

The copyright of this thesis rests with the University of Cape Town. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

“This is Africa”: Whiteness and Representations of the Other in Recent
Hollywood Films

Allison Swank

SWNALL003

A minor-dissertation submitted in *partial fulfillment* of the requirements for the award of the
degree of Master of Philosophy in African Studies

Faculty of the Humanities

University of Cape Town

2010

COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Table of Contents

Compulsory Declaration	I
Acknowledgements	III
Abstract	IV
Chapter 1: Introduction The Knowledge Regime	2
Chapter 2 Dominant Western Discourse and Hollywood's Colonial Lens	21
Chapter 3 Intimacy and Difference in <i>The Last King of Scotland</i> (2006)	41
Chapter 4 Identity and Difference in <i>Blood Diamond</i> (2006)	64
Chapter 5: Conclusion Colonial Desire	87
Works Cited	90

Acknowledgements

This work was made possible through the intellectual and moral support of many during my time at The University of Cape Town:

Research for this mini-dissertation and many other projects was greatly influenced by the mentoring of Professors Brenda Cooper and Harry Garuba at the Center for African Studies. Their work on “knowledge production” and Africa has served, and will continue to serve, as a cornerstone for my continued research on representations of Africa in the United States.

Educator and activist Prexy Nesbitt has played an especially critical role in my education and understandings of Africa. His views on Africa’s representation in popular modes of Western media have served as inspiration for this project. To him, I am greatly indebted.

Many of my colleagues at UCT have graciously taken the time to read early drafts of this mini-dissertation. They include: Natasha Himmelman, Bongani Kona, Hannah Botsis, and Professor Judith Head. Their feedback has been key to the development and intellectual shape this project has taken.

Finally, Nava Derakhshani, Steven Aguilar, Tabitha Paine, Karen Ijumba, Grace Ayensu, Sakina Grimwood, Cynthia Mugo, and my parents provided me with a substantial amount of moral support. Their kind words of encouragement carried me further.

Abstract

This mini-dissertation interrogates racial representations in two recent Hollywood films, *The Last King of Scotland* (2006) and *Blood Diamond* (2006). Drawing heavily from Richard Dyer's key theories on the white heterosexual male image in film, I look specifically at representations of whiteness in both films' male protagonists: Dr. Nicholas Garrigan (*Last King*) and Danny Archer (*Blood Diamond*). Both men use the phrase, "This is Africa" (TIA) in conversation with white foreigners to enunciate some supposedly enduring characteristics of Africa that mark its essential difference from what exists in a normative elsewhere that is never explicitly mentioned. Using Edward Said's "strategic location" (1978:20) as a method of discourse analysis, I examine the narrative positions of both men as they appropriate TIA discourse. In doing so, I unpack TIA discourse to reveal its reflection of colonial discourse as well as the new knowledges it produces.

This work is divided into four chapters. The first chapter focuses on the knowledge regime on which TIA discourse is anchored while the second chapter sketches a history of this knowledge regime through its representation on screen. The second chapter also describes how the socio-political context of time and space largely effect race representations in Hollywood films. Chapter 3 focuses on the narrative position of the white male heterosexual protagonist, Dr. Nicholas Garrigan as he articulates and appropriates TIA discourse in *The Last King of Scotland* (2006). Chapter 4 focuses on the same principles of Chapter 3, except with the white male heterosexual protagonist of *Blood Diamond* (2006), Danny Archer. The final chapter resubmits the theories of TIA discourse I put forth and concludes my intervention.

[W]hen we desire to decolonize minds and imaginations, cultural studies' focus on popular culture can be and is a powerful site for interventions, challenge, and change... only if we start with a mind-set and a progressive politics that is fundamentally anticolonialist, that negates cultural imperialism in all its manifestations" (hooks 1994:4,6).

University Of Cape Town

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Knowledge Regime

“This is Africa” is a phrase that occurs repeatedly in Hollywood or Hollywood-type films set in Africa and in popular discourses about Africa; the two constructions feed each other. Typically, a character will say, “This is Africa” and then enunciate some supposedly enduring characteristics of Africa that mark its essential difference from what exists in a normative elsewhere that is never explicitly mentioned. What results is an ambivalence whereby Africa becomes tied to a fixed set of stereotypes that can never really, in discourse, be proven. It “vacillates between what is always ‘in place’, already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated” (Bhabha 1994:66). “This is Africa” (hereafter TIA discourse, or TIA) exists in the ambivalent realm of excess. The anxious repetition of African stereotypes in Hollywood makes substantial contributions to the knowledge regime that has dominated images of Africa in the West for decades.

Within TIA also rests access to a certain economy of pleasure that is acquired through the expression of ownership or what I will be referring to later as ‘intimacy’. By ownership I mean the right of those who use the phrase to claim an intimate knowledge of Africa as implied in the assertive first word: “this.” “This is Africa” is a statement that does not require the subsequent question: “What is Africa?” The knowledge of the “what” is neatly embedded within the position of those who use it (including their race, ethnicity, gender, and place in time) and the audience to which they are speaking. This mini-

dissertation uses this phrase as a platform from which to embark upon an exploration of whiteness and representations of the Other in two recent Hollywood films in which the phrase is used by white characters. This project draws upon theories of representation and race in the works of Homi K. Bhabha, Edward Said, and Richard Dyer, among others. Its thrust is to examine the racialized discourse which anchors TIA when it is used by two white heterosexual males: Nicholas Garrigan of *The Last King of Scotland* (2006), and Danny Archer of *Blood Diamond* (2006). The appropriation of TIA in these two films assumes a transparent cultural meaning that I will be interrogating and problematizing in the work that follows.

In *The Last King of Scotland*, a young white Scottish doctor, played by James McAvoy, tells a white male British Foreign Officer, “This is Africa! You meet violence with violence! Anything else and you’re dead!” (MacDonald 2006). Just before the year’s end in 2006¹, another central white male, played by Leonardo DiCaprio, in the film *Blood Diamond* declares, “This is Africa” to an optimistic white American woman (Jennifer Connelly) to essentialize Africa as crooked, backward, and corrupt. Though I am aware of the many ways in which TIA has been appropriated by black Africans in popular culture or in the private and public spaces of everyday life, my research here is concerned with the use of TIA by white voices within these two Hollywood narratives. The question guiding my research through the following analysis is: how does TIA discourse, as used in these two films, both expand and reaffirm colonial discourse, as well as inhibit or forge new spaces of representation and thought? Because “ideas, cultures, and histories cannot

¹ As pointed out by a reviewer in *Variety*: “film buffs may mark 2006 as the year the cinema world truly embraced Africa” (Jaafar 2006:A1).

seriously be understood without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied” (Said 1978:5), I interrogate the two white male protagonists of *The Last King of Scotland* and *Blood Diamond* in terms of the representative ideas they reveal about their configurative powers. The intent in doing so, as will be discussed later in this chapter, is to interrupt the neo-colonizing tool that popular Hollywood and Hollywood-style cinema has become, and raise questions as to how the image of whiteness is discursively structured in relation to an African Otherness.

Using Said’s “*strategic location*” (1978:20) as a method of discourse analysis, I explore representations of whiteness in Dr. Nicholas Garrigan (*The Last King of Scotland*) and Danny Archer (*Blood Diamond*) and the various knowledges these representations produce about Africa and Africans – or, in true Orientalist fashion, the various knowledges these representations produce about the political context in which they were manufactured (discussed in Chapter 2 of this work). Said describes strategic location as “the author’s position in a text with regard to the Oriental material he writes about²” (20). He broadens this idea by adding that “*strategic formation*” is “a way of analyzing the relationship between texts and the way in which groups of texts, even textual genres, acquire mass, density, and referential power among themselves and thereafter in the culture at large” (20). Primarily, I will use strategic location, however, I will also use nuances of strategic formation as a way of reading how the white male protagonists in

² Likewise, Stuart Hall calls this the “position of enunciation.” He says, “Practices of representation always implicate the positions from which we speak or write – the positions of *enunciation*” (1996:110, his emphasis)

these two films converge and diverge at different points and the kind of knowledge these cross-sections produce for the “culture at large.”

