> Of course, 'films of presumptive assertion' is quite mouthful. And it does not have a nice ring to it. So, I am not suggesting that we attempt to make ordinary folk replace 'documentary' with this cumbersome locution. We would not succeed even if we tried. I am suggesting that for technical or theoretical purposes we understand that what is typically meant by saying that a film is a 'documentary' is really that it is 'a film of presumptive assertion' unless we have ground for thinking that the speaker is using the term in the Griersonian sense. The reform I am suggesting is not primarily a linguistic reform, but a theoretical one. Moreover, if other film theorists think that this reform is ill advised, it is up to them to say why (Caroll, 2006: 169).

Carroll's proposition presents an intriguing twist because, perhaps once and for all, at least in theory, marginalized cultures that neither invented the camera nor the word 'documentary' can outline a definition to reflect the documentary-ness specific to their own worldview. Appropriation of the term documentary across the globe means that with it comes a Euro-American portfolio complete with instructions on how to practice it and consume images produced in such a discourse.

Vivian Sobchack (1994) reminds us that electronic media forms, including documentary, have historically symbolized and constituted a radical alteration of the forms of cultural temporal and spatial consciousness. Media encounters offer radically different ways of 'being-in-the-world', based on the belief that these electronic technologies 'implicate us in different structures of material investment, and -because each has a particular affinity with different cultural functions, forms, and contents -each stimulate us through differing modes of representation to different aesthetic responses and ethical responsibilities' (Sobchack, 1994: 84). Indeed, only when the diverse cultural temporal and spatial experiences between cultures with varying cinematic history are considered can Carroll's theoretical reform hold any relevance as a documentary definition that is adequate to reflect how 'reality' is produced and consumed.

Carl Plantinga (2005) ambitiously promises a suitable definition once and for all, in his article *What a Documentary is, After All*, but only ends up adding to the multitude of inconclusive definitions of what documentary *does* by first introducing new terminologies (a) *documentary as indexical record* (DIR) and (b) *documentary as assertion*, (DA) and finally offering a truly mouthful but detailed definition. Optimistically he writes: 'Now I am prepared to say what documentary is, after all.'

> I propose that the typical or usual documentary film be conceived of as an asserted veridical representation, that is, as an extended treatment of a subject in one of the moving-image media, most often in narrative,

> rhetorical, categorical, or associative form, in which the film's makers openly signal their intention that the audience (1) take an attitude of belief toward relevant propositional content (the 'saying' part, (2) take the images, sounds and combinations thereof as reliable sources for the formation of beliefs about the film's subject and, in some cases, (3) take relevant shots, recorded sounds, and/or scenes as phenomenological approximations of the look, sound, and/or some other sense or feel of the pro-filmic event (the 'showing' part') (Plantinga, 2005: 114).

Luckily Plantinga recognizes the futility of such a lengthy and ambivalent definition and concludes apologetically; 'I will not assert necessary and sufficient conditions, and thus I refrain from offering a traditional definition' (Plantinga 2005: 115).

In her book *Recording Reality, Desiring the Real* Elizabeth Cowie claims that the term documentary 'addresses our *expectations* about the world, and these derive not only from factual or scientific knowledge but also from our knowledge of what is held to be culturally normal for our community' (2011: 37). The question of verisimilitude in Cowie's view is an effect of our social knowledge that is culturally as well as historically specific. Her notion of documentary as 'natural interpreter' is underpinned by the dual assertion of the objective knowableness of the world and documentary's claim that it gives us access to this knowledge by presenting sights and sounds of reality, thus enabling reality to 'speak about' reality (Cowie, 2011: 1). This insistence on culturo-historical aspects of human existence, and therefore knowledge of *the* reality, is probably the best precursor for a sufficient definition, which brings back the relevance of André Bazin. Despite being a contemporary of Grierson and other early theorists Bazin holds significant relevance in our digital village, which is continuously flooded with unprecedented amounts of images of cultural Others.

André Bazin's simple definition of cinema as 'objectivity in time' (Bazin, 1960: 8) was based on the assumption that mechanically produced images can finally 'speak about' reality. Bazin compared the automatic production of the photographic image with the painter's action and played down the subjectivity of the photographer by arguing that: 'the personality of photographer enters into the proceedings only in his selection of the object to be photographed and by the way of the purpose he has in mind' (Bazin, 1960: 7). Assuming universal aesthetic experiences, and ignoring the culturo-historical specificity of perception, the virtuousness of the camera lens is explained by Bazin in this way:

> The aesthetic qualities of photography are to be sought in its power to lay bare the realities. It is not for me to separate off, in the complex fabric of the objective world, here a reflection on a damp sidewalk, there the gesture of a child. Only the impassive lens, stripping its object of all those ways of seeing

> it, those piled-up preconceptions, that spiritual dust and grime with which my eyes have covered it, are able to present it in all its virginal purity to my attention and consequently to my love (Bazin, 1960: 8).

'Virginal purity' proclaimed by Bazin here refers to the precision copying of the object itself; its perfect *analogon*. Roland Barthes asserts that it is precisely this analogical perfection that defines the photograph, as a 'message without a code.' He suggests, to draw an immediate corollary that, 'the photographic message is a continuous message' because apart from the *analogon* itself, which is a *denoted* message, the photograph comprises of *connoted* message which is the manner in which the society communicates what it thinks of it, whether aesthetic or ideological (Barthes, 1977: 17). In agreement, Berger (1973) and Bourdieu (1977) both note that our aesthetic norms affect our perceptions. 'Actuality' or what is 'normal' is relative, depending on the beholder, the time and the space. Universalization of what is perceived as 'reality' is therefore part of the problem that arises in most definitions, including Grierson's memorable 'creative treatment of actuality'. Cowie observes that in presenting its perception of *the* world, documentary assumes audiences will comprehend it the same way, because verisimilitude depends on the way we understand human activities and that meaning is available if we understand the relevance of a phenomenon in a cultural set-up. 'The poor, for example, must appear properly poor in whatever audience may currently recognize poverty' (2011: 37).

Bazin's objectivity claim focused more on the photographic camera as a cold scientific instrument with capacity to automatically form an image of the world, aesthetically stripped of the subjective ways of seeing. The cultural and ideological filters that inform our perception of reality were not Bazin's major preoccupation, although he mentioned that in case of cinema meaning was not to be found in the image but 'in the shadows of the image projected by montage onto the field of consciousness of the spectator' (Bazin, 1967: 26). This means that although Bazin's photographic realism is structured around an assertion that mechanical production of the image could reproduce reality in 'all its purity', he also acknowledges the power of montage in creating new meanings for the viewer. In summing up the montage discussion, Bazin concludes that 'cinema has at its disposal a whole arsenal of means whereby to impose its interpretation of an event on the spectator' (Bazin 1967: 26). Imposing a particular interpretation is one way that montage (editing) can 'speak about' the film's subjects to (re)present how-things-really-are.

Regarding montage and the imposition of meanings, Sergei Eisenstein theorized that the spectator creates a new meaning from juxtaposed images. In *The Film Sense,* Eisenstein points out that 'we are accustomed to make, almost automatically, a definite and obvious deductive generalization when any separate objects are placed before us side by side' (Eisenstein, 1969: 4). These conclusions might then be right or wrong depending on the conceptual map of the spectator, the intention of the storyteller and which set of 'pictures in the head' is informing the structuring of the text. Giving an example of an image of a grave, juxtaposed with a woman in mourning, weeping besides it, Eisenstein says that 'scarcely anybody will fail to jump to the conclusion: *a widow'* (ibid: 4), which is untrue. He then explains the real context of the 'widow' and the 'grave' as it originated in Ambrose Bierce's tale of '*The Inconsolable Widow'* in *Fantastic Fable* (1899), where it emerges that the woman is not a widow and that the man for whom she is weeping is her lover.

For Eisenstein, montage is the engine that defines cinema, including documentary. He argued that viewers 'automatically combine the juxtaposed elements and reduce them to unity' (Eisenstein, 1969: 5). The woman is a representation, the mourning robe a signifier, and that both are objectively representable. 'But "a widow", arising from juxtaposition of the two representations, is objectively unrepresentable – a new idea, a new conception, a new image' (Eisenstein, 1969: 8). Creation of the 'new idea', or what Eisenstein refers to as a 'third something', is not only a domain of fiction film but is the very spinal cord of documentary rhetoric, whether through audio, textual or visual juxtaposition that validates one particular meaning over other possible meanings. Eisenstein's 'third something' can also result from visual portrayal of differences where opposing meanings co-exist side by side. Historically, meanings about the 'reality' of black Africans straddled epistemology because of the inconsistent superimpositions and juxtaposition between black African images and the European empires that aimed at communicating 'savagery' to justify the need for the 'civilizing' hand. Decontextualising reality became paradigmatic in order to produce the 'third something' as explained by Eisenstein. The ethnocentric 'pictures in the heads' of the representers and the consumers of the cultural representations shaped how the discourse of the cultural Other was to unfold.

Distortion of reality through visual representation of live 'specimens' in imperial museums and ethnographic accounts for instance, relied on juxtaposing differences in such a formal way that there was no denying that the exhibited black Africans were not the 'norm'. Charles Dickens' account of *The Noble Savage* provides a good

‘close reading’ of the effectiveness of emphasizing differences to create a ‘third something’:

> There is at present a party of Zulu Kaffirs exhibiting at the St. George's Gallery, Hyde Park Corner, London. These noble savages are represented in a most agreeable manner; they are seen in an elegant theatre, fitted with appropriate scenery of great beauty, and they are described in a very sensible and unpretending lecture, delivered with a modesty, which is quite a pattern to all similar exponents. Though extremely ugly, they are much better shaped than such of their predecessors as I have referred to (Dickens, 1853: paragraph 7).

What Dickens saw was visibly evident in anyone’s eyes, therefore representable. He saw real people, but not in their own reality because this reality was not on display and therefore not representable. What was on display, in the exhibition setting, was the ‘third something’ deriving from the comparison of differences between the glory of the civilized empire and ‘primitiveness’ of the ‘savages’. Were the ‘savages’ savage in their own eyes? When there is a straddling of epistemology, as in Dickens’ case, the way of seeing of the hegemonic culture becomes the validated truth: thus the Zulu people rightfully become savages. Their reality gets ‘lost in translation’ because the Eurocentric gaze objectifies them and therefore their voice is absent in their own story. Just as the aid and HIV/AIDS story, the differentiating paradigm relieves the creator of the meaning from any incentive to ‘speak with’ the voice of the helped Other or to visualize reality through their own perspective. The ideology of the empire alone validated how black Africans should be known, and this is still the case in aid and HIV/AIDS documentary where the ideology of development justifies definitions and visual stigmatizations of underdevelopment. What then remains of reality? What about the documentary’s claim of truthfully representing it? More importantly, can a documentary definition transcend cross-cultural epistemic complexities? And what exactly is meant by ‘reality’ and ‘truth’? Whose? Why?

So far, none of the documentary definitions I have examined - Grierson’s (memorable), Winston’s (realistic), Nichols’ (mouthful), Bruzzi’s (insightful), Plantinga’s (untraditional) Bazin’s (ontological) and even Carrol’s (reformative) - address the complications of cross-cultural documentations, where epistemology is straddled. Eisenstein’s ‘third something’ clearly indicates that reality is not out there but in the association of the images with what is already known; ‘the pictures in our head’ as Lippmann put it. This leaves us, therefore, with Bazin’s distinctive ontological angle to documentary definition because cinema as ‘objectivity in time’ travels with history, which explains why the documentary medium continues to assert

‘truthfulness’ to viewers despite their level of awareness about possible structural inconsistency and the cultural biases of the filmmakers.

More than any other theorist, Bazin gives an insight to what documentary *is* instead of what it *does*, even though he did not use the term ‘documentary’. What is lacking in making Bazin’s definition more culturally specific is the word *space.* Defining documentary as ‘objectivity in time and *space*’ would then allow marginalized voices to define and represent reality in their own terms. Perhaps combining the formulations of Bazin and Winston would allow documentary theorists and practitioners to address the challenge about appropriateness of conceptual maps in structuring reality. If ‘documentary’ could indeed ‘speak about’ how-things-really-are the Western audience might be able, once and for all, to come closer to *the* truth through the voice of the one ‘wearing the shoes.’

Documentary Principles and Tendencies

It would appear that Siegfried Kracauer was right in commenting that ‘photography was born under a lucky star’, because the ground was well prepared for it to be conceptualized as a realist medium of representation. In his *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* Kracauer historicises the invention of camera, noting that many scientists including Charles Darwin used the photographic medium as a scientific tool on the basis that it produced unbiased objectivity. Positivist mentality at that time aspired to a completely faithful rendering of reality and the camera was therefore seen as an ideal means of ‘reproducing and penetrating nature without any distortions’ (Kracauer,1997: 5).

The objectivity principle of the documentary genre is based on similar arguments for photographic verisimilitude as the ‘natural interpreter,’ downplaying the fundamental questions of epistemology, ethics and aesthetics in relation to space. Whose gaze is interpreting the space of a cultural Other, and why? Bill Nichols emphasizes an exploration of axiography to answer such a question. Axiographics according to Nichols, is ‘an attempt to explore the implantation of values in the configuration of space, in the constitution of a gaze and in the relation between the observer to observed.’ Axiographics asks us to ‘examine how the documentary camera gaze takes on distinctive qualities and poses concrete issues of politics, ethics, and ideology in terms of space’ (Nichols, 1991: 78). Commenting on the position of the documentary filmmaker in the historiographic space, Nichols writes:

> Since documentary space is historical, we expect the filmmaker to operate from the inside, as part of the historical world rather than the creator or author

> of an imaginary one. Documentary directors do not create an imaginary realm so much as a representation of the very same historical world as the one they themselves occupy. Their presence in or absence from the frame serves as an index to their relationship (their respect or contempt, their humility or arrogance, their disinteredness or tendentiousness, their pride or prejudice) to the people and problems, situations and events they film (Nichols, 1991: 79).

Furthermore, Nichols claims that, revealing the position of the documentary filmmaker in the process of 'recording reality' is an important starting point in making sense of the power, dominance and control involved in presenting a distinct view of the historical world, but although 'there is an obvious and naturalness about the world represented' it is not the only view possible (Nichols, 1991:115). Whilst the photographic verisimilitude is unquestionable, the objective representation is under question in many fields of practice. Richard Bradley, in *The Cultural Life of Images: Visual Representation in Archaeology,* argues that the traditions of representation tend to mask the individual consciousness in order to create uniformity and authority. He asks 'for more humility in the face of the archaeological record, for that "record" consists of nothing more than what we are able to observe at particular stages' within the limit of our own imagination. 'Like painters, sculptors and photographers, archaeologists must spend their life learning how to see' because what humans are able to recognize will often depend on what they have seen before (Bradley, 1997: 71). This reminds us again that 'the pictures in our heads' determine to a certain extent how we relate to the space of a cultural Other. Richard Avedon the first staff photographer in the history of *The New Yorker* puts it more clearly: there is no such thing as inaccuracy in a photograph. All photographs are accurate. None of them is true.'[16]

The ethics of the gaze is therefore central in cross-cultural representation because the distortion of what Bazin called 'virginal purity' occurs when the interpreter of an image uses inappropriate or limited perception filters. Like the prisoners in Plato's allegory of the cave, documentary representations through too narrow a 'window-on-reality' create a false truth, which is essentially an existing truth but not the only truth in it, because there are many layers of truth and many ways of seeing a particular truth. This implies that, for the objectivity of the photographic image to be celebrated as factual or truthful interpretation has to occur within a limited field of production and cultural-historical space. An image may be both objective and subjective but its never

[16] Source: http://www.biography.com/people/richard-avedon-9193034?page=3. Accessed, March 2014.

universal. Bill Nichols has noted how stereotypes, which in essence are shorthand for a specific generalized reality forms black Africa's 'truth' in America. In the case of documentaries about development it might even be argued that such a truth is valid from the point of view of the audience or indeed the donor-sponsored filmmaker who applies differentiating paradigms as a mean to an end. In essence, the intention of the film on development is not to present a cultural profile individualizing the experiences of the 'helped,' but to serve as a general template for 'helping' in the broader sense, and therefore taking away the 'voice' from the speaking subjects is seemingly justified. The represented are stereotyped into templates of problems to be solved by the rich nations, and various 'helping' stories can in fact be structured upon any given image at any given time, using an appropriate First World development filter, which I have designated as the 'donor gaze.'

In *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* Stuart Hall reminds us of the dual context (objective and subjective) in which documentary is theorized and practiced. The understanding of the term documentary itself is twofold according to Hall, who distinguishes between '*documentary* as objective representation' and '*documentary* as subjective interpretation' (Hall, 2000: 8). He argues that since photography is paradigmatically seen as an objective representation, *documentary* is taken as something factual. The image is believed to present 'facts' about its subjects in a purely informational way and this has grown with the documentary tradition, which is seen as an *inherently* objective medium of representation (ibid: 82). He argues that 'documentary as subjective interpretation' is in many ways richer and less apparently clear-cut, because it deals with more social and personal aspects of the term. The 'document's informational value is mediated through the perspective of the person making it, and is presented as a mixture of emotion and information…which have the power to move the viewer' (ibid: 83).

Interestingly, the idea of objective representation and subjective interpretation forms the basis for Grierson's memorable definition; 'the creative treatment of actuality' which in essence revolves around the way reality is structured by human intervention in order to make a social comment. Authenticity of the filmed reality was central to Grierson's concept of documentary practice and is still a fundamental attribute for 'documentary-ness' today. Grierson laid down foundations that distinguished documentary from fiction in the manifesto, which came to be known as 'first principles of documentary':

1. We believe that the cinema's capacity for getting around, for observing and selecting from life itself, can be exploited in a new and vital art form. Documentary would photograph the living scene and the living story.

2. We believe that the original (or native) actor, and the original (or native) scene, are better guides to a screen interpretation of the modern word. They give the cinema a greater fund of material. They give it power over a million and one images. They give it power of interpretation over more complex and astonishing happenings in the real world.

3. We believe that the materials and the stories taken from the raw can be finer (more real in the philosophical sense) than the acted article. Spontaneous gesture has a special value on the screen (Hardy, 1966: 146-147).

Discussing this manifesto, Grierson hailed Robert Flaherty's working methods, claiming that having taken the story from the location Flaherty illustrated better than anyone the principle that the documentary must master its material on the spot. By living with the natives, he says, Flaherty gained insight into the proper order of things so that he could tell the story 'out of himself, that is, translate it to his audience. Grierson does not deny the subjectivity of the documentary filmmaker: 'You photograph the natural life, but you also, by your juxtaposition of detail, create an interpretation of it (Hardy, 1966: 148). What Grierson confirms with the 'first principles' is that, documentary practice is an interpretive process that requires cultural competence in deciphering meanings.

The rise and popularity of ethnographic cinema, which was concerned with translating the original native Other, is a subject taken up by Fatimah Tobing Rony in her book, *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema and Ethnographic Spectacle* (1996). Using a Saidian framework, Tobing Rony critically analyses visual representations of the 'orient' by the European empires. According to her, cinema was the first medium to bring the culturally distant Other closer, arguing that 'cinema has been the site of intersection between anthropology, popular culture, and the construction of nation and empire' (Tobing Rony, 1996: 9). *Nanook of the North* [1922], in Tobing Rony's view, is linked to discourses of race because it focused on visuality of differences in bodies. She argues therefore:

> One result of this ever present division between historical Same –Western subjectivity –and Primitive Other is a speaking for and thus a silencing of the people depicted in ethnographic cinema, an assumption of voice made especially dangerous because of the perception that film is a window onto reality (Tobing Rony, 1996: 13).

Presenting facts about the 'Nanook' myth, Tobing Rony concludes that the desire of Euro-American audiences and critics for a romantic perception of Others ensured

that until the 1970s no one had bothered to ask members of the Inuit community for their opinion about the film. It was only then we learned that an actor named Allakariallak played Nanook, and even his 'wives' were actors chosen by Robert Flaherty. 'Nanook,' meaning 'the bear' was more marketable in the West and therefore appealed to Flaherty. Despite all this 'false play' *Nanook of the North* is hailed as a monument in the history of documentary (Tobing Rony, 1996: 104). It was an Other's perception of reality presented through powerful orientalizing filters, which is still the popular mode of representation today.

I consider Brian Winston's (1984) criticism of Robert Flaherty's methods, mentioned in the introduction, important for going against the aesthetics trend in academic analysis of documentaries to point to the significance of the filmmaker's gaze. In *The White Man's Burden: The Example of Robert Flaherty* he critically examines Flaherty's ethical approach and opens a path for alternative analysis relevant for cross-cultural interrogations of the text's gaze. 'Even if we reach the sophisticated point of not worrying about reconstruction and fakery, some of us are going to care a great deal about Flaherty's treatment of his subjects and what that treatment has meant in the documentary tradition' (Winston, 1984: 59).

Nachukwu Frank Ukadike follows Winston's path by interrogating another aesthetically acclaimed documentary by the ethnographic filmmaker and feminist Trinh T. Minh-Ha, calling her experimental film *Reassemblage* [1982] 'taxidermic.' To him Minh-Ha's 'demystifying' quest inspired her to focus on 'low-life details and similar modes of filmic representation (framing, image selection and close-up) which conspicuously highlight African exotica' (1990: 42). Juxtaposing First World and Third World filters, Minh-Ha claims that her aim is to critic the ethnocentricism underlying Western anthropological studies of other cultures that focus on 'colourful images', 'exotic dance,' 'fearful rites' and the unusual' (ibid: 42). Yet *Reassemblage* operates within a familiar othering paradigm because Minh-Ha's 'cultural-discoverer' stance legitimizes a degree of objectification despite her noble intention of 'speaking nearby.'[17] Minh-Ha, like many critics is most certainly imprisoned by the First World filter that views black Africans as objects of study if not of pity. Like the director of *Darwin's Nightmare*, she uses her privileged position to document and demystify the cultural Other in her film as if Senegalese women are just 'something one illustrates' (Said, 1978: 40).

[17] Link to *Reassemblage*: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cc5G2-rTKis. Accessed, October 2013.

In *Africa on Film: Beyond Black and White* Kenneth Cameron questions whether the reductive nineteenth-century ideas about Africa have changed considerably today. According to him, Africa has from the beginning been seen through several filters. He explains:

> When the filmic 'Africa' and Africa are compared, a disjunction can always be found. Some of this disjunction is the result of ignorance, some of willful blindness, some of governmental or industrial interference or even censorship; but some of it is inevitable –the impossibility of ever capturing an almost infinite complexity with the camera (Cameron,1994: 13).

The filters referred to by Cameron are the various ideologies that validate a certain truth by framing reality in a certain way to say this-is-how-things-are. Western documentary viewers are therefore offered the 'pleasure of knowing' something about the real world, which Nichols (1991) terms epistephilia;

> Documentary realism aligns itself with an epistephillia, so to speak, a pleasure of knowing that marks out a distinctive form of social engagement. The engagement stems from the rhetorical force of an argument about the world we inhabit. We are moved to confront a topic, an issue, situation or event that bears the mark of the historical real (Nichols, 1991: 178).

Realism, writes Nichols, 'supports an epistephillia that arouses curiosity about objects whose knowability is limited only by the physical capacities of camera and the filmmaker' (Nichols,1991: 185). Epistephilia then depends on the viewer's acceptance of documentary film as a window into reality and the filmmaker's capacity to package that 'reality' into the same conceptual map as the viewer's. Nevertheless, documentary by and large addresses our assumptions about the world we share to either reinforce or challenge what we think we know.

It can be argued that the success of exoticizing travelogue film like *Africa Speaks* [1930],[18] which in fact exclusively 'speaks about' a childish continent with occasional sounds of jungle animals and a single word from one of the pygmy men, was the fact that the audience was rewarded with a certain epistephillia because their proximity to Africa was limited. As source of both knowledge and entertainment, the paradigmatic narrative structure foregrounding the voice of white, male and middle class authority asserting how-things-are still permeates documentary practice today. Cameroon claims that *Africa Speaks* was so popular in America that it had immediate follow up in the shorts *Africa Shrieks*, *Africa Squawks*, and *Africa Speaks English*, with each 'speaking about' black Africans in extremely taxidermic terms void of subjectivity. He

[18] Link to *Africa Speaks*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nF0Z9JjJbP8. Accessed, October 2013.

argues that the film's 'garbled anthropological' approach is patronizing, and that editing created a bogus reality in many scenes. The director, Paul Hoefler, included 'two sequences that had become trite, a lion-spearing and a meeting with the Ituri pygmies, who dutifully showed how small they were, shot their little bows and arrows, and ate the salt that the whites gave them' (Cameron 1994: 51). The salt eating in *Africa Speaks* can be compared to the scene in *Nanook of the North* when 'Nanook' bites into the gramophone record, thereby demonstrating inferiority through juxtaposing frameworks of primitive/advanced because representation of an Other is in essence 'an exercise of cultural strength' (Said, 1978: 40).

The Griersonian 'first principle' of the special value when materials are taken from the raw, together with the notion of the romanticized 'noble savage,' provides some insight for reading texts such as *Africa Speaks,* which rely heavily on the narrator's voice-of-god to confirm the savage-ness of the 'savage.' Arguably, one of the most basic principles of documentary is to successfully code the photographic message to suggest a specific interpretation and create appropriate 'pictures in the heads' for the audience. One of the characteristics of documentary practice is that, through editing and truth assertions, one and the same image can significantly be used to present different perspectives to different people, depending on the purpose of the filmmaker and the cultural toolkit of the audience.

Mai Palmberg, in *Same and Other*: *Negotiating Identity in Cultural Production*, discusses in detail how knowledge production in the West has constructed 'Africa' as unquestionably one society and one type of people and that the 'real Africans' are peasants in the countryside. Simplicity and generalization reign in common 'documentary' assertions about black African people, and this in turn has made way for an underlying dictum that 'one African is all Africans', where a picture of any African can stand for all Africans –with neither name nor place (Eriksson Baaz and Palmberg, 2001: 199). The notion that the backwardness of the African peasant is already known ensures that monuments like the pyramids are not associated with the rest of Africa. Palmberg asks why, for instance, a picture of large pyramids is not captioned as 'an African pyramid.' Is it because we know that pyramids signify 'culture' whereas there is no culture in Africa? Why for instance does 'a Tanzanian woman working the soil in a savannah landscape becomes the African peasant' without a name or place mentioned? (Eriksson Baaz, and Palmberg, 2001: 200). In this sense, assertion about the backwardness of Africa is easily achieved in aid and HIV/AIDS documentaries, because most western viewers have limited background

knowledge about Africa to give context to the presented documentary images. It is likely that most Western viewers of aid and HIV/AIDS narratives already have a Dickensian 'noble savages' view because reality is routinely decontextualised through irrelevant juxtapositioning. A well-meaning documentary filmmaker intending to inculcate a cross-cultural perspective in the aid story, for instance, is faced with a vacuum regarding an alternative documentary framework and/or filters for 'seeing' black African reality.

In *Rethinking Documentary, New Perspectives, New Practices,* Thomas Austin and Wilma de Jong acknowledge, that from an international perspective, documentary as a broad area of practice is under pressure from a changing audio-visual culture calling for deeper engagement with documentary history as well as with contemporary work. They urge further research into the variety of 'knowledge-systems,' which documentaries can employ, encouraging (and blocking) different ways of knowing and different kinds of knowledge including emotional knowledge, claiming that it 'is likely to be a rewarding line of further inquiry' (Austin and de Jong, 2008: 25). Likewise, Ogot (2009) finds it imperative for those studying Africa today to 'learn to problematize the issue of representation in order to locate and unpack economic, political, personal, or other motivations that might underlie a particular image of Africa' (Ogot, 2009:1). By extending the gaze concept as a way of seeing limited by various implicit and explicit filters this study will contribute towards the debate on epistemological appropriateness in 'documentary' representation of cultural Others in a global context. Documentary filmmaking is a conscious practice, that connects the filmmaker and the sponsors of the film because 'pistol whipping the hand that holds the wallet,' as Grierson said, is not an option for a filmmaker intent on making a living in a non-profit documentary branch. This connection is endemic in aid and AIDS documentary films because filming the pandemic is funded by the aid industry leading to a hierarchy of voices where the filmed subject's perspective is neither solicited nor relevant for the argument.

A relevant cross-cultural cinematic tradition that can represent the African experience in a meaningful way requires interrogating the 'way of seeing' in a cultural-historical context. Keyan Tomaseli points out that 'the direct importation into Africa of methods, theories, ideas and psychoanalytical assumptions developed in the First world and applied to African cinema is not without epistemological problems' and suggests a rethinking of the Western psycho-centric semiology (1995: 18). Furthermore, differences in audience perception need to be regarded in their socio-

cultural context to demystify the notion that there is a universal way of perceiving representations. In an article entitled '*Watching Africans Watch Films: Theories of Spectatorship in British Colonial Africa'* (2000) James Burns summarises various findings from the colonial 'film literacy' project of the 1920s, in which William Sellers, a British doctor in East Africa who in made medical instructional films and studied the reactions of the audience, was a central figure. Despite Sellers' condescending stance, epistemologically, his suggestions interrogate the universal audiovisual language of documentary, which the British filmmaker and television director Peter Watkins calls 'monoform'.[19] Sellers concluded that motion pictures were more readily understood than still photographs that were sometimes held upside down by the natives looking at the image. However, he cautioned against using the exact cinematic codes used everywhere else because the African audience had other ways of knowing, which among other things was not attuned to complex and fast-paced editing techniques:

> The African is not yet ready for the cinema, as we know it; he is bewildered by its conventions, fails to grasp psychological subtleties and is unable to follow a rapid succession of different scenes. Consequently, if we wish the cinema to have a real influence on the African public, we must adapt its technique to the primitive mind. We must take a step backwards and abandon all the recognized cinematographic conventions, all originality, all personality, and revert to the primitive simplicity of the early cinema (cited in Burns, 2000: 204).

Although this might be considered patronizing the fundamental message is that visual literacy is indeed culturo-historical specific and we need to learn the cinematic conventions in order to make sense of visual representations. Sellers makes the point with an anecdote on the filming 'grammar' of close-ups, which were supposed to emphasize meaning but became 'lost in translation' on an audience whose visual literacy was remarkably different from his:

> In a film on malaria I included some very satisfying full close-ups of mosquitoes in the act of sucking blood, but the results when the film was shown were disastrous. The people became alarmed and enquired about the country where the people had to contend with such wicked monsters and remarked that they themselves were very fortunate to have mosquitoes, which were quite small and comparatively harmless (cited in Burns,2000: 199).

[19] Peter Watkins is a British filmmaker who sees the dominant Hollywood style of filmmaking as problematic, hegemonic and therefore inadequate because it is unable to convey a pluralistic view of the world. I learned Watkins' unique filming approach in 1993 during production of a biographical film about a nineteenth century Swedish playwright August Strindberg. Watkins challenges Monoform by use of complex internal structure, unpredictable narrative movement and other 'non-orthodox filmic language.' More on Watkins' style is found on his website: http://pwatkins.mnsi.net/freethinker.htm. Accessed, February 2014.

The fact that the African audience divorced the image of the enlarged mosquito from their immediate environment suggests that to communicate with the power of the local knowledge it is important to consider signification within a limited cultural space and time. My own 1997-1999 unpublished audience study of seven to twelve year old Tanzanian children with various levels of exposure to audio-visual media indicated that images do acquire unintended meaning in a cross-cultural setting. Thirty-six children attending a pre-school unit that I supported were shown an episode from Walt Disney's animated cartoon *Tom and Jerry* and I noticed that sometimes they laughed at the 'wrong places'. What caused me to pause the film and discuss with the children was the deafening laughter caused by an image of a piece of cheese on the mousetrap, which was confused for a piece of wood because the children had never seen or heard of cheese. When I tried to explain it caused even more commotion and laughter because cheese rhymes with *chizi*, which is Swahili slang for a mad person. Furthermore, Hanna and Barbera's 'good guys' (Jerry the mouse) versus 'bad guys' (Tom the cat) message was to say the least 'lost in translation': these children lived in an environment where they experienced the nuisance of mice on a daily basis and also knew that mice/rats (*panya*) spread germs and viruses. They were upset that Tom the cat was 'stupid' enough to put a piece of wood on the mousetrap (*mtego wa panya*) instead of a 'nice little chunk of spicy beef,' as their mothers normally did. This was a practical example that filming of or for cultural Others is a matter of complexity regarding the appropriateness of the filmic language, such as editing pace and other taken-for-granted everyday conventions that need to be learned through experience.

Documentary and 'Truth.'

Throughout my study I approach truth in the Kantian sense of agreement of knowledge (representation) with its object (reality) because of my wish to explore the possibility of ever conveying truthful representations in a cross-cultural context. Can we know an Other in an un-biased 'virginal purity' that André Bazin spoke of, or is documentary's practice of structuring observable 'actuality' to present truthful representation just another post-modern illusion? In *Critique of Pure Reason*, Immanuel Kant defines truth as 'the agreement of knowledge with its object' insisting that 'knowledge is false if it does not agree to the object presented' (Kant, trans by Kemp, 1929: 97-A58). The true meaning of any object is unknowable because our understanding of it through representation to our senses is subjective and therefore limited. Kant points out that 'it is, therefore, solely from the human standpoint that we can speak of space, of extended things etc' (Kant, trans by Kemp, 1929: 71-B43). In

a cross-cultural documentary practice when, how and what is ‘true’ is a dilemma that is best approached by the concept of the gaze because this allows a clear examination of the ‘way of seeing’ that validates meanings of objects in social spaces and adheres to Kant’s dismissal of universal truths. The question of who chooses the piece of ‘reality’ to be represented, how the ‘real’ is re-presented, and if it validates taken-for-granted ‘truth’ underpins the gaze approach which views truth legitimization as an epistemic field involving power dynamics between the filmmaker and the represented subject. Documentary filmmaking is therefore ‘a form of discourse fabricating its effects, impressions and points-of-view-views’ (Nichols, 1985: 261). The gaze approach states among other things that un-biased truth cannot be represented.

The possibility of truthful representation in documentary practice is dismissed by Nichols, who makes a distinction between *the* world as it exists and *a* world as presented by documentary filmmakers, arguing that, ‘the notion of any privileged access to a reality that exists “out there,” beyond us, is an ideological effect. The sooner we realize all this, the better’ (Nichols, 1991: 107). Documentary invites us to engage with the construction of arguments directed towards the historical world and therefore they ‘do not present *the* truth but *a* truth (or, better, a view or way of seeing), even if the evidence they recruit bears the authenticating trace of the historical world’ (Nichols, 1991: 118). The history of documentary film is a perfect example of how impossible it is to engage truthfully with the truth. From the beginning of the documentary genre, Grierson asserted that: ‘You photograph the natural life, but you also, by your juxtaposition of detail, create an interpretation of it’ (Hardy, 1966: 148). Documentary discourse authorizes truth creation through the subjectivity of the authoring eyes of the filmmaker, whose interpretation of the culturo-historical world attaches a convenient meaning regardless of what the true meaning of the phenomenon might actually be.

Considering the complexity of the world and the many truths that exist therein, the gaze approach asks: why was a particular ‘truth’ chosen and whose limited human subjectivity is expressed in the ‘voice’ of the text? The ‘truth’ creating process, particularly trans-culturally, involves many a priori assumptions that a documentary filmmaker might not even be aware of because they make perfect sense in his or her limited version of reality. Erik Barnouw points out that, whether a documentary filmmaker is aware of it or not, he makes endless choices like any other communicator in any medium. ‘He selects topics, vistas, angles, lens juxtapositions,

sounds, words. Each selection is his point of view' (Barnouw 1993: 287). If documentary is capable of the fabrication of truths, as in Nichols' distinction of *a* truth and *the* truth, why then do we speak of documentary?

Ironically, in view of Ukadike's analysis of her films discussed earlier, Trinh T. Minh-Ha is clear on the relationship of truth, reality and ideology. In *Totalising Quest for Meaning*, she proclaims that 'there is no such thing as documentary' whether the term designates a category of material, a genre, an approach or set of techniques. According to her 'truth is produced, induced, and extended according to the regime in power' (1993: 90). Dominant ideologies can validate or deny a reality. 'Reality runs away', says Minh-Ha, and therefore documentary filmmaking is preoccupied with 'framing' reality in its course' (ibid: 101). To 'frame reality' in its course and call it truth is perhaps best viewed in the modes of representation identified by Bill Nichols; expository, observational, interactive and reflexive.

Nichols notes that these modes are 'distinctive approaches to the representation of reality' and that new forms of representation arise from the limitation and constrains of previous ones. New modes convey a fresh, new perspective on reality because credibility of documentary reality changes to reflect an historical period (Nichols, 1991: 32). Nichols' distinctions are useful for identifying the voice of the text because, epistemologically speaking, the authoritative 'voice-of-god' is the same 'fly-on-the-wall' observing and controlling from a seemingly credible distance. In aid and AIDS documentaries where the helper's motives are supposedly benevolent, the 'flies-on-the-wall' have cleverly flown back inside the text as 'images-of-gods' in the form of expert witnesses, philanthropists on location in Africa, or the relentless filmmaker in quest for a humane world. Jay Ruby points out that 'the off-screen voice of authority simply moved into the frame', subtitled with their pedigree and authority to continue telling us the truth (Ruby, 1991: 54). We continue to know the world of Others through such biased but in-built and invisible filters.

The objective knowability of the world through documentary representation is further explored by Elizabeth Cowie, who argues that documentary can re-present an existing reality in a recorded text and that its truth is 'apparently guaranteed by mechanical reproduction of that reality in what has come to be known as its indexical relationship to the original'. She then promptly cautions that although documentary is closely linked to the development of modernity, with its desire for the objective knowability of the world, documentary itself becomes prey to a loss of the real in its

narratives of reality through mediation, interpretation and presentation. The idea of a truly observational filming gave rise to the desire of an unlimited access to reality in unmediated recordings of actuality, as if through the camera we may create a record of everything an all-seeing God might have surveyed (Cowie, 2011: 20). Despite the objectivity claims made for anthropological filmmaking like those of Jean Rouch, actuality of a cultural Other is entered for a limited period of time and interpreted through the choices of primitive tribes (subjects) to document, what aspects of their reality to focus on and for how long. In fact, no mode of documentary representation can claim the ability to present unlimited access to any reality.

The popular participatory video movement supported by some development organizations in Africa is perhaps just another way of ensuring that the gaze is structured with the power of local voices so that the priorities of the donors are carried out in a seemingly democratic process. Martin Mhando points out in *Participatory and Video Production in Tanzania* that there is need for greater accuracy in representing 'reality. Participatory video production proposes sharing of representational power, 'thus ensuring, hopefully, a more balanced representation of the community being projected' (Mhando, 2005: 14), but even then distortion can occur since hierarchy of voices is unavoidably part of the human story. Power sharing between filmmakers and the people being represented is a 'creative ideological intervention' writes Mhando, because most of the power remains in the voice of the director-author. 'This power can be easily abused', he says, claiming it is even more dangerous if the filmmaker's point of view is shaped in an alien cultural and sociological background (ibid: 14).

Documentary and the Gaze

My approach to the gaze concept is concerned with the documentary filmmaker's conscious authoring of the text, as opposed to any psychoanalytical theorization of the spectator's consumption of the text. I am interested to explore not only the documentary's ability to spatially configure 'reality' and package it as truth, but also the ethics involved in such a process. The theory of gaze in film theory was mostly initiated by Laura Mulvey's seminal work *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975), which applied a psychoanalytic dissection of the male spectators' erotic fantasies. Mulvey's term 'male gaze' is underpinned by the notion that in a patriarchal culture the looking is gendered, where woman is an image and man is the bearer of the look, to position herself as subject rather than object the female spectator must, psychoanalytically, 'become male' to take possession of the power of looking

(Mulvey, 1975: 9). This psychoanalytic line of inquiry examines the sexual imbalance in looking through the unconscious processes of scopophilia and spectatorship, whereas my focus is the authoring of epistephilia through conscious choices made by the documentary filmmaker. The irrelevance of such a psychoanalytic approach for documentary is discussed in detail in Nichols' *Representing Reality*. The eroticization of the gaze and the gender hierarchy that fiction narrative imposes does not directly translate into documentary practice, he says, as neither institutional discourse nor the structure of documentary text revolves around eroticization of the gaze (1991: 76). However, voyeurism, fetishism and narcissism, which are also addressed by Mulvey, are to some extent present in contemporary documentary, particularly in aid stories because the donating public receive not only the pleasure of knowing (epistephillia) but also the pleasure of looking (scophophillia). Mulvey explains:

> The cinema satisfies a primordial wish for pleasurable looking, but it also goes further, developing scopophillia in its narcissistic aspect. The conventions of mainstream film focus on the human form. Scale, space, stories are all anthropomorphic. Here curiousity and the wish to look intermingle with a fascination with the likeness and recognition: the human face, the human body, the relationship between the human form and its surroundings, the visible presence of the person in the world (Mulvey, 1975: 8).

Mulvey's point about fascination with likeness and recognition in part clarifies the extraordinary success of telethons, activist documentaries and other reality-based appeals showing people like 'us' from here helping 'them' out there. This presents the viewer with an epistephillic sense of acquiring new information about a distant Other, but this overlaps with a scopohillic satisfaction of just witnessing how privileged First World benevolently acts to change the lives of the poor 'out there.' Some extreme forms of activist documentaries take the viewer through a narcissistic journey where 'saving mission' documentation builds to an explosive feel good crescendo. A good example is a 2012 compilation documentary *Kony 2012*;[20] watched online by over one hundred million worldwide. The film's structure is a typical 'white man's burden' theme, glorifying an American charity's initiative to end atrocities in North Uganda because of 'the-Africans-can't-do-it themselves' attitude.

Nichols maintains that gaze is constituted in the relation of observer to the observed and in the ethics involved in configuration of space. 'To speak of the camera's gaze is, in that one phrase, to mingle two distinct operations: the literal, mechanical

[20] Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4MnpzG5Sqc. Accessed, October 2013.

operation of a device to reproduce images and the metaphorical, human process of gazing upon the world'. Nichols notes that, the camera reveals not only the world but its operator's conscious preoccupations, subjectivity and values. 'The photographic (and aural) record provides an imprint of its user's ethical, political and ideological stance as well as an imprint of he visible surface of things' (Nichols, 1991: 79).

Gaze as a subjective process as noted earlier was emphasized by Immanuel Kant, who wrote that we can only speak of space and things solely from the human standpoint. 'Our knowledge springs from two fundamental sources of the mind, the first is the capacity of receiving representations and the second is the power of knowing an object through its representation' (Kant, trans. Kemp, 1929:92). The ethics and aesthetic relations with the physical world underpin the concept of the gaze. The simple choice of pointing the camera at a particular object in a particular way implants values in the configuration of space, which Nichols argues 'constitutes a gaze' (1991: 78). Unlike the pure, un-gazed *see-it-as-it-is* position conceptualized by Bazin, documentary structures visual evidence in a *see-it-this-way* position therefore reinforcing or challenging a 'truth'.

An important question of the process of knowing Others is raised by Nichols in an article *Getting to Know You…Knowledge, Power and the Body* (1993). Revolving around the issues of specificity, power and knowledge, he interrogates the politics of epistemology and representation involved in the process of knowing the Other and the worlds they inhabit by asking:

> If knowledge arises, in large part from subjective, embodied experience, to what extent can it be represented by impersonal and disembodied language? What strategies are available to us for the representation of people, their experience and the encounters we wish to have of them?' (Nichols in Renov (ed),1993: 174).

Nichols notes that, although images are always of concrete, material things recorded at specific moments in time, they can be made to point toward more general truths or issues. He therefore questions the extent to which a particular can serve as illustration for the general, and asks not only *what* general principle but *whose* general principle can the particular illustrate?

In *Ways of Seeing* (1973) Berger points out that, just like language, one's eyes are socio-culturally framed and there are various 'ways of seeing'. 'We never just look at one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves'

(Berger, 1973: 9). He claims that, ‘every image embodies a way of seeing,’ arguing that ‘the world-as-it-is is more than objective fact’ because, ‘it includes consciousness’ (Berger, 1973: 10-11). Making sense of other socio-cultural space is a delicate process according to Andrew Dudley who argues that a film will tend to ‘cut up the world of appearances into perceptual images organized into patterns that make sense’ to a specific audience because the images exist in their culture, and that without effort the audience can identify in the film something they have already seen in their culture as important. In other words, the film reinforces the subjective world we have constructed (1984: 47).

Foucalt’s conceptualization of gaze in *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (1989) is another starting point for understanding the gaze concept as a conscious epistemic field and indeed a site of power. Taking the history of eighteenth century medicine, he discusses how the ‘glance’ came to exercise its right of origin over truth in the configuration of disease because of the power that perception had in classificatory medicine (1989: 4). The medical gaze was organized in a way that classification of disease could be carried out solely by doctors’ field of vision, underpinned by the naturalist model whose classification of features could isolate the pathological. The clinic demanded as much of the gaze as natural history and the medical gaze ‘was no longer the gaze of any observer, but that of a doctor supported and justified by an institution’ (1989: 89). The doctor was therefore endowed with the power of decision over truth and falsehood based solely on what his eyes were capable of seeing.

In *The Tourist Gaze* (2011) John Urry and Jonas Larsen argue that: ‘people gaze upon the world through a particular filter of ideas, skills, desires and expectations, framed by social class, gender, nationality, age and education. Gazing is a performance that orders, shapes and classifies, rather than reflects the world’ (Urry and Larsen 2011: 2). Citing Foucault’s medical gaze, Urry and Larsen argue that the concept of the gaze highlights the fact that looking is a learned ability and that there is no pre-existing reality simply waiting out there (Urry and Larsen, 2011: 2). Gazing is a practice that involves the cognitive work of interpreting, evaluating, drawing comparisons and making mental connections between signs and their referents (Urry and Larsen, 2011: 17). Urry insists that:

> Focusing on the gaze brings out how the organizing sense in tourism is visual. And this mirrors the general privileging of the eye within the Western societies. Sight was long viewed as the noblest of the senses, the most discriminating and reliable of the sensuous mediators between humans and

> their physical environment. This emphasis is present within Western epistemology, within religious and other symbolism and within how society should be visible, made transparent' (Urry and Larsen, 2011: 1).

Interrogating the gaze as the integral to the architecture of meaning is therefore important in unpacking the political, ideological and popular dynamics that cause misrepresentation in aid and HIV/AIDS documentaries. As Urry observes, the gaze involves a set of practices of interpreting, evaluating and making mental connections in the social world because of the notion that sight occupies the noblest position in the hierarchy of senses of knowing. However, other socio-historical processes influence how the knowledge thus gained becomes a discourse. Foucault's historical approach examined the gaze in a concrete medical field and illustrates the process of legitimizing a discourse of spatialising disease through the visible body. Combining these two approaches (a) gaze as a natural interpreter (b) gaze as tool of a particular discourse, the next chapter will situate the gaze in concrete socio-historical contexts to trace the evolution of the donor gaze in the early encounters between Europeans and black Africans, where sight played a crucial role in marking differences, in othering and in establishing the prevailing Darwinian worldview of the black African Other.

Chapter Two:

The Differentiating Gaze: Black Africans in Western texts.

Introduction: What is 'Africa?'

> *What are people to do when everything they believe in - and everything that makes them who they are - has been called 'satanic' or 'primitive' or 'witchcraft'?*[21]
>
> Wangari Maathai

Ali Mazrui, one of the leading African academic and political writers, states that Europe 'invented' Africa, both geographically and conceptually. He notes that even the name 'Africa' can be traced to a Greco-Roman ancestry, and suggests that the Romans referred to their colonial province in present-day Tunisia and Eastern Algeria as 'Africa,' possibly meaning 'sunny' from the Latin *Aprica,* or perhaps 'hot' from the Greek word *Aphrike* (without cold). Either way, the name was later Arabised to *Ifriqiya* by Arab immigrants, but the application of the name in more recent centuries has been due almost entirely to European usage (Mazrui, 1986: 25).

Around the fifteenth century when Western Europeans first journeyed to the lands south of the Sahara they began to think of Africa as the land of Black people; Black Africa, the 'Dark Continent' and no longer just North African province. 'The new West European *racial* thinking implied that the 'real Africa' is south of Sahara, that Africans are black, that Africa is a race, that the northern boundary of Africa is the Sahara' (ibid: 25). For want of a better term, I use the term black Africans for distinction purposes, fully aware of racial implications because one is not always black, and that identity is complex. One's 'blackness' is only relevant when in presence of non-blacks, and depending on the differentiating gaze, the identity is either unifying and empowering or objectifying and disempowering.

A Ugandan-born British author, Simon Kuper, approaches the term 'Africa' from an historical perspective in a *Financial Times Magazine* article *Africa? Why There is no Such Place* (2013)[22]. Kuper notes that the term 'Africa' obscures reality rather than

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[21] Maathai (2010)*The Challenge for Africa* page 173.
[22]Source: http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/c7e5e492-40ec-11e3-ae19-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2veGl8F7j. Accessed, February, 2014.

reveals it.' The very idea of 'Africa' came from outside Africa and it might have made sense at some point in history, but speaking about Africa as an entity does not make sense anymore. The continent is 'impossibly diverse' says Kuper, and although there is the shared bond of basic experiences such as colonization, largely agrarian economies and some pockets of dictatorship, the experiences of African countries have diverged so starkly it almost makes no sense to speak of 'Africa' anymore (Kuper, 2013). 'Africa' stuck as a tag, because the continent rarely gets enough global attention to be discussed in more subtle terms. Typically, the whole continent is labeled with a single phrase such as in Bob Geldof's disempowering song *Do they know it's Christmas*? in 1984, *The Economist's* dismissive article *Hopeless Continent* in 2000 or the more positive one on the magazine's cover in December 2011 proclaiming *Africa Rising*. (ibid). For many Africans, however, the notion of a shared continent has little reality. 'Travelling to the next village is often hard enough, let alone to the next country', notes Kuper. The word 'Africa' nonetheless, still expresses an emotional reality for many Africans and it is one of the identities they have, beside a local and national and perhaps global identity. '"African" can be a positive identity. Often, though, it is simply used to mean a victim, a member of the lowest economic category. If that's the identity, then nobody wants to be African' (Kuper, 2013).

Gaze and the architecture of the 'civilization narrative.'

The absence of the African voice to define their own reality, which is paradigmatic in aid and HIV/AIDS documentaries can be traced back to the racialized past when knowledge about black Africans was authorized through Eurocentric 'scientific' fraternities of the nineteenth century. Historians and philosophers theorized and ordered the reality of Africans drawing on the biased gaze of white explorers, missionaries and anthropologists whose binary thinking inaccurately conveyed the lived experiences of the 'natives' they encountered. Their reports contributed not only to justify the imperial discourse but they also contributed in shaping how Africans are understood in the rest of the world and to a large even inside the continent. These early reports distorted the perspective of the 'natives' mostly because the white visitors enforced their own way of seeing to replace what they judged as 'primitive.' The 'civilization narrative' can be said to be a result of misinterpretation of ways of seeing and being in the world. Wangari Maathai, the first African woman to win a Nobel Prize, writes in *The Challenge for Africa* that the intellectual colonization persuaded Africans to accept that they not only are inherently inferior but should gratefully receive the wisdom of the 'superior' culture. Their society was undermined,

disempowered, and became willing to accept guidance and direction (Maathai, 2010: 172). This cultural exploitation continues to this day because black Africans are not solicited to 'tell our own stories' (ibid: 288). Maathai points out that 'the cultures of African people were trivialized and demonized by colonial administrators, missionaries and local devotees' dismissing ancestral wisdom and urging people to 'move beyond tribal inheritance' (ibid: 173). She asks: 'What are people to do when everything they believe in –and everything that makes them who they are has been called 'satanic" or "primitive" "witchcraft" or "sorcery?"' (ibid: 173).

Examples of these 'primitive' black people were brought to Europe's imperial capitals, for scientific study and displayed behind iron cages in human zoos and ethnographic exhibitions where they were indeed treated 'as if they were insects,' to borrow Sembene Ousmane's expression. *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires* explains that the desire to 'collect' and 'display' various races became a standard practice for the nineteenth century scientific world 'at a time when scholars were seeking to establish and understand human hierarchies' (Blanchard et al, 2008: 5). The racial discourse created negative stereotypes, with a powerful myth about the inherent inferiority of black Africans influencing representations in literature, travelogues and colonial films. The myth rests on the concealed but occasionally observable foundation of the 'civilization narrative', which still underpins aid and HIV/AIDS documentaries funded by international donor agencies and other non-governmental aid organizations. It is a twenty-first century Darwinian worldview that treats black African actuality through hierarchical differentiations of 'developed' versus 'underdeveloped.' This is a modern parallel to the assertion that 'Africa can only be humanized and civilized by Europeans', as James Hunt suggested in the nineteenth century. Hunt presented a 'scientific' paper at the Royal Anthropological Society in London titled *On the Place of the Negro in Nature* where he discussed 'the physical and mental characters of the Negro, with a view of determining not only his position in animated nature, but also the station to be assigned to him in the genus *homo* (Hunt, 1863: 1).

The differentiating methodology used by Hunt was deemed credible to reach for truth: 'I shall adopt this plan in comparing the Negro with the European, as represented by German, Frenchman, or Englishman. Our object is not to support some foregone conclusion but to ascertain what is truth by a careful and conscientious examination of the facts before us' (Hunt, 1863: 3). The question is how could they reveal any truth about the 'objects' of their study in the face of

obvious linguistic and cultural limitations of the time? The same differentiating paradigm is employed in the development story and the truth vis-à-vis the Other is biased by the frameworks of the Western 'knower.'

The practice of negatively emphasizing differences to establish an hierarchical order is indeed a problematic framework because 'projecting difference across historical time to suggest 'they are all that way, and they will always be that way' is 'essentialising, ahistorical, and metaphysical' (Shohat and Stam, 1994: 19). The differentiating framework is limiting because it overlooks the fact that experiencing reality is socio-historical specific, and that each human society has a specific 'toolbox of ideas with which, by which, through which, we experience and interpret the world' (Schumacher, 1973: 77). This chapter will provide historical context for arguing that it is a very complex, indeed almost impossible, task for Western aid and AIDS documentaries to truthfully represent black African realities because the nineteenth century discourse of 'the white man's burden' still shapes the way African reality is represented. The chapter will analyze how 'textual-attitude' reinforced the Eurocentric foundations of orientalist representation established by self-perpetuating explorers and missionaries. Edward Said explains in *Orientalism* (1978) that 'it is a fallacy to assume that the swarming, unpredictable, and problematic mess in which humans beings live can be understood on the basis of what books say (Said, 1978: 93). 'Textual attitude', claims Said, extends power to 'authoritative' texts allowing them to replace face-to-face interactions. What is learnt out of the book is taken as literal reality, thus allowing the text's authority to be favoured above reality itself. This happens when one is confronted by an unknown phenomenon or a distant reality (ibid: 93). The vividly sensational and sometimes logical but nevertheless ethnocentric, depictions of black Africans in the writings of nineteenth century explorers and missionaries were far from objective, but these published tales created and reinforced false 'pictures in the head' for others who philosophized, historicized and wrote about black Africans without ever having to set foot on the African soil.

Kenneth Cameron argues that, the reductive nineteenth century motifs created a conventional 'Africa' that was 'fairly sparse in information and that depended on a few repeated motifs, especially "jungle", "darkness' and "savagery"'. This 'lowering of real information', writes Cameron, suited imperial exploitation to match the theories of racial superiority by showing black Africans as 'childlike, violent, superstitious, and uncivilized' (Cameron,1994: 11). Another restrictive factor contributing to the disjunction between 'Africa on film' and real Africa, was the filmmakers' own 'limited

vision' because they saw reality through the Dark Continent of Stanley's violent mind' or through the colonial window. Either way, it agreed with the film audience's prior knowledge of Africa, which is questionable whether it is much better today.' (Cameron, 1994: 13). In the twenty first century, an age of unprecedented electronic revolution, the reality distortion is no longer confined to fanciful illustrated tales by explorers and missionaries, or the biased assertions by anthropologists, historians, philosophers and writers. An extremely selective reality, attesting to the differences between black and white is now instantaneously available on the global mass media, presented as a 'symphony of sympathy' for the poor Africans. The Zambian economist Dambisa Moyo notes that there is 'the largely unspoken and insidious view that the problem with Africa is Africans –that culturally, mentally and physically Africans are innately different' (2009: 31). This often infantilizing undertone is structurally present in many aid industry narratives, and therefore tracing its historical origin in nineteenth century racist constructions situates the donor gaze within the twenty-first century discourse of the aid industry.

Using the concept of orientalism as a theory of (unequal) representation, this chapter examines the dominant constructions of Africa and Africans in Western texts, with special focus on the epistemological orientation of the gaze, as the architect of meaning. Edward Said defines orientalism as 'a system of knowledge about the orient, and an accepted grid of filtering through the orient into the Western consciousness' (Said, 1978: 6). Orientalism is a useful framework for revealing the patronizing 'helping' gaze, which chooses specific African realities and particular groups in order to perpetuate the civilizing hierarchy of 'developing' versus 'developed.' Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* is very useful in understanding that human values are structured through specific cultural context and social-environment, and therefore the reading of cultural texts should interrogate the interpretative gaze to determine if representation of a cultural Other is underpinned by the same system of knowing of those living the reality. Bourdieu points out that, 'the homogeneity of *habitus* facilitates perception of a phenomenon making it immediately intelligible and foreseeable, and hence taken for granted by people in a particular community' (Bourdieu, 1977: 80). Ignoring the diversity of perception and pursuing a textual analysis blind to the politics of the gaze is 'academic imperialism', as Craig Prichard (2005) puts it in *Challenging Academic Imperialism*. 'We need to be critically suspicious of the very terms and concepts we think, speak, and write with' he suggests. It is important to 'understand the history of one's place or locale, and to explore how the frameworks we use come to be here,' argues Prichard. Only

then can we decide 'whether these frameworks align with the kinds of futures we would wish to see produced in the locales in which we find ourselves. If certain frameworks don't align, then perhaps they should be modified, challenged and simply rejected' (Pritchard, 2005: 276-277).

The first section of this chapter will explore the gaze as a valid lens for 'knowing', arguing that, historically, many authoritative assertions about African realities were neither informed by adequate empirical observations, nor supported by credible and neutral first hand sources. Jan Nederveen Pieterse a specialist in globalization, development and cultural studies maintains that, from the nineteenth century, 'Europeans constructed images of Africa and blacks on the basis of selective perception, expedience, second-hand information, mingled with reconstructed biblical notions and medieval folklore, along with popular or 'scientific' ideas that were current at the time' (Pieterse, 1995: 10).

In the next section I will examine some of the encounters that Othered black Africans and established the myth of the 'Dark Continent' as European explorers, missionaries and philosophers distorted the African inhabitant's own reality to meet their cultural prejudices and imperial self-serving intentions. Patrick Brantlinger (1985:198) maintains that: 'the legacy of the myth of the Dark Continent and, more generally, of imperialism has been massive and impossible to evade, as stereotypic treatments of Africa by today's mass media continue to demonstrate.' 'Darkness' was a premeditated construction to provide a valid differentiating paradigm for negative comparisons, elevating the Europeans as the 'enlightened' ones with the right to 'discover,' (re)name and (re) 'civilize'. Hegel's conceptual division of Africa is a particularly interesting example because to many black African academics he is 'the nineteenth century Hitler of the intellect' (Thiong'o 1986: 32). Although Hegel never set foot in Africa, his authoritative text *Philosophy of History* (1824) states many 'ontological truths' about a 'dark' Africa whose undesirable 'childlike' state is a dominant paradigm in many colonial films, and also prevails in the aid story today. Chukwudi Eze (1997), V Y Mudimbe (1988) and the British historian Basil Davidson (1984) all point a finger at Hegel for 'setting a tone' for orientalist representations of black Africans that refuses to go away.

The final section of this chapter will look closely at the rationale behind the narrative of 'civilization.' This part provides a clear framework for understanding the epistemological foundations of the donor gaze, leaving no doubt that as a filter it

exploits differences that are not only materialist but also cultural and to some extent visual. The racial discourse, particularly the claim that black people were incapable of developing without the 'guiding light' of the white nations, is 'the dark side of the enlightenment inheritance that combines its encyclopedic project to explain everything with the assertion that both nature and other cultures can be known by the principle' (Hallam and Street, 2000: 199).

To see is *not* to know

The dynamics of making sense about the world, or making truthful documentary assertions about realities of others, is not a forthright process because the world appears differently to different people. The meaning and function of objects or concepts are culturally coded, and therefore the gaze fixes an interpretation according to the 'cultural-toolkit' available to the one perceiving the object or other people. The Bazinian notion of 'virginal purity' is for the most part problematic because what is 'visibly evident' is still subjected to specific spatio-temporal interpretations. Elizabeth Cowie insists that although documentary's record of the real as visible evidence allows us to encounter 'reality' it cannot by itself fully determine reality because 'reality is neither true nor false.' In essence 'documentary is an organized statement, an "utterance" of the recorded audiovisual' that enables us to encounter the non-meaning real through making reality meaningful (Cowie, 2011: 29). 'Reality' acquires meaning through the 'voice' of documentary, which Bill Nichols says; 'conveys to us a sense of a text's social point of view.' (Nichols, 1985:260) A documentary filmmaker configures space and time to make reality 'speak' in certain ways validating a social point of view about 'how things stand in the world' (Cowie, 2011: 28). 'The facts, in fact cannot speak for themselves' writes Cowie, noting that, we [humans] 'make them "speak" by our contextual knowledge and understanding within specific institutional and social frames.' She points out that, 'the "true meaning" of reality lies not in what we see and hear, or touch, but in our understanding of reality organized through our symbolic systems, preeminently through language' (Cowie, 2011: 26).

Society, culture, and indeed our 'habitus' influence what kind of pictures we create in our heads to correctly understand and relate to various phenomena in the world, which is not necessarily the same for everyone, just as in the fable of the blind men and the elephant. Arguably, unless one is wearing 'epistemically adjusted lenses', to see is clearly *not* to know, and therefore it is doubtful that the early Western writers and filmmakers about African reality could possibly be entirely truthful. 'Europe was

always in a position of strength' to produce systematic knowledge and ensure that the 'Oriental is contained and represented by dominating frameworks' (Said,1978: 40), and 'historically and currently, the creation, constitution and reproduction of knowledge remain the privilege of the West' (Oyewumi, 2003: 25). The nineteenth century anthropological/ethnological quest for knowing the oriental African, for instance, created and validated false knowledge derived from generalization of the few examples displayed behind iron in cages. Quareshi claims that this activity presented a privileged position of authority to the ones ascribing meaning and 'disturbingly blurred the human/animal boundary' (Quareshi, 2004: 238). Even as visitors to the museums and other exhibition space could see, touch and even hear the displayed human subjects, it cannot be said that they could know them. Quareshi explains:

> Museums necessarily divorce objects from their original context; in doing so they ascribe meanings such objects would otherwise never easily obtain. The object implicitly occupies an epistemologically privileged position in the putatively neutral space of museological display, since it gains the capacity to augment a visitor's knowledge; at one extreme, display invests the object with a power to speak of its own accord…objects are decontextualized and re-presented as substitutions for the whole, thus embedding the associations institutionally (Quareshi, 2004: 246).

Documentary too can 'speak of its own accord,' and because of its association as discourse of truth it contributes to the process of institutionalized knowledge in the same way as museums although the truth is usually divorced from reality. Donor gaze documentaries in particular represent subjects as 'laboratory samples;' as substitution for the whole. Maj Palmberg rightly says, one African can be made to represent all Africans. In *Same and Other* (2001) Palmberg notes that 'the African woman with a hoe is nowadays a frequent illustration of Africans' (Baaz and Palmberg, 2001: 203). In general, 'Africa' is a 'shorthand for "development problems"' (ibid: 204) The underlying truth claims of the documentary genre, that the visible statements made about a particular historical reality, are truthful representation about how-things-really-are in the world, affects the way viewers engage with the text. Since meaning lies not in the objects but our interpretation of it, with the help of our innate 'pictures in the head', it can also be assumed that, like museums, documentaries too have the capacity to make objects mean something that is not there, especially when epistemological boundaries are crossed.

The concept of gaze as an epistemic field is very useful in investigating the enduring stereotypes of black Africans in documentary representation because distortion of

reality occurs when the true meaning is 'lost in translation' due to irrelevant frameworks of knowing. In preliterate societies the spoken word is central in how knowledge is passed from one generation to another whereas in media-saturated cultures knowledge is obtained from both the written and audiovisual medium. Oyeronke Oyewumi (1997) emphasizes this difference by arguing that 'in the West the world is primarily perceived by sight' and therefore textual and visual 'differentiation of human bodies in terms of sex, skin colour, and cranium size is a testament attributed to seeing' (Oyewumi, 1997: 2). To comprehend social reality it is important to differentiate how societies 'know' she notes. 'The term worldview which is used in the West sums up the cultural logic of a society, captures the West's privileging of the visual. It is Eurocentric to use it to describe other cultures that may privilege other senses,' she concludes. (1997: 2-3). Oyewumi's contribution to the gaze debate is that Africa was 'known' and is still 'known' through alien frameworks that fail to incorporate the African authentic voices that might diversify the 'civilizing' story. By trusting the gaze of White, middle class males to direct the African story, documentary discourse continue the nineteenth century racialised discourse that was also established by White males.

The development of the cameras as a tool of scientific inquiry allowed the documentation of distant Others to take the form of visible evidence. Charles Darwin routinely used photographs and his illustrated masterpiece *Expressions of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1871) was the first manual to use photographs to illustrate a scientific theory. *Descent of Man* (1874), which is Darwin's scientific framework on how humankind and human society should be understood, used considerable visual descriptions about other races that did not belong to the category of objective 'pure looking.' According to Hegel (1899) knowledge about our world should adhere to 'pure looking' (*reines zusehen*). This approach rejects a priori judgment of what is right or just, because many historians and philosophers tended to 'contrast unfavourably things as they *are,* with the idea of things as they *ought* to be' (Hegel,1899 trans. Sibree: 34-35). Interestingly, Hegel himself does not 'walk the talk', as I will discuss later in the chapter, and it is not surprising that Darwin's gaze isn't unbiased either. Like that of other nineteenth century thinkers they unfavourably' contrasted the Negro race with their own, and failed to affirm their humanity as it was. In this sense a priorism resulted in establishment of false hierarchical differences that still affect conceptualization of the human story today. The assumption that the European societies and race were the default comparison point shapes many narratives including political declarations concerning what a truly

democratic society looks like. In *Descent of Man* (1874: 303) Darwin writes that, 'of all the differences between the races of man, the colour of the skin is the most conspicuous and one of the best marked' which is a valid statement, but he then embarks on negative comparisons placing the black race on an inferior, undesirable position, thus lending scientific status to the 'civilization narrative.' Darwin's negative comparisons of societies led him to conclude that 'many savages are in the same condition as when first discovered several centuries ago' (Darwin, 1874: 213). In the last paragraph he proclaims that he would rather be related to monkeys and baboons than to 'savages' saying:

> For my own part I would as soon be descended from that heroic little monkey, who braved his dreaded enemy in order to save the life of his keeper, or from that old baboon, who descending from the mountains, carried away in triumph his young comrade from a crowd of astonished dogs - as from a savage who delights to torture his enemies, offers up bloody sacrifices, practices infanticide without remorse, treats his wives like slaves, knows no decency, and is haunted by the grossest superstitions (Darwin, 1874: 918).

Darwinism still informs the racial biases witnessed globally today, for instance the disturbing monkey chants sometimes directed at black football players during international competitions. If Charles Darwin's ground breaking evolutionary theory unchained humanity from the religious paradigms of creation, why then are monkeys popularly associated with black Africans if we all descended from the primates? Cynically, the monkey-ness of black Africans is the hidden text underpinning many hierarchical differentiating assertions by the Western helper-as-documentarist tradition framing the reality in Africa. The donor gaze mirrors the purported socio-cultural deficiencies of black Africans circulating in the Western audiences' historically informed 'pictures in the head.' 'And why should it have been otherwise?' asks Edward Said in *Orientalism*: 'the scientist, the scholar, the missionary, the trader, or the soldier was in, or thought about the Orient because he *could be there*, or he could think about it, with very little resistance on the Orient's part' (1978: 7). Theoretical illustrations could be made about the Orients in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial, and historical theses about mankind and the universe. Conclusive economic and sociological theories of development, revolution, cultural personality, national or religious character could be made about the oriental and general ideas of who, or what was of the orient were not governed by empirical reality but 'by a battery of desires, repressions, investments and projection' (Said, 1978: 7-8). Black Africans were textually objectified then, and still are in contemporary electronic representations, because the power of the donor gaze can turn self-regarding rural black Africans into 'laboratory insects' to structure a

compelling aid story with full support of the aid industry. The 'voice' of the documentary is in fact its style, and it is very crucial in this discourse because it will use any cinematic techniques to speak about the world we share (Nichols, 2010: 69). Documentary is one of many voices that 'give shape to our world' (ibid: 68). 'Just like the orator or public speaker who uses his entire body to give voice to a particular perspective, documentaries speak with all the means at their disposal' (ibid: 67).

The Photography Handbook (1999) by Terence Wright emphasizes that the technologies of seeing did 'give shape to our world' particularly in the mid nineteenth century when photography was seen as the culmination of Western visual representation. The notion that 'seeing is believing' had immense social and cultural impact at the time because visual 'representations of "others" were seen as mirrors of their cultural and racial development. According to this view, Western art had shown the way for the "correct" ways of viewing the world and set the model for depiction to be executed as it should be, and the camera seemed to prove this' (Wright, 1999: 2). Photographic accuracy cannot be disputed but aesthetically, the image is never 'innocent'. Interestingly, the colour film itself is 'selective' in how human skin colour is captured. Brian Winston notes in *Technologies of Seeing* (1996) that the colour film is a 'cultural creation' because research, development and designing of colour film stock sought to 'render the "white" skin in a culturally, and therefore commercially acceptable manner…the cinema is a child of science and exhibits the supposed objectivity and accuracy of its parent' (1996: 40). Winston notes that in the turn of the nineteenth century the Western public was dominated with 'addiction to realism' and 'narrative,' which made live spectacle and pictorial verisimilitude extremely entertaining (ibid: 25).

It is not surprising that during this period live example of cultural Others were exhibited in the Western empires for education and entertainment. In *Human Zoos: Science and Spectacle in the Age of Colonial Empires* (2008) Raymond Corbey explains that the motto of 'to see is to know' legitimized 'objective' narratives where 'primitives' were displayed for the gaze of Western public. Together with their artefacts, houses and even complete villages they were 'made available for visual inspection by millions of strolling and staring Western citizens…comparable places of spectacle such as zoos, botanical gardens, circuses, temporary or permanent exhibitions staged by missionary societies and museums of natural history, all exhibited other races and/or other species' (Blanchard et al eds, 2008: 95). Narrative paradigm comprised of juxtaposing differences, just as it is now in the 'helping' story.

Models of African mud hut villages were reconstructed beneath imposing Victorian structures as a visible demonstration of the evolutionary concept of moving from primitive towards modern:

> Placed alongside all kinds of objects and products, colonial natives quickly became a standard part of world fairs, for the education and entertainment of Western citizens. Not only the citizens themselves but also the native figured as categories in Western representation of self, as characters in the story of the ascent to civilization, depicted as the inevitable triumph of higher race over lower ones and as progress through science and imperial conquest (Blanchard et al, eds, 2008: 96).

Interestingly, what was communicated through such narrative was not the humanity of the natives: instead the set-up reinforced the notion of savagery and sub humanity as the 'civilized' museum visitors poked and prodded the caged natives for amusement. The European scientists justified the practice as a genuine epistemological process arguing they 'were seeking to establish and understand human hierarchies… To achieve this end, they needed anthropological and ethnographical collections, but they also needed to be able to see, touch, measure and study living humans' (Blanchard et al, 2008: 5). The best way to do this, short of 'going into the field', which meant 'long, arduous and costly expeditions, available only to those with substantial means', was to bring the objects of the study to the scientists instead (ibid: 5) People snatched or lured away from their African environment in Africa suddenly became 'human types,' not only to be gazed at as spectacle at exhibitions, but also to be measured and studied at length by natural biologists.

It is an understatement to conclude that a 'human type' in a labeled cage is scarcely human enough because, on the one hand, the cage is a clear signification of their sub-humanity and secondly the socio-historical context that makes us human cannot possibly be displayed in human zoos. Although their human essence was not on display every exhibition context and display embodied particular claims to authority, drawing on culturally shared evaluations and assumptions about truth, reality, representation, and differences among cultures (Hallam and Street, 2000: 202). The truth outcome of such discourses persisted because 'stereotypes can assume a life of their own, rooted not in reality but in the myth-making made necessary by our need to control our world' (Gilman, 1985: 12). Such orchestrated representation was a 'very effective method of distancing Africans from Europeans' says Bernth Lindfors in *Hottentot, Bushman, Kaffir: The Making of Racist Stereotypes in 19th Century Britain* (in Palmberg, 2001: 55).

In my introduction I mentioned Charles Dickens' racist remarks after seeing exhibited black Africans in Hyde Park London. His experiences prompted him to write *The Noble Savage* (1853). From reading the text it is clear that Dickens was convinced of the 'barbarous' nature of natives, and therefore without exchanging a single word with the 'savages' he could reconfirm his 'knowledge' about the undesirability of the people he gazed at. Such an a priori conviction is synonymous to Erving Goffman's notion of 'known-about-ness.' Goffman explains that known-about-ness is a visible stigma that is revealed merely by looking because the gazer has previous knowledge about the other person, through gossip or other means (Goffman,1963: 65-66). It is also clear that even if Dickens could understand what the 'savages' had to say about themselves, or indeed about him, it would not have made any difference because Dickens was in a position to stigmatize them and 'speak about' them as he pleased because of the narrative proposition of such visual displays. The humanity of the 'savages' was not on display and therefore Dickens' gaze could discredit them. Metaphorically, Dickens stood on an elevated privileged gazing position that allowed him to create a racist narrative about the inferiority of black Africans. In the opening paragraph of *The Noble Savage* he clarifies his right to judge by saying that he did not care what the savage called him but he will anyway call him a savage because a savage is 'something highly desirable to be civilized off the face of the earth.' He continues his 'assessment' by noting that the 'savages' did not 'speak.' They 'howled' and 'clucked.' [Presumably Dickens was referring to the clicking consonants, which is normal in Zulu, Khosa and many other tribes.] He also discredited their traditional dances as 'stamping, jumping and tearing' [in this case, the Zulus might have been ordered to perform the war dance, which didn't go well with Dickens' aesthetics, either.] Their [decorated and bejeweled] bodies received the same negative critical assessment:

> It is all one to me, whether he sticks a fish-bone through his visage, or bits of trees through the lobes of his ears, or bird's feathers in his head; whether he flattens his hair between two boards, or spreads his nose over the breadth of his face, or drags his lower lip down by great weights, or blackens his teeth, or knocks them out, or paints one cheek red and the other blue, or tattoos himself, or oils himself, or rubs his body with fat, or crimps it with knives (Dickens, 1853: 1).

Passing a moral judgment on invisible traits that he could not possibly have seen by simply looking at them, Dickens concludes that they were 'cruel, false, thievish, murderous; addicted more or less to grease, entrails, and beastly customs; a wild animal with the questionable gift of boasting; a conceited, tiresome, bloodthirsty, monotonous humbug' (Dickens, 1853). Dickens' gaze demonstrates that 'to see is

not to know'; rather it is a sum total of biases and other cultural filters that facilitate perception. We look with certain frameworks for interpretation. Dickens' racist tirades reflected the 'pictures in the head' that were common sense at that time, and arguably these stereotypes are still in operation today.

Blanchard et al (2008) claim that 'the stereotypes which created images of the Other until the time of decolonization made a significant contribution to the collective imagination and legitimized colonial practice in the eyes of the public' and that 'human zoos raise not only the questions concerning spectacle and the creation of popular culture, but they also raise questions about a form of racist thought which spread across the globe' (ibid: 39). The argument here is that seeing alone is not knowing and cannot produce universal perception because there are underlying assumptions in our cultural toolkits that shape the 'pictures in our heads' to create a meaningful interpretation of reality. Curtin (1964) observes that news reporters going to Africa, for instance, knowing the theoretical conclusions drawn by their predecessors, will be sensitive to data that seems to confirm their European preconceptions and insensitive to other realities. They will not ask 'what is Africa like' and 'what manner of men live there' but 'how does Africans fit into what we already know about the world' (Curtin 1964: 479). In this sense the image of Africa is what Europeans say Africa is, because the differentiating paradigm allows 'culture' to speak with one voice (Brantlinger, 1985: 167).

In the beginning there was *only* darkness.

Patrick Brantlinger writes in *Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent* (1985) that 'Africa grew 'dark' as Victorian explorers, missionaries and scientists flooded it with light, because the light refracted through an imperialist ideology that urged the abolition of 'savage customs' in the name of civilization.' Power was self-validating for middle and upper class Victorians dominant over a vast working-class majority at home and extending over increasing numbers of 'uncivilized' people of inferior race abroad. Guiding them was a belief that although 'there might be many stages of social evolution and many bizarre customs and "superstitions" in the world, but there was only one "civilization," one path of "progress,' one "true religion"… Culture spoke with one voice' ((Brantlinger 1985: 166). The nineteenth century narratives by explorers like Richard Burton, David Livingstone and H M Stanley raised British interest to a new level. During this time 'as headline, best-selling reading, the "penetration" of Africa provided a narrative that has been likened to excitement about space exploration today' (ibid: 175). What

unifies most explorers' work was their visual description and judgment of the found reality, enhancing the fascination of the readers at home by providing a Eurocentric interpretation of what they saw, and sometimes didn't see. Traits like the thieving and boisterousness that Dickens 'observed' at the ethnographic display, are also noted in Richard Burton's *The Lake Regions of Central Equatorial Africa* (1860). Similarly his description is very visual and dismissive:

> South of the Wajiji lie the Wakaranga, a people previously described as almost identical in development and condition, but somewhat inferior in energy and civilization. Little need be said of the Wavinza, who appear to unite the bad qualities of both the Wanyamwezi and the Ujiji. They are a dark, meagre, and ill-looking tribe; poorly clad in skin aprons and kilts. They keep off insects by inserting the chauri, or fly-flap, into the waistband of their kilts: and at a distance they present, like the Hottentots, the appearance of a race with tails (Burton, 1860: 326).

'Race with tails' alludes to the Darwinian evolutionary theory that put black Africans closer to primates than other races. In the process of identification, the purity of the gaze was then burdened with what was 'known' about the black race. Brantlinger suggests that racism often functioned as a displaced or surrogate class system, and grew more extreme like the domestic class alignments it reflected. 'As a rationalization for the domination of "inferior" peoples, imperialist discourse is inevitably racist' (ibid: 181). Similarly, even the reality that was experienced by black Africans was considered 'darkness' and became a subject of sensation and systematic ridicule. According to Brantlinger, the myth of the Dark Continent was a Victorian invention as part of larger discourse about empire (ibid: 198). As late as 1964 a lecture by the Oxford university historian Hugh Trevor-Roper generally illustrates the penetration of this discourse in history, and in particular, how the Darwinist worldview shaped the ethnocentric stance in educational institutions. Trevor-Roper begins by telling his students that there was no need to study a history of Africa because 'darkness' is not a subject of history. He emphasizes that history is essentially a form of purposive movement and there was none in Africa. 'History is not equal', he proclaims. There is no need to 'amuse ourselves with unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant corners of the globe: tribes whose chief function in history in my opinion, is to show to the present an image of the past from which history has escaped' (Trevor-Roper,1966: 9).

Chukwudi Eze (1997) insists upon the examination of ethnocentrism in authoritative texts because 'it is with the authorities of Hume, Kant, Hegel, and Marx' that 'the enduring image of "the African" as "black," "savage," "primitive," and so forth, in

conjunction with clearly articulated political and economic colonial interests, that nineteenth and twentieth century Western Europeans descended upon Africa' (Eze, 1997: 10). Although not a relevant category in the daily reality of black Africans on the continent, I use the term 'black Africans' in this study to identify the inhabitants of Hegel's 'Africa proper' (Sub-Sahara), 'Africa's children by racial blood' in Ali Mazrui's term (2002: 12). As he notes elsewhere::

> One of the paradoxes of history is that it took Africa's contact with the Arab world to make the Black people of Africa realize that they were black in description, but not necessarily in status. The term "Sudan," meaning "the Black ones," carries no pejorative implications. That is why Africa's largest country in territory (capital Khartoum) still proudly calls itself "Sudan." In a European language one cannot imagine an African country calling itself today "Black Land," let alone "Negrostan," as the name of a modern state (Mazrui, 2005: 68).

The importance of a backward glance to understand the present is emphasized in Berthold-Bond's *Hegel's Grand Synthesis: A Study of Being, Thought, and History,* where he argues that 'history exhibits the relation of consciousness to the world, and this developing relation constitutes our knowledge, our appropriation of truth' (Berthold-Bond, 1989: 14). My study limits its backward glance to the nineteenth century because it was marked with unprecedented contact between Europe and Africa that foregrounded an ethnocentric 'window-on-reality' and permanently shaped how 'truths' about the continent could be asserted. James Johnson's analysis of Joseph Conrad's fiction in *Victorian Anthropology, Racism, and 'Heart of Darkness'* explores, for instance, how the reality of human differences is explained within the racial assumptions of Victorian evolutionary anthropology. He argues that Conrad's version of the 'anthropological encounter (the contact, or confrontation, between different cultures) participates in ethnocentric assumptions and the reflexive gaze that never really leaves Europe' (Johnson, 1997: 112). The negative comparisons take as a starting point European culture as the default for comparison. Take for instance Burton's European judgment of food habits in Tanzania; 'breakfast was again a mess of *uji* [maize porridge] and milk, such civilized articles as tea, coffee, and sugar, had been unknown to me for months' (Burton, 1860: 335). It is interesting that Burton discredits maize porridge, which is a breakfast staple food widely enjoyed in Tanzania, although cereal porridge is an acceptable breakfast staple in Great Britain. Either because of cultural ignorance, or simply imperial arrogance, Burton does not appropriately represent *uji*/porridge: instead he mystifies maize porridge as 'uncivilized' because it is 'African'. A similar process of decontextualization is routinely used in some donor gaze productions, framing completely normal cultural activities as deficiencies or deprivations or simply 'strange' in comparison to Western standards.

Seen from such an orientalist viewpoint, African reality can easily be narrated as 'strange' and 'unknown' although essentially insiders who live in the reality know about their activities and therefore they are not strange in their eyes. The Congolese-born philosopher and scholar Valentin-Yves Mudimbe considers negative comparisons 'a repression of otherness in the name of sameness' (Mudimbe, 1988:72). The Other is not allowed or, indeed, asked to speak to present his/her epistemological relevance. Differences are reduced to the already known: 'This limiting ethnocentrism testifies to a kind of epistemological determinism' (ibid: 1988, 72). Reading some of the explorers' tales, in particular Henry Morton Stanley's *In The Darkest Africa* (1891), Dr. David Livingstone's *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* (1857), and Richard Burton's travels through Tanzania [then Tanganyika] *Zanzibar, City, Island, and Coast* (1872), I came to the conclusion that the displayed ethnocentrism was in fact a harmful limitation on part of the 'learned' Victorians who could only conceptualize differences through a very narrow 'window-on-reality.' Industrialization had 'gone into their heads' and they could not imagine a possible 'civilization' without consumerism, money, Christianity or other states of orderliness. Their orientalist stance reduced the non-industrialized black Africans simply into beasts-of-burden within the hierarchy of civilization, as Burton proposed in *Two Trips to Gorilla Land*:

> I unhesitatingly assert - and all unprejudiced travelers will agree with me – that the world still wants a black hand. Enormous tropical regions yet await the clearing and the draining operations by the lower races, which will fit them to become the dwelling place of civilized man (Burton, 1876: 311).

What guided Burton and others was in fact the exploitative agenda of colonialism, which was served well by infantilizing representations of black Africans because the explorers' gaze was focused through a culturally distorted lens. The 'way of seeing' of any society is culturally formed (Berger, 1973; Barthes 1977; Bourdieu 1977), and this suggests that generally a truthful cross-cultural representation requires humility by the observer. Some concepts and cultural practices make sense only to the beholders and any attempt of interpretation without the right 'voice' will only result in discrediting the Other, as happened in the nineteenth century discourse.

Demeaning the validity of experiences of Others is a known practice still promoted by donor communities, where some African traditions are condemned as 'harmful' or 'outdated' without a dialogue with the practitioners. Sembene Ousmane's film *Moolade* [2004], for instance, applies a poignant, cultural-specific approach to addressing the dangers of female circumcision, which is otherwise dramatized in

documentary representation and demonized in Western feminist discourses. *Moolade* clearly demonstrates the spatio-temporal relativity of the gaze. By rejecting sensationalization through objectification of the Other the film interprets the central issue through the perspective of the 'natives' and sheds a 'light' on what might otherwise be portrayed as an extremely 'dark' reality. It can, therefore, be said that if those experiencing the reality are consulted the 'darkness' can be illuminated, thus making it less 'strange' and 'sensational'. However, sensationalizing and objectifying have grown to become 'addictive' elements in the stylistics of visual narratives.

Pieterse writes that non-western people have long been subjects of discussion through comparison with animals and other negative themes. He argues that such demeaning themes form part of the 'hidden text' of the images, part of the cultural assumption built into them and that 'they supply the underlying texture and mental horizon of western imagery, echoing far beyond their formative period to the present' (Pieterse, 1995: 30). In this sense, his notion of 'hidden text' is the same as Said's 'latent orientalism', and it is part and parcel of the cultural toolkit of the Eurocentric gaze. As an epistemic filter, the gaze is framed by spatio-temporal relativity and also embedded within other interpretive frameworks of textual authority that fix meaning on concepts and objects. According to John Urry and Jonas Larsen's *The Tourist Gaze* these 'discursive determinations' depend on a 'particular filter of ideas, skills, desires and expectations, framed by social class, gender, nationality, age and education.' Gaze does not reflect the pre-existing world, rather it is a performance that orders, shapes and classifies (Urry and Larsen, 2011: 2). Similarly, John Searle points out, in *The Construction of Social Reality,* cultural, economic and psychological factors affect our representation of others, and that, 'complete epistemic objectivity is difficult, sometimes impossible.' Statements about how things are in reality are true 'only if they correspond to the facts in reality' (Searle,1995: 151). Any attempt to impose a false truth constitutes an act of intellectual violence.