Pairing Said’s Orientalist theories with Richard Dyer’s (1993,1997) key theories on the white male image in colonial films, my own work seeks both to return to basic principles of race representations in Hollywood films, and also expand the field by forging new inquiries. Dyer’s works have made major contributions to the body of ideas surrounding white male representations in film and as such provides a solid theoretical foundation on which my arguments are structured.

Much of my analysis of *The Last King of Scotland* and *Blood Diamond* in Chapters 3 and 4 are based on a key element of visual style in film studies called mise-en-scène. Translated from French, the term literally means ‘to put on stage’. The term’s figurative meaning refers to the contents of the film frame (including such things as lighting, décor, costume, actor blocking and the actors themselves) and the way that they are organized within the frame (Gibbs 2002:5). The contents of a frame are suggestive of broader narrative tropes and garner meaning in and of themselves. However, mise-en-scène is not just about the contents of the frame and how they are organized, but also about the audience’s relationship with the frame. The audience’s relationship to the contents of the frame is influenced by camera movements, the particular lens employed, and other photographing styles, therefore, mise-en-scène “encompasses both what the audience can see, and the way in which we are invited to see it” (Gibbs 2002:5). The narrative

positions of the two central characters I discuss are expressed by elements of mise-en-scène such as visible ‘boundariness’, water, and lighting.

Representations of whiteness in these films bring together Said and Dyer’s theories of power relations between the Occident and Orient. Said argues, “the relationship between the Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony” (1978:5). The power relations between the Occident and Africa operate in several different capacities in these films: first, is the more visible power structure between white and black characters within the narrative as reinforced by mise-en-scène; second is the power relation between Western audiences and images of black Africa³ on screen. As will be discussed in Chapter 2, images and ideas of Africa on Hollywood screens have been from the very beginning an imaginative construction of the Western filmmaker’s mind. Like colonialism, early filmmakers came into the continent with little to no regard for creating a sense of equality between black and white peoples. The very first filmmakers on the continent built an unequal race representation structure to which many of Hollywood films still subscribe. The racial hierarchy employed by Hollywood is informed by the notion of human evolutionism introduced by the European Enlightenment project and proliferated throughout Africa during colonialism. . Zimitri Erasmus points out,

life sciences in the nineteenth century were anchored by theories of origins, descent and kinship.

The modern idea of race emerged from these scientific discourses of lineage, origins and

³ Eileen Julien describes black Africa as “the most egregious site of the primitive” in the civilized West (2009:50).

evolution... Within this paradigm, race, understood as a biological fact, became intricately connected to hierarchically structured models of humanity and culture (2008:170).

“Hierarchically structured models of humanity and culture” typically work through racialized notions of superiority, always favoring white heterosexual men. Hollywood continually adheres to this model by representing Africa in essentialist tropes: tortured black bodies, white guilt, black demons, and white intellect. This is problematic because as described above, it sets up an Orientalist power structure between Western audiences and black African images on screen.

The third manner in which power relations between the West and Africa operate are a subsequent result of the unequal power structure between Western audiences and black African images. Since the inception of film, unequal power relations between black and white characters on screen, described above, has been fueled by dominant Western discourse. The power relation between racial representations and dominant Western discourse is what I am most concerned with here. Race representations are dictated by popularized Western discourse and proliferated through the West’s most dominant mode of cultural production – Hollywood. Dyer argues that certain aspects of power relations in representations, including the prestige of high culture, the centralization of mass cultural production, and the literal poverty of marginal cultural production continually put the weight of control over representation on the side of the rich, the white, the male, and the heterosexual (1993:2). As such, it is important to intervene in these modes of mass cultural production. Representations affect the reality of people’s lived experiences everyday. “Not just in the way they are treated... but in terms of the way representations

delimit and enable what a person can be in any given society” (Dyer 1993:3). Western discourse can manipulate how the dominant and dominated are viewed, thus it is important to extract their cultural meanings. My research is concerned with naming dominant racialized tropes within TIA discourse to make them visible. Visibility is paramount in unraveling the popular misconceptions created through dominant Western representations of the Other. In identifying popular images, my aim is to encourage interrogation into prominent understandings of Africa in the West.

In addressing the power relation between Western discourse and images of ‘black Africa’ it is important to consider the audience. Racial representations only become meaningful through the gaze. Cultural meanings are linked to images through the interpretation made by the gazer. The perception audiences create from representations in film are not based on a finite set of images, rather they are a combination of images drawn from one’s position in space and time. Likewise, Dyer says, “cultural forms do not have single determinate meanings – people make sense of them in different ways, according to the cultural (including sub-cultural) codes available to them” (1993:2). Perceptions vary in accordance with cultural codes but are also bound together by popular discursive formations. Stuart Hall argues that ideology “is generated, produced and reproduced in specific settings (sites) – especially, in the apparatuses of ideological production which ‘produce’ social meanings and distribute them throughout society, like the media” (1990:10). Western discourses on Africa have rearranged images according to the popular ideas of epochs in time, but the ideas still give preference to certain dominant representations. Images authored during the European imperialism project have more or

less remained unchanged in popular Western modes of thought. Ruth Mayer argues that imperialist frameworks of representation are still effective today:

At least in one respect the gigantic project of colonialism did work: forcing most diverse regions, traditions, and cultures in Africa into one symbolic system, colonial rule brought about an imperialist framework of representation that is still effective today, even if the effects are not necessarily what they used to be (2002:1).

Yet, the imperialist framework of representation that is still effective today did not derive from a kind of colonial ignorance. There is a popular assumption that misrepresentations, or ‘false’ images of Africa rest on Western ignorance and that truer images of Africa are based on knowledge. However, as pointed out by Harry Garuba and Natasha Himmelman in their study of the “uncited” (2009:TS) images in the film, *The Last King of Scotland*, the equation of *ignorance* with *falsehoods* and *knowledge* with *truth* in discursive formations on Africa is problematic. False representations of Africa are not based on ignorance, rather a centuries old knowledge structure described by Mayer above and elaborated on by Garuba and Himmelman in the following:

By believing that these representations are based on ignorance we miss the fact that there is a kind of knowledge present in these images which makes them so readily understandable; we miss the fact that there is a knowledge regime within which representations of Africa function and acquire meaning; one built on centuries of knowledge production on Africa that is immediately available to comprehension (2009:TS).

It is important to acknowledge the difference between falsity based on ignorance and falsity based on “knowledge regimes” in order to understand that the arguments I make going forward in this work are not based on ‘accidental’ representations. Similarly, Said says of Orientalism that it “is not an airy European fantasy about the Orient, but a created body of theory and practice in which, for many generations, there has been considerable material investment” (1978:6).

Both films I analyze are based on either true events or historical people. While white male protagonist Garrigan is a fictional character, *The Last King of Scotland’s* Idi Amin character is based on the ‘real-life’ figure of Uganda’s former president. The characters of *Blood Diamond* are fictional, but they are set in Sierra Leone’s civil war that began in 1991 and continued thereafter to be funded through the international ‘conflict diamond’ trade. This project is neither the analysis of fictional representations as they reflect true events, nor is it an analysis of the actual Idi Amin. This is a project of representation analysis assuming that representations are not based on reality, rather a map of other representations that claim to reflect reality. In other words, the arguments I make going forward are neither based on ‘accidental’, or ‘false’ representations as mentioned above, nor ‘real-life’ or ‘realistic’ representations. The arguments are based on the Occidental knowledge system that has imposed its ideas on Africa for centuries. Said argues that the evidence of these imposed ideas can be found in the “style, figures of speech, setting, narrative devices, historical and social circumstances, *not* the correctness of the representation nor its fidelity to some great original” (1978:21, his emphasis). Effectively, he also says that “it needs to be made clear about cultural discourse... that

what is commonly circulated by it is not ‘truth’ but representations” (21). What has come to be known as colonial discourse has created a body of representations that are merely a reference to Africa projected by the Occident.