Regarding epistemological determinism, Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze suggests in *Post-Colonial African Philosophy* that speculations about black Africans became widespread and inter- textually entrenched within the universal discourse of the French, British and German Enlightenment thinkers (Eze,1997: 6). He argues that it is imperative we study the nature and dynamic of European modernity, to examine the intellectual and the philosophical productions of the time in order to understand how, in too many cases, they justified imperialism and colonialism. The imperial and colonial domination of Africa were, at the root, constitutive elements in the historical

formation of the economic, political, and cultural expressions of European ideals, including the Enlightenment, and therefore an organic understanding of the larger social-historical context will illuminate the central ethnocentric assumption that 'Europe *is* the model of humanity, culture and history in itself' (ibid: 6). The gaze of the explorer and the anthropologist, like that of the philosophers, legitimized a framework for 'knowing' and representing black Africans, which we cannot shake off easily today. Eze points out that, racial distinctions in particular, caused black Africans to be permanently framed outside 'proper' humanity noting that:

> Since, for the Enlightenment philosophers, European humanity was not only universal, but the embodiment of, and coincident with, humanity *as such*, theframing of the African as being different, subhuman, species therefore philosophically and anthropologically sanctioned the exploitation of Africans in barbaric ways that were not allowed for Europeans' (Eze, 1997: 7).

Dehumanizing 'pictures in the heads' were created through the explorers' colourful tales of black African barbarism and savagery. Such tales were later legitimized as 'scientific' through geographical and anthropological discourses, and even European philosophers who never travelled to Africa indulged in defining and making ontological assertions about the humanity of black people. Depending solely on fanciful tales from missionaries and explorers, dehumanizing writings about black Africans began long before Charles Darwin published *The Descent of Man* in 1871. Hegel's *The Philosophy of History* in 1824 is one such text, which undoubtedly influenced the scientific fraternity because his detailed and extremely judgmental analysis of black Africans reinforced all the myths.[23] Hegel's analysis of Africa begins with assigning 'darkness' to sub-Saharan Africa and disconnecting it from the rest of the world:

> Africa proper as far as history goes back, has remained for all purposes of connection with the rest of the world, shut up; it is the gold-land compressed within itself, the land of childhood, which lying beyond the day of self-conscious history, is enveloped in the dark mantle of night (Hegel, transl Sibree, 1899: 91).

Hegel cautions that it was difficult to comprehend the 'peculiarly African character' and therefore it was necessary to give up the principle of universality (ibid:93). However he reaches an ethnocentric conclusion about the continent; a 'land of childhood' enveloped in darkness, where black Africans 'exhibited the most reckless

[23] In 1984 BBC series *A Story of a Continent: Different but Equal* The British historian, writer and Africanist, Basil Davison singles out Hegel for 'setting the tone' for the distortion facing black Africans today. Hegel's reference to 'darkness' and 'childlike ignorance,' became paradigmatic in many orientalizing textual and visual narratives, including *Darwin's Nightmare* [2004], which I discussed in my introduction.

inhumanity and disgusting barbarism' (ibid: 92). Hegel, who never visited Africa, seemingly 'sat on the shoulders' of early missionaries whose written accounts are authoritatively referred to:

> The Negro, as already observed, exhibits the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state. We must lay aside all thought of reverence and morality - all that we call feeling - if we would rightly comprehend him; there is nothing harmonious with humanity to be found in this type of character. The copious and circumstantial accounts of missionaries completely confirm this, and Mahommedanism appears to be the only thing which in any way brings the Negro within the range of culture (ibid: 93).

Because of his position in the canons of philosophical sciences Hegel undoubtedly contributed in creating and reinforcing myths of 'uncivilized savages.' His imaginative vivid description of the continent transports the reader into a dark abyss of strange customs and dangerous rituals. For instance, he takes up and discusses at length the issue of cannibalism as a marker of extreme barbarism, even speculating on the reasons why Africans devoured human flesh. He asserts that, for Negroes, 'human flesh was but just an object of the senses - mere flesh. At the death of a king, hundreds are killed and eaten; prisoners are butchered and their flesh sold in the markets'. Black Africans, says Hegel were too ignorant to understand death as a universal natural law; instead they believed it is a result of evil magicians (ibid: 95). Furthermore African polygamy is a savage, selfish act of breeding children for the slave trade:

> 'The polygamy of the Negroes has frequently for its object the having of many children, to be sold, every one of them, into slavery; and very often naïve complaints on this score are heard, as for instance in the case of a Negro in London, who lamented that he was now quite a poor man because he had already sold all his relations' (ibid: 96).

Hegel suggests that Africa was still 'sleeping under the dark mantle of childhood,' and that it should be removed altogether from the subject of history: 'at this point we leave Africa, not to mention it again. For it is no historical part of the world; it has no movement or development to exhibit' (ibid: 99). It is worrying that half a century later Hugh Trevor-Roper could still repeat the same statement about Africa's lack of history. Indeed, bestowing 'darkness' on African reality allows intellectual and social domination.

Seeing in the dark

Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958) deconstructs the 'darkness' by interpreting the socio-historical reality of the colonial natives through their own eyes. Although the narrative is fiction Achebe employs credible realism in capturing how-

things-really-were. The novel 'speaks with' the natives' gaze because as an African who had heard stories from the earlier generation Achebe can correctly understand and convey the reality, and therefore foreground the epistemic validity of the African 'voice.' He contextualizes phenomena like 'strange' tribal masks and 'sensational' rituals involving tribal spirits by revealing their relevance to the cultural environment they embody. In a rural society without police or prisons (in some African elders' eyes this symbolizes a valid form of civilization,) the presence of the fearful *egwugwus* [tribal spirits] as keepers of peace and order is correctly understood. Likewise, the measure of wealth in terms of the amount and size of stored yams or other food crops is relevant in many rural African communities and is woven into the narrative. The orientalist gaze might dismisss Achebe's description of a ritual involving a new bride as 'mumbo-jumbo' but it provides an insight to a valid process of truth verification still practiced in some rural African communities today:

> *They sat in a big circle on the ground and the bride sat in the centre with a hen in her right hand. Uchendu sat by her, holding the ancestral staff of the family. All the other men stood outside the circle, watching. Their wives watched also. It was evening and the sun was setting. Uchendu's eldest daughter, Njide, asked the questions.*
> *"Remember if you do not answer truthfully you will suffer or even die in childbirth," she began. "How many men have lain with you since my brother first expressed the desire to marry you?"*
> *"None," she replied simply.*
> *"Answer truthfully," urged the other women.*
> *"None?" asked Njide.*
> *"None'" she answered.*
> *"Swear on this staff of my fathers'" said Uchendu.*
> *"I swear'" said the bride.*
> *Uchendu took the hen from her, slit its throat with a sharp knife and allowed some of the blood to fall on his ancestral staff.*
> *From that day Amikwu took the young bride to his hut and she became his wife'* (Achebe, 1958: 97).

It is obvious that Achebe is 'speaking with' the voice of the subjects he is representing; in other words, the subjects are neither objectified nor used as palimpsests for generalizing templates. Similarly, Sembene Ousmane's films normally portray nuanced qualities of black African women such as strength and resilience. Ousmane firmly positions subjectivity in the subjects by 'speaking with'

their strong and confident voices and at the same time accurately situates them [women's voices] within the hierarchy of traditional way of knowing and being, which many Africans recognize even today. Both Achebe's and Sembene's 'window-on-reality' is wide and diverse allowing both old and new concepts to filter through the gaze of the African subjects' whose interpretation structures the narrative. Such a nuanced structure would be unfit for the aid story because helplessness is a structural prerequisite of the donor gaze.

Written in the high imperialist era, Joseph Conrad's famous novel *Heart of Darkness* (1899) did not lighten the African 'darkness' but instead appropriate it as a narrative device. His well-meaning intention of condemning imperial greed and cruelty seemingly justifies his structural choice of objectifying black Africans as ignorant and hopeless. Conrad's own gaze bestows ethnocentric interpretations on the subjects because, like missionaries, he sees them as objects of pity or perhaps utter contempt. His ethnocentric depictions epitomize an extreme form of objectification and silencing where 'truth' is told *only* through the eyes of privilege and power of the written word against the spoken. Understandably, Conrad's 'wasted' subjects 'cannot speak' because, just like Dickens' listening to 'howling' and 'grunting' savages at the Hyde Park exhibition, Marlow's incomprehension of the local languages is interpreted as natives inability to speak in 'civilized' tongues. Conrad uses this lack of dialogue to dehumanize black Africans in most garish terms:

> The earth seemed unearthly. We are accustomed to look upon the shackled form of a conquered monster[24], but there –there you could look at a thing monstrous and free. It was unearthly, and the men were –No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it –this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. They howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity –like yours –the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar (Conrad, 1995: 63-64).

Conrad's book was published in 1899 in the heyday of Darwinism and it is easy to conclude that the racist 'pictures in the head' he had about Africans contaminated his imagination. Chinua Achebe writes in *Images of Africa* that 'Conrad did not originate the image of Africa we find in his book. It was and is the dominant image of Africa in the Western imagination and Conrad merely brought the peculiar gifts of his own mind to bear on it' (Achebe, 1978: 13). Edward Said reminds us that 'to these ideas was added second-order Darwinism, which seemed to accentuate "scientific" validity

[24] Here Conrad seems to be referring to the imperial exhibitions that displayed 'live specimens' (shackled monsters) from colonies; the same discourse that brought Charles Dickens face-to-face with displayed black South Africans in Hyde Park.

of the division of races into advanced and backward, or European-Aryan and Oriental-African' (Said,1978: 206). V Y Mudimbe's seminal book *Invention of Africa* explores this epistemic imperialism dismissing Eurocentric constructions of Africa as self-serving: 'it is clear that since the beginning of the nineteenth century, explorers' reports had been useful for opening the African continent to European interests' (Mudimbe,1988: 20). He proposes a study on 'the theme of the foundations of discourse about Africa' because only then will Africans be able to 'challenge and rewrite these discourses as a way of explicating and defining their culture, history and being' (ibid: xi). Drawing on Mudimbe, another African philosopher, Chukwudi Eze, expands on the differentiating paradigm preferred by imperial propaganda:

> By dialectically negating Africa, Europe was able to posit and represent itself and its contingent historicity as the ideal culture, the ideal humanity, and ideal history. While 'reason' and 'humanity' and 'light' remained in Europe, 'irrationality' and 'savagery' and 'darkness' were conveniently, -and perhaps unconsciously projected on to Africa, the Big, Bad, Primeval, Evil, the 'Dark Continent' (Eze, 1997: 13).

Eze argues that the long history of European preoccupation with differentiating in order to 'know' and 'contain' non-European cultures 'has remained fully embedded in contemporary Eurocentric global politics' (ibid: 49-50). Such hierarchical differentiations are the conceptual foundations of the donor gaze, and structurally the Eurocentric 'voice' presents the argument in accordance with the Western visual literacy. It would otherwise be impossible to relay the diversity of truths because the very individual experiences of reality 'challenges our very foundations for thinking about what reality is and how it works' (McKee, 2003: 5). For instance, McKee notes, that 'there is no equivalent of "elder" in Western culture.' In other cultures an elder is 'a wise person with a high social standing because of their knowledge and experience' (McKee, 2003: 7). At face value, a visitor might misinterpret the concept because there is another nuance that can only be picked up by the people in the community, namely 'not all old people are elders; not all elders are old people.' (ibid: 7) The early European 'visitors' might be said to have been epistemically blind and therefore saw only darkness. McKee argues that reality is relative:

> We make sense of the reality that we live in through our cultures, and that different cultures can have very different experiences of reality. No single representation of reality can be the *only* true one, or the *only* accurate one, or the *only* one that reflect reality because other cultures will always have alternative and equally valid, ways of representing and making sense of that part of reality (McKee, 2003: 10-11).

Although there have been alternative and equally valid ways of making sense of reality in Africa, as illustrated in Chinua Achebe's numerous books and in Basil Davidson's historical films, the diversity of 'voices' did not form part of the authoritative framework for 'knowing' black Africa. Said's *Orientalism* illustrates how self-serving regimes of truth validated what was to be known about colonized people and supported a premeditated form of exploitative discourse. He makes a distinction between a humanistic need for knowing 'other peoples and other times that is the result of understanding, compassion, careful study and analysis for their own sake' and another kind of knowledge 'that is an overall campaign of self-affirmation, belligerency and outright war' (Said, 1978: xiv). Orientalism identifies various historical, economic and political discourses that have led to the current Othering of non-European countries, most of which are identified as the 'Third World'. This suggests that a singular Eurocentric framework of interpreting reality is forced upon Others, disregarding their system of knowing and being. The European method of domination through epistemic violence is in fact reinforcement of cultural and economic hegemony, as revealed by Said:

> Taking the late eighteenth century as a very roughly defined starting point, Orientalism can be discussed and analysed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient; –dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (Said, 1978:3).

Explaining how and why Europeans came to know about the non-European, Said points out that 'the scientist, the scholar, the missionary, the trader, or the soldier was in or thought about the Orient because he could be there, or think about it, with very little resistance on the Orient's part" (Said, 1978: 7). Indeed, according to postcolonial historian Barbara Bush the very idea of Africa is a product of the West, conceived through conflicting systems of knowledge, myths, colonial mappings and one-dimensional African identities (Bush, 1999: 29). Another postcolonial academic, Lucy Jarozs, identifies the journalist/explorer Henry Morton Stanley as the first person who wrote of Africa as the 'dark continent,' a term 'subsequently taken up by missionaries, travellers and literary authors and utilized in three major ways for a variety of intellectual, political and dramatic purposes and effects but always within the duality of dark/light and Africa/the West' (Jarosz,1992: 106). She argues that two powerful and enduring myths have shaped the white's visions of Africa: 'first, 'primitive' Africa has stagnated due to isolation from the outside world; second, Europe has redeemed this 'heart of darkness' through humanitarian intervention to

abolish slavery. The metaphor of the Dark Continent 'is a key term in Euro-American discourses which have constructed the land and people of Africa to the Western reading public from the late nineteenth century to the present day' (ibid: 105).

With the arrival of cinema, filmmakers became trapped in sensationalising differences as part of entertainment, particularly in the early travelogues. Travelogues categorized Africa in terms that appeared to be objective whilst actually creating and perpetuating the myth of a brutish and 'uncivilized' people believed to be without, or worse still, incapable of religion. Such stereotyping underpinned the view that colonial expansion was not only desirable for the colonizing nations but also beneficial to the colonized peoples. The process of appropriation implicit in these forms of categorization was of fundamental importance in constructing Africa as a commodity available for colonial advantage (Quareshi 2004: 234). The differentiating gaze that structures orientalist depictions was exploited by early travelogues and is eloquently illustrated in *Africa Speaks* [1930]. This was the first sound film made in Africa. Promising to be 'the strangest romance ever filmed', it largely capitalized on the prevailing stereotypes of a 'dark' and 'savage' continent and objectified black Africans as creatures without humanity worthy of understanding. The gaze is that of the white American filmmaker Paul Hoefler, who is also the narrator. The film speaks from the point of view and in the terms of the observer who identifies with his white 'civilized' audience: the irony is that Africa does not 'speak' at all.

The director/producer Paul Hoefler was a noted member of the Explorer's Club and an esteemed lifetime fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in London, an authoritative organization that was founded in Great Britain in 1830 as 'a world centre for geography: supporting research, education, expeditions and fieldwork and promoting public engagement and informed enjoyment of our world.'[25] Needless to say, the representation of the 'different Other' does not become objective or innocent just because it is acknowledged within European 'scientific' circles. Ethnographic displays in imperial museums and the Royal Geographical Society to some extent served as platforms for 'dry cleaning' racist prejudices as legitimate forms of Robert Rydell (1987: 6) points out that the industrial world fairs and international expositions

[25] Source: Royal Geographical Society: http://www.rgs.org/HomePage.htm. Accessed, April 2013.

- *See the real Africa - HEAR the real Africa!*
- *Misshaped and marvelously disfigured folk...customs of odd humans and beasts never before seen or photographed!*
- *An authentic and rare record of heretofore undiscovered monsters!*
- *This sound camera makes the dark continent give up its most amazing and closely-guarded secrets.*
- *Lions Roar! Zebras Bark! Elephants Scream!*
- *The Lives - The Loves - The Vengeance and Triumphs of the People of the Trackless Congo. A Panorama of Darkest Africa.*
- *The strangest romance ever filmed!*[26]

were very important and most authoritative sources for shaping racial beliefs. They offered Americans 'a powerful and highly visible, modern, evolutionary justification for long-standing racial and cultural prejudice.' The motto that underpinned these anthropological exhibits was '*to see is to know'* (Rydell, 1987: 44).

[26] Poster available on: http://www.grindhousedatabase.com/index.php/Africa_Speaks! Accessed, April 2013.

The contemporary Western mass media engagement in hierarchical differentiation of the black African Other is a legacy of the ideology of the superior 'developed' West and the Rest who are 'underdeveloped' and inferior. As Stuart Hall has noted this separation into West and the Rest 'enabled people to know or speak certain things in certain ways. It produced knowledge. It became 'the organizing factor in a system of global power' (Hall et al, 1996: 278). Addressing the epistemological foundations of this discourse, Eric O. Ayisi concludes that (mis-) representations of black Africans were a result of a gaze contaminated with orientalist concepts and arrogance. The Europeans, he says, lacked the intellectual equipment to see beneath symbolic expressions, customary nuances and emotional proclivities of African societies. In the face of these bewildering difficulties the best they could do was to construct artificial models, categories and sometimes identifications that did not truly reflect the true nature of the social complexities:

> These anthropologists attempted 'holistic studies' of these societies, treating African peoples as 'human type.' They hazarded certain hypotheses, which classified Africans as 'primitive' racial groups, homogenous in social development. It was contented by these writers that the nature of such societies rendered them resistant to civilization in the Western sense (Ayisi, 1997: 99).

Thabo Mbeki, the former South African President, claims that the nineteenth century scientific inquiries that constructed the 'Hottentot Venus' as representative of black African savagery were barbaric: 'It was not the lonely African woman in Europe, alienated from her identity and her motherland who was the barbarian, but those who treated her with barbaric brutality'[27] (Mbeki, 2002). As discussed earlier, the humanity in 'objects' of museum displays like 'Hottentot Venus', a Khoisan woman whose real name was Saartje Baartman, could not be truthfully represented. In reality, the degradation of black Africans in this manner was a part of a larger ideology of domination through categorization. In fact, the Khoisan of South Africa proved to be too 'fiercely independent and self-sufficient, unsympathetic and even mocking towards Europeans, militarily formidable, culturally rich and complex, sharp though honest traders,' who 'challenged at its roots European confidence in being the natural guardians of universal truth' (Hudson, 2004: 328). In general however, an orchestrated invention of Africans as inferior was a crucial aspect of facilitating colonization and neo-imperialism.

[27] Thabo Mbeki (2002) '*Hottentot Venus' laid to rest*'
Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/2183271.stm. Accessed, June 2013.

Conclusion: The white man's *invented* burden

This chapter has attempted to show how the ethnocentric gaze of the explorers, missionaries, writers and philosophers textually misrepresented Africa and black Africans by false interpretation of the 'found' reality. Creating a universal (Eurocentric) framework for making sense of African reality resulted in an architecture of hierarchical differences, where negative comparisons were used as the rationale to justify slavery, colonialism, Christianity and ultimately 'civilisation' Patrick Brantlinger (1985: 178). maintains that, 'for Livingstone, as for other missionaries and abolitionists, the African was a creature to be pitied, to be saved from slavery, and also to be saved from his own 'darkness' and 'savagery.' Livingstone was optimistic that through christianisation, the African could be rescued from 'darkness' and perhaps civilized. 'This attitude was necessary for any missionary activity. At the same time, missionaries were very strongly tempted to exaggerate 'savagery' and 'darkness' in order to rationalize their presence in Africa.' Brantlinger cautions that 'the legacy of the myth of the Dark Continent and, more generally, of imperialism has been massive and impossible to evade, as stereotypic treatments of Africa by today's mass media continue to demonstrate' (Brantlinger, 1985: 198).

Civilisation, or indeed 'development', as the white man's gift to Africa is a myth that the British historian Basil Davidson strongly debunks in a documentary series that pieces together the true history of the continent. Davidson argues that 'the denial of human history in Africa is the corollary, of course, of another denial: the denial of African equality.' Seeing African reality as deviant and undesirable instead of diverse and culturally rich gave way to centuries of domination and exploitation in the pretense of 'civilizing' (Davidson, 1958: 44). Myths about black Africans' inherent ignorance and epistemic incompetence allowed uninvited voices to 'speak about' reality in sub-Saharan Africa by completely excluding any dialogue. This skewed framework supports the orientalist structure of the donor gaze by foregrounding Western 'experts' assertions to articulate issues and concepts regarding Others. Chinua Achebe reminds us that this is not accidental because 'the white man has found and used so many evasions in the past to replace or simulate dialogue to his own satisfaction that he may go on doing it indefinitely' (1990: 25). 'Equality' he points out, 'is one thing which Europeans are conspicuously incapable of extending to others, especially Africans' (ibid: 23). 'Europe's reliance on its own experts would not worry us if it did not, at the same time, attempt to exclude African testimony' (ibid: 26).

The exclusion of authentic testimony is indeed 'epistemic imperialism,' now seen in 'the application of "expert" knowledge as interventions into global crises that include climate change, language endangerment, and extinctions and losses of genetic diversity.'[28] The next chapter will show how and why the aid industry favourably funds and supports partnerships that often 'validate modernist development ideals, including a preference for the objectification, rationalization and centralization of knowledge itself', which too often excludes 'the marginalized local voices, concerns, and practices.'[29]

[28] Source: http://www.anthropologywa.org/iuaes_aas_asaanz_conference2011/0065.html, Accessed, November 2013.
[29] ibid.

Chapter Three: Aid industry and 'the white man's burden.'

Introduction

The white man has been talking and talking and never listening because he imagines he has been talking to a dumb beast[30]

Chinua Achebe

After exploring the origins of the orientalist representation of black Africans this chapter will argue that the aid industry reinforces the notion of 'the white man's burden' by supporting differentiating narratives that stigmatize underdevelopment and objectify the 'helped' Other. Chinua Achebe's comment above ties the genealogy of 'speaking about' black Africans to the racist discourse of the past that treated the African way of knowing as irrelevant. Ordering and categorizing African reality by using a similar culturally ungrounded Eurocentric perspective, which excludes an African voice explains why the 'window-on-reality' used by donors is problematic: it stands on an incomplete conceptual framework for understanding how-things-really-are. In other words, the one wearing the shoe is not being asked where it actually hurts. According to Arturo Escobar, knowledge about the Third World is 'subjected to the eye of the new experts in the First World' whose 'truth' is depended upon to validate assertions about various aspects of development (Escobar, 2001: 41). As in any discourse, development is 'a space for the systematic creation of concepts, theories and practice' (ibid: 39). The development industry however is marked by self-perpetuation motives, which are best served by a Eurocentric perspective: a balancing African voice might upset the status quo by exposing multiple truths, and perhaps, paths to 'development' that are equally valid.

Thomas Dichter writes in *Despite Good Intentions* that when he joined the US Peace Corps in 1964 one of the most firmly held beliefs was that they were going to the third world to 'work themselves out of a job,' because if development was successful they would no longer be needed. Today, he says, the development organizations are marked by 'common organizational imperatives to grow, to become more important, to become more "legitimate" and achieve higher status' (2003: 181). Competition for visibility has also grown and therefore in order to 'market development', visual messages cleverly adopt more sophisticated methods to avoid 'donor fatigue' caused

[30] Achebe (1990:24) *Hopes and Impediments.*

by repetitiveness. ‘The starving child is out. The smile and hope are in’ (Dichter, 2003: 259). Dichter points out that although the idea of helping the poor, along with the idea of social justice, is as old as the Bible, one of the key characteristics of post-World War II development ideology has been ‘an ironclad faith in a way of life’ that has to be spread to the rest of the world (ibid: 49). Dichter maintains: ‘I am reluctant to label the development assistance industry “neocolonialist” but if we try to help others when they have not asked for it, are we in our own ways “philanthropic invaders”? … Helping others, whether they ask for it or not seems to be morally and psychologically problematic’ (ibid: 152).

The Zambian economist Dambisa Moyo, clears out this moral and psychological dilemma in *Dead Aid* (2009), saying that since we now live in a ‘culture of aid’, psychologically and morally we believe that the rich should help the poor because giving alms to the poor is the right thing to do. ‘The pop culture has bolstered these misconceptions. Aid has become part of the entertainment industry. Media figures, film stars, rock legends eagerly embrace aid’ and scold governments for not giving enough. ‘Aid has become a cultural commodity. Millions march for it. Governments are judged by it’ (2009 : xviii). Aid has indeed polarized the world into white and black, for good or ill.

An American economist and foreign aid specialist, William Easterly, argues that the discourse of ‘the white man’s burden emerged from the West’s self-pleasing fantasy that “we” were the chosen ones to save the Rest’ (Easterly, 2006: 20). ‘The West exchanged the old racist coinage for a new currency. “Uncivilized” became “underdeveloped”, “savage peoples” became the “Third World”’ (ibid: 21). The task of the donor gaze narrative is to mirror this ‘new’ discourse by structuring the story using the same differentiating paradigms that exploit stereotypes of rich/poor or white/black, in order to resonate with the dominant ‘pictures in the heads’ of the target audience. This means that, ethically and aesthetically, the documentary filmmaker has no need whatsoever for a genuine engagement with the filmed subject because the narrative does not depend on the subjectivity or the voice of the filmed subjects. In *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* Shohat and Stam convincingly demonstrate that ‘truth’ is contained within ‘institutional structures that exclude specific voices, aesthetics, and representations’ (1994: 18). It is rare to come across nuanced stories about black Africans in the Western hemisphere. In fact the Mauritanian filmmaker and writer Med Hondo points out in *What is Cinema for Us?* (1986) that Western cinematic products seldom represent African

personality, their collective or private way of life, their cultural codes, their specific art, way of thinking, and communicating or indeed African history and civilization (Hondo, 1986: 47).

Most interventionist documentaries seen by transnational audiences filter out the diversity of truths and problematicize reality by configuring sub-Saharan African space as place of serial miseries in order to 'sell' a needy Africa. Analyzing interventionist texts in particular requires a profound understanding of the role of the voiceless subjects shown on screen in order to explore how the documentary gaze strikes a balance between a 'benevolent intention' of portraying genuine need and the exploitation of 'voice' to indigenize First World views. *Darwin's Nightmare,* discussed in my introduction, exemplifies this process. The institutional biases within the aid industry and the other politics of the gaze are a clear reminder that documentary filmmakers are dealing with ideologically motivated representations, as opposed to being creators/authors of their own texts in a way that qualifies for purely aesthetic analysis. The aid industry is well-served by visual texts that support its discourse: the primary purpose of donor gaze documentaries is to engage the viewer's empathy or pity limited to the donor's current project.

HIV/AIDS, as a socio-historical reality that disproportionately affects sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, legitimizes seemingly justifiable usage of the nineteenth century stereotypes as shorthand to ultimate helplessness. The explosion of NGOs dealing with HIV/AIDS issues has also meant an increase in the demand for negative stories because of the increasing competition for funds, according Karen Rothmyer, writing in *Columbia Journalism Review*. 'If you are not negative enough you won't get funding. So fierce is the competition that many NGOs don't want to hear good news' (Rothmyer 2011: 2). The power over life and death that is wielded by NGOs in the HIV/AIDS sector causes self-orientalization as 'testimonials' and other so called 'personal stories' emerging from this discourse are seen as a win-win undertaking. Filmed subjects relinquish their subjectivity and become ventriloquists for promoting specific approaches that ensure long-term survival for themselves and also for the intervening NGOs. The persons living the reality are encouraged, and perhaps rewarded, to share 'stories of hope', which are significant in the battle for truth because they disguise objectification by pretending that the subject 'speaks' in his/her own terms.

One story that stands out is that of Tatu Msangi, a Tanzanian HIV-positive woman from Kilimanjaro, who has been extensively used by the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation's (EGPAF), an American NGO which labelled her 'an ambassador of HOPE to millions of HIV-positive women.'[31] Because of EGPAF's intervention, Msangi was able to deliver a healthy HIV-negative daughter, Faith, in 2004 and her story became a template for glorifying EGPAF and American programmes in general.[32] In 2008, Msangi and her daughter were saluted by the then US President G. W. Bush during his annual State of the Union speech, and she joined First Lady Laura Bush in the audience at the Congress to hear the president recognize the impact of US overseas assistance programmes for AIDS patients.[33] PEPFAR (the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief) was launched in 2003 with $15 billion for HIV/AIDS and was said to have been 'the most ambitious international health initiative in American history.'[34] The American *Weekly Standard* reported that 'mother and daughter from Moshi Tanzania sat, their eyes alive with hope, in the first lady's box.' According to the article, 'the redemptive story of Tatu Msangi and her daughter' was a powerful reminder 'that Bush has orchestrated the most successful partnership of government and international civil society in memory', emerging as 'the medical Marshall Plan for Africa.'[35] According to *PEPFAR Blueprint: Creating an AIDS Free Generation* (2011: 5) 'the U.S. leads the world in contributions in the fight against AIDS, having invested nearly $37 billion to date in bilateral funding and over $7 billion to the Global Fund since 2004. Furthermore it reports: 'millions of human beings are alive today because the United States, and others in the global community, are paying for their anti[retro]viral medication… by 2015, the world could see the beginning of the end of AIDS, something that was unthinkable just a few years ago' (ibid: 19).

To substantiate the success of such ambitions stories such as Msangi's is one of many that are 'documented' for online transnational audiences. Structurally, these narratives make 'reality' speak for itself to show that the interventions are indeed working. 'Documentation' as a routine evaluation in development projects and

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[31] Found on: http://www.africanewsanalysis.com/2013/07/09/exclusive-tatu-msangis-story-of-hope-proof-of-the-elizabeth-glaser-pediatric-aids-foundations-work-towards-an-aids-free-generation/. Accessed, August 2013.
[32] Source: http://vimeo.com/69179243. Accessed, August 2013.
[33] Link: http://m.voanews.com/a/561195.html. Accessed, August 2013.
[34] Online link: http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/014/668cbrke.asp. Accessed, August 2013.
[35] ibid.

HIV/AIDS intervention forms a crucial discourse in the 'battle for truth.' In this case, short testimonials from beneficiaries or audiovisual statement by celebrities posted on NGO's website become an important evidentiary 'document'. Brian Winston explains that 'the contemporary use of "document" still carries with it the connotation of evidence' and that 'the photograph was received, from the beginning, as a document and therefore as evidence'. He argues that it is this evidentiary status that was passed to the cinematograph, which is the source of ideological power of documentary film (Winston, 2008: 14). Documentary as a vehicle of ideology is also used by donor agencies' in corporate videos posted on websites, to articulate their mission statements and laud their unique approaches to interventions on behalf of the poor. Furthermore, many donors, including the World Bank routinely finance evidence-based documentation to highlight important 'development' goals. What is distinct however, is the narrowness of their 'window on reality', considering that their gaze provides an accepted grid for understanding the world we all share.

As Arjan de Haan notes in *How the Aid Industry Works* (2009: 1) 'International development is big business,' while using negative stereotypes and images to problematize Africa and justify intervention and funding is just a means to an end. Development has grown into an industry as financially motivated as any other, making it imperative to maintain its standing and increase its market share because there are a lot of jobs, money, and institutional interests at stake. Thomas Dichter, who has worked in international development since 1964, including at the World Bank gives an insight on the size and dynamics of the 'stakeholders':

> No one knows how many people work in aid, but some numbers are indicative. The World Bank alone employs 9,300 people and is considered an excellent employer, with perks that exceed those in today's leaner private sector. UN agencies employ tens of thousands. An international NGO based in the United States with an annual budget of $10 million or so will employ 200 to 300 people. In much of the Third World, a job in the development aid industry is highly coveted, and competition for such jobs can be fierce. There are also thousands of consultants (Dichter, 2005: 8).

James A. Austin, a Harvard professor of business administration, writes in the *Times Higher Education* that 'throughout the world, charitable enterprises are the fastest growing sector, springing up at a rate that exceeds that of the private or public sector.' He argues that the aid sector is important economically, socially and politically, and that in the US, the charitable sector constitutes 6.7 per cent of gross domestic product – more than the computer industry, or the automobile and steel

industries combined (Austin, 2004).[36] Since the 'product' being sold by the aid industry is 'help' the supply has to be justified. Karen Rothmyer remarks in *Hiding the Real Africa*: 'when you are fundraising you have to prove there is a need. Children starving, mothers dying. If you are not negative enough, you won't get funding' (Rothmyer, 2011: 2).

Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (Oxfam)

The process of growing from a simple charity focused on limited regional goals to a multinational organization with ambitions to expand and 'stay in business' is exemplified by the British charity organization Oxfam, which was started by group of Quakers and social activists in 1942 concerned with misery and starvation in Greece. Today as a confederation of 17 international organizations working in 90 different countries, it is one of the largest NGOs in the world, with more than 5,000 staff in total (Black, 1992: 2). Maggie Black explores its history and provides a chronological account of how the founding organization accidentally got caught up in the expansionist discourse and permanently discarded their 'Victorian uniform of gentility, probity and earnest good works' to pursue the 'sustained marketing of charitable organization.' After employing a full-time manager in November 1949 it became imperative to aggressively look at new sources of income away from the 'conceptual straightjacket' that regarded advertisement as un respectful (1992: 34). Black asserts that Oxfam is representative of the aid industry in UK, and that it has 'changed the face of British charitable activity.' She elaborates:

> A voluntary aid organization such as Oxfam is, ultimately, of historical interest as a barometer of the way the people in Britain and elsewhere have viewed other societies over time, especially the fortunes of their less privileged members. The story of Oxfam is primarily the story of what happened to the doctrine of 'internationalism' over the course of half a century (Black,1992: 2).

The pragmatic nature of charity organizations is explored by Black illuminating both sides of 'helping.' On the one hand the helping story reflects an immediate need to respond to a particular situation but on the other it is about surviving the competition. Self-preservation of an organization becomes crucial as it commands more finances and acquires even greater responsibilities towards staff and other beneficiaries. This suggests that the motivation for self-preservation of these donor agencies may be as strong as the need to help the under privileged, as philanthropy becomes a career like any other. Manji and O'Coill write in *The Missionary Position: NGOs and Development in Africa* that 'charity was not only designed to help the poor, it also

[36] Source; http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/188803.article. Accessed, August 2013.

served to protect the rich' (Manji and O'Coil, 2002: 570). According to them, Oxfam and other charities extended their humanitarian activities beyond Europe's boundaries in part because they were driven by ideological goals and also sought organizational survival for its own sake (ibid: 573). For post-developmentalist thinkers like Arturo Escobar the development discourse is 'akin to Said's study of the discourse on the Orient' (Escobar, 2012: 6). To see development as an historically produced discourse it is important to examine why so many countries started to rate themselves as underdeveloped in the early post-World War II period. Why, for instance, did Western 'experts' and politicians start to see conditions in Africa and Latin America as a problem, defined by Western gaze as poverty and backwardness? A new domain for thought and new strategies for how to deal with the Third World was structured around how to 'help' the underdeveloped to 'un-underdevelop' themselves (Escobar, 2012: 6).

According to Black's explanation 'selling' pity vis-a-vis African people became paradigmatic after the Second World War because many people in the West greeted the changes in independent Africa with misgivings, as the status-quo was challenged and suddenly Africa was demanding an equal place at the international table. Africans were calling for an end to paternalistic relationships and the abandonment of an outworn, often racialist mentality. This was seen as a big challenge because 'equality is one thing which Europeans are conspicuously incapable of extending to others, especially Africans' (Achebe, 1990: 23). For those in Britain for whom the imperial sway and the responsibilities of the civilizing mission had been cornerstones of a worldview and a lifetime of service, the changes took them by surprise (Black, 1990: 67). The 1960s were declared 'The Decade of Development' by the United Nations, and improving living standards, which had not been a window through which African societies were observed, became the standard aim in this 'new age of partnership.' President Kennedy pledged to help 'those peoples in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery' because 'if a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it can never serve the few who are rich' (ibid: 68). Crucially, a temporary famine in the Congo provided a well-justified platform for continuing the 'civilizing mission'. Images of starving children in independent Congo in 1961 'launched a new perception of Africa' enslaved in poverty and hunger, and 'for good or ill, that same perception launched Oxfam that we know today' (ibid: 67).

The idea of providing help for the poorer countries reached public prominence with Oxfam's Congo appeal and became the springboard from which the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief became a practitioner of development assistance alongside its existing role as disaster relief. 'The symbol of its involvement in both disasters and development was the starving child of Africa, an innocent whose haunting eyes and skeletal limbs made a startling impression on the British conscience' (ibid: 69).

First famine horror
From:
(Black, 1990:118a)

22 *The photo that launched the earliest outpouring of British generosity towards people in newly-independent Africa: Congo 1960, the first famine horror.*

Black explains that photographs like this 'burnt the image of the starving African child onto the collective British conscience.' Oxfam helped make that come about, and in the process itself leapt into public view as *the* British agency for prompt relief. When Oxfam representatives helped within European borders during and after the Second World War they were 'no-one special', just helpers among many, says Black, but when a representative went to the Congo in early 1961, 'he was, fleetingly, a celebrity, on whom the British hopes of saving lives were visibly pinned' (ibid: 63).

Advertising eventually changed the face of charitable activities in the UK, forging a new partnership with newspapers such as *The Guardian, Daily Telegraph* and *The Times* and later the BBC radio (ibid, 35). The increase in monetary response was not left to 'divine intervention' says Black, but an increasingly intense promotional effort for each appeal (ibid, 36). Oxfam's appeal for funds for relief in the Congo in 1960 proved to be the most rewarding response experienced to that date, and the charity's income rose from £500,000 in 1958-59 to £1,400,000 in 1960-61. By the early days of the war against HIV/AIDS Oxfam had an income of £69 million in the financial year 1990-91, making it Britain's largest overseas aid charity, and it continues to be in the top three of the income league of British charities (ibid, 293).

HIV/AIDS and the aid industry

The way of seeing Africa is predominantly institutionalized through the frameworks of powerful donor organizations such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the plethora of NGOs that control the discourses of 'development' and 'modernization' with regard to production of knowledge and meanings (Tucker, 1996: 5). The IMF 'provides policy advice and financing to member countries in economic difficulties and also works with developing nations to help them achieve macroeconomic stability and reduce poverty.' The HIV/AIDS epidemic is viewed as a major development threat requiring orchestrated responses:

> The HIV/AIDS epidemic poses a severe threat to global health, development, and security. The IMF collaborates with other organizations in the fight against this disease, most notably by supporting national poverty-reduction strategies that allocate additional spending to HIV/AIDS and other poverty-reducing programs. The IMF also provides advice to countries on the macroeconomic impact of HIV/AIDS, and how to effectively absorb large inflows of foreign aid. (IMF.org)[37]

Similarly, the World Bank, whose ambitious goal is to 'end extreme poverty within a generation and boost shared prosperity,'[38] commits unprecedented sums of money for the HIV/AIDS response around the globe:

> -The Multi-Country AIDS Program (MAP) was the first billion-dollar AIDS initiative, which helped transform the global AIDS response into a multi-billion dollar effort.
>
> -The World Bank has funded about 50,000 community AIDS organizations globally, helping to create effective community responses in more than 50 countries.
>
> -The World Bank has assisted 125 countries to understand their AIDS epidemics and 100 countries to strengthen their national AIDS plans. (WORLD BANK.org) [39]

Without doubt such hegemonic structures dealing with such a threatening epidemic implicitly influence the 'voice' in representation of the epidemic. Documentations like the film *Talking About Sex* [2008], discussed in chapter 4, address 'harmful African traditions' and mimic the 'modernity' ideal, making it impossible to acknowledge the

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[37] Link: http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/hivaids.htm. Accessed August 2013.

[38] Source: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/0,,contentMDK:20103838~menuPK:1696997~pagePK:51123644~piPK:329829~theSitePK:29708,00.html. Accessed, August 2013.

[39] Link: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTHEALTHNUTRITIONANDPOPULATION/EXTHIVAIDS/0,,contentMDK:21546262~menuPK:376479~pagePK:210058~piPK:210062~theSitePK:376471,00.html. Accessed, August 2013.

positive aspects present in African cultures. Ukadike says that distorting the role of traditional medicine, for instance, ignores the fact that 'an organized system of curing disease existed in Africa well before the arrival of the whiteman' (Ukadike, 1992: 36). Foregrounding western 'expert' voice and reducing the filmed African subjects to ventriloquists' dummies are paradigms guiding the visual representation in the aid industry. A typical example is the documentary film *Courage and Hope*: *African Teachers Living Positively With HIV* [2008] produced and directed by two Americans; Daphne Glover and Tim Baney. It was sponsored by the World Bank and Imperial College of London and attempted to break with the 'expert' voices by incorporating authentic African voices. The DVD blurb promises the following:

> Courage and Hope is the remarkable story of four teachers living positively with HIV. It is an insight into the lives of ordinary, courageous people. We hear, in their own voices, how they discovered their HIV status and how this has affected their lives with their families, their schools and their communities. Each teacher tells a unique story of extraordinary courage and hope.
>
> When Beldina Atieno learned she was HIV-positive, she lost everything - her husband, her children, her job. On receiving treatment and realizing that HIV does not have to be a death sentence, Belding returned to teaching, re-established her home with her children and now works to help others to face similar challenges.
>
> On discovering that they were both HIV-positive, Martin Mkong Ptoch and his wife decided to live positively. Martin shares how the experience has brought them closer together, as well as describing the critical role of the Kenya Network of HIV-positive teachers.
>
> Jemimah Nindo lost her husband to AIDS and then lost her home. Having overcome these challenges, Jemimah now works to address HIV stigma and discrimination among students and staff.
>
> Weak, ill and stigmatized at her school by pupils and staff, Margaret Wambete reached the lowest point in her life. Now on treatment, Margaret is teaching again and helping other teachers to access voluntary counseling, testing and HIV services (DVD cover, *Courage and Hope,* 2008).

Courage and Hope began as a book project by African journalists recounting the real life experiences of 12 HIV-positive teachers from Burkina Faso, Cameron, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, and Zambia.[40] The documentary however selects only four stories from Kenya to represent the complex and somehow very personal experiences of people living with HIV/AIDS. A Tanzanian HIV-positive

[40] source: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTHEALTHNUTRITIONANDPOPULATION/EXTHIVAIDS/0,,contentMDK:21865101~menuPK:376477~pagePK:64020865~piPK:149114~theSitePK:376471,00.html. Accessed, August 2013.

woman whose story is included in the book is a 59 year old Theresia Hakili (Teddy), whom I interviewed in 2013. She told me that she had set up her own NGO and had enjoyed substantial financial support during the promotion of the book when she was invited to America to give talks, but now she is destitute and her NGO is dormant, having being 'frozen out' by the TACAIDS (Tanzania Commission for AIDS). Her 'fifteen minutes in the spotlight' during the World Bank episode suggests that there is a tendency to recruit 'victims' for specific purpose, which is sometimes temporary. Perhaps a better term is 'AIDS-spotting' because of the logistics of parachute filmmaking. Teddy confirmed that she has not seen the final book nor heard about the documentary, although she has contact with the Tanzanian journalist Erik Kabendera who interviewed her for the book.

Teddy's case is not unique as there are a multitude of 'victim' stories on the internet that are neither addressed to Tanzanian communities, nor accessible to the people portrayed in them because they have no access to the published information. This might also indicate that there are some ethical issues regarding the kind of information the social actors are given prior to consent, even if such was solicited. My experience of filming in Tanzania is that the subjects are very generous with telling stories to fit the donor's templates, hoping they will be rewarded financially and also trusting the filmmaker to use the images wisely. Unlike the Griersonian victim tradition where the filmed subjects articulated their concerns and possibly formed part of the audience, the Sub-Saharan aid and HIV/AIDS stories largely exclude the filmed subject's authentic voice even when their societies are claimed as a part of potential audience. The film *Courage and Hope: African Teachers Living Positively with HIV,* was launched at the International AIDS Conference in 2008 in Mexico. Free copies of the DVD were distributed at the UNAIDS booth, later sold through Imperial College in London for around £10, and ultimately posted on You Tube.[41] The paperback book itself is still on sale at Amazon for £11.50 and £6.73 for a Kindle edition. The whole purpose of portraying a story such as this is partially to provide testimony about the success of HIV/AIDS policies in Africa to stakeholders in the West to ensure continued financial support.

[41] Link http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjo3JypCyGM&list=PL55E65372FC168A49. Accessed, August, 2013.

Scouting for subjects

Nichols (2010) notes that documentary filmmakers often take on the role of public representatives. They speak for the interest of others, meaning that they speak both for the interest of the filmed subjects and the institution or agency that supports their filmmaking activity (Nichols, 2010: 43). Whilst this might apply in the West where rights of the filmed subjects are respected and perhaps protected, aid industry documentaries that hunt for 'victims' to help too often override the rights of the poor to speak with their own authentic voice. The parachute filmmakers see what is already defined prior to arriving on location in Africa. The fact that Western filmmakers arrive with tailored scripts suggests they only scout for subjects whose subjectivity is of no consequence for their film. The relationship between filmmaker and subject is thus a mere formality to secure visible evidence of an a priori truth. The common-sense ethics of not compromising the dignity of those being photographed become irrelevant when the subjects stigmatize themselves faced by the donor gaze. The practice of representation in this context is 'unequal, perhaps even exploitative' (Bleiker and Kay, 2007: 148).

Documenting black Africans within the boundaries of the aid industry relies heavily on emphasizing the 'helplessness' of the African subjects. Manji and O'Coill point out that development NGOs have become an integral part of a system that sacrifices respect for justice and rights. They are motivated by charity and pity (Manji and OCoill, 2002: 581). Likewise, Roland Bleiker and Amy Kay argue that humanist photography 'hinges on the assumption that images of suffering can invoke compassion in viewers, and that this compassion can become a catalyst for positive change' (Bleiker and Kay, 2007: 139). In *Regarding the Pain of Others* Susan Sontag argues that 'in the era of information overload, the photograph provides a quick way of apprehending something and a compact form for memorizing it' (2004: 19). According to her, the credentials and objectivity of photographic images are inbuilt, and although they present a point of view they are nonetheless a record of the real in a Bazinian sense. Sontag maintains that no amount of written or verbal accounts can compete with photographic evidence since a person has actually 'been there' to capture the image (Sontag, 2004: 23).

Strong imagery, such as Hooper's portrait of the Ugandan dying mother and son *Florence and Ssengabi,* introduced earlier, shows that the privileged position of white filmmakers can influence the final outcome of any text, and that the observer and observed engage only superficially with each other. Willingly, filmed subjects submit

to self-orientalization before dignity because physical survival is far more important than fighting the representation battles. Subjectivity is relinquished in favour of standardized templates that represent poverty or the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Western terms. It is from this standpoint that an inclusion of African perspectives in reading donor gaze texts becomes extremely crucial. In fact, this study argues that the essence of 'documentary' practice vis-à-vis black Africans reflects the basic dictionary meaning: 'using pictures or interviews with people involved in real events to provide a factual report on a particular subject.'[42] Some 'documentaries' in the aid industry use black African subjects exclusively as a visual 'quotation' for a general concept. In *An Agenda for Thinking About Race in Development* Uma Kothari proposes a closer inspection of the racialized aspects of representation because 'a consideration of how power, knowledge and inequality are entangled with 'race' would produce a more rigorous understanding of the workings of the aid industry' (Kothari 2006: 21). Indeed just as 'documentation' and 'documentary' are interchangeable in NGOs evidence-based discourses, images of black Africans are synonymous with poverty, HIV/AIDS and general helplessness. Because both documentary proper and documentation deal with actual social actors, it is therefore useful to scrutinize how actuality is treated.

Documentary or not documentary?

As explained in chapter one, there is no adequate definition of documentary that is capable of addressing cross-cultural dynamics and the unequal relationship between the filmmaker, as representative of the donors, and the helped African subjects in front of the camera. Brian Winston simply puts it: 'I know of no theoretical position, no definition of documentary, that does not in some way reference the relationship to the real' (Winston, 2008: 9). The slippery question of what in actual fact constitutes a 'documentary' is also addressed by Bill Nichols, who says that 'the whole domain of documentary exhibits permeable borders and chameleon-like appearance. The sense that a film is a documentary lies in the mind of the beholder as much as it lies in the film's context or structure' (Nichols, 2010: 33). However, for the purpose of this study it is important to have a guiding definition as a framework for considering the explosion of documentary forms in the technological era. I find Brian Winston's post-Griersonian definition of documentary as the 'structuring of recorded aspects of observation' (2008: 290) remarkably useful because it agrees well with the parachute style of donor-sponsored documentation. Ad hoc recordings of observed or

[42] Link: http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/documentary. Accessed, November 2013.

reconstructed phenomena are cleverly edited and adjusted into a narrative that fits a particular a priori argument. Usually this reflects assertions from Western 'experts:' in HIV/AIDS and aid discourse such reports are an integral part of periodically measuring the success of intervention and documentary evidence cements various 'utterances'. As Louis Lumière once famously said, 'the film evidence would be able to shut the mouth of a liar' (Barnouw, 1993: 29). 'Documentary' enables reality to speak, as Cowie says, but at the same time it 'speaks about' reality (Cowie, 2011:1).

Interventionist films presenting Africa from 'the white man's burden' perspective often go to great lengths to arrange the mise-en-scene, interfering with how-things-really-are in order to confirm 'the pictures in the heads' of the donors and viewers. Robert Flaherty, who was notorious for making 'natives' perform to suit his romantic imaginings once said: 'I should have been shot for what I asked these superb people to do for the film' (Rotha, 1983: 116). Although Flaherty was reflecting on the physical risks to which he exposed his subjects, the power embedded in the relationship between Western filmmakers and African subjects are still a reality today, particularly in aid and HIV/AIDS representation. Brian Winston argues that recasting or any other direct faking or 'reconstruction' is what is ideologically significant in Flaherty's explorer style. It is the universalization of a capitalist relation to other cultures: 'That is the essence of their imperialism' (Winston, 2008: 25). While his claim is relevant, it would be wrong to say that all 'the white man's burden' texts are neo-imperialistic productions. Even an orientalizing film like *Darwin's Nightmare* [2004], discussed at length in the introduction, manages to project benevolence, albeit in a very ugly manner.

The legacy of Live Aid

On 23 October 1984 the nightly BBC television news bulletin was devoted to a lengthy report on the advancing famine in Ethiopia. The poetic commentary by the BBC's Africa correspondent, Michael Buerk, allied to stunning images by the Visnews cameraman Mo Amin, shocked viewers in Britain and around the world as the report was picked up and broadcast uncut by international channels. This was, in Buerk's words 'a Biblical famine, here in the twentieth century.' It was a culminating disaster after a decade of famines and civil war in a corner of Africa rarely visited by western filmmakers or TV crews and thus 'invisible' to the outside world. The BBC report, in illustrating the reality of the famine, both confirmed old stereotypes about African poverty and helplessness and dramatically opened a new chapter in charity fundraising that took those images as its starting point.

The TV news report prompted the rock musicians Bob Geldof and Midge Ure to form Band Aid with other musicians, and then to write and produce a charity record, *Do they know it's Christmas?,* released in November 1984. It was an instant hit, raising more than £4m towards emergency relief for Ethiopia. Emboldened by this, Geldof and Ure planned a follow up which eventually grew into Live Aid, two huge open-air concerts held simultaneously in London and Philadelphia the following July. This was to be the most ambitious global media event so far in the new age of satellite TV, and just as significantly, it showed the power of 'celebrity currency' when linked to a charitable cause with an obvious and emotive purpose. On 25 July the broadcast of the two Live Aid concerts operated like a rolling telethon, ultimately raising some £150m (US$283), with the volume of donations reportedly increasing when a video of starving Ethiopian children was screened at the Philadelphia concert and relayed to Europe.

That episode marked the limits and the paradox of Live Aid as an unprecedented event in generating humanitarian compassion. A report commissioned by the European Economic Community (EEC) and Oxfam, *Images of Africa in the UK* (1987), examined the impact of Live Aid and concluded that most people did not have sufficient geographical or factual knowledge about the cause of famine in Africa and only saw Africa in the light of how the West 'helped'. 'Media images, and to a great extent fund-raising campaigns by NGOs, were largely responsible for a context in which Africa is not "Africa developed" but simply "Africa assisted" (van der Gaag and Nash, 1987:19). 'The public's perceptions, though they were influenced by other factors like family, friends and school were ultimately formed by the media.' The report showed that the visual images were dominant, and were remembered even when significant facts and figures had been given and forgotten (ibid: 18).

Live Aid thus helped not only to accentuate the rift between 'we' (rich) and 'them' (poor) but also, inadvertently, to endorse the tone and imagery used by much charity filmmaking and 'crisis' news reporting. Without doubt, Geldof benevolently used his 'celebrity currency' to 'speak for' Africans during a humanitarian disaster that demanded immediate 'parachute relief', and in such a case the images were both morally and ethically justified. However, in the wake of the Buerk/Amin report, and boosted by the success of Live Aid, there was a surge in charity fundraising that capitalized on disempowering images of the Other, arguably, a pattern of 'poverty porn' deployed for purposes of general 'development' that was ethically and morally more questionable, and which is still evident today.

The short-comings of the media in Europe and north America before and after the Live Aid event were examined in *News Out of Africa: From Biafra to Band Aid* (Harrison & Palmer,1986) and in a 90-minute documentary film, *Consuming Hunger* (dir. Ilan Ziv & Freke Vuijst, 1987) which was screened by Channel 4 in the UK and on PBS in the USA[43]. Both sources showed how difficult it had been to interest television executives in the developing crisis in Ethiopia, and how this had reflected a more general disregard for Africa stories which were seen as holding no appeal for audiences. Live Aid changed that, but also accentuated the tendency by some charities to employ non-individualizing narratives and imagery that aestheticized poverty in Africa simply to induce 'guilt giving', an approach notably dismissed by Brian Winston in *Consuming Hunger* as 'visual masturbation' intended to make Westerners feel good about themselves.[44] To a greater or lesser extent this condemnation might still be applied to 'donor gaze' films in general.

Twenty-five years on from Live Aid and countless charity telethons later, another, rather better-made, TV documentary examined the subsequent progress of the campaign begun by Geldof in 1985. *Give us the Money* (dir. Bose Lindquist, 2012) was made by Stockholm-based Momento Film and broadcast in the UK as part of the BBC series 'Why Poverty?' in December 2012.[45] It showed how Geldof and Bono, his fellow Irish-rock-musician, had deployed their 'celebrity currency' to move the focus on from emergency relief and charity giving to political lobbying at the highest level. Firstly, their engagement with president Bill Clinton and prime-minister Tony Blair in a campaign to cancel Africa's towering international debt, on which annual repayments to Western donor countries outpaced incoming aid. Secondly, how their lobbying tied in with president George W Bush's grand humanitarian project, his pledge on AIDS, and thirdly, their success in getting the 2005 G8 Summit to endorse their 'Make Poverty History' slogan.

However, as the film makes clear, 'success' was only relative in all three cases. Clinton's pledge to cut 100% of debt owed was reduced by half by the US Congress, and since Africa's debt total is too big to ever be fully repaid this was effectively a 'no

[43] Despite its relevance, *Consuming Hunger* is conspicuously unavailable in digital format and hard to find even in the original VHS format.
[44] Winston's comment was in response to World Vision's fundraising campaign that used poverty images from Ethiopia and showed people as a huddled mass without names or dignity.
[45] Link to *Give us the Money*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cgGP3zV8kdU. Accessed July 2014.

cost' option. [*Give us the Money*, 25:24-25:43][46]. George W. Bush's pledge on AIDS was offset and over-shadowed by the war against Saddam Hussain in Iraq. The G8 commitment to cancel debt and double aid, engineered by Blair, was never fully delivered. More fundamentally, the Geldof/Bono lobbying always seemed more focused on Western 'aid' rather than on African-led 'development', so the resultant impression has been that of powerful white men riding to the rescue. In *Give us the Money* the Zambian-born economist Dambisa Moyo was perhaps a little harsh in her judgment - 'These celebrities: if economic growth and poverty reduction are their motivation they have failed miserably' [52:37-52:57] - but hers was not the only African voice to point out that cancelling debt played well in global news-rooms but had no impact on ordinary people. Ironically, where the Bono and Geldof campaign might have had some impact was, arguably, in incidentally helping to kick-start the ideas underpinning the separate initiatives of Clinton, Blair and Bush.

Celebrity currency and the white man's burden

One of the techniques employed in producing documentaries for the service of the aid industry is the use of credible, authoritative and, if possible, recognizable faces and voices. Depending on the prominence of the charity, an 'image of god' approach might be appropriate where an international iconic celebrity enters the story lending it credibility by direct address or off screen voice-over. Usually the celebrity currency is substantiated with location footage of having-been-there, or just littered with archive footage or stills to back the voice-over. The visual sequences serve as a 'quotation' but the strength of the argument is largely invested in the choice of words, pauses, sighs, sniffs and the pace of editing including background sounds. To explore the 'images of god' method, I will give the example of two corporate videos of the two iconic former politicians I mentioned earlier. This will demonstrate how Bill Clinton and Tony Blair enter the aid story, fully aware of the high level of their 'celebrity currency' and how the tone of their voice will influence the whole texture and 'documentary-ness' of the otherwise structured narrative.

The Clinton Foundation

Former US president Bill Clinton credits Christianity as a great influence that shaped his helping story. He points out in *Giving: How Each of us Can Change the World* that 'like most Americans in my generation, I first learned about giving in my church, where we were taught to tithe' (Clinton, 2007: xii). His high power position in the

[46] Source: *Give us the Money,* [2012] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cgGP3zV8kdU Accessed, July, 2014.

hierarchy of celebrities is revealed in a passage where he explains how he was able 'to bring together several hundred leaders, philanthropists, business leaders, and NGO activists from all over the world' and ask them to make commitment in time and money (2007: 11). In just two intensive meetings, his charity, The Clinton Foundation received an amount exceeding 9.5 billion US dollars to 'fight poverty, improve health, combat climate change and promote reconciliations' (Clinton, 2007: 11-12). Then 'over the course of eight annual meetings, members have made nearly 2,800 commitments totaling 87.9 billion US dollars that will improve more than 430 million lives.'[47]

One of the first things that the Clinton Foundation did was to employ 'a full-time staff to help those who make commitments keep them effectively, to assist those who have good ideas but need funding partners, and to match people who want to give money with reliable partners' (Clinton, 2007: 12). Considering the huge influence and colossal funds raised by the Clinton Foundation it is clear that the proclamation made on the Foundation's website: 'Everywhere we go, we're trying to work ourselves out of a job'[48] has an un-intended double meaning. This echoes Thomas Dichter's recollection of the Peace Corps ethical approach in the 1960s. As for Oxfam and other major NGOs, the bigger the organization becomes the more complex and pressing are its needs to ensure its own continued operation.

The Clinton Foundation is careful to avoid donor fatigue by structuring the narrative and embracing what works for the donating public. A look at the book cover, for instance, shows that a symbolic choice was made to select an image that emphasizes Clinton's white giver's position and the recipients' gratitude. As usual, black-ness represents poverty and in this case children stand for ultimate helplessness. The image constructs an almost messianic relationship between the smiling white savior and the black children wanting to touch his hands. It is composed in an aesthetically pleasing manner avoiding the hopelessness paradigm that causes donor fatigue. As noted earlier, in Dichter's words: 'The starving child is out. The smile and hope are in'. In the world of philanthropic giving, the subtextual levers are 'love, little guilt, and also power, though of a different sort – the ego gratification that comes from being thanked by grateful people' (Dichter, 2003: 259-260).

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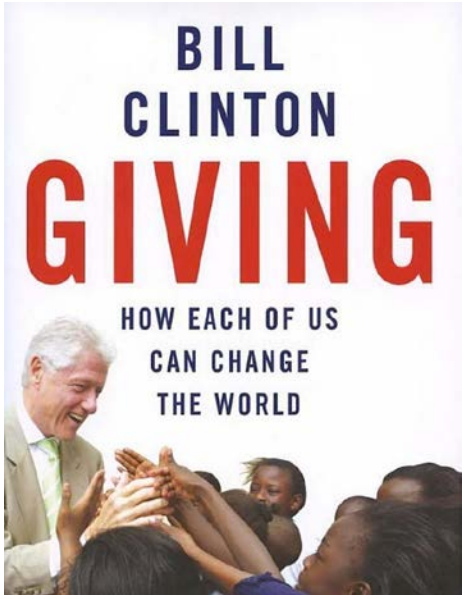
[47] Source: http://www.clintonfoundation.org/about/clinton-foundation-history. Accessed, November, 2013.
[48] Source: http://www.clintonfoundation.org/about. Accessed, November, 2013.

Book Cover
(Clinton, 2007)



The centrality of the media in marketing the celebrity phenomenon is undisputed and Clinton's participation in the aid industry is not a coincidence. He writes in the book that for all its blessings, the modern world is very unequal, unstable and unsustainable. 'The great mission of the twenty-first century is to move our neighborhoods, our nation, and the world toward integrated communities of shared opportunities' (2007: 4). By sharing possibilities and creating a genuine sense of belonging, he says, we can address the problems that bedevil both rich and poor because 'our common humanity is more important than our interesting difference' (ibid: 4). Forgetting differences sounds both desirable and idealistic, but although all humans are equal celebrities are more equal than others. Drawing extensively on Clinton's celebrity status, the digital media is used by his charity to maintain donations and his direct engagement with an eager online community. The uniqueness and success of using the 'celebrity currency' as a marketing approach is illustrated in the official video on the charity's website titled *The Clinton Foundation Impact.*

The video is narrated by Clinton and his daughter Chelsea, who say they are using a 'unique approach to solving some of the world's biggest challenges'.[49] A series of images of Clinton in the White House substantiates his voice-over. He explains his foundation will pursue issues where he can still have an impact [00.15-00.24]. His

[49] References here to *The Clinton Foundation Impact* are to the version of the promotional video available on the website http://www.clintonfoundation.org/ in June 2013. The version currently available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glRSJXbYjoE&list=PLYDtq5Mw3PkDYQnAaYwHanO8JiDnC_hZW (accessed March 2014) has been re-edited: it is now shorter and includes a scene of Bill Clinton with President Obama. Chelsea Clinton no longer appears, but her central role in the Foundation is evident from other videos available on the main website.

daughter appears entirely in close-ups re-emphasizing her father's assertion: 'I think, really it's looking for areas, which we think we can make a difference, and then, where we believe that at least we have to try and make a difference. That motivates the work that the foundation does today and in the future'. [00:24- 00:41] Clinton tells us that he picked 'things' that he cares about, [00:42-00:45], over images showing smiling black African women sorting grain.

Still from the video: [00:44]

Apart from the sympathetic and composed voice over, powerful 'images of god' are also strategically edited in to give a sense of connected-ness along the black/white divide.

Still from the video [01:39]

The Clinton Foundation Impact might not be considered a 'documentary' by any definition but it illustrates the 'image of god' approach that is one of the many paradigms that 'speak about' reality without including the point of views of those appearing on the screen. The Internet is full of such representations because many NGO fundraising initiatives are dependent on 'selling' disempowering images of needy people. The aim of the Clinton Foundation video is the same and subscribers are urged to donate generously.

African Governance Initiative

Unlike Clinton's global ambitions, Tony Blair's 'sphere of intervention' is more focused and geographically territorialized, as the name of his charity clearly spells out: while in office, Blair promised to stand by Africa and aid analysts often quote his 2001 comment that 'Africa is a scar on our conscience'.[50] Now out of office, Blair's approach, credibility and success draw heavily on his 'celebrity currency' as a former prime minister of a major world power whose voice and image are recognizable in the media. He identifies the problem of Africa as a failing in governance and uses this efficiently to mobilize financial support for his mission of 'building capacity' of African leaders. Like the *Clinton Foundation Impact* video, the official *African Governance Initiative* (AGI) video[51] also uses the 'images of god' method, with Blair appearing in the text both visually and as the narrator. Footage showing him on various African locations is edited in at strategic points for substantiation and credibility. Although the video presentation is littered with much stereotypical slum imagery and 'needy' children, the story is balanced by punctuating it with 'progressive' and empowering images to indicate 'just what is possible' to achieve if AGI realized its goal.

Blair tells us he passionately believes that, with help, Africa can lift itself out of poverty but success depends on the generous support of 'donors and partners.' His aim is to help a generation of African leaders lift their people out of poverty and move beyond aid for good. Asserting his continual relevance in the story, Blair convincingly claims that although much has been achieved, there is much more to be done regarding leadership and development, and that 'it is our responsibility to support those leaders' [3:14-3:16]. This statement is superimposed with footage of Blair meeting and greeting African leaders.

Still image from film [3:16]

Africa Governance Initiative 2011

[50] Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/1575428.stm. Accessed, November 2013.
[51] Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDb5a1JFqnE. Accessed, June 2013.

This presentation of AGI's intentions suggests that Blair is indeed intent on 'working himself out of the job' because his approach is 'pioneering new way of working with Africans by putting the reform tools into the African hands – ultimately, the only way to lift the continent's people out of poverty'.[52] However, on a closer reading, this approach towards African development reinforces old notions of 'the white man's burden' now recast as a need to teach good governance to Africans on top of feeding them. In the 'image of god' mode of such corporate videos no attempt is made to enlighten the Western audience about any positive characteristics existing in Africa that originate from the African mind: to do so might suggest different 'solutions' and different ideas about 'development' therefore rattle the hierarchy. Blair's unique position on the hierarchy is revealed in his book *Not Just Aid: How Making Government Work Can Transform Africa* (2010), where he questions the omnipotence of others in the aid industry:

> I've spoken to Ministers in Africa who have been asked by donors to attend three-day strategy retreats, taking them away from their ministries in a way that would never be acceptable in a western government. And I've met senior officials in finance ministries who spend 60 percent of their time servicing donor missions (Blair, 2010: 13).

Development myths

In *Hopes and Impediments* (1990) Chinua Achebe warns that 'the myths created by the white man to dehumanize the Negro in the course of the last four hundred years' allows them to continue doing all the talking while blacks only listen. He questions the sugar-coating of the 'development' story and its claims for 'partnership' between Africa and the West by insisting that the declaration of partnership is only a political slogan as, 'equality is the one thing which Europeans are conspicuously incapable of extending to others, especially Africans' (Achebe, 1990: 23-24). The development narrative is without doubt intentionally humane, but many critics argue that it is inherently paternalistic (Kareithi (2001); Longreen (2001); Palmgren, (2001); Easterly (2006); Moyo (2009); Escobar (2011)). In a Saidian perspective, as noted in chapter 2, the development story is a post-imperialistic way of dealing with Africans, by 'speaking about' them through dominating frameworks. In Said's words:

> Oriental is depicted as something one judges (as in court of law), something one studies and depicts (as in curriculum), something one disciplines (as in a school or prison), something one illustrates (as in a zoological manual). The point is that in each of these cases the Oriental is contained and represented by dominating frameworks (Said, 1978: 40).

[52] Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDb5a1JFqnE. Accessed, November 2013.

The patronizing 'helping' framework is an 'exercise of cultural strength', to borrow Said's expression (ibid: 40), and it is from such a position of power that the aid industry articulates the helping stories through the use of documentary evidence. The benevolent intention seemingly justifies the exclusion of the voices of the 'helped.' In many ways this can be seen as a 'saviour complex' and the dynamics are clearly observable in the forms of representation that the donor's gaze authorizes. Some visual narratives representing this 'new' order go a step further to credit the West with any pocket of 'civilization' that is found in Africa, as Hanna Longreen (2001) reveals with her concept of 'development gaze.' Her study examined various official brochures showing how the Danish Development Agency (DANIDA) used photos to frame the Other outside the globalization process. The texts explored presented development problems of the countries where Denmark was involved, from the point of view of Denmark as the saviour of the poor. 'The tone is objective and sober' she writes (Longreen, 2001: 228). 'All the photos are categories, which means that they present generalized scenes and social practices' (ibid: 229). Statistics and indexes are convincingly presented and the distance between 'them' and 'us' is explained through contrasts in social-economic development or between a 'pre-modern and post-modern societal situations' (ibid: 231). She continues:

> By this, the Development Gaze stresses the power-relation between 'Us here' and the 'Others' outside the Eurocenter. It is 'Us here' who are ruling the 'Others and who select the areas for development. The power-relationship is even emphasized because of 'Us here' being absent in the photos. It is 'Us here' who manage the gaze, who define the Development Gaze' (Longreen Hanna, 2001: 231).

Longreen points a finger at DANIDA for not breaking with the stereotypical way of representing the Other. An alternative way of representing development that can challenge the dominant paradigms, which Longreen would like to see, is perhaps an impossible undertaking considering that development is rigorously defined in terms of poverty being replaced by wealth, and challenging such a 'benevolent' framework will be seen as totally inhumane if not altogether futile. Longreen concludes that the gaze is a 'discourse on Westernness;' a specific ideology of 'Us' here (Longreen, 2001: 226). According to the *Directory of International Donor and Development Organizations*, 'development aid and expertise have assumed special significance for the countries of the South vis-à-vis resource constraints and lack of capacity to plan, develop and implement projects and programs.' The role of donor and development agencies, therefore, is to provide structural assistance to 'help the developing and

under-developed world to overcome their obstacles to socio-economic progress.' (2007, Directory, 3rd compilation: i)[53]

Major donor organizations like the World Bank and IMF offer a universal framework for interpreting poverty in terms of US dollars, but arguably this provides a false comparison point for perceiving the reality of those involved in barter trade or labour that cannot be measured in monetary terms. A World Bank video clip titled *Who Are the Extremely Poor,* posted on their website and on You Tube[54], explains that 'of the 7 billion people on earth, about 1.2 billion still live on less than US dollar 1.25 a day.' The video, like many other illustrative donor productions, uses archive footage and other imagery taken from real events to substantiate its truth claims. Not surprisingly the video also places poor, deprived and illiterate people in rural areas, suggesting that development equals modernization as practiced in the West. Longreen's 'development gaze' challenges this stereotype claiming that although globalization has compressed the world, 'this compression does not include the Third World and the "Others"'. Pre-modern social and economic conditions of the 'Others' are stressed to extend the distance between the Eurocenter and the Third World as a means of emphasizing power (Longreen, 2001: 230-231).

HIV/AIDS, aid, life and death

Media representation and collected statistics suggest that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is disproportionately situated in Sub-Saharan Africa, heavily affecting women who are the glue that hold communities together. An article by Kofi Annan, the former UN General Secretary, published in the *New York Times* and entitled *In Africa, AIDS has a Woman's Face (2002),* describes reality from an African perspective and resonates well with the 'pictures in the heads' of many black Africans. He points out that 'before the AIDS crisis, women proved more resilient than men' in terms of survival and coping skills. African women 'were the ones who found alternative foods that could sustain their children in times of drought' and also passed on survival techniques to younger women. Annan proposes an inclusion of this 'African women perspective' in the HIV/AIDS story, claiming that 'international effort must put women at the center of our strategy to fight AIDS' (Annan, 2002). While African women have exercised social power as Annan notes, they have traditionally lacked political power and the

[53] Link: http://www.comsats.org/publications/Other_Docs/Directory_of_International_Donor_and_Development_Organizations_June_2007.pdf. Accessed, September 2013.
[54] Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7EC7b0fR2Y. Accessed, November 2013.

burden of HIV/AIDS has increased practical responsibilities and reduced time for exercising their need for an equal 'voice.'

More than any other discourse, the HIV/AIDS story is embedded with power inequality between the helper and the helped. In some cases, it is literally power over life and death and undoubtedly allows the important voice to be that of the helper. It is undeniable that Western donors deserve acknowledgement for addressing the pandemic, but equally the African voice should be allowed to re-surface for a dialogue to take place. The foregrounding of the Western voice is called 'the salvation agenda' in *AIDS and Power*, where Alex de Waal explains the logic is that Americans or indeed Europeans 'can exercise practical solidarity with oppressed and poor people across the world, offering them real (if American) solutions to their predicaments.' Moreover, such solutions are 'selective and come with many strings attached, including a moral agenda'; limiting the funds to programmes that are interesting for the donor countries (de Waal, 2006: 64).

Seen through Foucault's concept of knowledge and power, the donor gaze contributes to the 'techniques of domination' by producing and spreading certain truths about other living and speaking subjects. In *Politics of Truth*, Foucault argues that in a human society systems of significations can be used to 'determine the behaviour of individuals, to impose certain will on them and to submit them to certain ends or objectives' (Foucault, 2007: 153). The power inequality was observable, for example, in Tanzania during the making of *Talking About Sex* [2008], discussed in the next chapter. The white Swedish cameraman and producer were held in high esteem by interviewees, who were keen to impress them by speaking in broken English rather than in Swahili through an interpreter. The influence of donors is also reflected in the popular usage of the Swahili word for donor – *mfadhili* - to imply immense financial power. The Swahili verb *niwezeshe* meaning empower or enable me, mirrors the giver/recipient interactions that are paradigmatic in the helping story. HIV/AIDS is one area where the politics of domination takes many forms, and often interrogation of sexuality is plunged back into the racist attitudes of the past that stigmatized African actualities. HIV/AIDS is not only a global pandemic but it is endemic with top-down western directives of how African communities should readdress issues pertaining gender roles, sexuality and so forth. The socio-cultural aspect in HIV/AIDS as an important sphere of intervention area is presided over by international donors using predominantly western paradigms to prescribe new ways of interacting. The multitude of peer educator and Trainer of Trainers (TOT) schemes

spreading Swedish-modeled gender equality in the Arumeru community, where *Talking About Sex* was filmed, are a local version of one of the 'new reform tools in African hands' that Blair promises in his own charity video[55].

Dennis Altman finds predominant Western paradigms problematic, pointing out that by ignoring cultural specificity this 'inevitably means the further entrenchment of western concepts of disease, treatment, sexuality and the body' (Altman, 2008:146). HIV/AIDS, as the first global pandemic in the digital era, and probably the most stigmatized disease ever known in history, abounds with myths and taboos because sexuality is not a public topic in many societies. However, the fact that Sub-Saharan Africa [Hegel's 'Africa proper'] is disproportionately affected causes Western commentary to draw on the savagery myth more than ever by sensationalizing harmful 'primitive' traditions which are said to fuel the pandemic. *Talking About Sex* [2008] aimed to address 'irresponsible' sexuality by teaching Swedish gender equality to a small rural community. Interestingly though, a close look at how some Tanzanian communities traditionally deal with sexual education reveals many superior attributes that could be significantly beneficial if the 'native' voice were to be included in approaches. Instead, the donor gaze divorces reality from the environment and unnecessarily stigmatizes the past by proposing completely 'new tools' and selling 'unique approaches.'

Donor gaze and African epistemology

Gender roles in many African communities were and are learnt through observation, and when boys and girls 'come of age' experienced elders teach them what to expect in sexual relationships and other family matters. Within the frameworks of HIV/AIDS, however, such a traditional model has fallen into disfavour and old traditions are categorized as being inherently 'primitive' and 'harmful'. The elders' wisdom, which Kofi Annan (2002) argued sustained the generations, is stigmatized and silenced in favour of western experts on sexuality and gender who train the elite Trainer of Trainers. These in turn train 'peer educators' to teach completely new approaches to everyone in the community, including wise elders, on how to survive the pandemic. Some of the outside experts have a Dickensian attitude towards 'natives' because they enter the helping story for career opportunity as opposed to a genuine humane intention of 'helping' to spread the 'knowledge' they possess. A Swedish visiting expert once informed me, during a research series called *Sex Under a Tree* [2006],

[55] Link to video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDb5a1JFqnE. Accessed, August 2013.

that he did not wish to interact with ‘people,’ [common Tanzanians], preferring to stay in his hotel [in Dar es Salaam] and browse through written reports prepared by local project coordinators who were eager to have the continual sponsorship from Sweden. In his eyes the west knew best and his task was to make sure that this conceptualization of HIV/AIDS and stigma arrived in Tanzania as an unadulterated franchise.

Prior to globalization many African communities never experienced epidemics of sexually transmitted diseases like the syphilis breakouts in Europe and therefore making sense about HIV/AIDS is challenging, particularly when components of HIV/AIDS lack direct translation from the universal [English] language. From the beginning, teaching about HIV/AIDS took many visual forms and the PowerPoint lecture was one of the preferred modes because of the communicative power that the images had for illiterate masses. Attending many such seminars in the 1990s in Dar es Salaam I couldn’t help noticing how the auditorium became charged with interest if the PowerPoint slide had communicative images. It is perhaps for the same reasons documentary films became popular in spreading HIV/AIDS awareness in rural Africa. The hope was to disseminate life-saving knowledge to the illiterate masses with the power of the local voice.

Many Western filmmakers thus entered the HIV/AIDS narrative with a missionary attitude, promising to empower the stigmatized, vulnerable and marginalized by finally giving them a voice in this inherently African story. One such film, *Eshageada UKIMWI Datoga!* (*Datoga, Let’s Beware AIDS!*) [2004], produced by a Norwegian film team claims to be the first ‘cultural-specific’ film made in Tanzania because the film uses a participatory approach and the original Datoga tribal dialect, with subtitles in Swahili and English. The text on the DVD cover explains that, ‘the film draws upon central Datoga song, dance and ritual to enhance the communication of the message at stake. Both “modern” and “traditional” risky practices are targeted.’ (EUD, 2004, DVD cover). While it is true that the film speaks the Datoga local dialect the stereotypical depictions reveal the Norwegian donor’s gaze, especially their focus on ‘harmful traditions’ such as polygamy practiced by a minority Tanzanian tribe who are projected as a stand-in template for ‘traditional and primitive.’ According to the social anthropologist professor Ole-Bjorn Rekdal from Bergen University, who headed the intervention project, the project took over fifteen years of research and culminated in the participatory film production. He claims that in the process the Datoga were empowered with enough knowledge to film and edit the video. But for all its efforts,

like *Reassemblage* before it, *Let's Beware AIDS* shows the Tanzanian tribe from a First World perspective and therefore fails to correctly situate the local way of knowing. It is, perhaps, ironic that the film is distributed by the Bergen Museum alongside Flaherty's *Nanook of the North*.[56]

Spreading HIV/AIDS awareness, and combating other socio-cultural aspects such as stigma, are allocated a substantial amount of money by the international donor community, causing a scramble for HIV/AIDS stories that accord with the donors' aims. De Waal (2006) observes that 'the apparatus of international AIDS governance is new and flexible it has attracted a range of groups and agendas that seek legitimacy and progress through association'. Because it has so much money, he says, it is attracting 'real power brokers'. He notes that 'donors resources for AIDS in Africa has risen tenfold between 1996 and 2005 and most of this is new money', so it is not surprising that it has also increased AIDS activism in Africa (de Waal, 2006: 60). The resulting donor documentaries are informed by the particular objectives of the NGO and overall ideology in seeing HIV/AIDS, often ignoring the possibility of other cultural-specific approaches that might complement the stories. Dennis Altman (2008) distinguishes between the two worldviews, claiming that the western 'scientific' view undermines other and different ways of viewing sexuality and the body. Recognizing the local approaches, he argues; 'might make us more sympathetic to president Mbeki's desire to find an "African" understanding of the epidemic' (Altman, 2008: 146). In 1999, when president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki tried to challenge the official HIV/AIDS narrative by seeking alternatives from non-mainstream sources and outspokenly denying the causal link between HIV and AIDS. In protest, 'over 5,000 scientists signed the "Durban Declaration" which declared the HIV to be the cause of AIDS'. [57] Subsequently, in a media storm partly fuelled by his own pronouncement, Mbeki's quest for truth hit a brick wall. Unrepentedly he argued that there is a danger in abusing knowledge if it is only in the hands of a chosen few: 'I say this because of the frightening reality contemporary society faces, of the capacity of a small but powerful minority of humanity, to determine what society should 'know', which passes as "knowledge."'[58]

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[56] Bergen Museum: http://bergenmuseum.uib.no/filmforum/program_h07.html. Accessed, February 2014,
[57] Source: http://shm.oxfordjournals.org/content/19/3/521.short. Accessed, November 2013.
[58] Source: http://constitutionallyspeaking.co.za/on-the-tragic-brilliance-of-thabo-mbeki/. Accessed, November 2013.

Conclusion

Ideally, documenting developmental problems in Africa, particularly the HIV pandemic, should be in the hands of trained African filmmakers who perhaps are best suited to negotiate the old with the new. Instead the HIV/AIDS story has become for many Western non-profit documentary filmmakers, a way to 'butter the bread.' One of the main reasons for the dominance of Western filmmakers in the aid and HIV/AIDS story, and perhaps the most fundamental, is that the discourse of 'the white man's burden' requires a First World filter to structure a convincing narrative. The inclusion of an authentic African voice would most certainly open undesirable can of worms by disrupting 'the pictures in the heads' of the audience, because the 'voice' would demand epistemic validity and perhaps begin to put an end-date on the helping-merry-go-round. In reality though, the aid industry rests upon a concrete conceptual platform that universalizes how and what human society should be like, and the donor gaze reflects this using the effective differentiating paradigm. Ukadike emphasizes that, 'cinema, like literature, storytelling, religion, and other aspects of culture, reflects the natural world of things, including human community, and that how these things are perceived profoundly affects their interpretation (Ukadike, 1994: 11). An African filmmaker might unintentionally make the 'half-naked' African women less poor and exotic and a mud hut might be made to communicate what it really is; a normal home where people live, love and laugh. In *AID and other Dirty Business*, Giles Bolton concludes: 'We influential individuals in a world system must ensure that voiceless individuals have the chance to determine their own futures. If we don't, who else will?' (Bolton, 2008: 329).

Chapter Four: Encountering the donor gaze

Introduction

You look at us as if we were insects!

Sembene Ousmane, to Jean Rouch

The previous chapter examined how the frameworks of the aid industry legitimize First World filters to categorize and order representation of black African reality and thus stigmatize underdevelopment. It illustrated how the donor gaze shapes the aid story through the notion of 'the white man's burden'. This chapter will look specifically at the actual process involved in structuring a 'truth' based on an a priori script that never really leaves the boardrooms of foreign NGOs. Sembene Ousmane's comment above is still a valid criticism, reminding us that the objectifying approach is facilitated by unequal representation relationship that excludes the subjects' voice. As a typical example this chapter will analyze the short film *Talking About Sex* [2008], classed as a 'documentation' by the sponsors but employing familiar documentary film techniques to project a pre-determined message. I was involved in this project, initially as producer/director, but because of ethical differences with the sponsor I only remained as a facilitator/researcher. The sponsor in this case was a Swedish NGO running a gender equality and sex education project in Tanzania. My 'insider outsider' role allowed me to see at first-hand how the 'donor gaze' turned the speaking subjects who were mainly participants of the project, into ventriloquist dummies to mirror the synopsis conceived during various meetings at the head-office in Stockholm.

To understand a donor production such as this it is important to examine the production infrastructure that legitimizes the 'truth,' and therefore a profile of the sponsoring NGO is of utmost relevance in the analysis of the gaze. In recent years the forms of documentary have changed unrecognizably, but they all make a truth claim. In *The Margins of Reality,* Paul Ward maintains that 'the only unchanging thing about documentary is that it is a form that makes assertions or truth claims about the real world or real people in that world' (Ward, 2010:8). Donor gaze documentaries make truth claims to endorse the NGOs asserted mission statements, visions and objectives. Subsequently these will guide the documentary filmmaker's interpretation of reality, including their choice of where to film, who to film and how to structure the

voice. For the sake of 'buttering the bread', these producers of donor gaze films relinquish any ambition to obtain genuine unbiased information from the human subjects they point their camera at: instead they seek footage that reflects the truth they are tasked to present. Their ethical loyalty lies with the sponsors and therefore opposing truths that are present on location are disregarded. *Talking About Sex,* for instance, romantically constructs the idea of young men helping their wives to cook, but in practice this is misleading because in rural communities like Kikatiti, where we filmed, there is an agreed-upon distribution of labour that is considered fair to both sexes. Young men and little boys are assigned heavier chores outside the house where it is considered 'manly' territory, whereas the womenfolk are happy and proud to be the nurturers. In fact, most rural men refrain from entering their mother's or wife's kitchen, not because they are oppressive but because a cooking place is considered a female space and indeed one of the few feminine spaces where women can exercise power and pride.

Sembene Ousmane's fiction film *Moolade* [2002], though shot in Senegal, shows some of these cultural nuances with regards to the African matriarch, her family, her body and her space which an outsider cannot grasp. One of the worst insults in Tanzania, even in big cities like Dar es Salaam, is to say disrespectful things about another man's mother, particularly mentioning the genital organs. However, the culturally blind eye is usually unable to accommodate such nuances. A donor gaze applying European interpretations can decontextualize a traditional but inherently non-oppressive relationship between men and women, and thus demonize black African men as the heirs of oppressive patriarchal attitudes. From a Swedish post-feminist perspective domestic work should be shared equally between men and women, including childcare, despite differences in family units, working patterns and other environmental conditions. This attitude sensationalizes labour division in Africa; a theme that can be traced back to nineteenth century Royal Anthropological Society reports where tales of African men's dominance over women and children abound. Men were generally seen as exploiting women: Richard Burton once reported that 'the women tilled the ground while menfolk sat and span cotton' (Paxman, 2011:123).

The discussion of *Talking About Sex* that follows will highlight some of the cultural blind spots that cannot be revealed in a purely aesthetic analysis of cross-cultural texts. The quest for a universal all-encompassing analysis foregrounds the dominant way of seeing as a foundation from which the analysis is launched. I will therefore give an alternative analysis by unveiling the dynamics involved in framing an African

cultural Other through universalizing First World filters. This will underline that an incorrect frame of reference does distort the truth because the donor gaze imagines 'the-way-things-are' in a way that does not necessarily correspond with the lived-in reality. In other words, the documentary voice is totally divorced from the speaking subjects experiences of their own reality in their own social-historical space. The result is that in both the film's text and in subsequent analysis the producers are simply 'talking to themselves'. Looking at gender relations in a small Tanzanian rural community through Swedish eyes meant that *Talking About Sex* was able to problematize the existing relations by negatively comparing what was being practiced against the successful and seemingly agreeable Swedish model, which supposedly is more suitable in the era of HIV.