It is crucial for this ‘knowledge regime’ to be identified so that these films which reflect historical events and figures do not lay claim to reality. The viewer must understand that “reality is always more extensive and complicated than any system of representation can possibly comprehend” (Dyer 1993:3). Tiisetso Tlelima warns that “film is a very powerful medium – people often form their perceptions of reality from what they see in films” (2007:42). She is concerned with the image of contemporary Africa projected by *The Last King of Scotland* and *Blood Diamond*. She adds,

Although *Blood Diamond* is a superb portrayal of the horror of Sierra Leone’s 1990s civil war, and *The Last King of Scotland* is a good depiction of Amin, images played out in these movies have long lasting effect. Even though the movies are rooted in the histories of these countries, many people watching them may think this is how Africa is today – that massacre is the order of the day (2007:42).

It is important to understand the effect representations have on those being represented. As mentioned above, representations often enable or delimit what a person can be in society. The current debates are centralized around a concern that Africans can have no hope of building a positive image of the continent as long as Hollywood is governing its representations.

For this reason, the knowledges of Africa produced for the Western world through Hollywood film must be seen as existing in the realm of the stereotype (what Bhabha calls the “major discursive strategy” of colonialist discourse [1994:66]). Bhabha argues that the point of intervention should not be concerned with identifying images as negative or positive, rather, it should work to understand the “*processes of subjectification* made possible (and plausible) through stereotypical discourse” (1994:67, his emphasis), adding:

To judge the stereotyped image on the basis of a prior political normativity is to dismiss it, not to displace it, which is only possible by engaging with its *effectivity*; with the repertoire of positions of power and resistance, domination and dependence that constructs colonial identification subject (both colonizer and colonized) (67, his emphasis).

In my analyses, I engage with the effectivity of the “repertoire” of stereotyped images of whiteness and the Other (Africa/blackness) within TIA discourse: their power and resistance, and domination and dependence, with the aim to displace them.

Thus far, I have established that TIA discourse in these films draws on racialized filmic representations as structured by the colonialist knowledge regime. In detail I must now discuss the theoretical tools I use to interrogate race in the following chapters. Typically, when we speak of racialized representations, we speak of those that have become raced in popular thought – which is to say non-white peoples. However, my aim here is to disrupt popular notions of racialized images. In other words, I will make white racializations

visible so that their supposed normative position in racial discourse is dismantled⁴. Dyer argues in his studies on whiteness that it has become a truism in dominant discourse that whiteness is not racially recognized and because of this, functions as the norm. He contends (1997) that whiteness has become culturally hegemonic, whereby (O)ther people are raced and whites are just people. Similarly, Coco Fusco says, “Racial identities are not only black, Latino, Asian, Native American, and so on; they are also white... To ignore white ethnicity is to redouble its hegemony by naturalizing it” (in hooks 1990:171). This work seeks to disband white hegemony by identifying it within TIA discourse. Therefore, this work is not about representations of the Other in these films, rather it is about the uncanny ability of whiteness to turn non-white races into the Other. bell hooks argues, “race is always an issue of Otherness that is not white; it is black, brown, yellow, red, purple even” (1990:54). Remarkably, representations of whiteness in these films, set in predominantly black African environments, still manage to accomplish the task of Othering non-white races. This fact is paramount to the idea of ownership in TIA discourse. By creating a situation in which TIA can be used and accessed by whites, Hollywood manages to put Western audiences at ease while still projecting the image of a violent and chaotic Other. White ownership of TIA produces a comfortable sense of knowledge over the Other while still creating difference.

⁴ In her study of *identity and pedagogy* (1999:226), Eileen Julien asks the question: “Is whiteness still invisible?” (1999:232). Speaking of a Western literature course she taught wherein she was the only black person, Julien points out that her students saw quite clearly that black comes with baggage, while white of course comes with none” (1999:227). She adds, “I do indeed carry with me into teaching, as into everything I do, a pervasive consciousness of skin color and its privileges or deprivations, a consciousness of the history that produces it, and an awareness that most white Americans – a good many students in Western Literary Traditions, for example, have not yet realized that they too are racialized, that race in this hemisphere is not black baggage, rather, American baggage” (227).

White people have been able to sustain a dominant discourse in their image because of Hollywood's Othering ritual. Dyer adds,

Power in contemporary society habitually passes itself off as embodied in the normal as opposed to the superior... This is common to all forms of power, but it works in a peculiarly seductive way with whiteness, because of the way it seems rooted, in commonsense thought, in things other than ethnic difference... white domination is reproduced by the way that white people 'colonize the definition of normal' (1993:127).

Whiteness in Western discourse benefits from the absence of reference to it as a raced identity. Whiteness remains un-raced because it is rarely referred to in Western cultural modes such as literature and Hollywood films. Dyer argues (1997) that despite whiteness being everywhere in representation, whiteness is never presented as such. This becomes problematic because at the level of representation, whites are not of a certain race, they are the human race (Dyer 1997:3). Just as commonsense thought links and confirms emblematic figures, practices, and items with certain cultures; for example, 'tribal dancing' with 'Africa', commonsense also links and confirms whiteness with nothingness. The "peculiarity" Dyer speaks of is that in dominant discourse whiteness is always present yet seemingly not represented. Whiteness is "rooted" in normalcy and all other identities become Othered. In the chapters that follow, I address these equations of whiteness with normalcy and black Africaness with Otherness as they become relevant to ideas of imagery and representation. However, there is a crucial element of whiteness particular to these films that must be discussed here first.

Representations of whiteness in these films are fragmented. Dyer speaks of a hegemonic whiteness in Western dominant discourse, but these films are an entanglement of this hegemonic whiteness and a whiteness specific to its encounters in predominantly black African environments. In many ways, representations of whiteness in the two films uphold Dyer's theories of invisible superiority while at the same time making reference to the superiority as if they were agential in doing so. Both white male protagonists recognize their power as whites in Africa and refer to it often. However, the references to white power in Africa are not simply a sign of agency, rather a necessary practice in order for these two men to access the pleasures of whiteness. The national origins of both men deny them a certain pleasure in their home countries, however, in black Africa, they are able to claim a sense of power.

In *The Last King of Scotland*, Nicholas Garrigan is a white Scottish man, which is to say that his whiteness is significantly marginalized when compared to that of his white British counterparts at the British High Commission in Kampala, Uganda. Amin offers a token of solidarity to Garrigan because of Scotland and Uganda's mutual colonization by the British. Garrigan is welcomed into Kampala's inner black bourgeois circle of poolside cocktail parties and state dinners – events he would never have the pleasure of attending in his native Scotland. In *Blood Diamond*, Danny Archer is a white South African struggling with the disillusionments many whites face/d in the post-apartheid, post-colonial state. The pleasures of power and influence are accessible to Archer in the largely black country of Sierra Leone, however, the marginality of his whiteness is

evident when compared to the whiteness of his American companion, Maddy Bowen. Archer consistently relies on Bowen's connections and resources. The fact that Archer's male whiteness is trumped by the power of a white American female speaks volumes about the influence of nationality and ethnicity in the matter of whiteness in dominant discourse. White power relations in these two films, including the question of accessible pleasure are paramount to the construction of white identities in TIA discourse and are discussed in further detail in Chapters 3 and 4.

Dyer (1997) warns of the problems that arise when using black images to analyze whiteness. He argues, "it seems that the only way to see the structures, tropes and perceptual habits of whiteness... to recognize white *qua* white, is when non-white (and above all black) people are also represented" (1997:13, his emphasis). This is highly problematic because it reduces the non-white subject to be a function of the white subject, not allowing him/her space for autonomy (13). I must take this risk in the analyses that follow because historically, the white male image in Hollywood films about Africa largely makes sense based on the dichotomy between black and white. A primary tenet of colonial discourse is the creation of a Manichean world⁵, which is to say making sense of oneself by creating difference in an Other. Orientalism operates under the same code; the Orient functions as a means for the Occident to make sense of itself. In his text, Said argues that the Orient has helped to define the West as its contrasting image, idea, personality, and experience (1978:1,2). The subtitle of this work, "Whiteness and Representations of the Other in Recent Hollywood Films" is a play on this idea. In

⁵ Fanon has identified it as the "Manicheism delirium" (1986:1).

revealing to Western audiences the Africa filmmakers suppose it to be, they are ultimately exposing more information about the white protagonists within the narrative by creating a world in which difference is key. However, as I discuss in Chapters 3 and 4, *sameness* is also significant to the Self/Other dichotomy employed in these films. TIA is the fragile combination of intimacy and difference⁶. In a sense, Amin is a negative category of Garrigan's same (or what Said calls an "underground self" [1978:3]), just as Captain Poison serves as a negative category of Danny Archer's same in *Blood Diamond*.