The fact that HIV/AIDS is a devastating reality in sub Saharan Africa presents a valid challenge to established social norms and documentary filmmaking is faced with responding to it representationally. Documenting HIV/AIDS in Tanzanian communities has reactivated the stigmatizing gaze on black African sexuality as donors define, evaluate and report about the pandemic without input from the local community. Such deliberate practice is endemic in the aid industry where cultural awareness is not considered an important part in the ethics for 'helping.' There are many tales about paternalism in the helping sector, all pointing to Said's notion of 'textual attitude', which is a stark reminder that excluding the voice of the 'helped' Other and generalizing human experience by relying on Eurocentric 'expert' assertions is indeed a facet of cultural imperialism. In *The Whiteness of Power: Racism in Third World Development and Aid* Paulette Goudge cautions that 'ideas of Western progress and enlightenment are utilized in development discourse to establish the standard by which the Third World is judged and generally found wanted' (Goudge, 2003: 115). *Talking About Sex* is a good example, illustrating the post-World-War II helping caravan of fixing-what-is-wrong with Africa, guided by Western discourse and justified by the frameworks of the aid industry.

This analysis of *Talking About Sex* chapter is presented in three parts. Pre-production gives a detailed background to the film including the profile of the NGO that commissioned the production. Structure and the eight claims shows how the limitations of parachute-filmmaking-cum-safari necessitated maximum exploitation of the filmed subjects' voice in order to structure the film's point of view without having to deal with opposing voices. It provides a textual analysis of the film and its central claims. Production issues and analysis points out specific details and concludes the

chapter. *Talking About Sex* is thus presented as a case study to show that although donor gaze productions present a truth, more often than not, this is a truth structured to serve the objectives of the NGO. Like most donor gaze productions this film palimpsest in format because the speaking subjects are not individualized: rather, they are general templates for carrying a pre-planned narrative. Their appearance in the text is simply to lend it a 'documentary value' because even in the perplexing post-Griersonian era of unidentifiable documentary formats, witness is still 'the glue joining the story to the world' (Winston, 2013: 24).

Pre-production

The assignment to produce *Talking About Sex* was suggested to me early in 2007 by representatives from the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education, *Riksförbundet för Sexuell Upplysning* (RFSU), during an HIV/AIDS seminar at the Stockholm headquarters of the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). RFSU's intention was to 'visualize a report' that detailed the success of one of their long-term sexuality and gender projects in Kikatiti, a small community in Arumeru district, which lies a few miles from the Northern Tanzanian tourist province. I had never heard of this community before, but after reading the baseline survey report about the project, which is called Young Men as Equal Partners (YMEP), I immediately understood that the Tanzanian community was just a space for testing the methodology developed by RFSU in order to extend it to other Third World regions. The report itself suggests:

> It is our belief that the YMEP programme needs to continue after the programme period ending in June 2009. If the YMEP programme methodology and the resources built up were expanded to more regions in the selected countries, and also to other countries, taken up by government organizations and other NGOs, it could provide a very positive contribution to meeting the Millennium Development Goal 3 - of promoting gender equality and empowering women; MDG 5 – to improve maternal health; and MDG 6 on combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.[59]

Nevertheless, I was confident that with cooperation from my Tanzanian documentary colleagues the project could be professionally filmed and edited in Dar es Salaam. The initial strategy was to engage in open-minded interviews with the project participants, members of the wider community, and key representatives in Tanzania for real credibility. The initial boardroom negotiations at the RFSU's headquarters in Medborgaplatsen, Stockholm, however alarmed me when the executive producer, Ylva Bergman, a magazine editor who had never travelled to Tanzania, proposed

[59] Link to report: http://www.rfsu.se/Bildbank/Dokument/ymep-pdfer/YMEPpresentation.pdf?epslanguage=en. Accessed, November 2013.

staging an establishing sequence: 'Two girls are walking near a crowded market place talking and laughing but when they approach a quieter street they seem frightened and speak in whispers; Girl 1 whispers to Girl 2, that she is scared of being raped'. At this point I joked with Ylva, saying that it was unlikely that rape has such a high profile and I'd rather the voice originated from Tanzania. I suggested that instead of imagined scenarios we should allow issues of rapes to enter the story in a more credible form; that is, the voices have to originate from Tanzania. This proved reasonable in the end, because during our seven days filming in Tanzania we did not encounter a single girl or boy claiming they were afraid of being raped, nor did the teachers or elders in the community actually mention rape as being a social problem. According to my recollections, this first disagreement between Ylva and myself negatively influenced further discussions and eventually caused me to completely walk away from the project, only to come back as a facilitator/researcher at a later stage. It was therefore clear from the beginning that we were not using the same 'window-on-reality' and it was crucial for me to study the filters that informed all those working under RFSU's framework.

According to one report, the YMEP was born 'in response to two landmark conferences that brought issues of gender and sexual reproductive health to global attention.' One was the international conference on population development that took place in Cairo in 1994, and the other was the United Nation's Fourth World Conference in Beijing in 1995.[60] These conferences inspired RFSU to launch a reproductive health initiative targeting young men. The following rationale guided the initiative:

> The Young Men as Equal Partners programme is based on the belief that young men are important gatekeepers in promotion of safer sexual practices and preventing unwanted pregnancies, STIs/HIV and AIDS and gender based violence.
>
> Why? Because in most African societies men are in charge of making the decisions. For example, it is often men who decide when and how to have sex – and whether or not a protective method should be used. It is also common for men to decide when to have children, and how many. For that reason, women's access to and use of sexual and reproductive health services often depends upon their husbands' knowledge and decisions.[61]

Interestingly, Africa is immediately stigmatized as a continent where men are in charge of making decisions, as if it is the *only* place where patriarchy still reigns.

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[60] Link to report: http://www.rfsu.se/Bildbank/Dokument/ymep-pdfer/YMEPpresentation.pdf?epslanguage=en. Accessed, November 2013.
[61] same as above.

Nevertheless, in the present HIV/AIDS pandemic an interrogation of male dominance in sexual matters is of utmost importance and identifying an important area of intervention that is relevant and crucial in curbing HIV spread. RFSU's long-standing success in gender issues in Sweden is second to none, and extending their progressive modules to other parts of the world is seen as part of their human rights approach in campaigning for gender equality and women empowerment. It is undoubtedly a right step towards combating HIV spread, because gender equality validates the woman's voice in matters of sexuality. RFSU is a human-rights-based organization with a long history dating back to 1933 when its founder, Elise Ottesen-Jensen, campaigned for 'right to abortion and contraception, sex education in schools and the decriminalization of homosexuality'.[62] These are still the aims that shape the world-view of those implementing RFSU's policies.

Ottessen-Jensen's words have a special place on the RFSU's homepage, clarifying why it is morally correct to extend this ideal to other corners of the globe: 'I dream of the day when every newborn child is welcome, when men and women are equal, and when sexuality is an expression of intimacy, joy and tenderness'.[63] Originally the organization was funded through the sale of condoms, which is acknowledged on the homepage; 'in order to get the money for these controversial activities, they started selling condoms – and that's still the case today, after more than 75 years'.[64] Indeed, although RFSU is now predominantly funded by SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency) condom sale still plays a major role, and throughout the production of *Talking About Sex* a special emphasis was put on condom use. The film concludes with a monologue from parents who praise their daughter Neema for her efforts in distributing free condoms in the community.

RFSU takes pride in marketing different varieties of condoms and other sexual aids:

> RFSU Ltd tests, packs, markets and sells many different condoms. All products are of highest quality, they are both safe and thin and every product has a unique advantage. There is a condom for every need. In addition to condoms, RFSU Ltd also sells e.g. lubricants, intimate care products (e.g. intimate shaving gel and after shave), home test kits (e.g. pregnancy tests), and sexual aids (e.g. dildos and vibrators). Our products are sold in several European countries through own subsidiaries and agents. You can find the products in for example food stores, pharmacies, gas stations, on the web and kiosks.[65]

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[62] Source: http://www.rfsu.se/en/Engelska/About-rfsu/Our-History/. Accessed, June 2013.
[63] ibid.
[64] Source: http://www.rfsu.se/en/Engelska/About-rfsu/Our-History/. Accessed, June 2013.
[65] Source: http://www.rfsu.se/en/Engelska/Products/ Accessed, June 2013.

From RFSU's perspective, campaigning for condom use is an important task and, crucially, it is the moral standing presented in *Talking About Sex.* RFSU's code of ethics stipulates that 'those who work on behalf of RFSU also represent the organization's values, in accordance with RFSU's vision statement and the brand'.[66] It also states 'partners represent RFSU and Swedish values even during free time'.[67] RFSU's tremendous achievements cannot be fully acknowledged, but it is worth pointing out that RFSU contributes immensely in bringing a greater awareness about the diversity of human sexuality and in breaking taboo subjects. Their working framework reflects the high sexual freedom and equality enjoyed in Sweden by people of all sexual orientations, which is largely due to RFSU's 80 years of activism and lobbying worldwide. The RFSU worldview is articulated as an extremely agreeable ideal, which can and should be adopted by all women around the world:

> We think it is self-evident that contraception should be available to all. We think that women in other countries should be able to get an abortion in Sweden if it is illegal in their own country. We think that everyone in the world should have the right to decide over their own body and with whom, how and when they have sex. RFSU works with both development projects around the world and on sexual information in Sweden. We talk to both the UN and high school teachers. If you think like we do, join us and help. Through RFSU, you can have an impact.[68]

RFSU's approach is inherently humane but might be seen as desperately naïve, because even in many First World countries, the US being one of them, abortion is still a contested concept. On the other hand, by suggesting that Sweden is an open paradise for all women wanting to terminate pregnancies, RFSU continues lobbying for influence and sometimes has to fight ideological wars with those who oppose abortion and casual but safe sex. It is a common practice within the global HIV/AIDS discourse for NGOs to clearly map out their areas of expertise in order to stay in the highly competitive funding market. So far the YMEP idea reflects the funding opportunities that favour 'evidence-based education on sex and sexuality for adolescents and their access to sexual and reproductive health services' (WHO Report, 2011). RFSU unapologetically specifies their uniqueness in this field by pointing out that they have 'developed methods and accessible approaches that can facilitate change in other parts of the world'.[69] Their approach is distinctly explained

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[66]Source: http://www.rfsu.se/en/Engelska/International-Programmes/Approach-and-Code-of-Ethics/. Accessed, June 2013.
[67] ibid.
[68] Source http://www.rfsu.se/en/Engelska/About-rfsu/Influence-the-world/. Accessed, June 2013.
[69] Source: http://www.rfsu.se/en/Engelska/International-Programmes/Purpose/. Accessed, June 2013.

as human rights based, thereby legitimizing its expansion to poverty stricken areas of the world where humanity is not respected:

> Our objective is an equal world in which the individual rights of all people including women, homosexual, bisexual, transgender persons and the poverty stricken are respected. Our international development efforts aim to increase the conditions for productive work with SRHR, [Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights] issues in various countries through long-term cooperation with local partner organizations. In addition, these efforts focus on developing methods and accessible approaches that can facilitate change in other parts of the world. Through our advocacy and political efforts we strive to improve policies concerning sexual issues in general throughout the world.[70]

RFSU's overt political efforts to influence policies is implemented in many ways, and during the pre-production of *Talking About Sex* I had an opportunity to film a speech in Stockholm by the Tanzanian President, Jakaya Kikwete, particularly his message about HIV policy in general. He was very clear about not wanting younger primary school pupils burdened too early with sexual education, and more importantly he focused on poverty eradication as a priority. His speech was not useful for the film, however, and it was then decided that Ylva and myself should interview the first lady of Tanzania, who was invited to the RFSU headquarters in Stockholm. The aim was to obtain some 'useful' comments for the film, perhaps even a word of gratitude for RFSU's work. On the contrary, however, the first lady, Mama Salma Kikwete, did not share RFSU's First World post-feminist ideals, although she did praise them for the tremendous gender equality achievement in their own country. She was adamant that Tanzanians should not be pushed blindly in sexuality matters and proposed that a 'Tanzanian speed' should be adopted to allow local adjustments and expressions to ripen. She reminded Ylva that as RFSU has had over 75 years to 'talk about sex', similarly Tanzanians should be permitted space and time to do things *kitanzania* (in a Tanzanian way); after all Tanzania had other socio-historical experiences that were very different from Sweden. Her one-word response to legalizing abortion in Tanzania was *'makubwa!'*, which is Swahili slang expressing that the matter is more complicated that meets the eye. According to her, mimicking approaches designed in technologically advanced cultures risks misunderstanding, misapplication and alienation. The interview did not connect favourably with RFSU's fundamental values and visions, and Ylva, whose frame of reference was narrowed by RFSU's approaches and her own feminist values, failed to see the relevance of Mama Kikwete's assertions. Personally, I found Mama Salma Kikwete's point of view

[70] Source: http://www.rfsu.se/en/Engelska/International-Programmes/Purpose/. Accessed, June 2013.

reasonable and promptly wrote an article, *AIDS Starts Spreading Where Love Ends* (2007), which appeared in two Tanzanian newspapers, reminding the reading public that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is a joint responsibility and therefore over reliance on 'expert' advises from elsewhere might not always provide the best outcome.

In the article I emphasized that, no amount of foreign methodology or behavioural tool-kits, or even the availability of anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs), would save lives if fundamental moral values were not considered, such as the simple, common-sense attitude of treating others as one would like to be treated. By this time in 2007/2008 almost all Tanzanians were aware of how the infection spread, so the main issue was to scale up preventive measures and the personal responsibility of not spreading the virus knowingly. Moral responsibility was a big problem because it was alarming that many people were being infected in normal long-term heterosexual relationships, and indeed it seemed as if marriage itself was becoming a risk factor. According to TACAIDS (Tanzania Commission for AIDS), almost 6 percent of Tanzanian adults were living with the virus, over 50,000 died annually from AIDS, the number of AIDS orphans had reached 1.3 million and over 97 percent of spending on HIV/AIDS came from donors (TACAIDS, 2012: 1).

Each international donor has a priority area, values and visions, but since 2000 a development framework agreed by the UN guides all donor initiatives in designing projects, monitoring and evaluating. These are called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were adapted in September 2000 by 189 UN member states to 'guide the efforts of virtually all organizations working in development and have been commonly accepted as a framework for measuring development progress.' The eight MDGs are:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a Global partnership for Development (World Bank data [71])

The MDGs provide influential guidelines for all major donor organizations, including the RFSU whose YMEP framework reflected goal number three. However, the goals are not communicated beforehand to those targeted by development initiatives. This

[71] Source, http://data.worldbank.org/about/millennium-development-goals. Accessed, November 2013.

was confirmed during my pilot study when my group of Tanzanian women refused to watch *Talking About Sex*, which was concerned with gender equality and HIV, claiming they would rather watch the BIOGAS film because their priority was to put food on the table. What this showed is that some development initiatives do not reflect the priorities of those on the receiving end. In a documentary called *Keeping Africa Small* [2008], produced by a UK NGO called Worldwrite[72], some visibly angry Ghanaians complain that donors came to their slum area to teach about issues that were not of interest to them instead of helping them to rebuild a section that had burned down. Since funding is justified according to the UN development guidelines it is understandable that NGOs are keen to design and articulate projects that fit those agreed goals.

It is also reasonable to point out that there is competition for appropriate funding because of the sheer number of NGOs. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates that the International NGOs exceed thirty seven thousand in total (Polman, 2010:10). Needless to say, these NGOs are partly driven by their own instincts for survival, and choosing their goals in order to access bigger funding is part of their inbuilt strategies. In my 2007 article in the Tanzanian newspapers I also insisted that rather than totally relying on the mercy of donors, a genuine responsibility and empathy towards AIDS sufferers was equally essential because there was a danger of HIV/AIDS becoming just another trope of development. The pandemic had acquired a permanent address in Tanzania so the issue was to reduce the possibility of it becoming a hideous spectacle by those willing to exploit the epidemic for their own gains. *Talking About Sex,* in comparing Tanzania to Sweden, implicitly suggested that it was indeed deficiencies in Tanzanian traditions that were fueling the pandemic.

April R Biccum notes, in *Development and the 'New' Imperialism,* that how a problem is defined and narrated can alter the way it is dealt with. The 'lacking' paradigm, she says, 'has been consistent throughout development discourse from World War II and is consistent within colonial discourse and operates as a justification for the civilizing mission, of which the project of development is a continuation' (Biccum, 2005:1018). The universal narrative guiding the HIV/AIDS response is not only overloaded with technical jargon but even some of the more translatable aspects override what is socio-cultural specific, and this is what prompted Mama Salma Kikwete's statement

[72] Source: http://www.worldwrite.org.uk/keepingafricasmall/gisbyreview.html. Accessed, September 2013.

regarding implementation approach and speed: ‘it might be the same thing, but we say things differently in Tanzania’ (Kessy, 2007). As this assertion did not agree with RFSU’s guiding framework as far as *Talking About Sex* was concerned, it was felt the Tanzanian First Lady had said absolutely nothing ‘useful’ towards the project. Thus the interview was discarded, and the differences in approach between Ylva Bergman and myself became even more obvious and irreversible. At this point I decided to quit the project altogether.

Half a year later, in October 2007, I resumed discussions with Ylva after preliminary negotiations with the International Coordinator for RFSU, Staffan Uddeholt, who informed me that the ‘end by’ date of the money to document the YMEP project was approaching. Staffan sympathized with my way of seeing, as a Tanzanian and a documentary filmmaker and philanthropist, because he was well travelled in Africa and he even saw relevance in incorporating the elders’ opinions because they are the gatekeepers in rural communities. However, the issue of condoms was non-negotiable, and therefore conscious efforts had to be made to ensure that people of all ages were encouraged to use condoms. Staffan had a good understanding of Tanzanians in general and his first-hand knowledge of the YMEP project proved to be very useful, and therefore I agreed to temporarily adopt the RFSU filter so that the film could reflect what they deemed acceptable.

Staffan was extremely helpful and described the actual project location, which proved to be useful for logistic purposes as I could plan who to interview, where and when. Scouting for interview subjects was also greatly simplified by having prior knowledge of the positive comments they had already said, and therefore I only had to call them and explain that I needed those comments repeated on camera. Staffan also gave me mobile numbers of key persons and they all seemed keen to participate in the film because it meant continuity of the project. I also made calls to other important local Tanzanian contacts suggested to me by the project coordinators in Tanzania. These arrangements were made to ensure that even a ‘culturally blind’ person was able to communicate the message that RFSU required. This strategy was important because, coincidentally, the end date of *Talking About Sex* funding clashed with my own preparation for filming *Life Goes On: Voices From Cape Town,* scheduled for January and February 2008. (See Chapter 5) To circumvent this I agreed to a nine-day trip to Tanzania as facilitator/researcher, with a Swedish cameraman and Ylva as the producer/director who would then be responsible for the end content, as I would not be around for the post-production. Ylva had a clearer idea of the results

she wanted to achieve. My task was limited to securing a filming permit from the Tanzanian government, coordinating the interview process and logging rushes. Interview questions were to be designed by Ylva, with me interpreting and conducting the interview in Swahili. It was agreed that, on a daily basis I would meticulously log the scenes to ensure that there was adequate and relevant footage to structure the film later in Stockholm without further input from me.

Ylva suggested that because of budget restrictions only one trip could be made to the location, and that the three of us (Swedish cameraman Anders Liden, Ylva and myself) could spend only nine days in Tanzania, two of which would be spent on a safari to the famous Ngorongoro crater. This combination of parachute filming and safari tourism made it even more imperative that we obtained sufficient and relevant responses from the interviewees to match what RFSU needed. The strategy was to frame the questions in a way that did not invite digressions or contradictory comments from respondents, and therefore, to convince myself, I studied the YMEP baseline report before leaving Sweden to understand the pre-intervention assessment and the project design, implementation and evaluation. I also attended several useful Q&A sessions with visiting regional project coordinators from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Zambia who were very positive about the impact of YMEP.

For good measure, I proposed that we should include an interview with a 'sensational' YMEP educator, dubbed 'Mr Masturbation,' who was a teacher from another RFSU project in Southern Tanzania. 'Mr Masturbation' was seen as a pioneer because he was brave enough to take up the taboo subject in classrooms. From a YMEP perspective this was an outstanding achievement towards talking openly about sex in order to demystify some sexual practices. Luckily, I managed to call Leo (Mr Masturbation) before we left Stockholm and he happily agreed to take an overnight bus from Songea in Southern Tanzania to be interviewed at the Kikatiti project site in the North. His participation was important from a structural perspective because his voice served to validate the core argument that YMEP had indeed succeeded in breaking the silence about one of the most personal taboo subjects around sexuality. However, like all other respondents, Mr Masturbation's individual voice was not significant in terms of the script; rather he formed part of one enthusiastic voice that 'spoke about' the YMEP project to fit the a priori script, which never really left the boardroom in Sweden.

Structure and the eight claims

The film's message is proudly emblazoned on the DVD:

> The HIV/AIDS pandemic has already caused too much suffering. Experts know that stereotypical gender roles, macho attitudes and sexuality issues being taboo fuel the pandemic.
>
> It might shock the neighbours at first to see a man doing housework, but it makes life much sweeter and rewarding for all. The information project Young men as Equal partners YMEP, has changed people's lives in the four YMEP countries: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia - and it is focusing on men and sexuality.
>
> The film takes us to Kikatiti, in the Arumeru district in Tanzania. Teachers are learning to talk openly about sex and as a result pupils don't run the same risk of being infected by sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS. There has also been a dramatic drop in teenage pregnancy and condom use has increased. Parents are proud of their teenagers making a difference in their community, sexual violence is discussed more openly and young men are saying NO to irresponsible and harmful macho attitudes. Local and religious leaders are supportive because they do not want to lose another generation through lack of awareness - and they see the benefits of YMEP. As of 2007, it is estimated that 23 million people in Africa live with HIV. Experts say that if people don't start to talk about sex, the spread of HIV will never stop. (DVD cover, *Talking About Sex*, 2008)

Talking About Sex makes assertions and 'speaks about' existing social reality in Tanzania. Its aim is to show that Young Men as Equal Partner's project is a very effective tool in challenging 'harmful traditions.' The central message is that only breaking with primitive taboos and talking openly about sex will benefit the country and similar developing societies that are devastated by HIV/AIDS. The importance of 'equal partnership' is emphasized in the UN policy on traditional harmful traditions, reminding the international community that 'it is essential to improving communication between men and women on issues of sexuality and reproductive health, and the understanding of their joint responsibilities, so that men and women are equal partners in public and private life' (UN Fact Sheet,1995: 20). *Talking About Sex* therefore shows YMEP as a relevant sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) approach and justifies the intervention by focusing on positive achievements that are directly linked to it. Eight of these claims will guide this analysis:

(1) Teachers are learning to talk openly about sex
(2) Pupil's don't run the risk of being infected by STDs including HIV/AIDS
(3) There has been a dramatic drop in teenage pregnancy
(4) Condom use has increased
(5) Parents are proud that their teenage children are distributing condoms
(6) Young men are saying NO to sexual violence
(7) Irresponsible and harmful macho attitudes are on decline
(8) Local and religious leaders are supportive and see benefits of YMEP

The film opens with 44 seconds of testimonials from project participants who are not identified at this point because they are not speaking for themselves but for the project as a whole. This important sequence carries a 'documentary value' as the voices belong to a particular historical location at a particular time. A young man enthusiastically speaking in English (with subtitles) testifies how he has benefited from YMEP: 'before, I believed that if a woman didn't put food on the table, I could take a stick [cane] and punish her.' Then a teenage girl mimics YMEP's approach by saying that she too wants: 'women and men to be in one class –to be equal and have equal right.' The young man featured on the DVD cover image, Emmanuel Mbise, expands on YMEP's enlightening trajectory: 'after joining the project and getting knowledge, it helped me understand that if I help a woman it doesn't mean that I am ridiculing myself.' A teacher concludes this prelude by praising the YMEP input in her school: 'the pupils really enjoyed learning about their bodies, and for the first time, year 2007 we didn't have a single pupil who got pregnant in this school; and this is a miracle!' The screen fades into black and then a white text appears …I**t is a matter of life and death**, which fades out onto stereotypical wildlife scenery in order to situate the project in a specific geographical location.

'It is a matter of life and death' solemnly prepares the viewers on the seriousness and importance of the intervention and the offline narrator soon reveals the geographical location: 'Tanzania wildlife is world famous and thousands of tourists come here yearly with expectations for exciting safaris and cultural highlights' [0.46-01:02].Two cultural highlights are mentioned: (1) experiencing songs and dances and (2) watching the Maasai tribe who are a pride of Tanzania. The singing and dancing is substantiated by panning in a scene of singing women that we filmed in one of the village churches, and a stereotypical scene of a group of colorfully attired Maasai verifies the second cultural highlight most known to tourists. The narrator points out that Tanzania is 'a country known for its ancient history and traditions as well as the highest mountain in Africa: Kilimanjaro.' The Kilimanjaro Mountain is dutifully zoomed in and out to reveal a market shed in Kikatiti, and the viewer is now asked to leave behind the tourist gaze and enter Tanzania through the donor's gaze. The narrator's voice guides the gaze as images from various local areas accompany his dooming assertion that the HIV/AIDS situation is critical everywhere in Tanzania -except in Arumeru where YMEP intervention is ongoing:

> Behind the breathtaking nature lies a deadly threat to the local people. In year 2000 the president of Tanzania declared that HIV/AIDS is a national catastrophe that threatens the entire country. And despite the information about HIV and safe sex, it has only become worse.

> But in Arumeru district, something remarkable is happening.
> Unlike the rest of Tanzania, HIV cases are decreasing. Likewise the number of unwanted pregnancies has gone down. Sexual harassment in school has dropped and the use of condoms has increased a lot. The reason for this amazing development is called YMEP; a unique information that has really made a big change here. [from 01:16 to 02:00]

In less than a minute more than half of the eight claims are made: (a) HIV cases are decreasing; (b) sexual harassment in schools has dropped; (c) condom use has increased 'a lot'; (d) unwanted pregnancies have decreased; (e) YMEP is beneficial and an 'amazing development'. The film proper starts [02:20] by following a lady walking to her office and then identifying her as Edna J Lugano Site Coordinator, YMEP project, who picks up the narration: 'The unique thing with YMEP, is the issue of young men's involvement'. She claims that many other projects do not consider the involvement of men despite men being decision makers in all matters in life [02:18]. The film then moves to the young man who claimed he used a stick to beat women. His name is revealed as Ombeni Mbise, YMEP peer educator, and he starts by explaining how wrong his thought process was before YMEP*:* 'Myself, I believed that the issue of punishing women was correct' [02:28]. This he blames on the culture, claiming that he learnt from the traditional leaders that 'the man is the head of the family so that when the woman refuses to do something, you have to punish her' [02:40]. His monologue is accompanied with images of women and children in front of houses eating or just talking quietly to each other. The narrator's voice emphasizes here that 'because of the gender roles, men still have a lot of power over women' [02:47]. And to drive the point home, Ombeni Mbise's explanation of how this power is expressed in reality is superimposed on a scene of a group of seven men riding in a tractor: 'To show that he is a man he should has sex with a woman and make her pregnant' [02:54]. The structure of *Talking About Sex* is a simple film grammar with the narrator's voice and the talking heads providing the audio assertion while corresponding location images substantiate what is said. The designation of the talking heads also gives credibility to YMEP because it positions the 'voice' in social actors in a real community, carrying out a real project.

To show that (1) teachers are learning to talk openly about sex, a teacher from Olmotony primary school, Richard K Laizer explains that, the knowledge he received from YMEP is helping him to teach his pupils. Talking from a classroom and occasionally cheered by his pupils, Laizer explains that in the beginning he was afraid to teach about the subject but now he has matured into the role. He also claims that because of YMEP, no child got pregnant in 2007 [10:50-11:16].

The film points out that (2) pupil's don't run the risk of being infected by sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS by showing that the participants have a raised awareness and break silence about taboo subjects such as masturbation. Mr Masturbation (Leo Matao) is filmed during and after a class with attentive students, who are shown to be enjoying the discussions. Matao notes that the information from the YMEP project is beneficial for overall improvement of health to men and women [06:15- 07:09].

The film asserts that (3) there has been a dramatic drop in teenage pregnancy, in the opening sequence where a teacher speaking in an office with a globe in the background passionately states; 'for the first time, year 2007 we didn't have a single pupil who got pregnant in this school and this is a miracle' [00:37-00:44]. Later in the film the head teacher, Mrs Rehema Limu, acknowledges YMEP's input by recounting the journey to this miraculous success. She describes how the whole community first rejected the YMEP approach because of the prevailing cultural beliefs. She explains that the teachers also initially dismissed YMEP as 'an abusive, insulting education and not appropriate for the pupil's, they totally refused it.' [03:25-03:52] According to her, this attitude changed after two male teachers participated the YMEP training and

started to teach energetically in the classrooms, and their enthusiasm led other teachers to be interested to know the contents of YMEP project. [05:06-05:29] This proved to be very significant because the pupils didn't know much about themselves and 'some didn't even know about their secret parts' [06:50-06:14]. Limu's message is inserted strategically to support the underlying theme of 'before' and 'after' YMEP.

A local doctor, Christian Sirikwa, corroborates the notion that (4) condom use has increased by comparing the concerns of the youth before and after the YMEP input. 'Before the project, the number of patients with sexual transmitted disease was very high. Now it has reduced.' Siriwa insists that this is because the youth have been educated about proper condom use [08:42-09:06].

Showing that (5) parents are proud that their teenage children are distributing condoms, a father, Peter Pallangyo, whose daughter Neema is a YMEP participant, explains that after finding out that his daughter was taking part in distributing condoms he realized how this was beneficial to her and the whole community. Neema's mother, Katherine adds with a smile: 'I am thankful that my daughter Neema is participating in this project, because it will help her and her fellow youth to stay alive' [09:40-10:14].

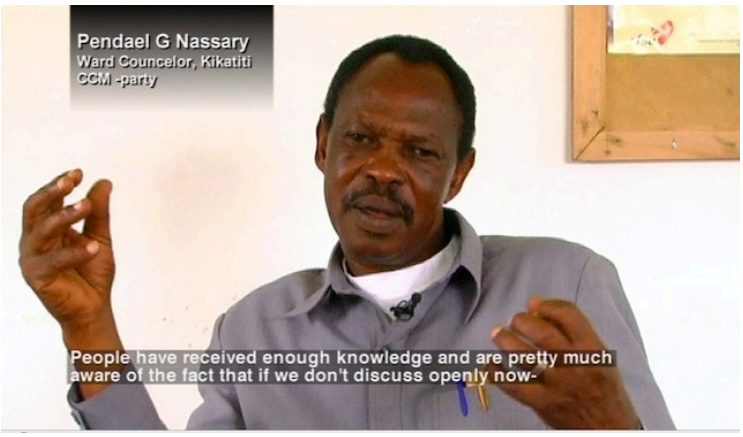
To demonstrate that (6) young men are saying NO to sexual violence, (rape was never mentioned) the film turns to a young man who has already revealed in the opening sequence that before YMEP he believed man had a right to cane a woman who didn't put food on the table [00:01-00:14]. The young man is now shown to be Ombeni Mbise, a YMEP peer educator who explains that the wrong beliefs were learnt from the traditional leaders: 'the man is the head of the family so that when the woman refuses to do something, you have to punish her' [02:24-02:42]. Chatting with two women on a bench, he asserts: 'It is not good for men to stay in the traditional beliefs. They should change. We can see that both men and women do get more advantages once men change from traditions' [10:33-10:49].

To illustrate that men are changing and (7) irresponsible and harmful macho attitudes are on decline, Emmanuel Mbise (not related to Ombeni) and his wife are used several times. In the opening sequence Emmanuel asserts that: 'After joining the project and getting knowledge it helped me understand that if I help a woman it doesn't mean I am ridiculing myself' [00:22-00:31]. To emphasize his rejection of macho attitude in the community Emmanuel is later shown performing various untraditional men chores. Whilst busy making the bed, he says 'the root of HIV is the lack of openness concerning sexuality and gender roles. But my generation is ready

to talk openly about it' [08:25-08:35]. Next he is shown helping his wife in the kitchen whilst the narrator intones: 'There is no guarantee that YMEP will solve the health and gender problems in Africa, but it is one of the most successful projects so far and hopefully it can be a start of a bigger movement and in the future it can spread through the whole continent' [10:17-10:33]. At the end of the film Emmanuel and his wife Neema are shown walking slowly towards their house. Neema explains that neighbours were shocked at the beginning, but nowadays they are actually following their example. They enter their house giggling with affection and the film fades out. Before end credits, Emmanuel is faded in again saying with a big smile that in the beginning he found washing and cooking extremely difficult to do [11:19-11:39].

In an earlier sequence a Muslim cleric, Ramadhani Mfinanga, and the ward councilor, Pendael Nassary, appear in the film to substantiate that (8) local and religious leaders are supportive and see benefits of YMEP. The narrator explains that religious traditions can be an obstacle for effective sex and gender information [03:55 -04:07]. Mfinanga however assures us: 'changes will happen but it will take a long time'. Sexuality education is very important because majority of young people do not know much about various disease or how their bodies function [04:50-05:05].

The *local leader* theme is represented through the ward councillor Pendael Nassary, who confirms that talking about sex is absolutely necessary otherwise 'the consequences will be disastrous' [09:15-09:28].



This chapter has demonstrated how *a* truth can be asserted by implanting the donor's strategy through a documentary representation, whether the format is 'documentation' or a documentary proper. The strategies applied in *Talking About Sex* are paradigmatic in most donor gaze productions because the NGO vision influences what can be said, and how. I have shown how the story was treated a priori in Stockholm, and how the beneficiaries of the YMEP were eager to respond according to RFSU's preferred framework. Emmanuel Mbise, for instance, unknowingly carries the whole underdeveloped/developed ideology on his shoulders by demonstrating that civility between men and women is lacking in underdeveloped African traditions. His space is configured according to Swedish post-feminist filters. Without hesitation Mbise demonizes traditions without mentioning one single positive aspect of the culture that he and his wife are able to embrace so proudly. This is 'self-orientalization' and perhaps the correct word would be palimpsests because the donor gaze overwrites the diversity of truths existing in the recipient community.

Production issues and analysis

RFSU's human-rights approach guided the entire filming process and all questions were stated in a way that affirmed the Swedish worldview about sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). RFSU's self-interest as an organization was to expand internationally and for this they were asking the Swedish government 'to

allocate at least ten percent of its total foreign aid toward SRHR initiatives'.[73] The Young Men as Equal Partner project was important in this process and this was the attitude that we all adopted. Although the project was in essence an SRHR initiative targeting young men and women, in Kikatiti community the health (HIV) angle took precedence and gave the project another context, both in terms of seriousness and acceptance in a community that until now had not had to openly 'talk about sex'. Analytically, NGOs increasingly use HIV/AIDS as a trope for underdevelopment, and it is a well-known phenomenon in Tanzania that some local NGOs commission professional proposal writers conversant with the buzzwords of the aid industry in order to increase the likelihood of being granted the funds for 'development'.

Kikatiti was a typical semi-rural community between Kilimanjaro and Arusha, with picturesque hills, donkey driven carts and cheerful people who seemed to know everybody else.

Kikatiti.
Still image
from the film.

By all counts, this was a small community with few cases of HIV/AIDS and my initial scepticism was; 'Why Kikatiti? Why was this community chosen instead of a big city like Arusha or Dar es Salaam where HIV prevalence is higher and benefits much more remarkable?' When I interviewed the RFSU regional director in Tanzania he told me:

> YMEP was not a HIV/AIDS project it was more on SRHR (sexuality, gender & HIV inclusive) project targeting behaviours of young men and for that reason it was not necessary to be implemented in high prevalence areas. That phase of YMEP was a scale-up of pilot phase (2000 - 2002) from which UMATI had rationale for picking Kikatiti so the last phase 2005 - 2009 was a scale-up.

[73] Source: http://www.rfsu.se/en/Engelska/Sex-and-Politics/SRHR-and-Swedish-Foreign-Aid/. Accessed, June 2013.

> Now we are implementing TMEP - Tanzanian Men as Equal Partners - a gender transformative project promoting male involvement in SRHR - a brother to YMEP. We are in Rukwa and Singida - regions that used to be marginalized. (Maendaenda Interview, 2013)

Maendaenda was a medical doctor initially employed by UMATI (Uzazi na Malezi Bora Tanzania) 'an autonomous, not for profit, non-political voluntary national NGO providing Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) education, information and services in Tanzania'.[74] From his response it is clear YMEP is an acceptable 'laboratory test' that can be stretched in many directions as long as there are funds to support its continuity. Maendaenda claims that YMEP/UMATI cooperation targeted communities such as Kikatiti not because of high prevalence of HIV but for the fact that it is a 'marginalized' community. In Tanzania the project was being implemented by UMATI, which is the largest and oldest organization responsible for sexual health in the country. I had long discussions with the local UMATI manager Edna Lugano at the RFSU Head quarters in Stockholm and her day-to-day cooperation in Kikatiti was invaluable. She took us to all the filming sites and automatically became part of the film crew: she appears as a researcher in the credits. Edna was well regarded in the community and the participants behaved with utmost respect in her presence. Many were keen to show how 'enlightened' they have become since participating in YMEP.

All participants claimed that YMEP had positively changed their attitudes and they were 'ambassadors' of the good news.

Ylva framed the questions in a way that prompted the respondents to agree that they have benefited from the project. And of course they had, because not only did they have more information about modern equal relationships but their chances of being infected by HIV was reduced. At a more cynical level the benefit was also monetary, because participants of donor-sponsored projects are paid daily allowance and in a small community like Kikatiti with limited income generating activities YMEP was indeed very beneficial. However, documenting in such a straightforward and un-

[74] UMATI http://www.umati.or.tz/servicesoffered.php. Accessed, June 2013.

nuanced manner only played into old stereotypes of negatively comparing cultures as we used the Swedish model as the yardstick and asked the respondents to condemn the prevailing traditions. Praise was duly made about YMEP and care was taken to ensure that the responses looked credible. Filming the younger, eager participants was easier because to some degree they believed in every word they said.

Participants also claimed they had abandoned 'harmful traditions.'

Some of the older respondents, however, were not as keen and we had to remind them what they had said in the written report. Answers were fed to some, as the case of the school principal Mrs Limu who repeated word by word what Ylva wrote on a piece of paper. After many retakes, the principal asserted that the school did not have a single case of pregnancy, which was a miracle, thanks to YMEP. [00:46]. This powerful statement is placed at the beginning of the film and also appears in the official trailer. We spent an incredibly long time filming her, trying to make her statement look credible as she kept bursting into laughter.

All in all the sub-text of *Talking About Sex* was to show Kikatiti's transformation from an otherwise 'marginalized' community into a modern, condom-using society and this is substantiated by 'approving' voices of parents whose daughter distributes free condoms. The film boasts that 'proud' parents are supporting their children to distribute free condoms in the community and save life. In actual fact the 'proud'

statement was made only by one couple who put on their ‘Sunday best’ for the interview. Their view is presented in a sense of ‘one parent’ is ‘all parents.’

RFSUs ambition to export a Swedish gender relationship model to a rural Tanzanian community meant that First World and Third World actuality were juxtaposed. What *Talking About Sex* did was to verify how YMEP had ‘shown the light’ and the project participants were very eager to contribute positive information that would help to present a coherent documentation of how the Swedish initiative had helped change the community, just as the experts’ reports claimed. The project was significant in many ways because it provided activities for the youth and the daily fees were well-needed income. Two of the participants even offered to respond in English to impress the *Wazungu* (white European) donors, despite the fact they struggled to understand the questions and their inarticulate answers had to be subtitled in post-production. I had insisted from Stockholm that respondents should be allowed to speak in Swahili because it is the first language and it would allow the speaking subjects to express themselves better. Any Tanzanian knows all too well that the level of English in the country is not sufficient for a secondary school leaver to freely conduct a conversation in English, let alone articulate an idea as complex as YMEP, HIV or gender relations.

Throughout the filming process I could see how the power imbalance between donor and recipients influenced what could be said. Respondents immaculately repeated the suggested answers in very credible manner, even though at times giggles were hard to fight, in which case they were asked to repeat. Condoms were spoken about in a most positive way as part of RFSU’s marketing strategy, and *Talking About Sex* did not include voices that opposed condom use such as the church leaders. Promoting condoms was central and Erik Centerwall and Stefan Laack’s first book on YMEP, which was funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, points out that

everyone involved should strive to make condom 'talk-able' (2008: 114). I met both Erik and Stefan on various occasions in Stockholm and they emphasized that ethically the condom talk was non-negotiable. In Tanzania the condom talk however is still shrouded with many negative myths and those openly confessing to using condoms are seen as promiscuous and unable to be faithful to one partner. Whilst in Kikatiti I silently witnessed a 'condom war' as a group of older women watching us film a neighbouring young couple (Emmanuel and Neema Mbise) hurled insults at us, calling condoms 'satanic' and ridiculed the couple as *wapambe* (puppets). The couple responded by promptly dismissing them as *washamba* (a derogatory term for pre-modern, literally meaning a primitive rural dweller). As a Tanzanian, I was able to detect many other sceptical voices from the grown-ups in the communities and I proposed to Ylva that we at least include some of their comments in order to balance the story and avoid orchestrated monologues. Her answer is recalled in an email interview on 14th June 2013:

> I remember you were critical that we did not find opposing voices, that criticized the project, I am sure we could have found that if we had double the time in Tanzania, and aimed at it being a full documentary, however that would have meant someone working on funding for a year or two, before starting. I think you might remember us talking about this? We did try to fund it initially, but did not have resource to put aside and work with this. Earlier on we tried to pitch the idea of a documentary to BBC first, they liked the idea, but then nothing happened. Maybe that would have been a film more to your liking, and something more fundamentally critical. (Ylva, interview, 2013)

According to Ylva, *Talking About Sex* is not a proper 'documentary' but simply 'documentation' of a project, because sufficient resources could not be mobilized for the production of a balanced and critical text. Indeed, the 'documentation' film is only twelve minutes long, but it does make truth claims about how-things-really-are in Tanzania. *Talking About Sex* is a visual statement telling the viewer that the Swedish gender equality initiative is unproblematic, successful and desirable for further application in other marginalized communities, as Maendaenda's statement confirmed. During the filming of *Talking About Sex* we did not engage with the subjects to find anything about their individuality. In Sembene Ousmane's words, the subjects were treated 'as if they were insects' because their own voices were divorced from their subjectivities and they only functioned as a voice to promote YMEP. As I have discussed in chapter one, documentary itself defies simple definition and to say whether *Talking About Sex* is a documentary or not 'lies in the mind of the beholder' as Nichols proposes (Nichols, 2010: 33). According to Nichols, a text is documentary if it speaks (a) about reality, (b) about real people, (c) telling stories about what really happened (ibid: 33) *Talking About Sex* made truth

assertions about a socio-historical actuality in Tanzania and can therefore be considered a documentary representation because it used witness testimonies.