If the role of blackness (as Dyer argues) and the role of Africa (or the Orient, as Said argues) in representational discourse merely operates to serve as Achille Mbembe says, "a polemical argument for the West's desperate desire to assert its difference from the rest of the world"⁷ (2001:2), what would representations of Africa, specifically black Africa in Hollywood film, look like outside of this paradigm? I argue that an analysis of whiteness not somehow based on the black image would not make sense to Western audiences until there is a paradigm shift.

⁶ In his influential work, *The Invention of Africa* (1988), V.Y. Mudimbe refers to this creation of the Other by a Self as "double representation" (1988:8). In his study, Mudimbe refers to 16th Century artists who relied on the travel journals of explorers to concoct the details of their exotic subjects. The artist would first paint the known normative white body, then add exotic features of an imagined Other to assert their difference. Mudimbe argues that the first representation's objective is to reduce and neutralize all differences into the sameness signified by the white norm (8). This first representation establishes a second, more discreet second representation that "unites through similitude and eventually articulates distinctions and separations, thus classifying types of identities" (9).

⁷ He adds, "In several respects, Africa still constitutes one of the metaphors through which the West represents the origin of its own norms, develops a self-image, and integrates this image into a set of signifiers asserting what it supposes to be its identity" (2001:2).

In many ways, post-colonial and post-modern discourse has opened up new avenues of expression outside of black/white dichotomies. These discourses have also opened up new space for conceptions of Africa to acquire agency in Western thought. The emergence of an African film market in particular has made possible the rethinking of Africa outside of colonial discourse⁸. However, this wave of new discourse remains lost on Hollywoodian representations of Africa. Therefore, I must recognize that in the analyses that follow, I will critique colonial discourse while still employing its language. Furthermore, the language and vocabulary available to describe racializations are also “trapped” in colonialist discourses on race. Garuba argues,

It is possible that not only colonial anthropologists and administrators were trapped in the discourse of race but also that the language and vocabulary available to us as academics for describing and categorizing difference at this postcolonial moment are so completely racialized that we cannot hope to operate outside them” (2008:1641,1642).

The analysis of race in the following chapters lean on “completely racialized” modes of “describing and categorizing difference” in the narrative positions of the two white male protagonists. Recognizing the colonialist underpinnings of racial language with regard to Africa is not a license to disregard its still urgent and violent effects. It is simply to

⁸ In his key text, *Focus on African Films*, Françoise Pfaff argues, “The formal independence of a number of African nations in the late 1950s and early 1960s facilitated access to the medium of film, as did the later end of apartheid. African eyes began to offer new perspectives on the continent that contrasted sharply with views popularized by Western jungle melodramas, where Africa was a mere backdrop – with stereotypically uncivilized, childish, or cruel natives – for triumphant acts by great White hunters and treasure seekers” (2004:1).

acknowledge that I must employ the language because to speak outside of the discourse would not make sense.

It is plausible that with the reconstruction and reordering of language and vocabulary one can begin to “speak through” colonialist discourse on race that makes sense in Western society. Stuart Hall urges, “We have to ‘speak through’ the ideologies which are active in our society and which provide us with the means of ‘making sense’ of social relations and our place in them” (1990:9). By making white racializations as they have come to be known in Hollywood colonial adventure tales visible, my aim in the following chapters is to “speak through” popular representations and create an awareness that what has previously made sense is not sensible any longer.

In this chapter, I have outlined the primary theoretical tools of whiteness described by Richard Dyer and the methodological approach of “strategic location” described by Edward Said that I take into the following analyses. I have also set the critical tone with which I will be approaching these two Hollywood narratives. The rest of this work is divided into four chapters. Chapter 2 presents the historical framework through which racial representations of Africans in Hollywood films have been discussed by academics and cultural critics alike. Chapter 2 also describes how the socio-political context of time and space largely effect race representations in Hollywood films. Chapter 3 focuses on the narrative position of the white male heterosexual protagonist, Dr. Nicholas Garrigan as he articulates and appropriates TIA discourse in *The Last King of Scotland* (2006). Chapter 4 focuses on the same principles of Chapter 3, except with the white male

heterosexual protagonist of *Blood Diamond* (2006), Danny Archer. Chapters 3 and 4 seek to make a well-rounded, self-reflexive, and thoughtful response to the research question I posed early in this chapter: how does TIA discourse, as used in these two films, both expand and reaffirm colonial discourse, as well as inhibit forge new spaces of representation and thought? Thus, Chapter 5 resubmits the theories of TIA discourse I put forth and concludes my intervention.

University Of Cape Town

Chapter 2

Dominant Western Discourse and Hollywood's Colonial Lens

From the beginning, the Western gaze on Africans has been steeped in notions of superiority and difference. The public display of African bodies in Europe in the nineteenth century marked a new discursive formation in which “display” was central. Africans incited intrigue and raised questions as to their biological origins. There was a widely received belief that Africans were at least as close to the animal world as they were to the human world, and that they probably constituted the “missing link” in the evolutionary chain between apes and men (Lindfors 1999:viii). “Interesting” African bodies (alive and dead) were put on display in Europe not only for anthropological reasons but for entertainment purposes as well. African people appeared in front of audiences at theatres, fairs, amusement parks and circuses (ix). Possibly the most famous mortal display is that of Ota Benga, a Batwa pygmy man who in 1906 was placed in a monkey cage of the Bronx Zoo in the company of an orangutan and a parrot (ix).

Africans on display shaped European's self-delusions of grandeur and a belief in the basic inferiority of the “black” body. As discussed in Chapter 1, this racially hierarchical approach set in motion “a series of colonizing discourses, each adapted to a specific historical situation” (Spurr 1993:2). The black image in European society at that time offered Europeans an exotic and often times exhilarating topic for 19th and 20th century literature. When Hollywood's portrayal of Africa debuted in the early 20th century, the

colonizing discourses had already been in place for decades. Therefore, Hollywood had to look no further than what V.Y. Mudimbe infamously has coined, the “colonial library” (1988) to find a host of readily available representations of Africa and Africans. Drafted and endorsed by the massive colonial project, the library houses all the information worth knowing about Africa in the West. Worn with use as they are cited again and again from the library’s shelves, Hollywood’s representations of Africa thus came to employ the colonial lens.

In “Dominant Western Discourse and Hollywood’s Colonial Lens,” I first present the arguments regarding representations of Africa in general, and race representations specifically, in popular Hollywood films. I then present the Tarzan films of the 1930s and the apartheid films of the 1980s and 90s as the means for staging an introductory analysis of colonial discourse and race representations. Both of these genres emulate the “historical situation” in which they were produced and distributed. However, they also share common elements of unequal race representations primarily due to the colonial lens they inherited. My analysis will demonstrate how colonial discourse has manifested in more recent cinema from the first decade of the 21st century. These more recent films tug at the colonial/Orientalist “fabric” (Said 1978:24) in an effort to reshape representations and ideas, but ultimately they make additional means to reference colonial discourse.

Many academics and activists have written on the subject of African representations in popular United States media. The discussions and arguments are not limited to Hollywood films; there are also great bodies of work surrounding Africa’s representation

in journalism⁹, literature, and television. Moreover, there are extensive filmic studies about how Africa's history has been represented on film¹⁰. A number of studies have even attempted to introduce new knowledge(s) into the representation debate. For example, Robert Stam and Louise Spence present an interesting argument critiquing the methodologies used when analyzing race and colonialism in popular film. They contend that

studies of filmic colonialism and racism tend to focus on certain dimensions of film – social portrayal, plot, and character. While such studies have made an invaluable contribution by alerting us to the hostile distortion and affectionate condescension with which the colonized have been treated in the cinema, they have often been marred by a certain methodological naiveté (1983:2,3).

Stam and Spence remind us that “racism is not permanently in the human mind; it forms part of a constantly changing dialectical process within which, we must never forget, we are far from powerless” (1983:20). This reminder echoes what Kenneth Cameron later argues in his key text, *Africa on Film: Beyond Black and White* (1994). In the text, Cameron says,

It has become a truism of recent criticism that commercial motion pictures about Africa are racist. Contemporary scholarship has abandoned the language of what used to be called objectivity and has embraced a rhetoric that includes such terms as “master race’ narcissism” and “the voyeuristic

⁹ See Beverly Hawk, *Africa's Media Image* 1992.

¹⁰ See Vivian Bickford-Smith and Richard Mendelsohn, *Black and White in Color* 2007, *Film and History Studies in South Africa Revisited: Representing the African Past on Screen* 2003, *Reviewing Hollywood's Apartheid* 2003; Alfred Ndahiro and Privat Rutazibwa, *Hotel Rwanda: Or the Tutsi Genocide as Seen by Hollywood* 2008; Njeri Ngugi, *Presenting and (mis)Representing History in Fiction Film* 2003.

gaze” to describe films about Africa. Thus, the established face of a repulsive racism rises between viewer and films like a colored glass, through which, we are told, we must look if we are to view them properly (1994:13).

Cameron asks, “Is racism the only thing to be seen in these films?” (13). Cameron, Stam and Spence raise valid concerns with how analyses of race in Hollywood films have been conducted, however, they do not discount the overwhelming evidence that most of these films are told through the colonial lens. With a few exceptions (i.e. film reviewers employed by Hollywood publications), authors writing seriously about Hollywood films about Africa cannot attempt to ignore the colonial lens, or rather, not afford it a full critique. To do so would be to undermine the incredible significance of its role. What follows is the genesis of the colonial lens and accounts of its use and affects (i.e. the overwhelming evidence).

Historically, images of Africa and Africans in Hollywood films have been tightly interwoven with racist colonial ideologies. “The United States was not an African colonial power, but its received ideas were the same as Britain’s and were in fact derived from Britain’s” (Cameron 1994:12). Thus Hollywood, with its knack for reflecting popular American ideas collaborated with ‘the great colonial project’. So much so in fact, that Hollywood’s representations of Africans have been referred to as the second colonization of Africa by author Peter Davis. Comparing the conquest of the African continent with the colonization of the African by the Western movie camera, Davis relays:

Around the apex of the age of empire there occurred a phenomenon that seemingly had nothing to do with massive land-theft and subordination of native populations. It was, however, part of the technological advancement and industrial development – which had also produced the Maxim gun – that characterized the Western powers at that time. The invention of motion pictures towards the end of the nineteenth century had an impact more subtle, but arguably no less profound, than imperialism itself, since the impact of cinema – followed by television - is ongoing, and, moreover, the numbers touched by these mass media in a single day can be compared with the numbers of those touched by imperialism over three centuries. The movie camera opened up the world in a way that no other medium had ever done (1996:1).

Despite their small population on the continent, white men narrate/d the lives of the majority of black Africans in many popular Hollywood films – much like the project of colonialism. “Since colonial days films produced in the U.S., Europe and South Africa have propagated images of ‘black Africa’ dominated by people of European decent with whom Western viewers could easily identify” (Gugler 2003:2). The white man and his malice, or in more recent instances his goodwill, have driven Hollywood stories about Africa from Tarzan to today. African representations in Hollywood films involve substantial racist overtones, always giving preferential treatment to the white man’s intellect and ability, his enterprise and achievements. In an early essay Francoise Pfaff argues,

Hollywood’s image of Africa started at the turn of the century in a climate of racial discrimination and it used as its basis stories written by second rate British writers whose thought was influenced by the idea of Western superiority over African barbarism conveyed through European colonialism. Known for its reflection of American Ideologies at given time periods, the Hollywood industry has adopted conservative, biased patterns which proved successful and which

have distorted Africa. Often Africa was seen as a new frontier through foreign lenses (Pfaff 1981-82:116).

The foreign lens was based on the Western filmmakers own restricted vision. “For early filmmakers and many later ones who worked in the studio and never visited the real Africa, ‘Africa’ was this complex of received ideas and censored subjects, the Dark Continent of Stanley’s violent mind” (Cameron 1994:12). Cited from the colonial library, and shaped by “American ideologies at given time periods,” Africa was/is the fantastic playground, becoming anything and everything that the foreign lens could/can envision. However, the fantastic African image does not always service American ideologies.

First published in a 1956 issue of *Africa Today*, Oladipo Onipede writes a searing piece on the “savage African symbol” in Hollywood film (1974:72). Seemingly before its time, the piece argues that the historical significance of the distorted savage African symbol has devastating effects for both Africans and the United State’s prestigious role as world leader (72). For the African man, Onipede makes a distinction between the rural black African and the city-dwelling African, the former is likely to grin with pride because the white man will never be able to understand him, the latter is more sophisticated and is likely to disassociate himself with the savage image. Onipede’s piece, entitled “*Hollywood’s Holy War Against Africa*,” further argues that Hollywood films that generate negative images of the black African as savage creates a sort of reverse racism against the United States. “The thunderbolts of Hollywood’s holy war reach far beyond the coasts of Africa. In Asia, at least since the war, the Asian people have come to talk of the ‘savages’ in Hollywood who produce such movies” (Onipede,

1974:74). For Onipede, this is a mark of disdain, not against Hollywood *per se*, but against America as a whole (74).

Onipede relays a case study in which the Indian Central board of Film Censors actually banned eight Hollywood films on “Africa” (1974:74). The action was in response to complaints made by African students at Delhi University concerning “Hollywoodian distortions of Africa” (74). Many, including writer Lindsay Patterson welcomed such acts of resistance against American propaganda. Published in the *New York Times* newspaper in 1971, Patterson says that the United State’s output of unequal race representations by way of Hollywood films created heavy anti-American sentiment. Strongly, she writes:

America has done a magnificent job of exporting, along with her other commodities, the doctrines that to be white is an infinitely more desirable human state than any other. That may be true at present, but as has been repeatedly pointed out, two-thirds of the earth is populated by people with pigmented faces. And since this country has elected to police the world (“making it safe for freedom,” our government constantly assures us), then it is obligated to deal with those pigmented faces on equal terms (1974:76).

Yet there seems to be something missing from the argument, for it is not just that “America has done a magnificent job of exporting... the doctrines that to be white is an infinitely more desirable human state than any other,” but whiteness seems to be what Western/American audiences have come to require. As pointed out above, Hollywood audiences are comfortable with a white protagonist to guide them through the perils of

the African jungle. How else would one explain the terms in which a white man named Tarzan came to dominate images of Africa in the West?

Few other authors in the 19th and 20th centuries made greater contributions to Hollywood's racist images of Africa than Edgar Rice Burroughs – Tarzan's creator. During his lifetime, Burroughs mastered the staple "jungle" movie that has characterized films set in Africa since the early part of the 20th century. "Beginning in 1912 with *Tarzan of the Apes*, continuing through forty-six further features, along with two television series and several Tarzan look-alikes" (Dyer 1997:146), Burrough's Tarzan undoubtedly left a large impression on American audiences. The scope of Burrough's "Africa" work is quite impressive from a man that never stepped foot on the continent. The repeated image of subjugated black Africans in Burrough's opus suggests that he relied on colonial discourse at the time for his knowledge base.

In an article titled, "*Lights... Camera... Africa: Images of Africa and Africans in Western Popular Films of the 1930s*," author Kevin Dunn (1996:156) categorizes the five images of Africa in the Tarzan movies as follows: 1) Africa as inhospitable to the white man; 2) Africa as the keeper of a great treasure; 3) Africa as a hunter's paradise (in *Tarzan Escapes*); 4) Africa as a dream/nightmare; and 5) Africa as a land which time forgot. Likewise, Clara Henderson adds, "of the many Hollywood films made about Africa, perhaps the Tarzan films are some of the most pervasive in creating stereotyped notions of African peoples, geography and social organization" (2002:91). In an article titled, "*When Hearts Beat Like Native Drums*," Henderson conducts a close analysis of musical

themes in the film, *Tarzan and His Mate* (1934) and how they relate to race representations. She argues that “throughout the film, music provides a means of bringing the notions of savage and civilized into confrontation, accentuating one or the other depending on which term one of the European characters is struggling to define” (119). All elements of theatrical styling, or *mise-en-scène*, can be employed to define dominant ideas of race – even musical themes.