In the twenty-first century, particularly in the HIV affected areas, ad hoc documentaries use witnesses to produce what Brian Winston calls ‘documentary value’ in the post-Griersonian digital era (2013:24). Witness testimonials are crucial in reporting and evaluating various HIV/AIDS interventions, and YMEP is not an exemption. During filming I tuned into the donor worldview, knowing that it was crucial for achieving the goals of the film. Recently in 2013 I explained to Ylva that the power of the donor gaze did influence the filming process to which she retorted:

> Did you really think this was so bad, racist and colonial? I don't understand that you did want to join?’ Finally it seems you believe people on this film were pure propaganda, rubbish to get more aid? But you helped us pick them? In pre interviews, remember? As you knew evaluation reports also are based on interviews with people, combined with targets and results, so is the ‘truth’ in the findings, or what people whisper behind someone’s back, or in between? What should be told about a project? What went wrong? Or what might work? (Ylva, interview, 2013)

As Ylva suggests, donor evaluation reports are to a certain extent based on actuality interviews with the beneficiaries of development projects, but as a filmmaker the actual success of the YMEP approach was not a real concern for my part then or now, and the interview subjects were simply chosen by me to realise the producer’s plan and help to assert that YMEP was indeed a success. My analysis of the film’s content, structure and direction shows that this central argument is communicated through the talking heads, but the local space is simply used as a background to give a we-have-been-there ‘documentary value.’ From the producer’s point of view *Talking About Sex* successfully communicated the donor’s message. However, having been part of the production team but not part of the donor’s ‘team’ I am able to offer a more critical perspective on the way documentary techniques were actually employed, as opposed to a post hoc textual analysis based only on an aesthetic evaluation and ‘an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be of a text’ (McKee, 2003:70).

Chapter Five: Donor gaze in action: Whose voice is it?

Introduction

Only the wearer knows where the shoe hurts!
(An English proverb)

Asking whose 'voice' is heard is integral to any challenge to the donor gaze. Bill Nichols notes that 'voice' is a 'measure of how a filmmaker responds to and speaks about the world he or she shares with us' (2011: 69). Structurally, voice reveals power dynamics, the filmmaker's relationship to the filmed subjects and also the proximity to the shared toolkit for making sense of reality. As I have shown in previous chapters, power inequality allows the donor gaze to 'speak about' the subjects and their reality according to an a priori script. 'Speaking nearby' the subjects, on the other hand, is a position that includes the perspective of the filmed subjects but where meaning is still interpreted to suit intentions of the filmmaker and/or the sponsors. A third, and ideal, position for challenging the donor gaze is 'speaking with' the subjects, where reality is configured from the perspectives of the ones experiencing it. Choosing a speaking position, however, is not an easy task as Jay Ruby points out in *Speaking For, Speaking About, Speaking With, or Speaking Alongside –An Anthropological and Documentary Dilemma* (1991). He notes that the advent of portable synchronous sound film technology allows the filmmaker to empower the filmed subjects through the use of on-camera interviews, but also that the off-screen voice of authority has now moved into the frame as 'expert witnesses' subtitled with their pedigree and thus empowered to speak *the* truth [emphasis added]. This, he says, 'needs to be tempered by the lived experiences of the subjects and their views of themselves.' It marks a shift in 'speaking with' instead of 'speaking for.' However, this shift is still more illusionary than actual, because, 'while new voices are heard, traditional forms of authorship have not been significantly altered' (Ruby, 1991:54).

This chapter will examine the speaking position in three documentaries; *Miss HIV* (speaking nearby), *Hyena Square* (speaking about), and *Life Goes On: Voices From Cape Town*, (speaking with) to show the ideological and practical considerations that make challenging the donor gaze a difficult if not almost impossible task. Due to the

largely Western response to HIV/AIDS the pandemic has become a socio-historical actuality that places unprecedented power in donor's hands, allowing them to dictate the ideological and biomedical stance that activist documentaries should produce. *Miss HIV* and *Hyena Square* take up HIV/AIDS from two different ideological positions and discussing them will draw attention to various manifestations of the 'voice' that dominate this concrete social-historical situation. I will highlight the ideological underpinnings of the HIV/AIDS discourse, unpacking practical reasons that influence the non-profit filmmaker's choices of location, subjects and narrative structure. In representing HIV/AIDS certain signifiers, such as slums/extreme poverty, prostitutes, drug injectors, thugs and other deviants, are seen in advance as contextually necessary narrative devices because HIV/AIDS reality 'speaks' through a highly polarized ideology (Green, 2003). For good or ill, visually representing the HIV/AIDS pandemic is also burdened with racial signification, as noted by former UNAIDS director Dr. Peter Piot that 'when we think of AIDS, it's Africans, black people and so in that sense there is probably that racist undertone.'[75] According to UNAIDS and WHO statistics, of the estimated 35 million people living with HIV in the world 25 million of them live in sub-Saharan-Africa compared to the 260,000 in North Africa and Middle East put together.[76]

The commonsense approach by aid agencies and their filmmakers is therefore to represent the epidemic in a feel-sorry-for-Africans manner; a dominant paradigm which is challenged in a groundbreaking book *Rethinking AIDS Prevention: Learning From Successes in Developing World* (2003) by a Harvard medical anthropologist Dr. Edward Green. Among other things the book dispels the racist myths about 'African promiscuity' by presenting the case study of Uganda, the only country in the world that succeeded in significantly reducing the HIV infection by changing sexual behaviour. Green notes that the racial stereotyping ignores positive cases such as Uganda because many AIDS experts think that 'in the tropics, in these little villages, there is little else to do but to have sex. It's all they have for recreation' (2003: 87). According to Green, those working with HIV/AIDS 'fall into thinking and operating within certain paradigms, which become mindsets, which in turn erect blinders to ideas and evidence that falls outside –or contradict the prevailing paradigm' (Green, 2003: 5-6).

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[75] UNAIDS comment http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/1527599.stm. Accessed, December 2013.
[76] Fact sheet. http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/campaigns/globalreport2013/factsheet/. Accessed, December 2013.

Pointing out what motivates acceptance of a particular paradigm, Green says that 'there are powerful economic interests and related political forces at work guiding the allocation of billions of dollars. Science, reason, and plain common sense can all become forgotten in face of such consideration and forces' (Green, 2003: 5). For these reasons I interviewed the directors of *Miss HIV* (Jim Hanon) and *Hyena Square* (Lars Johansson) in order to understand their perspective. It is beyond question that although they needed to 'butter their bread,' their intentions were morally well meaning: as privileged, white, middle class males with tools of representation they felt they were in a position to help 'empower African women with a voice' (Hanon interview, 2012: 2). As usual, the donor's intention is fundamentally well meaning too. For example, Hanon explains that the Christian donors who sponsored Miss *HIV* 'had heard Dr. Edward Green speak about US AIDS policy being imposed on African woman in what they saw as an incredible injustice. The first interviews we did were with Dr. Green and Dr. Hearst, both secular epidemiologists who argued to include abstinence education as part of an overall strategy' (ibid: 4). It is therefore not surprising that structurally, Green and other white experts hijack the 'voice' and the film simply 'speaks nearby' the HIV beauty contestants to show that well-dressed individuals in red-carpeted AIDS conferences set up the HIV/AIDS 'tune,' and the voiceless sufferers on the bottom adjust accordingly. The HIV beauty pageant is portrayed in such a context but Hanon believes that the contestants are inherently empowered: 'Some of the contestants might do this in order to try to create opportunity for themselves with sponsors, but most do it because they want to call attention to the great need to make HIV/AIDS visible and to not judge and marginalize the infected' (Hanon 2012, interview: 4).

Empowering 'powerless' and 'voiceless' black African women with a voice is, however, the standard assertion made by many Western activists overwhelmed by moral responsibility, who adopt the 'traditional journalistic role as protector of the powerless and fearless confronter of the powerful' (Winston, 1988: 44). However, these 'noble intentions' can only be expressed within the paradigm of the funding organizations, which is only to be expected because it would be unwise to 'pistol whip the hand that holds the wallet,' as Grierson famously stated. The third documentary, analyzed in this chapter, *Life Goes On: Voices From Cape Town*, was fully financed by the filmmakers, Anna Larsson and myself, and shows other issues arising when the reality of the cultural Other is not configured through intentionality on the part of the filmmakers. The film was made during a one-year study at the Red Cross Media School in Stockholm in an attempt to challenge the dominant paradigm

of ‘speaking for and about’ Africans. We aimed instead for a film that would ‘speak with’ them. Without a preconceived synopsis we spent two months in Cape Town listening, and in the end we discovered that even filming a slum from the perspective of those living there could provide more human similarities than differences. Our ethical approach was not to objectify our film subjects, and as we explored the human similarities the need for a single truthful story disappeared and our film ‘spoke with’ diverse human voices to reveal some of the many parallel truths that we found in Cape Town. The section analyzing *Life Goes On* is called *and then there were none*, because once we rejected differences and interpretation of an ‘alien’ reality the human story became one. We were neither motivated by pity towards the people we met nor were we obliged to fulfill a donor’s intention and tell a particular story.

The donor gaze asks us to differentiate, objectify and assume that ‘we’ are normal and the ‘Others’ deserve our pity and intervention because they lack the same material comforts that are universally prescribed by the development discourse. Erving Goffman asserts that an objectifying relationship arises between those considering themselves to be ‘normal’ and those attributed with ‘undesired different-ness’ based on assumption of the latter’s inferiority (Goffman,1968:15). The differentiating paradigm is central in the HIV/AIDS story and many western activists are particularly drawn to sub-Saharan Africa by good intentions to represent ‘vulnerable’ African women. As the American ethnographic director of Miss *HIV* puts it: ‘African women in general do not have access and training to participate in media discourse, in the same way they may not be able to have a say in the policies of their own countries or even among their own families’ (Hanon Interview, 2012:1). Green and Herling (2006) challenge this feel-sorry-for-African worldview in *Paradigm Shift and Controversy in AIDS Prevention* arguing that: ‘African women have more power than they are given credit for’. Their findings indicated that ‘between 75 percent and 92 percent of Ugandan women say they can refuse sex, or sex without a condom, for reasons such as suspecting that their husband has an STI (sexually transmitted disease) or is unfaithful’ (ibid: 28). The feel-sorry-for-Africans worldview however, dominates HIV/AIDS documentaries, and this ‘victim hood’ genre can be traced to Griersonian roots, as Brian Winston notes: ‘the impulse to social amelioration which is a central element in Griersonian rhetoric’ has become a major part of the great documentary tradition’ (1988: 34).

Grierson’s propagandist ambition for a better and more just society, says Winston, would inevitably lead to ‘the constant, repetitive and ultimately pointless exposure of

the same set of social problems on the television in the West night after night' (Winston, 1988: 35). Some HIV/AIDS related documentaries do not fulfill the initially proposed intention of addressing HIV stigma or empowering African women with voices because they are predominantly shown to Western audience whose need for such narratives are questionable, and it is also questionable if showing these films in European film festivals is empowering for Africa whatever credit this may give to the filmmaker. *Darwin's Nightmare*, which is discussed in the introduction chapter, has never been shown in Tanzania where it might perhaps provoke thoughts towards homegrown solutions for the depicted social ills. The same applies to *Hyena Square*, which was supposedly targeted at 'the general Tanzanian public' (Larsson Interview, 2010: 1) but so far it has only been shown in the West. It was later uploaded on social media, YouTube and Vimeo, which are not accessible to the majority of Tanzanians. Apart from a small appearance fee or a promise for future aid, what do such films offer the 'victims' they depict? As Winston notes, 'by choosing victims, documentarists abandon the part supposedly played by those who comment publicly on society (the watchdogs of the guardian power)'. This means that, 'in almost any documentary situation, the filmmakers are always the more powerful partner.' However, 'the moral and ethical implications of this development are not only ignored; they are dismissed as infringements of filmmakers' freedoms' (Winston, 1988:43).

Among other things, this study has generally sought to examine the complexities of power imbalance in documentary representation, and the donor gaze concept has so far identified the ethical and ideological frameworks that authorize and support 'victim hood' narratives about Africa. The three films analyzed in this chapter will broaden the discussion of the donor gaze to show that ethics and morality sometimes converge. Through examination of the voice of each film I will show to what extent the filmmakers share their 'freedoms' with the subjects of the documentary. Non-profit filming has become a way of living for some activist documentary filmmakers, and sometimes moral and ethical considerations can be forgotten in face of sponsorship considerations. Such considerations influenced *Hyena Square* to 'speak about' HIV/AIDS reality in Tanzania through the usual template of victim hood, whereas *Miss HIV* 'speaks nearby' in a complex narrative structure juxtaposing Botswana and Uganda's responses to HIV/AIDS but nevertheless foregrounding the voice of the American Christian donors. The Butterfield Memorial Foundation financed the 750,000 dollar production, undoubtedly expecting the film to be in

harmony with 'the tenets of the Free Methodist Church of North America'.[77] (In fact, the contribution of black Africans in *Miss HIV* is disempowered by word-by-word fade-in subtitles in the middle of the screen despite the fact that they all articulated themselves in a good English.) My own film *Life Goes On: Voices From Cape Town* was an experiment to 'speak with' and has implications for a 'gaze less' representation. This chapter asks: Whose voice is it? Jay Ruby proposes that documentary filmmakers and anthropologists go even further and ask: 'With what intention, in what "language" and in what environment?' (1991: 50).

We come as friends: 'Speaking nearby' the women on the platform [*Miss HIV*]

> *I firmly believe that we need to expand the coalition of constituencies that are fighting AIDS, building new alliances, being less purist, and moving out of our narrow circle of AIDS 'bureaucrats' and activists.*[78]
>
> Peter Piot, UNAIDS, 2006

Geographically, the HIV/AIDS reality is firmly situated in sub-Saharan Africa because the majority of infected people live there and this narrows the selection of filming locations for those like Jim Hanon who venture to represent aspects of the pandemic or its victims. As Peter Piot points out, 'when we think of AIDS, it's Africans, black people'.[79] The task of visually representing the HIV/AIDS story therefore seems quite simple because the HIV/AIDS discourse is already burdened with overwhelming textual and visual evidence, giving the filmmakers and their audience a preconceived perception of how-things-should-be. For those willing to 'get their hands dirty' and to some extent engage with how reality *is* and not what is *should be*, the task is complicated and entails being open to other perspectives and truths. Jim Hanon attempts to do this in *Miss HIV*. In most cases however, representing the pandemic

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[77] Miss HIV sponsors: http://www.butterfieldfoundation.org/WhoWeAre/MissionandVision.aspx. Accessed, February 2014.
[78] Peter Piot's Speech: http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/dataimport/pub/speechexd/2006/20060309_sp_piot_woodrowwilson_en.pdf. Accessed, February 2014.
[79] ibid.

begins and ends in the western boardrooms of the AIDS fraternity, or as Peter Piot put it, our narrow circle of AIDS "bureaucrats" and activists'. Producing cross-cultural meaning within such confines resonates well with Grierson's concept that 'the essential virtues of the noble savage have been declared and can be more easily declared again, and no one will deny them' (Hardy, 1966: 151). However, representing the complexities of HIV/AIDS in simplistic visual depictions is problematic and it is not surprising that many activist filmmakers inadvertently trivialize the pandemic by producing stereotypical feel-sorry-for-Africans text that reinforces the importance of the institutions involved in the response and undermine the voices of the sufferers.

Miss HIV does not escape this trap, however, because the film constructs its central argument using a succession of 'experts' – all white, male and Western who explain the predicament of the African women. No doubt inadvertently, because adhering to 'documentary form', Hanon's film in this way reproduces the familiar paradigm of white men bringing wisdom to 'rescue' black African victims. Here the 'victimhood' stance is presented not visually, but contextually. A segmented interview with Edward Green (*Rethinking AIDS*) glues *Miss HIV* in a complex and thought-provoking documentary that shows how the whole sub-Saharan Africa became 'casualties' in the AIDS policy wars. Hanon's a priori intention was to provoke thoughts about the conflicting AIDS policies, which he claims are created from a 'predominantly western homosexual context:'

> I would say that *MISS HIV* represents a small and limited example of African women who by themselves do not represent the whole because they were selected from two sides of a polarized policy struggle. Yet, do their stories represent a truth that has bearing, insight and effective commentary on the whole? I believe so, because the questions their stories raise serve all African women. 1) Can we face the stigma of HIV/AIDS and affirm and help the afflicted who have it and more effectively prevent it from spreading? 2) Is it right that AIDS policies created from a predominantly western homosexual context be applied to African women? (Hanon Interview, 2012: 2).

Despite the title, *Miss HIV* is not a simplistic narrative about the annual anti-HIV stigma beauty pageant that was started in Botswana in 2002 by an HIV-positive activist, Kesego Basha-Mubeli. The pageant is only one of the stylistic devices used in *Miss HIV*. Mubeli claims that the idea of a beauty pageant for HIV-positive women was conceived 'as a fun way to educate people about the need to erase stigma'.[80] The pageant is usually held at a glamorous location, attracting a good number of

[80] Miss HIV background information: http://www.kaiserhealthnews.org/daily-reports/2005/march/01/dr00028384.aspx. Accessed, December 2013.

enthusiasts and media representatives, and it has since spread to other countries such as Nigeria, Russia, Nepal and Uganda.[81] In Botswana the pageant has gained public support and financial backing from various sources including banks such as Barclays, diamond mining company De Beers, cell phone companies, airlines and local churches.[82] Hanon uses the pageant to contrast the varying responses from organizations that position HIV/AIDS either as primarily an issue of human rights or as requiring a conservative behaviour change approach based on abstinence and faithfulness.

This is done in a non-condescending visual or audio tone, which is not surprising because as an ethnographic filmmaker Hanon claims that he 'pursues stories as a respectful, engaging exploration of meaning'.[83] A closer reading of *Miss HIV* however reveals that some voices are treated 'more respectfully' than others. For example, his decision to subtitle all African subjects except the Ugandan anti-gay activist Pastor, Martin Ssempa leaves no doubt that the watchful gaze of the Christian donors directs his 'exploration of meaning.' Ssempa is presented as charismatic and likeable religious leader with thousands of followers, many of them university students. He enters the story to support the faith-based approach and directly mocks the human-rights activists:

> People accuse me of being homophobic. I say gosh right! You know what I find? I find that these guys have irrational fear of abstinence. I mean they are paranoid. When I say the word abstinence they go aaaarggg…Stop! And do you know what gets them riled up? Speak about being faithful in marriage. They will want to pull their hair out. Stop! Don't tell us marriage. They are abstinophobic and they are matriphobic [43:20-44:10].

[81] Countries: http://www.christiannewstoday.com/Christian_News_Report_461.html. Accessed, December 2013.
[82] Sponsorship: http://www.kaiserhealthnews.org/daily-reports/2005/march/01/dr00028384.aspx Accessed, December 2013.
[83] Hanon: http://blog.jimhanon.com/about/bio/. Accessed, December 2013.

Furthermore, *Miss HIV* employs a distinctive narrative style of undermining a spoken comment with conflicting images to create a 'third something,' thus interrupting the logical continuity. A typical example is when one of the contestants happily talks about how she will charm the audience, '*I will dance, I will do everything on stage to attract them*' [26:00], bizarrely, the camera pans into an open grave [26:07].

As she cheerfully continues to speculate about the audience's surprise to her HIV disclosure, we are shown a group of sad-looking women huddled around a wooden coffin, followed with a medium shot of a dead woman, and the camera lingers on a close up of the motionless face. After the dead woman is covered and then carried away [26:07-26:30], the film cuts to Green telling us it is wrong to de-stigmatize AIDS because it is indeed a killer disease:

> People have to be made afraid of getting the disease. We can't make it seem like as long as you use anti-retro-viral drug you can lead a normal life, a happy life. The strategy of Uganda was to make people afraid of AIDS, to cut through the denial, to believe that AIDS real was a killer disease…the good news is HIV is not transmitted easily. You almost have to go outside and look for it [26:35-27:10]. (ends with a funeral scene)

There are many narrative devices used in *Miss HIV* to engage the viewer at different levels, and the film is particularly valuable for those already conversant with the HIV/AIDS discourse because they can comprehend the nuances insinuated in the narrative.

Peter Kareithi argues that human stories matter because 'we make sense of our world from the stories we are told.' He writes in *White Man's Burden, How Global Media Empire Continue to Construct Difference* (2001) that in post-industrial societies, such as the United States, the news and entertainment media 'tell most of the stories to most of the people most of the time'. These stories not only provide narratives for specific discourses about race but also a shared experience, a common starting point for such dialogue (Kareithi, 2001:1). Lack of a common starting point does not hinder Hanon from pursuing a complex story such as

HIV/AIDS because visual representation of HIV/AIDS uses universal codes that enable any Western filmmaker to produce comprehensive narratives in sub-Saharan Africa. Hanon acknowledges that as a white North American male 'who grew up in an entirely different world with entirely different cultural norms and experiences than any African woman' he cannot claim to truthfully interpret the reality of an African woman. He argues that 'a documentary film sharing the true stories of other people is constructed out of listening more than any other discipline or art. Listening well is the key to representing the authentic interests of the subject as well as the donor or corporate sponsor' (Hanon Interview, 2012: 1-2). 'As a filmmaker whose non-profit projects are funded by donors', he says, 'interpreting the central question in non-profit projects funded by the donors isn't just confined to the donor gaze, but also extends to the prejudices of ideology and interests of media distributors and marketers'. Different filmmakers deal with these forces in different ways, he continues, but there is no escaping the fact that they are all 'known to add filters to the lens of the filmmaker' (Hanon Interview, 2012:1).

Indeed, more than any other HIV-related documentary of recent times, *Miss HIV* provides a very good platform for reflecting on the questions of voice, authority and authorship. Analysis of the film also shows the blurred boundaries between morality and ethics, clearly revealing that 'the empowerment of the subject is therefore more illusionary than actual' (Ruby, 1991: 54). Hanon travelled to sub-Saharan Africa with the intention of 'empowering African women with a voice', in other words to 'portray the political, social and economic realities of oppressed minorities and others previously denied access to the means of producing their own image' (ibid: 51). The story he tells, however, is trapped by the 'tenets of the Free Methodist Church of North America'[84] who financed the 750,000 US dollars production,[85] with the intention of showing the relevance and perhaps superiority of the Christian message to be faithful in marriage in the midst of a sexual epidemic that is still spreading like wild fire amongst black Africans.

The paradigmatic significance of *Miss HIV* is that it contrasts HIV responses in Botswana and Uganda in order to situate the most effective method the world has ever seen in a rural, impoverished, but religious country namely Uganda. This

[84] Miss HIV sponsors Butterfield Memorial Foundation: http://www.butterfieldfoundation.org/WhoWeAre/MissionandVision.aspx. Accessed, December 2013.
[85] *Miss HIV* cost: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miss_HIV. Accessed, December 2013.

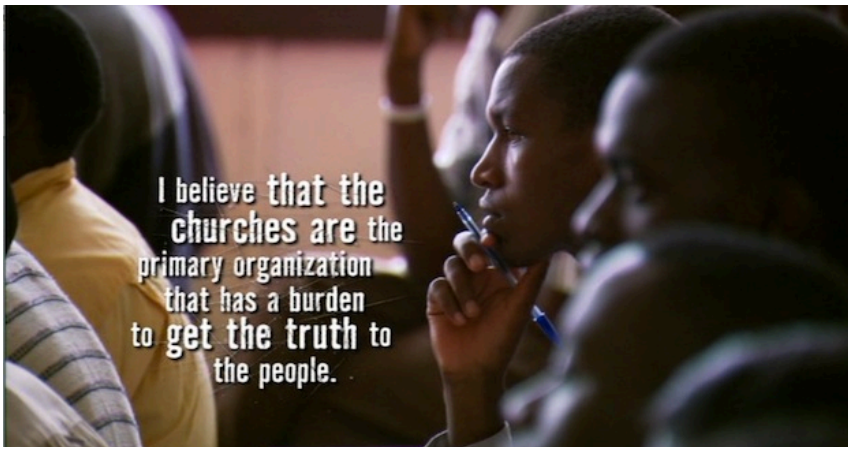
message is stylistically punctuated at the end of the film in a wedding celebration as an American band *The Newsboys* sings '*Something Beautiful'* to a jubilant Ugandan crowd.

Scenes from mass weddings, which have gained popularity in Uganda, are also structured into the film to intone the importance of the marriage institution and indeed the Christian church. The film leaves no doubt that heterosexual monogamous relationship is the only lasting and effective prevention against the HIV virus.
It also urges people to learn from Uganda and make better sexual choices because 'the worst of the AIDS pandemic is only beginning in the rest of the world' [1:08:33-1:09:12]. The overall message is that HIV will keep spreading as long as sexual restraint is not practiced. To show the long-term consequence of ARV treatment if sexual behavior remains un-changed, an animated illustration displays how the HIV virus multiplies: 'For each new person treated for HIV, about 10 become infected'.

Miss HIV boldly credits Uganda as originator of the 'ABC approach' (abstain, be faithful or use condom) that is widely used around the world. In inset news footage

President Yoweni Museveni is seen and heard, talking from a podium about ABC and the importance of only A and B. His wife, First Lady Janeth Museveni, supports him in a lengthy interview where she passionately promotes sexual restraint and praises the church:

> I believe that the churches are the primary organization that has a burden to get the truth to the people and we wanted to mobilize everybody who can speak to our population to tell them about this enemy. We believed the church would truly do this best because they already had the burden of speaking to our people and telling them the truth [42:52-43:20].



Miss HIV highlights the fact that people working with HIV/AIDS prevention often disagree over the application of the ABC approach. Conservative faith-based donors sponsoring Abstinence and Be faithful, (behaviour change first) occupy one camp, whereas liberal donors taking a human-rights approach promote Condoms (safety first) and other technological solutions that allow individuals to experience sexual pleasure. Most UN and major donor organizations support the human rights approach, whereas some, like The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), show more conservative tendencies. PEPFAR may claim to support a comprehensive approach,[86] but its programmes are faith-based-friendly, favour behavior change and are considered intrusive to individual expression of sexuality by the human-rights camp. *Miss HIV* hints at these dynamics by including demonstration slogans on billboards telling President Bush that 'we need condoms to have sex' thus placing him on the conservative camp [1:03:00-18]. Former President Bill Clinton (discussed in chapter 3) on the other hand is positioned on the liberal

[86] PEPFAR, which was initiated by President Gorge W. Bush in 2003, favours a 'combination of evidence-based, mutually reinforcing biomedical, behavioral, and structural interventions' source: http://www.pepfar.gov/about/strategy/document/133244.htm. Accessed, December 2013.

human-rights approach camp. At the AIDS conference Clinton receives loud applause for defending women's empowerment in the HIV/AIDS fight:

> Empowering women to protect themselves seems so elemental and yet when I hear people pontificating about AIDS and acting as if we can do everything through abstinence. I think they don't know what most women are up against in too many parts of the world face today [30:58-31:19].

Clinton's comment is further emphasized with a still from a newspaper about what he had said in this particular conference. The image lingers on long enough to give the viewer enough time to read the heading: *Former U.S president blasts abstinence-only AIDS programs, backs needle exchange*. Inclusion of these scenes signify: Clinton Foundation's liberalism (promoting casual sex, which kills) vs PEPFAR's conservatism (demanding sexual restraint, which saves lives).

The film shows support for the Uganda's approach, which prioritizes A and B first and stigmatizes casual sex, whereas Botswana's 'condom first' approach is depicted as a way forward for those already living with the virus, and thus the pageant plays a significant role in this juxtaposition. Excerpts from the AIDS conferences where HIV-infected activists demand their rights to have sex are usually undercut. For example, an HIV-positive Beatrice Were is seen at the podium saying proudly: 'We know that we are living a long time. We are living healthy, we are living as beautiful people. Look at me. I am not dying, I am not feeble, I am not filthy. I think we need to begin to change the picture to change the new trends. We need to begin to bring hope. We need to say what it is, we are looking good' [22:31-23:12]. (But this is superimposed on grave digging in an African location.)

Miss HIV is 88 minutes long and employs various stylistic devices to offer a compelling overview of the pandemic. Through the didactic voice-over commentary by the African American actress Della Reese and the interviews with Harvard medical anthropologist Edward Green, *Miss HIV* presents a chilling story. It suggests that sub-Saharan Africa is in the middle of an AIDS genocide, caused by

ethnocentrism and pride on part of Western AIDS experts. The choice of on-screen white experts such as Green to defend African sexual conservatism and way of knowing is significant because Green is outspoken about racial thinking in HIV/AIDS discourse and claims it has caused some Western experts to fall back onto the 19th century adventurers 'lurid tales' about the hyper sexuality of African people. According to Green's 2003 book, one of the several reasons Uganda developed a distinctive and different response to AIDS prevention is because the 'zero grazing' (be faithful) programme was developed before outside experts showed up in significant numbers and enforced the condom-first approach which undermined personal responsibility (Green, 2003:172). Hanon's personal bias is also 'personal responsibility,' and although he claims that he wasn't 'constructing an argument for the jury in order to swing them to a client's position' (Hanon Interview, 2012:5), *Miss HIV's* support for the behaviour change approach is not disguised; this reveals the gaze of the Christian donors and of Hanon as the filmmaker.

Miss HIV is an ambitious project featuring scenes from the 2006 international AIDS conference in Toronto, various locations from Uganda and Botswana, archive images from other identified sub-Saharan Africa places, off-screen filmed footage etc, to provide a coherent picture of the scale of the AIDS machinery. Opinions from high profile individuals such as Bill and Melinda Gates, Bill Clinton, Peter Piot (UNAIDS) President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, epidemiologists and medical anthropologists are juxtaposed with grave digging, burials, tearful women, cheerful wedding marches, abstinence celebration dances and other communicative devices. Hanon randomly subtitles comments from black African contributors although they speak fluently and articulately in English. The most striking stylistic device is the voice-over narration by Della Reese, the African American actress and gospel singer whose distinctive voice carries the central theme of the film.

The first part of the film offers the non-informed viewer a well-detailed background regarding the origins of HIV/AIDS. Right from the beginning, before the opening credits, the controversy pertaining to the very nature of the HIV virus is presented audio-visually. The sequence opens with a young black African girl standing near a redbrick wall shyly staring into the camera, and then fades into an iconic African sunrise over green fields superimposed on sound from a solo traditional string instrument, then slowly pans into a yard with clothes hanging to dry. Two mud huts are panned in and a different little girl is shown sitting down painting with mud on stacks of compressed boxes. [This nameless 'mud painting girl' is one of the

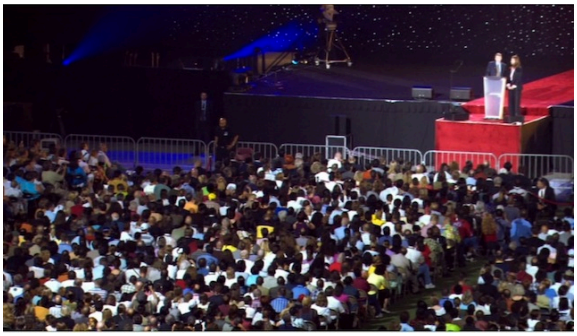
continuous cutaways built into the film, showcasing progressive stages of her painting.] More images that visually depict an authentic African location are shown in succession before Della Reese's voice comes in: 'There is controversy over nearly everything having to do with HIV/AIDS, even its origin. Most of the world's leading epidemiologists believe that a strain of HIV evolved from the simian immunity deficiency virus found in certain monkeys' [00:36-01:02]. A dry mud painting of a brown coloured monkey brandishing sharp pointy teeth is then panned in as the nameless mud-painting girl in medium close up squeezes the excess mud from her hands.

Reese's voice explaining how the virus entered humans is now superimposed on a close-up of the girl's hands as she continues to squeeze out the excess mud, and we assume she drew the painting of the monkey:

> The cut on a person's hand while preparing monkey meat is all it would have taken for the virus to enter a human. Because it can take ten years for symptoms to appear, HIV was already established among some general populations in Africa well before the virus was discovered among the first patients in the United States. It would be several years before the children of Africa knew the real reason why their young parents were dying. This shrouded the disease in fear, superstition and stigma beyond the experience of any Western culture [01:02-02:02].

The background sound heightens to a dramatic pace and this sequence transition is an important stylistic devise used throughout the film, calling for a renewed attention to an even more serious and urgent message. As the opening credits roll, the editing speed changes and loud background rap music is added in so that the viewer is now assaulted by a montage of iconic and captivating images that unmistakably communicate 'underdeveloped Others'. Lonely children in bushes, a succession of coffins being lowered into the ground, a wedding march in a small church, sad

looking women lighting candles, an old woman rocking back and forth in bitter tears, a dead child being wrapped in a cloth, and other stages of funeral preparations.



This is contrasted with Bill Gates at a red-carpeted podium talking to a large group of well-dressed AIDS conference delegates, the majority of whom are white. After this fast-paced, breathless visual introduction, a scene from an African wedding ceremony is faded in with a male voice (later revealed to be a seated white male, and only much later identified as Dr Edward Green) saying 'Nicholas Kristof of *The New York Times* said, the two most dangerous things in Africa today are not promiscuity or prostitution but marriage and abstinence' [02:35-02:45]. A close-up of a white woman at the podium claiming that the Bush administration's AIDS policy 'is tied to an agenda to control non-orthodox expressions of sexuality' is juxtaposed with black African men digging with spades in a field. [02:55] Reese's narration fades on the digging men: 'Nearly two thirds of all HIV infected people in the world live and die in sub-Saharan Africa [03:02-03:16].

After situating the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa, the film cuts to Bill Gates from the Toronto AIDS conference, looking and sounding confident about the new medical solutions: female condoms and anti-HIV vaginal gel that will finally protect vulnerable women and empower them from having to ask men to put on condoms. Gates informs the applauding delegates: 'We hope and expect that this could be the next big breakthrough. It is particularly important because it will benefit women who largely have to rely on men to agree to abstinence or condom use, and that simply isn't getting the job done. The woman should never need to ask her partner's permission to save her own life' [03:19-03:38]. The HIV-positive activist Beatrice Were, supporting Gate's sex-as-human-right vision, is cut to on the podium in a medium shot: 'In most cases people forget that we have a right to sex' [03:49-04:09].

Throughout, *Miss HIV* combines metaphorical contrasts with unnerving abrupt changes in background sound, editing pace and unexpected assertions from contributors. But the most significant and conclusive stylistic strategy is the chilling warning from an epidemiologist, Rand Stoneburner, which is placed right at the end of the film as a 'take home' message for the viewer: 'One of the worst abuses of the latter part of twentieth century is the failure to do AIDS prevention in ways we know that are effective.' To many people who are conversant with the HIV/AIDS discourse *Miss HIV* is a groundbreaking text, and it is fair to say that the director 'got his hands dirty' through extensive research. The 'take home message' from the epidemiologist is particularly significant because Dr. Stoneburner was commissioned by the UN and his findings clearly illustrate the superiority of the Ugandan solution, which was very effective, cheap and culturally relevant. In other words it is an unexpected instance where a Western expert recommends an African perspective, although the AIDS establishment rejected it. Stoneburner asserts that:

> Uganda provides the clearest example that human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is preventable if populations are mobilized to avoid risk. Despite limited resources, Uganda has shown a 70% decline in HIV prevalence since the early 1990s, linked to a 60% reduction in casual sex. The response in Uganda appears to be distinctively associated with communication about acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) through social networks. Despite substantial condom use and promotion of biomedical approaches, other African countries have shown neither similar behavioral responses nor HIV prevalence declines of the same scale. The Ugandan success is equivalent to a vaccine of 80% effectiveness. Its replication will require changes in global HIV/AIDS intervention policies and their evaluation (Stoneburner and Low-Beer, 2004: 714).

Miss HIV includes this African successful initiative through the clips of the Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, and the interview with the Ugandan First Lady, Mrs Janet Museveni: 'We had to fight to defeat AIDS or it would defeat us. We had just gone through a war, and many of our people had died. We now saw this enemy coming in, and we just had to come together as a nation again, and fight AIDS' [13:25]. In another book by Green*, Paradigm Shift and Controversy in AIDS Prevention* (2006) he notes that 'when Uganda began to respond to HIV/AIDS in the late 1980s and early 1990s, it was just emerging from two decades of war and extreme civil unrest' and that 'far from being passive victims of forces beyond their control, Ugandans mounted an effective response to HIV/AIDS in spite of the difficult situations in which they were living' (Green and Herling, 2006:28). Furthermore, the approach is praised as 'culturally relevant, very low cost, and very successful' (Green and Herling, 2006: 30).

The film is a strong visual statement that despite Uganda's success story most African countries rigidly follow the human-rights approach to their own peril, because in the long run they cannot afford the technological solutions such as condoms, HIV testing kits or indeed the expensive ARV drugs. Likewise it shows that de-stigmatizing HIV/AIDS and treating it as any other disease is also problematic because poor countries are unable to keep up with the treatment costs for life prolonging drugs. Besides, the virus does not usually end with one patient, behavior change approaches are undermined by the liberal camp as Ssempa puts it: 'It has become a battle for human rights. My rights to have sex anytime I want.' [26:26-34]. To emphasize this, Bill Gates' comment about the overall cost implications is articulated with subtitles: 'Right now, nearly 40 million people are living with HIV. The annual cost of getting treatment to everyone in the world who is HIV positive will be more than 13 billion US dollars a year, every year. We are now averaging 4 million new infections a year' [56:10-56:41].

Stylistically, subtitling in this case serves to emphasize the seriousness of the statement, but it is doubtful that the same can be said about subtitling the black African contributors, particularly when they simply state their names.

Without doubt, *Miss HIV* 'speaks nearby' the beauty pageant, on the one hand to empower the contestants to articulate their human needs, and also to show the relevance of the condom-only alternative, for those already infected. Elizabeth smiles as she explains: 'People think you can't have sex when you are HIV positive. But

they must understand that you are always a human being. Because, sex, it's not me who did it. It's God. It is for every person. So when that comes, I have to have sex, enjoy it. If I don't enjoy it I will say so. But if I enjoy it, I have to' [39:48-40:11]. To put an emphasis on condom in such a case, a brother to the other contestant Motse Thabang adds: 'when a person has HIV it doesn't mean that he or she doesn't have to have sex. As long as there is protection. If you don't have sex with someone who is HIV positive, it will be like we are stigmatizing them. So we need to give them support. We need to have sex with them, relationship with them. Condom is the best way of having sex [40:22-41:05].

What is expressed throughout the film however is the fact that the ideological biases of donors got in the way and undermined a perfectly effective solution that originated in Africa simply because it was not 'measurable' and it did not necessitate expensive foreign expertize. Green says that the 'cost of promoting ABC the way Uganda did it in the early years when they were just emerging from war and turned the epidemic around was less than 50 cents per person, per year' [57:00-15]. He condemns the donor's arrogance because it allows 'experts' to travel to Africa to help but not to listen to Africans:

> We were so arrogant. We were typical Western experts. So here is this great model in Uganda. The Western experts show up. They know what is best because of what may have worked in San Francisco in a different kind of epidemic affecting gay men and drug users and hemophiliacs, and they go into Africa with no experience in Africa and tell them what to do and don't listen and they don't notice what is going around them [18:50-19:14].

The film foregrounds the voices of the white experts to show the relevance of the Ugandan approach, and at the end uses a long sequence with an American band (The Newsboys) to celebrate matrimony, which relegates the Miss HIV contestants into a backdrop template for a two-sided HIV/AIDS story. In this case, African subjects are demonstrated upon to show how Western-derived (human rights) solutions are failing in the fight against HIV/AIDS as Green asserts: 'The people working with HIV/AIDS prevention are reluctant you might say to go down that path of seeming to constrain or restrain sexual behaviour. Most Africans have conservative attitude towards sex. Most people who work with HIV program adhere to liberal attitude towards sexual behavior' [16:08-16:28]. It is at this intersection of competing voices that *Miss HIV* story tries to make sense of the pandemic. It places the pragmatically concocted HIV pageant in the human rights camp showing that although HIV infected people might benefit from free condoms and life-prolonging

drugs, however, true empowerment worthy of a celebration is an HIV free life, which is attainable if sexual behaviour is addressed.

Whose story? 'Speaking about' the people of the square [*Hyena Square*]

> *My people speak disapprovingly of an outsider whose wailing drowned the grief of the owners of the corpse.*
>
> Chinua Achebe, (1990: 89).

The Swedish director Lars Johanson took up the subject of HIV because, he says, he was upset that Tanzania was failing to represent the tens of thousands of rural Tanzanian girls lured into big cities as housemaids but often forced to live and work under conditions that resembled slavery. According to him, this huge population of poor teenage girls is at risk of different forms of prostitution and eventually older men and sugar daddies infect them with HIV (Johansson, 2010, interview: 1). Johansson's stance of feel-sorry-for-African-women resonates well with Achebe's comment about the outsider who displays more anguish than the actual people experiencing a distressing reality, particularly in the context of the real events that led to the production.

According to Johansson: 'The film project began when I saw a set of AIDS campaign posters and billboards in Dar es Salaam sometime back in 2002 or so. The posters showed young, healthy-looking, smiling and very beautiful men and women, and the text read "can you tell which one has HIV?" ' (Johansson Interview, 2010: 1). Although the campaign message was designed by Tanzanians and targeted at the Tanzanian general public, Johansson claimed that it upset him because:

> (a) It represented more of the same fear mongering that *we* [AIDS establishment] knew was counterproductive,
> (b) It suggested that the youth was the source of the epidemic, and
> (c) It did not encourage people to get tested and to come out as positives, and their families and communities to support them, which I thought should be the key element in any campaign at the time. It did not blame the sugar daddies infecting schoolgirls, or the heroin trade, or the men who abuse poor house girls from the villages, or the rape culture in certain environments. The segment of the population that could identify with those young, well-dressed models were already scared stiff of AIDS, while the rest of us might come to think that AIDS was more of a problem for the young and beautiful (Johansson Interview, 2010: 1-2).

Did Johansson's Swedish cultural toolkit and the rigid HIV/AIDS grammar taint his interpretation of this poster campaign? The availability of life prolonging drugs means that HIV infected persons can live longer, usually without displaying symptoms and typically without disclosing their HIV status to potential sex partners. In case like these, Tanzanians applied a cultural-specific method meant to challenge behaviour, which collides with the preferred human-rights-based approaches of most UN organizations that are expensive to implement and rely on continuous flow of fund from donors. The Tanzanian prevention slogan described by Johansson was a fear-instilling text that called for personal responsibility in making informed choices about sex partners. It is underpinned by the idea the HIV/AIDS is a preventable disease and, unlike say malaria, individuals are empowered to stop its spread. An ongoing slogan is *Tanzania bila ukimwi inawezekana* (An AIDS-free Tanzania is possible) propelled by the Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete, in the belief that 'an aggressive sensitization campaign must be undertaken' to socialize people into becoming torch-bearers in a unified battle against the pandemic.[87]

In Tanzania, diagnosed patients are not required by law to disclose their HIV status to their sexual partners and many choose to keep their infection secret for fear of stigmatization and/or loss of income. (It is not uncommon for HIV infected people to lose their jobs or choose to resign because of discrimination). More often than not, many people on anti-retro-viral (ARV) treatment do not display any visible known-about symptoms of HIV/AIDS; thus it is relevant and undeniably lifesaving to revise the HIV narrative so that everyone is made aware that HIV infected people can indeed look healthy. It is vital to encourage people to 'love carefully,' as the Ugandan campaigns put it in the late 1990s. Striking up friendship in a friendly country like Tanzania is very easy, and people have a tendency to transit friendship into a non-condom relationship very quickly. People also believe they can 'test their partner with an eyesight', or *kupimana kwa macho* in Swahili: fat people are instinctively judged as being free of the virus whilst some thin individuals may erroneously be 'visually diagnosed' as HIV positive and subsequently taunted as *maiti inayotembea* (walking corpse), *marehemu mtarajiwa* (soon to be deceased) or in other stigmatizing Swahili slang of the day and place.