It is a widely received consensus by academics and activists writing on race representations in Hollywood that, “like literary representations, cinematic representations are constructions of an other by a self” (Dunn 1996:150). With regard to theories of “otherness,” Dunn says images of the “other” are projections from the “self” and do not represent actuality, therefore, such imagery tells us more about the “self” than the “other” (150). Dunn recognizes that an analysis of the Other in film, i.e. Africa in early Tarzan films, ultimately tells the viewer more about the makers of these films and their time and place in history. Josef Gugler writes: “In 1912, with Western imperialism at its zenith and Europeans completing their self-assigned task of colonizing Africa, Edgar Rice Burroughs created Tarzan” (2003:2); denoting that Tarzan’s racist narrative was employed at a time when popular sentiments still embraced racist colonialist ideologies. Consciously or not, Dunn argues that the filmmakers were acting as cultural colonialists by reinforcing and legitimizing Western political practices in Africa (1996:149). Similarly, speaking of Tarzan and other white action heroes in colonial adventure films, Richard Dyer argues, “the colonialist structure of the heroes’ relation to the native is aid as much as antagonism: he sorts out the problems of people who cannot

sort things out for themselves. This is the role in which the Western nations liked to cast themselves in relation to their former colonies” (1997:156).

Dunn argues that the constant bombardment of these images undoubtedly had a shaping effect on how Western societies thought of Africa and Africans (1996:170). Additionally, he says, “These images contributed to the viewing audiences’ misperception of Africa and Africans and helped to perpetuate and strengthen racist and colonialist modes of thinking” (149). This means that the Tarzan series, conceived at the apex of imperialism, continues to proliferate in the minds of their Western audience. Furthermore, the Tarzan series arguably wrote the script for the white-superman-in-Africa narrative that Gugler argues Hollywood continues to adhere. Gugler writes, “[F]our decades after most of Africa has become independent, Hollywood continues to promote a white man dominating his African surroundings” (2003:2). But what of white Africans dominating black African surroundings? Much has been said of the unequal race representations in Hollywood films set in apartheid South Africa from both sides of the color line.

One of the key texts on Hollywood films set in South Africa is Peter Davis’ *In Darkest Hollywood* (1996). Davis argues that Hollywood portrayals of subjugated black Africans in general, and black South Africans specifically, have served as a powerful propaganda tool for the colonialist project. Davis says, “pictures did not belong to the people they portrayed, but to the person who took them,” adding, “there is even a kind of rapacity lurking in the very phrase ‘to take’ a picture” (1996:2). Furthermore, Davis contends:

The placing of Africans on the cinema screen reflected their dispossession...they forfeited the right to appear center-screen. That position was reserved for white heroes and heroines. When Africans did appear on the screen, it was as adjuncts to whites; in that role, they told us more about whites – how whites saw themselves, how they reinvented and re-enacted mythologies of white supremacy – than they ever revealed about African lives (1996:3).

Davis' comprehensive argument that Hollywood was one of the proponents of colonialism in such films as *King Solomon's Mines* (1937) and *The Kaffir's Gratitude* (1916) goes a long way in framing how blacks were undermined both on and off the screen.

While Davis' argument situates itself within a rhetoric of a suppressed black representation, Vivian Bickford-Smith argues that the white South African image was also largely one-dimensional. He says feature Hollywood films, most notably from the 1980s, omit key aspects of race relations in apartheid South Africa. "These omissions include the absence of white liberals – beyond the vanishing (implicitly non-South African) heroes – of white radicals, of South Africans (in past and present racializations) held between black and white (like coloreds and Indians), of blacks who benefited from apartheid, and of racial mixing and hybridity in general" (2001:17). Bickford-Smith says that the two most prominent images of South Africans during the final years of apartheid were the brutal white Afrikaner and the saintly black political leader, and that such binaries create silences in other important aspects of the struggle. He warns that these silences may be part of a new historical orthodoxy of racist simplicities – "which, like historical orthodoxies of the apartheid era, merely help the self-serving purposes of a

powerful minority in the present” (17). The binary must be cut through to curb mainstream racist representations.

Taking this argument one step further, Garth Jowett contends that Hollywood needed a villain, and in the 1980s, the white Afrikaner met that need. Jowett argues that Hollywood films about apartheid incorrectly equated the policies of apartheid with the racist ideologies of Nazi Germany. This comparison amounted to an easy analogy, and not an explanation of the complex political situation in South Africa at the time. Jowett says,

Although one does not wish for a sympathetic treatment of apartheid, it is clearly not the intention of the filmmakers to present any detailed analysis of the complex racial situation in South Africa. In the end, we are left with an emotionally compelling story, but it is one that reinforces the analogy between the sadistic behavior of the Nazis and Afrikaners (1992:179).

This analysis of white Afrikaner representations in Hollywood films as misunderstood, superficial demons seemingly rebuts Davis’ simple binary of white imperialism/black suppression. However, both arguments contend that race representations in Hollywood tend to undermine one race or another at any given time; thus, these two arguments are not entirely opposed to one another.

In many of the examinations of race representations I have discussed thus far, the white and black images are boldly outlined in a racist colonial mode of representation. But what of more recent Hollywood films set in Africa that may not offer such outstanding race

representations? For example, the widely successful *Hotel Rwanda* (2004) stars black American actor Don Cheadle playing the leading role as an African. This recent film is seemingly an exit from white male leads narrating stories set in Africa, or stories about Africans. However, Ruth Mayer argues (2002) that symbolic systems are not static and representations in film are fluid and ever changing. Mayer says, “the imperial past both continues *and* undergoes transformations, living on in ever new guises and changing shape in the very process of being commemorated and preserved” (2002:2). Therefore, *Hotel Rwanda’s* black “African” lead is merely a sidestep in race representations in the long lineage of Hollywood’s negligent handling of African stories. The film may tell an African story through the eyes of a black protagonist, but as Mohamed Adhikari argues,

Hotel Rwanda’s simplistic approach to the genocide is more likely to perpetuate rather than dispel stereotypes of Africa as a place of senseless violence and tribal animosities. The absence of a well-founded explanation of the genocide is bound to result in many viewers falling back on shop-worn, racist conventions of Western attitudes toward Africa. Indeed, the film inadvertently reinforces such mystification (2007:281).

Hotel Rwanda’s race representations look different than in earlier Hollywood films made about Africa, but the “racist conventions of Western attitudes toward Africa” are still present under a new guise – a lack of historical context.

Aside from *Hotel Rwanda*, a crop of 21st century Hollywood films including *The Constant Gardener* (2005) and *Blood Diamond* (2006)¹¹ have employed new methods of moral-based race representations particularly within the central white characters of these films and many others from this period. Recent representations are riddled with questions of white guilt and white consciousness. Unlike earlier white representations that blatantly recount the colonial narrative with all of its harsh realities for black Africans, recent white representations are characterized by charitable ambitions where whites enable black Africans to fight against the powerful forces of the international diamond trade and pharmaceutical corporations. In this manner, whites seem to have taken on a differing role as Africa's protector, as opposed to Africa's nemesis. But Dave Calhoun reminds us that as in a jungle safari, we are still provided with "white guides to lead us through the black pain" (2007:34)¹². Mayer has delineated the same argument when she says,

The filmic history of representing colonialism has been consistent since its outset in the late nineteenth century. But of course, seen from a slightly different angle, the filmic traditions of representing colonialism and Africa have undergone tremendous changes, as there is no such thing as a timeless work of art. Thus, even where films pretend to be about another time and another

¹¹ A review of *Blood Diamond* in *The Economist* points out that "Edward Zwick, the director of 'Blood Diamond', argues that it would be 'disingenuous' to pretend that he could have got the same financial backing and publicity if he had tried to make a film with a black storyline and a black star instead of one centering on a white mercenary and a (pretty) white female journalist. Hollywood's parameters have expanded a bit, but they are still there" (N.a. 2007:50).

¹²An article in *USA Today* wrongly asserts, "Gone are the safari and Africans-as-savages motifs. The new films address recent history and topical subjects from terrorism to the diamond trade to long-distance runners. More important, observers say, many of the movies are being told from the perspective of Africans, instead of wide-eyed -- and usually white -- outsiders" (Bowles 2006:N.pag).

space they invariably tell us also something about their time of production. And often, these hidden messages are more interesting than the explicit ones (2002:3).

In this instance, the “time of production” that Mayer refers to would be in conjunction with what *Time Magazine* has labeled the “The Year of Charitainment” (Poniewozik 2005). The first decade of the 21st century has been characterized by an influx of interest in African calamities due to philanthropic mega-celebrities including Bono, Oprah Winfrey, Leonardo DiCaprio, Madonna and Angelina Jolie¹³. Julie Hollar explains that “celebrity interest in Africa is not particularly new, but today more stars than ever seem to be converging upon the continent, with television crews seldom far behind” (2007:21). Hollar argues that because of television and cinema’s emphasis on the visual, “African countries and issues are to a striking degree seen through the prism of celebrity” (21). Zine Magubane makes a similar argument in her extensive analysis of Bono’s far-reaching Product Red campaign and Oprah’s school for gifted girls in South Africa. Magubane notes an ad for the Product Red campaign that appeared in the July 2007 “Africa” issue of *Vanity Fair* magazine exhorting consumers that “Meaning is the New Luxury” (2008:102.2). Similarly, Natasha Himmelman and Kim Wildman (2009:TS) question whether Product Red is a new brand of Afropessimism. Referencing Achille Mbembe’s analysis of Afropessimism in *On the Postcolony* (2001), they pose the question: “... in its push for conspicuous consumption, has (Product)Red merely repackaged, resold and rebranded Afropessimism for the new iGeneration of global

¹³ These celebrities have also been termed “the new missionaries of the 21st century” by Paul Zeleza (2007:1). Lansana Gberie also points out that “For brief, fleeting moments almost every decade now, the rich world tends to embrace Africa as a pet project... By the end of 2006, Africa became ‘suddenly hot’ to the entertainment industry, to use the appropriately frivolous words of *The New York Times*” (2007:140).

consumers?” (2009:TS). They highlight the popular push for the commodification of calamity with Africa’s weak and sick at its core.

Cultural globalization has made possible the mass distribution of images and ideas. The opportunity to capitalize on popular images of Africans in need is readily available to Hollywood studios. Today’s Hollywood is stamped by a globalized network that characterizes Africa as a continent sitting on top of infectious diseases, strangled by corruption and tribal vengeance, and populated with mouths and hands open to receive international aid (Diawara 1998:103). Manthia Diawara argues:

The globalization of the media, which now constitutes a simultaneous and unified imaginary across continents, also creates a vehicle for rock stars, church groups, and other entrepreneurs in Europe and America to tie their names to images of Afro-pessimism for the purpose of wider and uninterrupted commodification of their name, music, or church (1998:103).

Hollywood films speak from their contemporary political moment; therefore a sort of post-9/11 politics also inscribes the commodification of Africa¹⁴. In a recent article, Mona Pedersen points out that

Once again Hollywood has taken a political turn. In the 1930s, the rise of fascism and the threat of global conflict drove many (leftist) film-makers to politicize their films. Later the Cold War had

¹⁴ In his recent book, *Saviours and Survivors: Darfur, Politics, and The War on Terror*, Mahmood Mamdani argues that “moral certainty” is the political course American charities have taken in their quest to ‘save’ various regions of the world including Darfur and Iraq. *Saviours and Survivors* poses “... an argument against those who substitute moral certainty for knowledge, and who feel virtuous even when acting on the basis of total ignorance” (2009:6).

political ramifications in Hollywood, which in turn led to Senator Joseph McCarthy's infamous 'red scare'. During the Vietnam War, another political wave washed over Hollywood and established concepts of anti-war and human rights among other things. After the attack on the World Trade Centre in 2001 we are now seeing a renewed interest in politically motivated films from Hollywood... (Pedersen 2009:182).

Pedersen concludes that today's audiences are "in need for a deepened understanding of the conflicts that involve US politics and economics around the world in a post-September 11 perspective¹⁵" (2009:183). However, in the published reviews of the two 21st century films *The Last King of Scotland* and *Blood Diamond*, the primary concern has been that the filmmakers miss the aim of a "deepened understanding of the conflicts that involve US politics and economics" by coating it with blatant 'social consciousness' overtones.

The Telluride Review points out that Garrigan's character in *The Last King of Scotland*

serves as the symbol of white Western involvement in African nations... There is a fine moral haze around the issue of white Westerners trying to 'better' life in third-world countries – by which we usually mean, bringing life there closer to our own standards (Voynar 2006:2).

¹⁵ An article titled, "The Continent's Celluloid Moment" in *The Economist* notes likewise that Africa's former Hollywood image of safari has been replaced: "Directors now go to Africa to find stories about arms-trading, genocide, famine and corporate wrongdoing that have filled the hearts and minds of a new generation of Westerners reared on Live Aid and anti-globalisation protests. Instead of old-style product-placement, the new films specialise in NGO-placement" (N.a. 2007:50). Quoted in the *New African*, Genevieve Hofmeyr a film producer in Cape Town, South Africa says, "...[W]ith word spreading that Hollywood films can be logistically and successfully shot in Africa, this awareness has resulted in a growing interest in African material" (Echevarría 2008:61). Writing for *Variety*, Ali Jaafar says, "Still, the reasons for the seeming surge of interest in Africa are, as with so much in the vast continent, far from straightforward" (2006:A1).

A review of *The Last King* in the *New Yorker* states:

[A]fter this movie and 'The Constant Gardener,' one would like to whisper ever so gently into the ears of all Western filmmakers that Africa, in its tragic condition, is perhaps not the most appropriate place to stage the moral redemption of dopey Europeans (Denby 2006:3).

The Los Angeles Times asserts, "Nicholas [Garrigan] is just another white man on the make in Africa, fooling no one but himself" (Chocano 2006:1). Lisa Schwarzbaum of *Entertainment Weekly* argues that the conclusion of *The Last King of Scotland* "suggests, quite questionably, that only through the testimony of white men like the doctor could black Ugandans influence world awareness of Amin as a mass murderer" (2006:1).

Reviews of *Blood Diamond* follow the same pattern of skepticism. In her review of the film, Schwarzbaum says, "Righteous indignation is exhausting in a movie – maybe not for the indignant, but certainly for the unsuspecting moviegoing bystander in the path of all that onrushing rectitude" (2006:1). *Variety* (one of the premier film industry magazines) relates that "Director Ed Zwick is trying to juggle several balls at once and does so with a heavy hand – delivering a history lesson on the sordid resource exploitation of Africa from within and from abroad, expounding of the role of wanton consumerism" (McCarthy 2006:2). In two of the more thoughtful reviews, Pete Vonder Haar of *Film Threat* and Peter Travers of *Rolling Stone* magazine are concerned that in the name of white redemption and expensive special effects, *Blood Diamond* glossed over the politics involved in the civil war. Vonder Haar argues that *Blood Diamond* "tries

to combine social conscience with big budget action and doesn't entirely succeed at either," he concludes that the film might have been more successful "had it focused more on the politics and intrigue and less on having a requisite car chase and a boffo finish" (2006:1). Likewise, Travers says, "DiCaprio is terrific, but he can't save this lecture from the shame of using Africa as a vehicle for another white man's redemption" (2006:121). It must be pointed out that for all of these review's concern for the representation of 'the white man in Africa', they nevertheless ceaselessly employ colonial language of their own. Time and again, film reviewers who are employed by the nation's top newspaper publications cite the colonial library. Used in a shamelessly kitschy manner, phrases such as the "Dark Continent¹⁶" and the "Heart of Darkness¹⁷" are situated alongside the condemning criticisms.