The billboard slogan *unamjua mwenye virusi?* (can you tell which one has HIV?), which upset Johansson is not only culturally specific but also a significant

[87] IPP Media: http://ippmedia.com/frontend/index.php?l=26021. Accessed, February 2014.

contribution to prevention because it is indeed misleading to assume that sight alone can tell who is infected and who is not. Johansson on the other hand, operating from a different cultural base, did not understand the connotations in the Swahili slogan. His reliance on the universalizing framework of Western donors caused him to misread a perfectly sensible campaign. Thus he embarks on his documentary.

To secure funding, Johansson's proposal for *Hyena Square* (originally titled *SILENCE – DENIAL – BLAME: A documentary trilogy on living with HIV in Tanzania)* focuses exclusively on the established discourse of the Western donors and uses the usual catchphrases and rhetoric:

> It took two decades of public education to instill fear for HIV/AIDS throughout the world. While this kind of information was perhaps required to curb the infection rate, it has also fuelled discrimination and human rights violations. Stigmatizing of HIV-positive people leads to silence, denial and blame, which paralyze public action. Instead of just fearing the virus, the public must learn to view the disease as preventable and manageable. We need stories that show possibilities for hope, and role models who demonstrate how we can live with HIV. We need to give space to people who break the silence, challenge the stigma and cope with their situation. There are such people in Tanzania, although they are still few and far apart (Johansson Interview, 2010: 2).

Johansson's proposal was that the *Hyena Square* documentary should be used both as a policy tool for NGOs addressing issues of gender imbalance, poverty and cultural norms leading to sexual abuse and exploitation of girls and young women, and also to address stigmatization (Johansson Interview, 2010: 3). He claims that stories about people living positively with HIV/AIDS 'provide the most powerful arguments for why society should be open about HIV and why we must look up to those who have the courage to come out in public as role models and champions in the fight against HIV-AIDS.' (ibid: 3). Contextually however, the completed *Hyena Square*[88] idea is a stigmatizing and close-ended documentary because it focuses on a small number of marginalized and abused girls and prostitutes, forgetting that the HIV epidemic in Tanzania is described as 'generalized'. Of the estimated 1.6 million people living with HIV in the country, sixty percent are women and the infection is far higher in the general population than among sex workers.[89] Textual analysis shows that as a documentary film *Hyena Square* uses stereotypical images, sounds and structure, to frame victimhood, ('poor housegirls') material deprivation (poverty-stricken slums) and careless-hyper sexualized Tanzanians (drunk and drug-injecting

[88] Hyena Square online: http://vimeo.com/1725640 Accessed, January 2014
[89] HIV AIDS in Tanzania: http://www.avert.org/hiv-aids-tanzania.htm Accessed, January 2014

prostitutes, criminal thugs/pimps/guesthouse owners and young boys addicted to ‘cheap sex’).

The story is set in one of one of the most notorious ‘red-light districts’ of Tanzania, named *Uwanja wa Fisi*, literally meaning ‘hyena’s field,’ which is derogatory from a Tanzanian perspective. ‘Hyena’ is associated with all kinds of negative evil and sorcery in folktales and is also used as a verbal insult. Using *Hyena Square* as a film title thus exploits a cultural sensitive phenomenon to sensationalize an already stigmatized reality. Some of the translation in the film further distorts the reality. In order to project sexual deviance of epic proportions a place mocked as *mtaa wa makuma* (cunt street) is literally subtitled as the official street name, as if to signify Tanzanians’ casual attitude towards sex. This resonates well with the adventurers’ interpretation of local customs discussed in chapter two. It is hardly imaginable that there is any such street name elsewhere in the world, but situating it in the sex-slum is significant in magnifying the level of sexual deviance. According to the explanation given in the film by Elisa Joseph, who actually lived on that street, the place was taunted as *mtaa wa makuma*, but this context is absent in the story. Typically in Tanzania grafitti or a memorable catchphrase can permanently name a place as a way of explanation, but depending on the context using such a name may have various consequences. In most places, streets do not have names so people describe geographical places through memorable landmarks.

It is worth noting that, to contextualize this cross-cultural nuance, Johansson uses quotation marks in the subtitle but this reads as a ‘wink’ to the Western audience about the magnitude of sexual activity that earned the place its nickname.

The film shows that all women on the square sell sex for living, however, the price for sex is as low as 30 cents (US).

Hyena Square runs for 28 minutes and centres on an HIV positive young Tanzanian woman, Elisa Joseph, who is 'living positively' with the virus. Elisa says she came to Dar es Salaam as a house girl but after being raped by her employer and mistreated by the police she ended up at the square as a sex-worker. Four years later she tested positive for HIV virus and is now being helped by a local NGO where she works as an activist/peer educator. *Hyena Square* exposes the problematic side of the home-help industry, but it is misleading for viewers that do not have other sources of knowledge about the HIV/AIDS situation in Tanzania.

The film was posted on YouTube in December 2007, with a long description by Lars Johansson, which among other things claimed that Elisa was 'sold for 10,000 shillings [approximately $10]' which is untrue and decontextualized.[90] In the film Elisa explains that the woman who recruited her as a house girl received 10,000 Shillings from the employer, and any Tanzanian will understand that as a 'finder's fee'. Many employers in big cities searching for home help are expected to cover the cost of the journey for the young woman or man from their village, and there are some other cost implications for the finders such as mobile phone top-up. Implying that Elisa was sold is an intentional choice on the part of Johansson perhaps meeting his a priori Western assumptions. Interestingly, the YouTube description of *Hyena Square* also highlights Elisa's football dream and this directly ties to Johansson's own activities. In

[90] YouTube description: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UODCeqpVEEE. Accessed, February 2014.
From 2007 to late 2013 this YouTube link carried the original title *Hyena Square*, but it has now been re-titled as *The Horrifying Truth About Tanzania's Den of Prostitutes*. When challenged Johansson claimed this change was the responsibility of the distributors (Journeyman Pictures).

the film the kit worn by Elisa and her football teammates is sponsored by Maweni Farm, which is an adventure resort owned by Lars Johansson.

The Maweni Farm Production homepage[91] explains that the resort is set in an old colonial farmhouse from the nineteenth century and that the owners have worked with development and media projects in Tanzania for more than 20 years. On the YouTube blurb, Johansson's helper's gaze appeals to poverty tourists: 'Elisa wants to be an example that it is possible to start fresh and lead a meaningful life in spite of the virus. She loves playing football and is hoping to become a star. Meet her, and a bunch of other colourful people of Hyena Square, in this half-hour documentary full of tears and laughter and contemporary Tanzanian music.'[92]

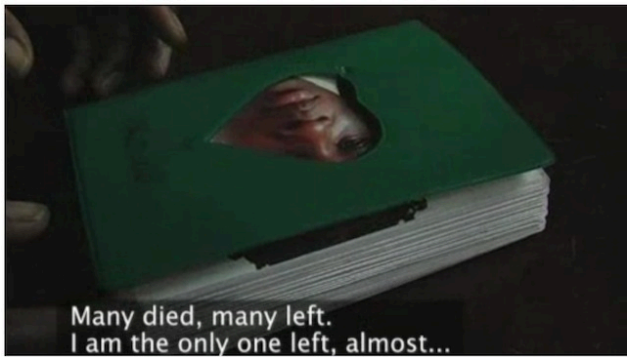
Johansson claims that his main target audience was the 'general Tanzanian public' but up to the time of the interview in January 2010 the film had still not been shown in the country. However, *Hyena Square* was broadcast on Swedish National Television SVT, and enjoyed wide distribution through other public forums in Sweden, including various NGO networks, and has toured international platforms. It is not surprising that an American pop singer Kelly Rowland visited *Uwanja wa Fisi* to present an MTV Stay Alive Foundation Award to Elisa Joseph. The real reason the film was rejected by Tanzania television, 'is a long and sad history, which has to do with corruption and greed' (Johansson Interview, 2010:1). Ideally, his preference was for the film to have 'premiere on Tanzanian television on World Aids Day, December 1st, 2006' (Johansson Interview, 2010:3). I received a free DVD copy of the film from a Stockholm-based NGO called Afrika Gruppen early in 2007, and immediately

[91] Maweni Farm: http://www.tanzania-adventure.com/resort/maweni-farm-usambara-mountains/. Accessed, February 2014.
[92] *Hyena Square* on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZ8vRS_FTWM. Accessed, December 2013.

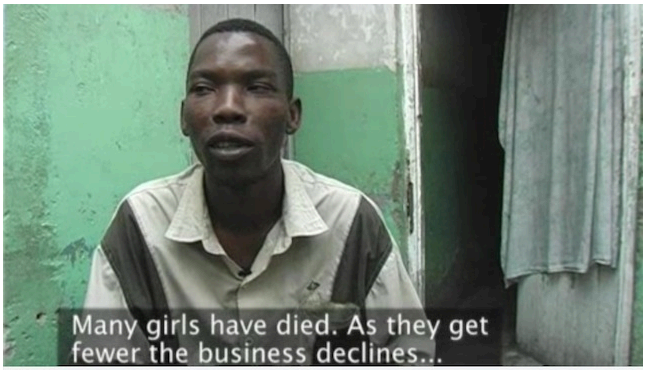
categorized the film as showing the ‘feel-sorry-for-Africans’ (*tycker-synd-om Afrikanerna*) approach that is generally favoured by the aid industry. Elisa’s story follows the same pattern of demonizing African men as unloving, violent, sexually immoral and likely rapists. Like most films about HIV/AIDS, it depicts prostitution as a common option to which many African resort, and as usual it glorifies NGO intervention as the ultimate solution.

Hyena Square is mostly structured around Elisa’s monologues and cutaways from the Square. An animated vignette in the beginning depicts the first time Elisa was raped by her employer and sets a tone for a dark film about lack of human dignity, lawlessness, cheap trade and drug abuse. The film uses strong visual imagery to signify poverty and a Western audience is taken on a tour of extreme deprivation and hellish existence. Right from the beginning the film declares the square unfit for human habitation. This is conveyed through a combination of uncoordinated panning around the square, and a montage of high-speed images of unrecognizable activities, around the square; all seen from Elisa’s rooftop. ‘I have lived here for seven years’ she tells us, ‘It is a dangerous place, scary and sad. I want the government to demolish Hyena Square’ [02:02-02:10].

There is a long sequence where some of *Uwanja wa Fisi* activities are caricatured in high-speed and later elaborated at normal speed to expose wobbling drunkards, unprovoked street fights, a man pushing and punching a woman, flies feasting on grilled meat and fish sold to customers, and many other activities. These are very desirable ingredients for a story such as *Hyena Square* that communicates through known stereotypes. Johansson’s choice of this iconic location is significant because, ideologically, the story never actually leaves Stockholm. A chaotic, poor Africa blasted with HIV/AIDS is a well-known template that only needs substantiating visible evidence that *Hyena Square* provides in abundance.



Johansson's decision to contribute to the HIV/AIDS story is also noteworthy because in the HIV/AIDS era many filmmakers eager to 'butter their bread' are conversant not only with the necessary jargon for funds pitching, but also the necessary film grammar that authoritatively 'speaks about' reality from the donor's preferred framework. Johansson's synopsis to sponsors, for instance, promised 'participatory method' (a paradigm favoured by all major UN agencies) although he had already decided he 'wanted to make a portrait film about Elisa' (Johanson Interview, 2010: 1). A well-balanced participatory method would perhaps not have resulted in a visual text structured around simplistic and stigmatizing significations that began with the slum fetish, which is seen differently by Tanzanians. According to many Tanzanians, *Uwanja wa Fisi* is 'a small place with big reputation,' but it is far from being a truthful representative of a diverse country that is more than twice the size of Sweden (almost four times the size of Great Britain) with a population of 47.2 million (UN, 2012). It also grotesquely misrepresents the 1.6 million Tanzanian people who are currently living with the HIV virus.[93] Jumanne, the owner of a 'guest house' or brothel complains that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is not good for the sex business: 'New girls are good for the business,' because 'customers get used to the old ones, so the new ones start a fresh circle' (he elaborates with hand gestures and then regretfully adds) 'Before we had more customers, unlike now. Many girls have died. And as they diminish the business declines too' [12:50-13:12].



[93] Current situation Avert.org: http://www.avert.org/hiv-aids-tanzania.htm. Accessed, December 2013.

Hyena Square explicitly implies that HIV is spread through an immoral sex industry, which is extremely stigmatizing for majority of the men, women and children living with the virus in the country. Unlike other parts of the world where the HIV virus is largely confined to drug addicted prostitutes and homosexuals, in Tanzania HIV affects people from all walks of life, and therefore it is misleading and dangerous to identify HIV/AIDS with drug-injecting prostitutes and alcoholic thugs. The real face of HIV/AIDS as Tanzanians know it today is a normal woman, man or child, usually with extended family and relatives living normally in their communities, struggling with the hardship of life like everyone else without being addicted to drugs. In fact the bulletin of the World Health Organization shows there are only 25,000 to 40,000 people who inject drugs in Tanzania.[94] Over representing drug injectors to make assertions about the spread of HIV is indeed unreliable, and in fact Johansson reverts to the 1980s apocalyptic visual representation of HIV/AIDS where the victims are immediately recognizable and easily stigmatized.

One of the most unsettling aspects of *Hyena Square* is that it constructs the HIV/AIDS story in a way that decontexualizes the domestic help sector in the country, directly condemning it as a potent source of HIV spread in the country. This damning connection, however real, is not accidental because the local NGO, KIWOHEDE, where Elisa works is primarily concerned with the rehabilitation of victims of domestic sexual abuse. It is not surprising that Johansson initially turned to KIWOHEDE to recruit a protagonist for his film. In his own words: 'We identified the protagonist, which we did simply through visiting Kiwohede and asking if there was someone who wanted to go public on TV' (Johansson Interview, 2010:1). It is also from KIWOHEDE's office in an old shipping container that Elisa shares her well-articulated story. Obviously, KIWOHEDE stands to gain from sharing Elisa's story because it promises a potential engagement from a foreign donor. As a matter of fact, such cooperation is usually based on win-win collaboration, meaning that the filmmaker gets access to relevant footage and the NGO receives well-needed exposure, which usually translates in more funding for their activities.

KIWOHEDE stands for Kiota (*nest*) Women Health and Development Organization and it was specifically started to nest/nurture abused young women and children. Since 1999 KIWOHEDE has focused on this vulnerable group and today it has more than 22 counseling centres around Tanzania, pursuing a human rights approach to

[94] WHO drug use: http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/91/2/13-030213/en/index.html. Accessed, December 2013.

empowerment and development. KIWOHEDE's main objectives are 'prevention of child prostitution, protection of child domestic workers, child trafficking and child-youth domestic violence'. KIWOHEDE exists to 'contribute to the elimination of all forms of abuse, sexual violence, and exploitation of vulnerable children women and youth.'[95] Like many of the thousands of mushrooming Tanzanian NGOs, KIWOHEDE is also dependent on foreign donors and because of the fierce competition for funding they, too, are apt to conform to the existing power hierarchy. A paper published by Research on Poverty Alleviation shows that Tanzanian NGOs usually 'alter a project design to align to donor's agenda in order to mobilize resources' (REPOA, 2007: xii). *Hyena Square* utilizes this willingness to accept the donor gaze to distort and simplify the complex HIV narrative by pursuing a 'truth' situated in a very small area and individuals. He treats this as general actuality, to make a comment that agrees with the framework of the human-right donors, which sponsored the production. It is not known how much *Hyena Square* cost to produce, but the list of sponsors is long: TACAIDS, UNFPA, Iris Jonzen-Sandblom and Greta Jonzen Foundation, ABF, workers Educational Association Sweden, Red Cross Sweden, Save the Children Sweden, UNICEF Regional Office for East and Southern Africa, Embassy of Finland Kenya and RFSU Sweden.

Seen from a Tanzanian perspective, the square (*Uwanja wa Fisi*) is less dramatic, definitely unsavoury but nevertheless a place where some people were born, live, laugh and love. A Tanzanian investigative journalist, Erick Kabendera, explains that *Uwanja wa Fisi* is a very small area but it acts as a nerve centre for the surrounding townships because of the high concentration of bars, meat vendors, sex workers and other small businesses. He points out that generally 'Tanzanians think *Uwanja wa Fisi* is a nasty place where most respected or otherwise decent people in the public eye wouldn't come' (Kabendera, 2006). Cecilia Backlander, Johansson's co-director of *Hyena Square,* formed by her Swedish First World filter, describes the square as 'hell on earth' in a 2006 article, *Uwanja wa Fisi, the Hyena Place in Dar es Salaam.* 'The first time I came to the *Hyena Square* or Fisi I thought I had landed in Dante's inferno' (Backlander, 2006). Johansson's visual text matches Backlander's textual interpretation of the square:

> It is heartbreaking to spend the hours around dusk in one of the alleys at Hyena Square. The girls are preparing for the evening, they wash, dress up in their special working outfits. They are so many! They parade by, some already high on drugs. But others are young and beautiful and flawless. Perfect young women, they could have a future with a proper job and

[95] KIWOHEDE vision: http://kiwohede.org/. Accessed, December 2013.

> children. But we all know that they will sell themselves and their future for a dollar to drugged, unemployed, brutal thugs or even seemingly respectable men, 'customers' who are allowed to use them for the price of a beer. Because that is the price of having sex in Fisi. The girls have no bargaining power at all –they have to sell themselves for every bucket of water, every beer, every meal (Backlander, 2006).

When I mentioned this, Johansson denies the parallel: 'I must say that I personally do not like that analogy of Dante's inferno. I think the movie shows that there is warmth and love even at *Uwanja wa Fisi*, that these characters are not reprobate people but that they are brave and fight to save themselves and each other. Many perceive it as well so' (Johanson Interview, 2010:1). Although it is true, as Backlander suggests, that 'Fisi is a place where notions of human rights for women are not on the agenda' her solution is a typical call for feel-sorry-for-Africans. 'In many poor and crisis stricken places in Africa you meet lots of aid workers and NGOs, often financed from abroad. The white jeeps are everywhere. But in Hyena Square only this container of KIWOHEDE is the sign that the people of Fisi are not total outcasts. At least one organization ventures in to show that there is a world outside that cares' (Backlander, 2006).

Slums are very useful visual representation sites as they simplify the narrative's sense making ability or 'verisimilitude'. As Elizabeth Cowie notes in *Recording Reality,* 'realist works must produce in their reader or viewer a sense of recognition of the world they portray as lifelike, as verisimilar' because 'the material and external world is not meaningful –it just is'(Cowie, 2011:37). Verisimilar addresses 'our *expectations* about the world, and these derive not only from factual or scientific knowledge but also from our knowledge of what is held to be culturally normal for our community'. (ibid: 37). *Hyena Square* uses a simplistic film structure to 'speak about' reality in ways that agree with an overall worldview of feeling-sorry-for-Africans. The story is structured by the human rights approach through a First World filter, but a different documentary with a different point-of-view could be made at *Uwanja wa Fisi* to show that, like many other major cities in the world, Dar es Salaam has a 'rough' area, populated predominantly by low-income residents, and has a high number of commercial sex workers and criminals.

And then there were none! 'Speaking with' people at home [*Life Goes On*]

Blacks are still staying separate from other races. We've got blacks in one area, we have coloured people in another, and we have white people on the other side…we don't complain!

Bulelani, *Life Goes On* [4.59-5.10]

In *Crafting Truth*, Spence and Navarro point out that 'anyone who speaks with authority does so from a particular perspective, and it is that perspective that tends to prevail when the documentary succeeds in convincing us of the truthfulness of its representation' (2011: 4). The classic role of traditional documentary as bearer of meaning and truth was not applicable in *Life Goes On* [96] because the film is not structured to interpret any particular central issue, rather it was an experiment to use an alternative form of audiovisual language. Peter Watkins argues that the highly structured audiovisual language form; 'monoform,' combines the traditional tools of the filmmaker (script and storyboard, camera framing, lighting, editing, music, sound effects, narration etc) into a particular set of fast-paced, monolinear narratives and uses these filmic devices to maintain a power over the audience. In *Media Crisis: A Perspective*, which is published on the TATE Modern homepage Watkins writes:

> The subterranean process of the monoform, its reliance on speed, fragmentation and hierarchical structures, the deceptive illusion of 'reality' it imparts, -whether on TV or in so-called 'documentary' or 'fiction' films –has created over the years an increasingly powerful tool of mass manipulation, with long-ranging social and political consequences (Watkins, 2012).

According to him, monoform has been taught as standard practice to many generations of filmmakers, TV journalists and students in thousands of institutions around the planet, making it a universal doxa for producing and receiving films and TV programmes (Watkins, 2012). I was greatly influenced by Peter Watkins, whom I met and co-operated with briefly at Biskops Arnö Media High School in Sweden in 1993-95, where he was commissioned by the Swedish Ministry of Education to develop an educational programme to critically analyze mass media. In 2007 I decided to join the Swedish Red Cross Media High School after discovering that the

[96] YouTube link to *Life Goes On*: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7HSbTz8WII. Accessed, December 2013.

tutors were familiar with Watkins' methods, and in fact one of the principles promised on the school's website was a sharing of the authoring voice: '*Att ge kunskap om alternativa berättarmodeller och bildspråk att använda i samverkan med lokala aktörer.* ('To give knowledge about alternative narrative structure and use of image language in co-operation with the local stakeholders.') Moreover, Red Cross Sweden promises to make efforts in combating negative sterotypes: '*Mediernas rapportering från Syd är "svart-vit". Särskilt den vanliga människans styrka och initiativkraft glöms bort. Kursens produktioner syftar till att nyansera massmedias ensidiga bild av länderna i syd.* ('Media reporting from the South, is "black-white". In particular, the common man's strength and initiative is forgotten. The course's productions aim to modulate the mass media's one-sided picture of the South.')[97]

My co-producer, Anna Larsson, and I met at the school, where we spent one year experimenting with narrative structure from two perspectives; philanthropic (myself) and creative (Anna). We were inspired to a practical application of the concept of *I'm OK You Are OK*, which is central to transactional psychology and useful in monitoring equality of voices in human communication. In such a mode it becomes inappropriate to order and categorize the reality of Others based entirely on your own perspective. Our position was that the epistemic lens that projected Westerners as OK and everyone else not OK powered stereotyping including self-stigmatization, and hence the hierarchy of voices. The theme of the course in the Red Cross school was to apply practical knowledge to challenge the stereotypical portrayal of Africa in Swedish media, but how to achieve this was left in the hands and heads of the students. Usually, after a year, the students are required to travel to a Third World country to produce a documentary under the auspices of the Swedish Red Cross. Cape Town was chosen in 2008, because of networks that the Swedish Red Cross had established and could guarantee safety. Surprisingly, though, we were urged to research and develop a story before leaving Stockholm and HIV/AIDS was proposed to me because the Red Cross had clinics in the townships and there were many nurses who would gladly have their lives portrayed by me. It was also implied that Red Cross Sweden would buy the film and even distribute it. However, Anna and I decided to just portray life as it goes on even when we are not observing it; hence the title *Life Goes On: Voices From Cape Town*.

[97] Red Cross: http://rodakorsetsfolkhogskola.com/sarskilda-kurser/vi-i-varlden/. Accessed, February 2014.

Our rejection of a single story about the devastation of HIV/AIDS in South Africa was justified because none of the people we met expressed major concerns about the pandemic, and since we did not ask questions HIV/AIDS remained on the periphery. HIV/AIDS was not the first or only thing that our subjects mentioned, and it seemed natural that the funeral director Mariette Maartins spoke about HIV/AIDS from the perspective of how business was booming in the funeral industry. Using one of Maartins' off screen comments about the meaning of life, we decided to construct *Life Goes On* as a poetic celebration of similarities because hours of filming Maartins in mortuaries, crematorium and graveyards, revealed that differentiating is a meaningful human activity, but in death our differences vanished.

One of the reasons for differentiating narratives, as I have consistently argued in this study, is the juxtaposition of the 'developing' and the 'developed'. This poor/rich dichotomy creates meaning exclusively through lens of the latter, and Anna and I represented each side so were very aware of our different ways of seeing. Anna was at the time a 26 year-old creative Swedish filmmaker and active feminist from Malmo, who had never travelled to Africa but had strong opinions about the plight of women there. One of her dreams was to film African dances and rhythms for museums and other places of cultures, but she soon found that the so-called 'spontaneous dances' that are so associated with Africa often happen at the direction of the filmmakers. In old travelogues dances and other emotional expression like ululations and clapping were frequently used as iconic devices to show a 'primitive' Africa, and these significations are still used out of context to emphasize differences or exoticise the Other. Part of the theme of the Red Cross School project was to celebrate similarities and avoid the fallacies of exploiting the 'strange-ness' devices, or at least to contextualize them if the camera's gaze accidentally encountered them, which didn't happen in our case. Failing to contexualize or intentionally staging 'differences' constitutes stigmatization of 'underdevelopment' according to post-development theorists. Escobar argues that development is 'an invention that continues to play a role in strategies of cultural and social domination' (Escobar, 2012: vii). Development, he claims, created 'abnormalities' such as the 'illiterate,' the 'underdeveloped,' the 'malnourished,' 'small farmers,' or 'landless peasants,' which it would later treat and reform (Escobar, 2012: 41). The UN framework gives guidelines for acceptable standard of life, the mass media shows how unequal the world really is, the aid industry aims to 'develop' the 'underdeveloped' and the donor gaze interprets reality accordingly.

Life Goes On did not interpret or differentiate reality; rather it allowed the subjects to author their own preferred story, from their own perspective. The reason for this is because the 'window on reality' was very wide open, and as we were allowed to navigate the same reality from various perspectives that convinced us that our own truth was irrelevant. We arrived in Cape Town with an open mind and visited many places and people with the intention to listen and learn. We did not have interview questions because there was no single story that we were pursuing. As filmmakers willing to let events shape the 'voice,' we noticed how the subject/object boundary became blurred, and we had to deal with conflicting truths as we analyzed reality from various points of views. Seen from the comfort of the air-conditioned township tour bus, full of well-dressed westerners, the Khayelitsha township was undeniably a very deprived 'slum,' and we were tempted at first to make a tearful story about the miserable life of its residents. That perspective changed when we visited Khayelitsha again, this time by minibus, pushing and shoving in the overcrowded interior. When we emerged at our recommended stop and met residents going about their lives we became disoriented as perceived reality changed and their shacks became homes. After serious reflection, listening to them and accepting our limitation as bearers of meaning, we decided to relinquish authorship and finally gave up any temptation to tell a 'story' which might have engaged our Swedish audience. Although the documentary was well received by other Swedish organizations like Cinema Africa, the Red Cross lost interest in buying it. Swedish Television (SVT), which had indicated that at 13.30 minutes it would fit their format, dismissed it as 'of no interest.' *Life Goes On* however had its premiere at the Filmhuset in Stockholm and was shown at Kulturhuset and a few other places. The film is currently distributed on DVD by Filmcentrum Rix (Stockholm)[98] and we also posted it on YouTube.[99]

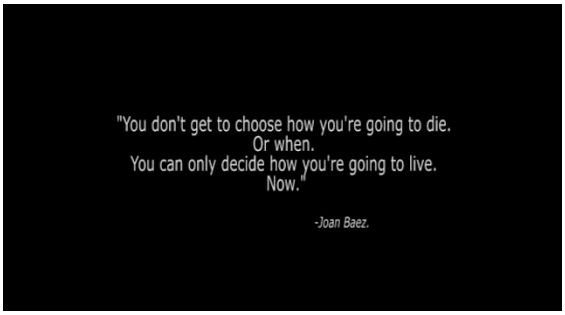
On both the DVD and the YouTube blurbs we explain that the documentary is based on random truths by randomly picked subjects in Cape Town. These comprise of a filmmaker, a 'witchdoctor,' two poets, an undertaker, a coffin maker and artists. During the 2013 Visible Evidence conference in Stockholm, I met a social anthropologist Johan Lindquist from Stockholm University, who saw the film without first reading the description and claimed that 'by the time we were introduced to the first character I thought this was a film about HIV-positive people. After watching it I had to go back to see if there was some cue in the first character that made me think

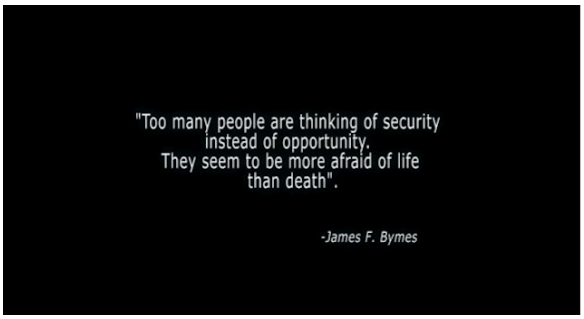
[98] Link: http://riks.filmcentrum.se/filmkatalogen/film/2994/life-goes-on-roster-fran-kapstaden/. Accessed, January 2014..
[99] Life Goes On: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7HSbTz8WII Accessed, January 2014.

this, but it was probably your introduction with the coffins.' Commenting on the notion of 'speaking with' Lindqvist notes:

> I think your topic and attempt is admirable, but 'speaking with' is, I think, also trickier than 'speaking nearby.' It brings you into closer proximity to the subject and raises questions about voice - whose voice, yours or theirs? - positions are more easily kept separate in Trinh Minh-Ha's work. These are still voices that are being represented by the filmmaker. Attempts to go against the grain of the stereotypical representations of Africa are not unusual in anthropology, for instance, though representations of suffering of course remain predominant.[100]

Lindqvist's spontaneous assumption that *Life Goes On* was about HIV/AIDS shows that the film does not impose a meaning, and it underscores the inappropriateness of making sense of an Other based on stereotypes or linear storylines. *Life Goes On* rejected the use of voice-over, but stylistically we used background music composed specifically for the film and placed quotes at the beginning and end to denote and disrupt continuity. Metaphorically, we wanted to show the imminent death of 'us' and 'them' because if life (and its choices) differentiates, death (and its lack of choices) doesn't.





To awaken the viewer's curiousity about what it is to be human, the film begins with an off an screen comment from the funeral director superimposed on a left panning of graves from one of the biggest cemetery in Cape Town. The shot was achieved by sitting in the boot of a slow moving taxi. We wanted to show that death is equally important.

(Off screen comment: female voice)
There is no meaning to life if we didn't have death, because it gives you a time span in which you must live your life and do whatever you want to do knowing there is going to be a cut off point at some stage. [00:33-01:01]

[100] Johan Lindqvist comment: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7HSbTz8WII. Accessed, February 2014.

Our aim here was to make an existential statement and challenge our viewers just like Mariette Maartins' casual comment challenged us to think about our own 'victim-hood.' Death is an actuality that will happen to all of us at some point, yet in many cultures it is not a 'dinner table' conversation. The comment was accidentally captured as we travelled in one of Maartins' empty hearse and a few days later we asked her to repeat it after realizing that it represented a common reality that we were willing to explore.

(Off Screen: Ronald Naude, 88 years old coloured man we met in a library)

'It is now that matters! How do you live? Not how did you live. It is how you live now. It is a day-to-day business. Life is a day to day business.' [01:31-1:42]

Because our 'window on reality' was wide open to explore life in all its diversity without constrains of the UN poverty-meter, the people in the film are treated as individuals, each with unique experiences and distinctive voice, which is a small fragment in the human story. We spent many hours with the people we filmed in order to learn and glimpse how 'life went on' in their part of the world. Rather than a single story with a point of view, *Life Goes On* introduces many parallel stories to show that whilst the documentary gaze may allow us to (re)categorize some aspects of reality and package them as truth, pursuing a truth is futile because *things-as-they-are* cannot be captured except from a human standpoint. Drawing on Peter Watkins' notion of 'democracy' we wanted to use alternative narrative structure instead of what he calls 'the traditional hierarchical documentary format'.[101]
Adding …*Voices From Cape Town* to the film's title was important to communicate the geographical location, and in the establishing shot we visually explain the essence of the city by juxtaposing the beautiful city centre and the less glamorous tin shacks of nearby townships. We then let the people who live there share some insights about life in their own 'voice'.

[101] Watkins' encourages 'sharing with the public an alternative exploration and presentation of history especially their own history –be it past or present.'
Source: http://pwatkins.mnsi.net/part2_home.htm. Accessed, February 2014.

Michael Lupondo

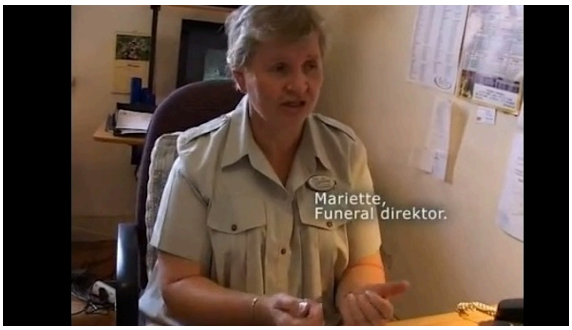
‘I try to make ends meet by selling some few chips to survive. Yes I do work but my salary is not enough to support my three children, my wife, my father, my mother, my step mother, my sisters, my brothers who all depend on me to feed them.’
[02:08-03:17]

Bulelani Mvoto

‘This is my neighbourhood, and this is where I stay. I grew up here, and I feel more comfortable. Blacks are still staying separate from other colour races.
We have got blacks in one area, coloured people in another, and we’ve got white people on the other area. We are not complaining!’
[03:30-05:20]

Sweety Nakubonga

‘I know that I am a very gifted individual but due to the circumstances that I come from I was not able to go to university. But more than anything I would like to study media and creative writing.’
[05:30-06:18]



Mariette Maartins
‘Today I haven’t had a call yet, but we do administration, and we pray, that the Lord will not forget to give us jobs.
Now people are saying, how can you pray for people to die? But I am not praying that they die? People die all the time, all I am saying is; Lord, please give me my share.’
[06:34-07:09]

Russell Davids
'The saddest part of this job is when you have to make a baby coffin. I feel this child has a right to live a normal life until they fit in an adult coffin.'
[07:21-0:32]

Sangoma Khubukheli
'Now I am heading for my last days. I think I have got only thirty years to live now (*in 2008 he was 77*) and my dream is to see that the whole world believes in democracy and stop apartheid, because apartheid is still here, and it is the main thing that worries me.'
[08:41-09:17]

Nicole Moody
'Throughout our lives we are taught to strive for the dream but settle for the attainable.
Sometimes we give up on dreams because we are too tired, or because it is too hard to breach the gap between circumstances and the ideal. Between the dream and the society's definition of what is good enough!'
[10:09-11:22]

Junaid Ismail
Parkour is not a sport where you try to be better than anyone else. Everyone comes together as a community. It is for anyone; even if you have no resource.
The aspect of Parkour in Cape Town is that it is not just for the privileged. It is like a religion almost, no one is excluded from it.'
[11:26-12:00]

(*Off screen: Janine van de Rooy, Pop Singer*)

'You only have one life. So, everybody needs to claim their lives and live it today. One dream one life. That is what we need to do.'
[12:14-12:24]

Conclusion:

Common sense implies that to truthfully represent another person, a filmmaker must adopt the perspective of the filmed subject. In reality, however, documentary 'truth' is burdened with the filmmaker's own assumptions, preferences and the objectives of their sponsors. This causes the (mis)represent the reality of cultural Others, which I have demonstrated throughout the study. Ideally, factual representation should 'speak with' the voices of those experiencing the reality, in order to best show how-things-really-are and not just what they-ought-to-be. This approach is slowly being embraced in UN discourse, albeit rhetorically, because of its epistemic importance for cross-cultural understanding. The United Nations Development Programme's report on human development, for example, claims that an intercultural dialogue is critical to development programming because 'only the wearer may know where the shoe pinches' and therefore 'pinch-avoiding arrangements cannot be undertaken without giving voice to the people' (UNDP, 2013: 24). The report emphasizes 'the epistemic importance of people expressing themselves, in dialogue with others, on what ails their lives and what injustices they want to remove' (ibid: 24).

I have shown in this chapter how the universal morality of fixing-what-is-wrong-with-Africa influences the helper-as-documentarists' choices of stories from sub-Sahara Africa and, importantly, how they are structured and why. Intentionality, which is central in documentary, limits how wide the 'window on reality' can be, and the aid industry's objectivities and goals further narrow the window to disregard other parallel truths that might exist on location. This happens in the 'donor gaze' mode when stories are mapped in Western NGO boardrooms. The process of the donor gaze is best captured in *The Manichaean Stigmatization of Africa* by Peter Wuteh Vakunta, an African scholar who states that 'racist stigmatization of Africa as a backward land in need of external intervention for its salvation is the justification for slave trade, colonialism and neo-colonialism.' It is a Eurocentric worldview that is 'seldom based on knowledge' instead it 'reinforced by disingenuous denial disguised in intellectual jargon' (Vakunta, 2013).

Sensationalizing films like *Hyena Square* fall into the trap of scouting for familiar stereotypes that have been well known in the West since the nineteenth century in order to contribute to the ongoing victimhood stories. Combining stereotypes and 'intellectual jargon' *Miss HIV* contributes to the victimhood story by constructing truth through the assertions of white experts. In fact, both *Hyena Square* and *Miss HIV*

show victimhood from two vantage points. Roaming Hyena Square, Johansson places his victims in a limited geographical place that ‘stands in’ for the whole of Africa, whereas, Hanon presents people from the whole of sub-Saharan Africa as ‘casualties’ of AIDS policies. In the end, the gaze is unavoidably the same: feel-sorry-for-poor-Africans. Because of HIV/AIDS sub-Saharan Africa continues to be a site for extreme stories of poverty and this benefits both the filmmakers and the NGOs that take up the burden of helping Africans. It is not surprising that the HIV/AIDS pandemic has coincided with a ‘boom period’ for International NGOs (INGO). According to *Representations of Global Poverty* (2012) by Nandita Dogra, in the UK alone more than half of the existing 600 plus INGOs were registered between 1991 and 2000. Visual imagery is at the heart of public messages of INGOs, says Dogra, and a dual logic of ‘differences’ and ‘oneness’ characterizes INGO messages. Global poor are shown as different and distant but at the same time like ‘us’ in virtue of their humanity (Dogra, 2012: 3).

The universal morality of feeling-sorry-for-Africans is pontificated not only from NGOs but also from other sides, including politicians, religious figures and other social actors. The resulting discourse provides an opportunity for activist filmmakers many of whom do not stop to critically reflect about the real reason behind these observable miseries. The intention of the donors validates the story and their gaze structures it. It is indeed a tall order to challenge the gaze as long as the donors are the ones holding the wallet. I have shown in this chapter that the HIV/AIDS pandemic has become overwhelmingly African, and ideologically, this has opened the old Pandoras box allowing racial and sexual stereotypes to resurface and dominate in visual representations.

Some final reflections

'Every photograph is accurate. None of them is the truth.'
Richard Avedon

As a Tanzanian woman filmmaker with experience that stretches from the dissolved National Film Company (TFC) and beyond, I am conversant with the logistics of filmmaking and distribution in the country. Put simply, the profession is still male-dominated and therefore the usual difficulties of acquiring funding for documentary production are even more acute for women filmmakers wishing to be taken seriously. Tanzania being one of the most donor-dependent countries in the world has other pressing priorities and seldom offers government-support in film production. Most filmmakers routinely look to foreign NGOs for funding and the more pragmatic ones use proposal writers who know how to agreeably play the donor's tune. Either way, the stories told in such a partnership between local filmmakers and foreign money frequently treat 'actuality' rather too 'creatively', with subjects well briefed to offer testimonials to camera that support the donor's objectives. This has particularly been the case with films covering HIV/AIDS.

On the other hand, the attempts made by foreign filmmakers to represent truthfully the life and people of Africa to Western audiences have not succeeded because film and television industries driven by 'entertainment' have little interest in Africa, except as a backdrop for stories that exploit Otherness. They endorse stereotypical scenes of poverty and corruption, against which Western protagonists must battle. The aid and AIDS stories that do bring Africa to the Western audience are a very small part of the complex understanding of the continent that still waits to be delivered. Until it is we will not have a pluralistic view of life in Africa or balanced stories of who its people are, how they live, what are their cultural traditions and where they are heading.

In this study I have shown that the victim-hood stories, which emerge from the frameworks of the aid industry typically endorse a set of pre-determined perspectives about Africa, which together form what I have termed the 'donor gaze'. These perspectives appear as 'authentic' because donor gaze films intended for fundraising in the West employ familiar documentary techniques which appear to 'speak truth',

but documentary filmmakers eager for sponsorship knowingly play the game by overriding authentic local voices which might otherwise balance the story. While the images on screen may be accurate, the context more often than not is a configuration of reality to produce 'helping stories' which have no real interest in 'normal' Africans except as subjects needing Western help. Voices and images of the needy are routinely aestheticized to create and reinforce a version of the truth, which agrees with the boardroom analyses of donor agencies and justifies their charitable fundraising and continued intervention. The dominant narrative position used in such texts, I have argued, may be termed *'speaking about'*.

I began the thesis with two main objectives: firstly, to examine how the techniques of documentary filmmaking are used to reinforce the donor gaze; secondly, to see if and how the donor gaze can be challenged. I have shown that without expressing doubt (or perhaps exercising choice) many documentary filmmakers adopt the donor gaze in order to butter their bread, and also because their own Western cultural toolkit means they subscribe to the dominant worldview of feeling-sorry-for-Africans. Their 'truth telling' documentary approach (re)organises whatever reality they are asked to portray in order to fit the expectations of sponsors and audiences. In fact, *'speaking about'* reality in this way is very simple and requires very little cultural sensitivity whatsoever. The majority of documentaries on aid and AIDS in Africa, freely available on digital platforms such as YouTube and Vimeo, take this simplistic position and employ familiar stereotypes beneath a veneer of 'truth telling' techniques.

These circumstances are illustrated in this study by the case of *Talking About Sex* [2008]. That film began and ended in the boardroom of RFSU and the subjectivity of the people filmed was of no interest for the outcome. My assignment was to help 'visualize' a written business report to show how successful the Swedish intervention had been: the narrative was decided in advance and the words of the villages featured were to all intents and purposed scripted in advance, and yet the 'documentary mode' employed gave the film a spurious authenticity. In these circumstances it is almost impossible to challenge the donor gaze because the controlling voice will always belong to the one controlling the purse's string.

Films about Africa that *'speak nearby'* the situations and the Others they portray do occur, but relatively rarely because they require a lengthier stay on location and involve a form of genuine engagement with the filmed subjects, circumstances which

are not feasible for most parachute filmmaking on limited budgets. And even when the filmmaker is independently financed and able to operate freely there is no guarantee that results will be very different. I have argued that Trinh T. Minh-Ha's much-lauded experimental documentary *Reassemblage* [1982][102] only exoticised black African women, even though she claimed she was *'speaking nearby'* their reality. Her assertion resonates well with the donor gaze producers who claim that they want to empower and give a voice to those with no power, who are seldom heard. The approach is well meaning; they see Africans as victims who need a helping hand but in providing this the Otherness is over emphasized in the stylistics. For example, Minh-Ha's repeated use of extreme close up of naked breasts: she wants to assert that this-is-how-things-are, but refuses to use the voice of the women to tell how-things-*really*-are. In this case, and in many others, the subjects perform as silent signifiers of meaning, completely divorced from their own voice just as in the old days when black Africans were the 'drum beaters.'

In order to challenge the donor gaze filmmakers should aim to *'speak with'* African voices and this can only be done by 'real' empowerment of the filmed subjects. Instead of asserting truth with the help of on-screen white experts or pre-determined narratives, the filmmaker should create collaborative opportunities for Africans to confirm their own truth. Trusting the interpretation of those living the reality is an attempt I experimented with for *Life Goes On: Voices from Cape Town.* When I arrived there I felt disoriented and unsure what I was expected to know: to me South Africa was a massive lion, and the parts of Cape Town that I was able to see in two months were just the tip of its tail, to borrow Albert Einstein's metaphor. I cannot claim my short text as a grand narrative about 'reality' or suggest that one complete story of one of the ten individuals we met would do justice to such a diverse country. But this was an attempt to make a film *with* rather than *about* people, working with subjects whose daily lives were fully eventful, but not eventful enough for a more conventional mode of narrative-driven documentary.

However, while my subjects were encouraged to 'order the gaze' the realities of camera and editing meant there were inevitable limitations. This was a step towards a different style of filmmaking but '*speaking with'* was not yet *'speaking by'*. In fact there is a history of participatory '*speaking with'* filmmaking, which involves the subjects in a direct attempt 'to give voice to the voiceless'. One of the more

[102] *Reassemblage* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cc5G2-rTKis. Accessed, January 2014.

interesting experiments in using film as a way of opening a dialogue and boosting social and economic development, as mentioned in the introduction (p17), was organized by the National Film Board of Canada in the late 1960s. The inhabitants of the remote and economically depressed fishing communities on Fogo Island, Newfoundland, became the focus of a process that was a combination of ethnographic documentary and political engagement.[103] Working with the Memorial University of Newfoundland as part of the Canadian Government's 'Challenge for Change' project, Colin Low spent several months on the island in 1967, getting to know the people and then inviting them to talk on film about issues that concerned them. At that time the traditional fishing economy was in decline, around 60% of the inhabitants were out of work and young people were leaving to find work elsewhere. The various communities felt ignored by government but were unsure how to work together.

Low later explained his approach:

> We began promising individuals that if they allowed us to film them, we would play the film back to them before anyone else saw it. This established confidence more than anything else and given that assurance, people were not afraid to speak. We also began promising the separate villages that if there was not village approval of film made in the village, we would destroy the film… In all, we filmed about twenty hours of material. Back in Montreal, we edited it to six hours…
>
> Three months after filming, we returned to the Island for playback of material. This was done in a different village every night for about a month and a half. Screenings usually included a general discussion…I have never been to more exciting film screenings. The appreciation was extensive, the discussions animated. We invited people to help edit the material, remove sections or add to it. In six hours of material, three minutes were removed because they were considered "unfair". Not all participants in discussions were in agreement with each other, but at no time did the discussions involve extreme anger. People continuously asked us to run the film off the Island - particularly to government.[104]

Showing the material to government indeed became part of the whole 'Fogo Process', with the filmmakers becoming *de facto* mediators and a minister in the provincial government responding to the islanders in kind, on film. At a time when television was still a relatively undeveloped medium controlled from distant cities this was a positive achievement, but just as significant was the way Low's documentaries

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[103] Link to Fogo Island films: https://www.nfb.ca/playlists/fogo-island/playback. Accessed, July 2014.

[104] Colin Low (5 July, 1972) *The Fogo Island Communication Experiment* available at: http://onf-nfb.gc.ca/medias/download/documents/pdf/1972-Fogo-Island-Communication-Experiment.pdf. Accessed, July 2014.

brought the various communities together. As Carolyne Weldon noted, when interviewing Low in 2010, 'In his own way, Colin Low gave the people of Fogo both a voice, and an ear. And when he involved the islanders in the editing process, he also gave them a mirror to take a good long look at themselves.'[105]

However, for all its innovation and effect, Colin Low's work on Fogo Island can still be seen as a more sophisticated development of *'speaking with'*, in many respects limited in time, place and technology. Can his techniques be developed for use within the digital age of the twenty-first century? A question posed by Stephen Crocker (2008: 60):

> What can we learn from the Fogo Process now in the age of new super-light nomadic technologies that seem to render nearness and distance obsolescent? This successful use of film and video to address problems of `information poverty' and help islanders `cognitively map' their situation was not only a result of the technology made available to them but of the way that it was integrated into their lives. For this reason we still have much to learn from the Fogo Process. Because the Fogo experiments concerned the social and political uses of media, they raise a question that has become more rather than less pertinent: what are media good for? As the means of communication become more widely available, what can we do with them? Now that it becomes possible to represent everything, why would we? For what purpose? The Fogo Process points us to the most basic problem in the politics of media. What role can media play in the formation of collective, political structures?

The development and world-wide spread of the ubiquitous mobile phone, with its capacity to capture video and upload it to the internet, challenges and demystifies the business of filmmaking. Easily accessed on-line websites remove the immediate problem of distribution. We are at a point where many people now have tools of representation easily available at all times and very soon even the inhabitants of the most remote settlements on earth will be able to transmit their own images, filming their own lives and taking *'speaking with'* onto the level of *'speaking by'.* What implications this may have for documentary as a form remain to be seen. Amateur video on YouTube rarely conforms to our established expectations of a 'film', however 'authentic' the images. Nor can the internet guarantee a specific audience or deliver a measurable impact. There will still be a need for the filmmaker's vision and editing expertise, and, inevitably, for sources of finance. But at least there may be already a corrective at hand for some of the worst excesses of the 'donor gaze'.

[105] Carolyne Weldon, *Lunch with Colin Low*, 27 May 2010, available at http://blog.nfb.ca/blog/2010/05/27/lunch-with-colin-low/. Accessed, July 2014.

Appendix: Interviews and correspondence

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1) Hubert Sauper (Director, Darwin's Nightmare) 18/10/2013

RK. *You might say I am your worst critic because my argument is that Western filmmakers use narrow First-World filters to interpret African reality. One of the filters I am exploring in my PhD is the 'donor gaze' that is legitimized by the international donor community who sponsor most aid and HIV/AIDS documentary films:*
HS. First of all, the donor community, I have nothing to do with them. I don't get money from them and I owe them nothing. I have big esteem for some people who work in them but I have little esteem for the whole machinery, and that is one of the things that I made a point about in my film; but again, I let the pictures speak for themselves. I give them the ropes so they can hang themselves.
Secondly, it is a complete misconception that the film is about Tanzania.
RK *What do you mean by that?*
The film is not about Tanzania, it just happened to be in Tanzania. It's like when you make a film about a love story in Paris. It is not a film about Paris but about the love between the man and the woman.
RK. *So why did you not make the film in New York, Vienna or elsewhere then?*
HS I could have
RK *You could have? So why Tanzania? Why Lake Victoria?*
HS Why not Tanzania? It is just one place, one of many places.
RK *Really? So it's just an artistic expression? Do you really think a film carrying the 'documentary' label can be set just about anywhere without affecting that particular social space?*
HS. Absolutely. Darwin's Nightmare is a universal story. It just happened to be in Tanzania because of series of coincidences and circumstances.
It's a universal story about human condition. It's about power, it's about exploitation, it's about ignorance, it's about lies, it's about problematic relationship between North and South, problems between poor and rich, it's about recourses, it's about beauty, it's about childhood, it's about a lot of things human.
RK *Even then, you must have thought about a perfect setting for such a story. As a filmmaker myself, I know that we do make conscious choices about where and who to film. What made you decide on Tanzania?*

HS I don't give a shit about space. It doesn't matter. There is fish everywhere in the world, power struggle everywhere in the world, there are idiots everywhere, it just happened to be in that place because in that place I happened to meet a lot of elements to make a point for a movie. The Russian pilots and the poor girls in the bar; you don't have to explain much to show that it is a sick and crazy relationship.
RK *I disagree with the notion of a universal story, because Darwin's Nightmare is labeled 'documentary' and with that it carries the truth stamp. Explain:*
HS What is the problem? I am making a film called documentary. I don't owe a report to any government. I am expressing a universal truth and I don't owe any balance to anybody. I get money because I am a film artist. I use my political motivations to make my comments.
RK *My concern is the word 'documentary.' You do know how audience will engage with the content? Documentary asks them to take it as truth.*
HS I don't give a shit if audiences see it, or if they buy it or go and see it. If they don't like my movie they don't have to go and see it. I didn't ask anyone to sit for two hours and watch the movie. It's one of millions of movies out there.
RK *That is very arrogant. Does it mean you don't have responsibility towards your audience? 'I don't give a shit?' That is not the right attitude especially when you make money for producing the film!*
HS [Sauper pans around his studio apartment with the camera showing a congested kitchen, a small working space, and a sofa bed.] I am showing you this because I am sick of being called a millionaire *Mzungu* [white European] by well-fed African politicians. All I am trying to do is express something universal, and listen to the little unheard voices to unveil reality, and if that triggers people like you to write, or some NGOs to send money that is very good. Regarding HIV in the area, I heard that the Bill Gates Foundations sent some ten million dollars or so after the film. I am not taking this as a credit, I am saying that it is one of the consequences. Another consequence is that some completely idiotic bullshiters trying to do a favour to your President started harassing the people who participated in my film and this is very hurtful. These people told the film participants that this *Mzungu* is a millionaire so we can sue him for a lot of money, which will benefit you. Some of the people were severely threatened, one had his house destroyed, luckily, most are still able to get in touch with me. Then there is Mike Mushi's YouTube campaign against my film, which is quite paranoid. In one scene you can hear him telling the subjects to say on camera that Sauper has to be electrocuted. I have in fact received death threats. The whole thing is caused by visual illiteracy.

RK *I can't agree more! Visual literacy varies. For starters there is no universal way of perceiving images. Secondly, Tanzanians for instance started consuming audio-visual texts later than many African countries; so yes, our visual literacy isn't the same as yours.*

HS I don't see Hollywood movie the same as other people see it. One of the problems of our time is communication information and there is so much power imbalance. Who gets to say what? Africanity spells out that lake Victoria is 'ours' etc etc. Countries see themselves as brands and feel that they have right to own and protect the representation of it. How to communicate to control the brand is very problematic. It's not right to say that *Mzungu* Hubert cannot represent Tanzania because it's not his space.

RK *Look at it this way. It is about intergrity. Since you are very textually literate yourself I presume you do know that historically, Africa has been defined by others and representation-wise Africans are regarded as lacking capability to do it themselves. As a cultural text, Darwin's Nightmare is orientalising because you are using your own privileged First World voice to tell the story in a particular way: What do you say?*

HS I agree about the power imbalance between the West and Africa, but I can only speak for myself. I completely agree that representation is a tool of power and repression but again thinking about my own work, I don't represent Rafael the night watchman for instance. His little voice is part of the glue for patching together the more important problematic global story, which I think needs to be told. Mind you we also have big definitional problems between who is 'we' and who is 'us.' To me Rafael and everyone else I filmed are part of the global 'us.' One of the things I am very proud of about *Darwin's Nightmare* is that I didn't use the slimy NGO angle of victimizing Africans and playing the big white missionary etc; neither did I use the 'Walt Disney' truth favoured by many African leaders and tourist industries to romanticize sunsets and beaches and smiling people.

RK *In other words you own your voice then?*

HS Yes, completely, and I think I am one of the last people in our civilization that can really express own voice in a large scale because many others are controlled by whoever is sponsoring them. It's my decision to stay close to my truth.

RK *How did you get that lucky?*

HS. This happened by chance because my documentaries are very creative. It is about the form. How you tell the story. What kind of rhythm are you editing etc etc. What kind of figures you are choosing, do you include the dog bark in the

background? The blow of the wind? The cricket's sound? To me documentary is art of information.

RK. *That is an interesting way of putting it!*

HS Reality is known and there is nothing absolutely new. It's now new that some soldiers in Tanzania are poor because there is poverty everywhere. Corruption, exploitation is everywhere too. So how do we tell the story? It is all known but it has not been represented in a movie, which I think is a powerful tool to make audiences sit for an hour or two focusing on one reality that needs to be seen in a certain way.

RK *But the fish reality sounds like 'manna from the tropical sun' judging from the comments on your website, because initially you were tracing the arms trade in Tanzania. Fish story was not your primary concern.*

HS Everything is secondary. Behind every story there is another story. In a way I feel very privileged that I could be there but it took many hours of flying in the belly of the Russian plane with the overweight Russian pilots constantly drunk from their vodka. Through discipline and routine I could tell the fish story.

RK *Have you read heart of darkness? Because you do sound like Conrad's Marlow in some of your expressions, particularly on the website*

HS [***he laughs***] Yes I have read Joseph Conrad, but that was some time ago.

RK *You refer to Africa as stinking jungle in the press release for the film.*

HS You have to understand the context why it was a stinking jungle. It was from when I was filming *Kisangani Diary* and there was genocide going on. There were thousands of dead bodies lying on the ground rotting and we could hardly breath. It was awful. It was stinking so badly. You had to hold your hand to your nose.

I had to say it.

In the spectrum of representation of the world, we are bombarded by representation. By news, by documents, by cinema, internet, by people giving perspective of themselves on Facebook etc. We are bombarded right? And the spectrum of representation has rarely a full scope into the most striking beauty. Usually it is in the middle, and usually it tends towards clichés of romanticisation. An image of Tanzania for instance, from Tanzanian government perspective you get a clichéd image, which I think in part is 'Walt Disney' truth. But that is nothing I am interested in, first of all. And I think also because of the sheer amount of clichéd representation, it is a lie. It is a lie because you get so much of the same thing and rarely you get background and I can tell you why I am extreme in my perspective.

You see I grew up in a beautiful place in Austria, where everybody agreed it was beautiful in the Alps. I grew up between the snowy mountains and beautiful lakes, every house had flowers, people were singing Tivolian folk songs, dressed up like

the old days, and it was very popular for tourists. We were lavished with praise about how beautiful everything is. But in the same village, lived or live and still live a huge amount of old Nazis because it was part of the third reich. And the worst part is that, some of those singing the nice Tivolian songs are old Nazis. But we never talked about it. It is never discussed, although it is the other side of the coin; the other part of reality. And this other part of reality, if it is not represented, it is politically very dangerous.

It is very dangerous.

What I am trying to say is that, I got very sensible, very early, about the multiple layers of reality. And because there are so many layers of reality, in the scope of all representation, I feel no urge to add another layer of bullshit 'disney' representation ok? But I do have an urge to represent the whole scope of human beings, and contrary to some people, there is a lot of optimism and beauty in my films.

RK *So why the prostitutes then? That hardly conveys optimism and beauty about Tanzanian women! Couldn't you have included other women for balance?*

HS To balance! Balancing what? My movie itself is balancing. The film balances global consensus of the slimy NGO reality. In fact those women were very beautiful in many senses and that is what I tried to show. The one who was main character, Elizabeth, she got killed, but she was extremely smart and she was very friendly while we were there, and she introduced us to the whole environment without expecting any payment.

You have to create a relationship based on trust, and I learned a lot because of this.

RK. *What did you write in the application forms for the filming permit? I am sure if you had revealed your real intentions the authorities wouldn't have allowed you.*

HS It's none of their business.

RK *Oh really? What do you mean it is none of their business? All foreigners filming in Tanzania have to give detailed intention; again it's about integrity I'm sure. It's a procedure to prevent nightmare representations I guess.*

HS It's none of their business what my filming intentions are. They asked where I wanted to film I said Mwanza. But honestly this administration is seriously stupid you know. They are really repressive to free thinking people. You know President Kikwete devoted so much time rubbishing my film instead of addressing more important issues at the time. He gave a speech in Mwanza and after it was translated to me I understood it was pure bullshit. He had bad time in Mwanza because of the superstitions there, so instead of solving that problematic he was instead trying to unite Tanzanians by saying to them; we have a common problem of a *Mzungu* who made a bad film about us trying to say that all women in Tanzania are prostitutes.

It is the same thing you are saying too!

RK *Of course over emphasizing prostitution is disturbing. But like most Tanzanians we laugh about things. By the way your film is parodied as 'Filamu ya Mapanki' in Tanzania because you also claimed we survive on mapanki; the skeletons. Luckily majority of Tanzanians have not seen the real film.*

HS [he laughs] Mapanki? I didn't know that!

RK *You do caricature Tanzania beyond recognition. The opening scene you Superimpose arrival of one of the air beasts with an air controller who is distracted by wasps and you devote more than half a minute to follow him frantically killing one and then another. Why? Are you saying 'filthy airport,' 'stupid people?'*

HS [***laughing***] You have to have humor in it. You cannot compile two hours of serious material without laughing a bit. At one point, I had to wait with my camera on until a plane came in, and it captured the wasp hunt, but the controller didn't give a shit about me being there.

RK *I am not surprised. Tanzanians are very welcoming. It is not just cliché.*

HS I understand that and I do have a lot of respect for Tanzanian people and I also know they have been thrown under empires, one side to the other. Germany left, then British came, communists too had a go and everyone left their stupid ideas in this country. But I really reject the idea of showing only misery.

RK *Yet you chose glue-sniffing children? That is proper misery universally speaking!*

HS I can tell you, I had hundred of hours of footage. We spent many nights with those children and every night they tried to kill each other, raping each other, and almost every night we had to take a child to hospital for stitching together and we tried to find where we could take them to after that. Some of this we filmed, and if I had wanted to show proper misery as you say, I could have included some of these scenes with pools of blood; it was a terrifying situation. I didn't include such scenes, because I was showing their struggle; that they were trying to have some kind of life. There are so many things I edited out. And the stupid thing is that Tanzania is saying that the film is a lie. Did you read that?

RK *Yes. But generally speaking documentary truth is a constructed truth. It is what you assert with your footage. Explain the lying?*

HS The argument was that Sauper lied by showing mapankis as food for humans. What was I supposed to do? Show images of people biting into the fish skeletons? It is easy for some big-bellied governor to say we don't eat mapankis, well he doesn't! And Kikwete himself, is a liar.

RK *I thought the skeletons are dried and processed for feeding animals?*

HS That's bullshit. You are a Tanzanian and you believe that? So you think I am lying? The mapankis are for human beings. The fishing factories are there. They export fillets and mostly they were throwing the mapankis out of the window and people grabbed them and made soup out of them; fresh, which is basically nothing bad. It is fresh fish although not much meat on it. And then this became popular, because people do not have enough money to buy other food. But the *Mzungus* from Brussels said this is not hygienic, the skeletons have to be carried away in trucks. From there on, the fish factory contracted some local guys with little trucks to get rid of the mapankis. So they began dumping these mapankis to a place completely unknown even to people in Mwanza. But they know that there is a factory somewhere and that the mapankis are fried in their own oil after being briefly sun dried, and if they get too rotten they are given to chickens. The fried mapankis are sold on the market for eating. And now in your country, they are more popular than ever because food is getting more and more expensive. So by saying Hubert is fabricating a lie is false.

RK *There is a particular shot that I find disturbing. You close in on the old woman's feet as she scavenges deep in the maggot infested skeletons. Why include such humiliating image? What were you thinking?*

HS I thought it was important to include it. You wouldn't otherwise have reacted the way you do now. The EU rules caused that. Of course it is a delicate question; to show it or not to show it. If you don't show it you are an accomplice and you let her die alone. But now she is in cinema, in European Union and people are going 'shit! What have we done?'

RK *Do you know her name? Did the film change her life?*

HS Of course I know her name. The government has sent a lot of money there to build showers for the people, but I don't know if that is good. They also criminalized a lot of people who appeared in the film saying they never should have spoken to that *Mzungu*. I have to emphasize that there is nothing in my movie that is not factual. It is all factual and presented in a way that reflects my own voice on global issues. I did not create those children out of school-going children in uniform. They were really homeless.

They were really in very bad state; they were really drug-addicts.

Another thing concerning the arms trade; I did not try to make a movie to invent that. There is arms trade right? The arms are not produced there; they are produced in industrial countries, Russia, Europe, America or in China, and, they are not flown into Africa by Air France, or the British Airways. They are not flown in by the Holy Spirit

either. So it is these same Russian cargo planes that are hired by UN to bring in humanitarian relief and the pilots are just doing their jobs.

This is what I tried to say. The biggest crime though is to camouflage reality, which I think the Tanzanian government tried to do by degrading my work as an invention; as a lie, in order to advance their safari cliché image of sunsets and Maasai's jumping around. That is also exploitation by the way of the image of Africa.

There is also something that I did not put in the films. There are a lot of young men who lost their farms to bigger companies so they come to the lake and there is a war going on between fishermen fractions. It is a tough existence. There are arms around; heavy guns and people are shot. Mind you, Kenyan fishermen come too so there is competition and shooting even right now, all because of this stupid fish. All this is not reported, and anyway, I am not going to report it.

RK *But your film makes bold and damning statements about everything else.*

HS [laughs] Perhaps I am too naïve sometimes. But I think you are right in how we see truth. We can only see the world in a certain way, which isn't the same for everyone. And a movie is a very complicated creation too because everyone who sees it will have different interpretation of it. Then there is the other question you ask, why a certain place, why those people not others, why that issue and not another etc. It's like me asking you, why don't you have more New Zealand friends? You have nothing against people in New Zealand, you just happened not to have met someone from there. Actually, it is quite interesting for me to have this discussion with you because I haven't had a chance to meet an African who is genuinely interested in what documentary is all about. By now I assume you already know I was trying to express my voice using the documentary form.

RK *If you knew how the history of black Africans has been distorted through centuries of cultural domination, you will understand why people like me refuse to accept skewed representation in the 21st century.*

HS That is my precise point! I was not out to misrepresent Tanzania but to present the consequences of 21st century exploitation and this I demonstrate with the fish story. As a person, it always gives me great joy to go after the big guys. It started in school where I always challenged difficult teachers. Perhaps my work doesn't always look noble but my intentions always are.

RK *Darwin's Nightmare hardly sounds noble! Why the title?*

HS It is about social Darwinism.

RK *If you were to tell the same story, would you change anything? Would you have chosen the same people?*

HS Yeah. But sometimes I think, I should have been more explicit, because if now even you are questioning if the mapankis were for consumption, perhaps I should have included the scenes of people biting into them. It seems the movie is not clear.

RK *As a Tanzanian I know what kind of fish are popular, affordable and tasty. Everyone has their preferences. Not sure if the oily sangara is on the top of the pyramid.*

HS That is propaganda.

RK *It is certainly not! I filmed in Mwanza in December 2008 and most fish sold in the markets are small.*

HS The propaganda in Tanzania is that Tanzanians don't like sangara, they just like tilapia. That is bullshit. If you were starving you don't care about what kind of fish you are getting.

RK *That is **if** we were starving. Otherwise, people prefer to buy food that they can also store.*

HS You don't have to store it. You buy a fresh chunk and cook it.

RK *I am not sure about the supply chain, because most of us don't even have a fridge at home. Mind you that Tanzania is a very big country too. By the way where was the starvation?*

HS In many places. In Shinyanga, around Geita. [after a long pause] I don't know where there is starvation in Tanzania, you don't think there is starvation in Tanzania?

RK *Can we ever know the truth?*

In an email before the interview, Sauper wrote:

> I have to say that the strange debate about truth after Darwin's Nightmare made it clearer than ever to me that it's important to make such films. They are vectors of truth, a hyper version of verite, and therefore painful and contested by establishments. It's ultimately a compliment for an author to be hated by powerful individuals whose crimes need to be seen and understood.

2) Ylva Bergman(Director/Producer Talking About Sex) 23/5/2013

RK: *You will remember I was irritated at the 'euphoria' and gratitudeness expressed by all the boys from the project? NOONE seemed to have an opinion except what they thought they should say to the filming team. Things were spoken behind backs, and I was told to take it with a 'pinch of salt'...Can you imagine the impact that donor communities have in HIV/AIDS representation? By the way, do you have more details like the total budget, distribution, dubbing etc?*

Ylva: I am sorry to say I have no access to the budgets and do not remember the details.
-I remember the budget was extremely small, and we did not have the money to travel back and fourth to Tanzania in order hire a film crew in Tanzania. We had only money for the one short trip. We needed a small crew, just like a news TV channel/editor would choose, and made it a short info segment, rather than a documentary, which was first intended.

-The back ground was to document Young Men ad Equal Partners, sexuality education towards men as well as women, which has since long been part of the RFSU objective, and in the YMEP concept, a joint program in several countries. Our object was to document this/compare it to an article, etc.

-This film is more a feature/information film, than a documentary. I do not think the film, 7 minutes long? can be regarded as a documentary, rather documentation of a project?

-I know you disapproved of us not using a Tanzanian crew, not doing the entire production in Tanzania etc, but if you look at the cost - and time needed - for that, I hope you will understand that we did not have the resources to make full documentary over time.

-I did not disfavour a Tanzania crew, but with such a small budget, time frame etc it was not doable and the project would have dropped/ been cancelled, and made into a written report.

I know there was criticism that it was not made in all the original languages. Again, there were severe budget limitations to this.

The film was done in English in order to document this project for RFSU; for Sweden/SIDA as well as for many countries, not just Tanzania. It was not done to show at film festivals, or TV. English was chosen as the main language with the possiblitiy of reaching as many as possible within the projects, with a dub in Somali, as you know.

I remember you were critical that we did not find opposing voices, that criticized the project, I am sure we could have found that if we had double the time in Tanzania, and aimed at it being a full documentary., However that would have meant someone working on funding for a year or two, before staring. I think you might remember us talking about this? We did try to fund it initially, but did not have recourse to put aside and work with this. Earlier on we tried to pitch the idea of a documentary to BBC first, they liked the idea, but then nothing happened. Maybe that would have been a film more to your liking, and something more fundamentally critical.

We did not have budget, not the personell, to finance a full documentary about YMEP. The SIDA support was towards YMEP, did NOT include a documentary, but of course included to communicate the project with a limited budget.

All the people who worked with this project at RFSU have left the organization, and the reception of the film is therefore almost impossible for me to find out. Perhaps if you ask STAFFAN?

Best luck with your thesis,
Ylva.

3) Jim Hanon (Director, Miss HIV) 14/04/2012

RK: *As I have explained in my earlier emails I am interested in how the Western filmmakers and their donors control the story? I call it the donor gaze. Your general thoughts?*

- I appreciate the expression of your line of thinking, and your entire thesis. You're an African woman while I am a North American male who grew up in an entirely different world with entirely different cultural norms and experiences than any African woman. As a filmmaker whose non-profit projects are funded by donors, I believe I can share insight into the donor gaze from at least my perspective. I say at least my perspective because just as a film interprets the subject, it also interprets the central question that the funders of the film are expressly interested in. Sometimes these two are compatible, and sometimes they are not. But always there are tensions and conflicts between them that have to be addressed one way or another. I will add that this isn't confined to the donor gaze, but also extends to the prejudices of ideology and interests of media distributors and marketers who are invariably owned by large corporations who are known to apply their own filters to the lens of the filmmaker. It is my experience that different filmmakers deal with these forces in different ways, therefore I can only speak for myself.

1. In Your email response to me you wrote:" I believe the voice of the African woman is not only critical to the shaping of policies but will eventually be the catalyst for redefining them." - Was your motivation for making MISS HIV film "to empower with voice"?

In this case, as in most any other, the problem is that African women in general do not have access and training to participate in media discourse, in the same way they may not be able to have a say in the policies of their own countries or even among their own families. This makes them susceptible to have whatever truths that serve the presenter projected on to them, which may or may not be accurate given the presenter. Knowing this, and accepting my own limitations, I make a conscious effort to ensure that I "listen" well. I believe a documentary film sharing the true stories of other people is constructed out of listening more than any other discipline or art. Listening well is the key to representing the authentic interests of the subject as well as the donor or corporate sponsor, and it can be said of every film that I have made that I have been caught between these two voices.

The direct answer to your question is that yes, I do seek to empower the subject with voice, but it is equally true that I seek to empower the audience with listening. This is how I navigate the tension between representing the subject and the donor or sponsor, and my own limitation of being a third party carrying my own bias. I trust that the audience is smart, that they can see biases even when they are my own, and if they are presented something that listens to the subject they can form their own opinions. These opinions are subject to the audience's own biases and beliefs, but the right questions can be raised to cause them to think about an issue and care about the subject represented. Therein is my goal, to raise questions in the interest of the subject presented and to represent their humanity in such a way that it genuinely connects to the humanity of the audience. All this could be said to "empower with voice."

2) It is very clear reading MISS HIV that, the African women actually are 'talking' subjects. But what are they saying? Are we hearing their personal stories as individuals or as representatives of women in a continent ravaged by HIV/AIDS?

I believe filmmaking is storytelling and storytelling is first and foremost a medium of metaphor. It represents an idea and question that has bearing on all humanity, even if it portrays a subject that is a small and limited picture. I would say that MISS HIV represents a small and limited example of African woman who by themselves do not represent the whole because they were selected from two sides of a polarized policy struggle. Yet, do their stories represent a truth that has bearing, insight and effective commentary on the whole? I believe so, because the questions their stories raise serve all African women. 1) Can we face the stigma of HIV/AIDS and affirm and help the afflicted who have it and more effectively prevent it from spreading? 2) Is it right that AIDS policies created from a predominantly western homosexual context be applied to African women? These questions are raised by individual and therefore limited stories of a few African women from two sides of a polarized policy debate, but the questions are designed to raise the interest and consciousness of the audience on behalf of all African women.

I stayed at the homes of the women in Botswana in the Miss HIV pageant, and followed the women in Uganda as closely as I could. I listened to them without leading the questions and found that in the end they were not different at all in their humanity. I sought to portray this in the film.

3. You say on jimhanon.com that your goal as a filmmaker is to tell stories that can help us understand what it means to be human. What is the best way of genuinely representing someone from another culture? Do you feel that you achieved informing your audience what it is to be an African woman and living with HIV?

As I said earlier, I trust that the audience is smart. I know I carry my own biases and prejudices. I know the donors and corporations have their own interests in the stories I work on. And the way I balance these things is to listen for common humanity and explore it when I find it. This process helps me understand what it means to be human. All art is infused with the spirit of the artist as well as the subject at hand, and I believe if my listening and searching is truthful to me then at least the process will be truthful to the audience. The audience may not agree with me, or my conclusions, and I am not asking them to. What I have found is that they do enjoy a good journey on important matters where they can gain insight and find a human connection to the subjects I explore. This human connection can't be underestimated. We all enjoy it when we find it. We all watch movies with the hope that we will experience it, but seldom do.

Do I feel that I achieved informing my audience on what it is to be an African woman living with HIV? That is a tall order and depending on who you ask I will get a high or low score. I can say that if I were to make a film with that specific mandate then I would have made a different film. Did I raise questions to a broad audience that causes them to more greatly consider and weigh the voice of the African woman for themselves? After seeing Miss HIV does the audience feel like this voice has been woefully absent in the policy struggle that affects them so directly? These are the questions I sought to raise and to portray the lives of some African women so genuinely as to make these questions harder to ignore.

4. Do you think that the beauty pageant was empowering?

For the contestants very much so. They found a greater good in it that has a way of changing any human being. They all followed the same basic process. 1) Coming to terms with the stigma for themselves, which means overcoming shame and judgment projected upon them by an entire culture and more often than not their closest friends and family. 2) Daring to go public and admit to everyone that they had HIV/AIDS knowing that this would limit their relationships, and most certainly their sexual relationships. These two things are enough for anyone to bear but these women all

went a step further which is to participate in a pageant that directly challenges HIV stigma on a national and international level. Some of the contestants might do this in order to try to create opportunity for themselves with sponsors, but most do it because they want to call attention the great need to make HIV/AIDS visible and to not judge and marginalize the infected.

Obviously I believe the pageant is very useful in creating awareness and raising the needed questions. To many the pageant may be as polarizing as the issue, but I have enjoyed challenging that thinking as well, again because of the questions it raises.

*5. Did you own your thoughts all through the production process? Were there any external influences on what and how you could build up the script**?***

Yes and yes. The donors and producer of MISS HIV are Christian and wanted to show that there was a bias in international HIV/AIDS policy against abstinence education. They had heard Dr. Ed Green speak about US AIDS policy being imposed on African woman in what he saw as an incredible injustice. The first interviews we did were with Dr. Green and Dr, Hearst, both secular epidemiologists who argued to include abstinence education as part of an overall strategy.

For my part, I was and am intrigued by the polarization the abstinence component brings. On one level it is inarguable that the first line of defense against a transmitted disease is to not transmit it. I am an advocate of personal responsibility. Some would call it my bias but I believe that anyone with HIV/AIDS should take personal responsibility to not give the disease to anyone else. If this were done then the HIV/AIDS pandemic would end. Enter the African woman, in the majority of cases she is unable to prevent her husband or boyfriend from having sex with someone else, or from withholding sex, or demanding a condom. Abstinence advocates who ignore this reality are easy to write off. I believed that the very question raised the right kind of exploration of the plight of African women.

Yes, I own my own thoughts through the production process. Primarily because I take responsibility for the effect that whatever film I create has on my audience either good or bad. I often have debates with donors or sponsors to get them to allow me to raise the questions they and I are interested in raising, without making a film that tells the audience what they should believe. Sometimes the donors or sponsors are

less happy with the film than the audience is. It is the receptivity and thought process of the audience that influences donors or sponsors to get behind other films I would like to make or not.

There are a lot of opinions expressed in Miss HIV that I completely disagree with. I wasn't constructing an argument for the jury in order to swing them to a client's position. I remind myself that the audience is smart and can sort through the bias behind what they are hearing if they are given that chance. A great failing in modern media in general is that the audience is not being trusted with that chance. Rather they are being conditioned to media that tells them what they should believe. This is a great failing of media toward humanity. If the audience is told what to believe then they don't have to develop moral thought for themselves, they can just agree or disagree with the purveyor of the media. With Miss HIV I was challenging myself, the donors, the subjects and the audience to look at the questions at stake and take ownership and moral responsibility themselves for those questions. I am not jewish but if anything I follow a rabbinical model of storytelling which is to incite moral thought and invite the audience to wrestle with the meaning for themselves, which is how we take ownership of what we believe.

Does this mean I will turn down projects if I can't own my thoughts through the process. Yes. Though it cost me in the short term, it is essential for the long term. I fail the subject, myself, the audience and ultimately the donors or sponsors if I do otherwise. I don't require my audience to come out where I come out, to believe what I believe, or convert to the donors or sponsors point of view. I require them to think and ask themselves some important questions, and by and large they are grateful for the experience whether we arrive on the same page or not.

4) Lars Johansson (Director, Hyena Square) 28/01/2010

1. What was the purpose of the film?
See below.

2. Who was your target audience?
Tanzanian general public.

3. Why AIDS, Why Tanzania and particularly why Manzese?
See below

4. Did you achieve what you wanted with the film?

No, it has yet to be aired on TV in Tanzania, TBC pulled it hours before the premiere for reasons that remain unclear to us. You may want to ask Elisa about the politics behind this. We can get the film on another TV channel now, if we find an organisation (such as RFSU!) to cover the costs for broadcast.

5.Who did the research and for how long?

The film was produced with a participatory method. Once we had identified the protagonist, which we did simply through visiting Kiwohede and asking if there was someone who wanted to go public on TV, we did the research with her and her friends more or less as part of the shooting. We did not have a clear idea of the story when we started, we only knew that we wanted to make a portrait film about Elisa

WHY WE MADE THE FILM
This film project began when I saw a set of Aids campaign posters and billboards in Dar es Salaam sometime back in 2002 or so. The posters showed young, healthy-looking, smiling and very beautiful men and women, and the text read "can you tell which one has HIV?"

The campaign upset me, because (a) it represented more of the same fear mongering that we knew was counterproductive, (b) it suggested that the youth was the source of the epidemic, and (c) it did not encourage people to get tested and to come out as positives, and their families and communities to support them, which I thought should be the key element in any campaign at the time. It did not blame the sugar daddies infecting school girls, or the heroin trade, or the men who abuse poor housegirls from the villages, or the rape culture in certain environments. The segment of the population that could identify with those young, well-dressed models were already scared stiff of Aids, while the rest of us might come to think that Aids was more of a problem for the young and beautiful. After a long discussion with my Tanzanian colleagues about what was wrong with this message, we wrote a proposal for a documentary trilogy about Tanzanians living openly with HIV:

ORIGINAL PROPOSAL for "SILENCE – DENIAL – BLAME: A documentary trilogy on living with HIV in Tanzania"

About the trilogy

It took two decades of public education to instil fear for HIV/AIDS throughout the world. While this kind of information was perhaps required to curb the infection rate, it has also fuelled discrimination and human rights violations. Stigmatising of HIV-positive people leads to silence, denial and blame, which paralyse public action. Instead of just fearing the virus, the public must learn to view the disease as preventable and manageable. We need stories that show possibilities for hope, and role models who demonstrate how we can live with HIV. We need to give space to people who break the silence, challenge the stigma and cope with their situation. There are such people in Tanzania, although they are still few and far apart.

Silence, Denial and Blame are the working titles of three documentary TV productions dedicated to the stories and experiences of three HIV positive people from groups whose voices are rarely heard in mainstream media. One of them lives in a refugee camp since nine years back. Another is a teenage girl who left an impoverished family in the village to make a living as housemaid in Dar Es Salaam, but who ended up as sex worker. The third is a pastoralist, a Maasai man, who believed that his people were immune to AIDS. In these documentaries they break the silence. They talk about the stigma and discrimination that prevent people from being open about HIV, but also about sources of hope and love found on the other side of coming out as HIV-positive. Their life expectancy may be short, but they are living fulfilling lives now. They have chosen to break the silence because they care. They are saying, "this is my virus, and it will die with me". In return for not passing the virus on they ask their communities and society at large to join them in their struggle to stop the epidemic, as well as to help them when they get ill and look after the orphans they leave behind.

Each story represents a particular take on the same topic: How communities have responded to the threat of HIV/AIDS – with Silence, Denial and Blame – and how they ought to respond in order to come to grips with the epidemic.

The first film in the trilogy has now been finalised and is ready for distribution. It is called Upendo nyakati za Ukimwi / Love in the Time of Aids, and the DVD is attached to this proposal. This film was funded by UNHCR through the Tanganyikan Christian Refugee Services.

This proposal deals with the second film in the series, which tells the story about eighteen year old Elisa in Dar Es Salaam. Production is to start in September 2005 so that the film can have premiere on Tanzanian television on World Aids Day, December 1st.

The third is still in the conceptual stage, and can be produced earliest in 2006.

Why make a film about Elisa?

In rural Tanzania girls usually don't inherit land or cattle, and so they are expected to be married or migrate at young age. As a result thousands of teenage girls move to Dar es Salaam from the villages every year. They come from the poorest families; many are orphans or single mothers. In town they work as housemaids under conditions that often resemble slavery. From this huge population of poor teenage girls, men recruit girls to different forms of prostitution, and infect them with HIV. The response of the community has been blame. With bizarre irrationality society at large blames young women, bar maids and sex workers for the HIV epidemic, rather than going after the older men and sugar daddies who infect them.

This film portrays Elisa, an openly HIV-positive teenage girl reflecting over a condemning society and how she contracted the virus. But she is not desperate and miserable. She has left her former way of life, and in a sense she is happier now than before she was diagnosed.

This documentary can be used in different ways. For some organisations, it can function as a policy tool to address issues of gender power imbalance, poverty and cultural norms leading to sexual abuse and exploitation of girls and young women. For others it would be used (in context with the other films in the series) to adress stigmatisation. These stories provide the most powerful arguments for why society should be open about HIV and why we must look up to those who have the courage to come out in public as role models and champions in the fight against HIV-AIDS. Noe Sebisaba, whose story is told in the "Love in the Time of AIDS" film, is now perceived as a hero by hundreds of thousands of refugees in East Africa who have seen the film in the camps and who will bring his lessons and example with them as they repatriate. Elisa in Dar Es Salaam is another exceptionally gifted storyteller who can become a heroine for the many millions of young women in East Africa who are threatened by sexual abuse.

In another email, Johansson disagrees with Backlander's 'DANTE'S INFERNO' view of the square:

Jag måste säga att jag personligen inte gillar den där liknelsen med Dantes inferno. Jag tycker filmen visar att det finns värme och kärlek även på uwanja wa fisi, att de här karaktärerna inte är förtappade människor utan att de är modiga och kämpar för att rädda sig själva och varandra. Många uppfattar den också så.

Att TVT inte ville visa den berodde inte på debatten efter Darwins Nightmare. Vi hade censurens förbehållslösa stöd liksom dåvarande TACAIDS chefen. Den verkliga orsaken är en lång och trist historia, som har med korruption och girighet att göra...

(I must say that I personally do not like that analogy of Dante's inferno. I think the movie shows that there is warmth and love even at uwanja wa Fisi; that these characters are not reprobate people but that they are brave and fight to save themselves and each other. Many perceive it as well so.

The TVT (Tanzania television) did not want to show it was not because of the debate after Darwin's Nightmare. We had censorship unreserved support by the then TACAIDS director. The real reason is a long and sad history, which has to do with corruption and greed.)

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VSO (http://www.vso.org.uk/about/what-we-do/health-hiv-and-aids)

WHO (http://www.who.int/hiv/pub/en/)

World Bank (http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty)

Interviews and correspondence

Bergman Ylva 23/5/2013	(Producer, *Talking About Sex*)
Fuglesang, Minou 9/7/2010	(Media Anthropologist)
Hakili, Theresia 1/6/2013	(Participant of a World Bank book/film project)
Hanon, Jim 14/4/2012	(Director, *Miss HIV*)
Johansson, Lars 28/1/2010	(Director, *Hyena Square*)
Maendaenda, Cuthbert 26/06/2013	(Regional Coordinator YMEP)
Nichols, Bill 16/8/2013	(Documentary Theorist)
Rekdahl, Ole-Bjorn 20/8/2010	(Director, *Lets Beware AIDS*!)
Sauper, Hubert 18/10/2013	(Director, *Darwin's Nightmare*)
Shoo, Gideon 6/7/2010	(Media Consultant)
Uddeholt, Staffan 2010-2013	(Donor Representative, RFSU, Sweden)

Filmography

Case study documentaries in order of appearance

1. ***Darwin's Nightmare*** [2006] Austria. Directed by Hubert Sauper. Produced by Artefacts Films and TV. (Location Tanzania. Duration, 107 minutes) Available on DVD and YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IV7Y9FHcdFk

2. ***Talking About Sex*** [2008] Sweden. Directed by Anders Liden and Ylva Bergman. Produced by RFSU in association with Liden Film and TV, Sweden. (Location Tanzania. Duration 12 minutes) Available on DVD and on Vimeo: http://vimeo.com/19660829

3. ***Miss HIV*** [2007] United States. Written and directed by Jim Hanon. Produced by Mart Green in association with Ethnographic Media. (Location Botswana and Uganda. Duration 88 minutes) Available on DVD only.
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4. ***Hyena Square*** [2006] Sweden. Directed by Lars Johansson and Cecilia Backlander. Produced by Maweni Farm Productions. (Location, Tanzania. Duration 28 minutes) Available on Vimeo: http://vimeo.com/1725640

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