The matter of socially conscious overtones is outside the scope of this research project, as is the question of the moral righteousness of post-9/11 American politics and their effect on Hollywood representations. However, I recognize their importance in representational discourse and therefore the need to explore in some small measure the ideas surrounding the socio-political environment in which the two films I will be reviewing were produced.

¹⁶ See the *Entertainment Weekly* review of *Blood Diamond*: "The chemistry between Lois Lane and Hans Solo of the Dark Continent is unstable at best" (Schwarzbaum 2006:1).

¹⁷ See *The Los Angeles Times* review by Carina Chocano: "Nicholas' groovy bop into the heart of darkness happens by accident..."(2006:1), *The New York Times* review by Manohla Dargis: "As a stand-in for all the white men who have unwisely and cravenly journeyed into the proverbial heart of darkness, the character [Garrigan] effectively serves his purposes, and you shake your head, tsk-tsk, right on schedule"(2006:3), the *San Francisco Gate* review by Ruthe Stein: "At its heart of darkness, the film is about the lure of power. It's a condemnation of all the dictator's men over all time" (2006:2).

It must also be said that Said's "strategic location" could be methodologically employed in a research project concerned with post-9/11 consciousness and its effect on Hollywood representations. The strategic location in that instance would place the emphasis of the analysis outside of the narrative, onto the filmmakers themselves. Alas however, the emphasis of my analyses is within the narrative. The authors I examine are not the filmmakers, but the two male protagonists as they represent and appropriate TIA discourse through their narrative positions.

In this chapter, I have described the great influence that the socio-political climate of the Occident has over representations of Africans in general, and racial representations specifically, in Hollywood films at their time of production. I have also chronicled how academics, cultural critics, and film reviewers have discussed these representations. The intent in doing so is to embed my own analyses of *The Last King of Scotland* and *Blood Diamond* into these discussions. This is important to demonstrate how my language and research differs from and expands on existing ideas. The next chapter focuses on the narrative position of the white male heterosexual protagonist, Dr. Nicholas Garrigan, as he articulates and appropriates TIA discourse in *The Last King of Scotland*.

Chapter 3

Intimacy and Difference in *The Last King of Scotland* (2006)

Unsurprisingly *The Last King of Scotland* (MacDonald 2006) begins like most colonial adventure tales: with a map¹⁸. From the onset of European imperialism, the map was paramount in the white explorer's mission to seek the dark, empty spaces of Africa. Dr. Garrigan (James McAvoy) spins a little globe to see where fate might take him. His finger first lands on Canada. No, he thinks, not exotic enough; "filled with people just like me." He spins again, this time landing on Uganda in East Africa. Yes! The globe has spoken and that is where the young doctor will begin his exploration of the Other. This scene is crucial for an understanding of Garrigan as a white European man in what is ultimately a narrative based on the classic colonial adventure tale of outward exploration affecting change in man internally. The mapping of Africa by Europeans during the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 was a key moment in the architecture of the continent's subsequent colonization. Harry Garuba elaborates on the importance of the map in the project of colonialism:

[B]ecause colonialism as a regime of power was largely organized through spatiality and subjectivity: spaces to capture, subjects to control. To capture the land, it first had to be explored and mapped, literally and figuratively. For the subject to be controlled, she first had to be contained... (2002:87).

¹⁸ See Joseph Conrad's key colonial adventure novel, *Heart of Darkness* (1902).

The map's use in the first few minutes of the film is a signifier that the narrative is told through the European lens, more specifically, Garrigan's white European gaze. The map also signifies that this is not a narrative about Africa, rather a narrative about Garrigan coming *into* Africa. It is important for the arguments that follow to view him as a subject within a colonial framework.

The *Last King of Scotland* employs the colonial framework not only through Garrigan's white gaze, but also through representations of the holy trinity of colonial whiteness: the missionary, the adventurer and the colonial administrator. Dr. Merrit (Adam Kotz) and his wife Sarah (Gillian Anderson) who work in a rural hospital represent the selfless missionaries of the colonial project; politically aware of the adverse effects of colonialism but nonetheless are on a civilizing mission of their own – in this case, the incorporation of Western medicine and literacy into Ugandan village life. The main white protagonist is Nicholas Garrigan, a young Scottish doctor fresh out of medical school. As this analysis unfolds, my aim is to clarify different aspects of Garrigan's whiteness within the narrative and the knowledge it produces in the realm of TIA discourse. Counter to Garrigan's subjugated whiteness (discussed in Chapter 1) is the white male staff of the British High Commission in Kampala; particularly a British Foreign Officer called Stone (Simon McBurney). Stone's whiteness represents that of the colonial administrator: a severe, racist, conniving enforcer of colonial British rule in newly independent Uganda. These areas of whiteness are discussed later in this chapter. It is important first to understand the binary created between Garrigan's Scottish whiteness and the Othered blacks of Uganda as they are represented in the film's first 20 minutes. The binary

described below is the backdrop for the arguments that follow. TIA discourse, like colonial and Orientalist discourse must first establish the binary between Self and Other to understand the roles of each in popular thought.

When we first meet Garrigan, he is sitting at his parent's dinner table using silver cutlery. His mother wears pearls and an apron and his father wears a tie and is addressed as "Doctor Garrigan" by his wife. Dr. Garrigan (senior) tells Nicholas that he has chosen a fine life in the family doctor arena and they raise a toast to "a long future together" (MacDonald 2006) as father and son practicing family medicine. The clock ticking in the background echoes the sentiment of Nicholas' precious youth slipping by. For Garrigan, the blind spin of a globe is about escaping the stiff confinements of his life in Scotland. The next shot, Garrigan is lying on his bed with a cigarette and lets out a scream – he must break the silence. For the imperialist adventurer of yesterday, the map is just as much about escaping, or 'breaking' the silence of stiff European social codes as it is about the unknown space being embarked upon. Garrigan feels that he must leave behind the stiffness of his comfortable life in Scotland. For many Europeans during the imperialism era, Africa represented a space where social contracts could be reworked. The stringent moral conduct required of Europeans in Europe during that time was not required of Europeans in Africa. Peter Ekeh reminds us, "Imperialism provided many a European the means to escape from not only sociological judgments of moral conduct but also invidious class distinctions" (1997:12). In Scotland, there is nothing distinguishable about Garrigan's whiteness. This is represented in the scene where Garrigan, along with his peers shed their graduation garments to jump partially nude into a lake. They all

possess the same whiteness and the same class distinction as new graduates set for a life of mundane class status - whether it is middle or upper class.

Garrigan accomplishes the task of breaking with 'proper' moral conduct and an inevitable class distinction upon his arrival in Uganda. The 'break' in Garrigan's environment is visually represented in the shift in hue from the dull colors of his home in Scotland, to the saturated greens and browns that comprise the plant life and soil in Uganda. Most notably however is the break in soundtrack from the ticking of the clock in a dead and silent space to the ululating accompanied by percussive African beats that often represent 'African' music in film. The alteration in the film's soundtrack reflects Garrigan's freedom from the "sociological judgments" of Scotland as he is now smiling, has his shirt unbuttoned and is feeling the breeze in his hair as he rides on a bus filled with black Ugandans¹⁹. The camera cuts from Garrigan bumping along on the dirt road enjoying his newfound liberation to close-ups of other passengers on the bus including a black man missing an eye and four black children stuffed into one seat. These cutaways are snapshots of 'black Ugandan life'. They differ extensively from earlier snapshots of 'white Scottish life'. Black children running barefoot through a village of huts versus mother and father sipping goblets of sherry at the dinner table reflect the rigid binarism that this film is organized around. In the film, whiteness stands for reason, order,

¹⁹ Similarly, in her study of French colonialism in the early film, *Princesse Tam Tam* (1935), Eileen Julien notes that the protagonist, a Frenchman named Max de Mirecourt, is "an aristocrat and second-rate author [and] blames his current writer's block on his wife's rich lifestyle and pretentious, boring, upper-class friends. He goes off to Africa, a pure, natural haven, for inspiration. He discovers a shepherdess, Alwina (Josephine Baker), whose spontaneity, playfulness, and childlikeness are refreshing in contrast to the snobbish, 'civilized' French tourists whom he encounters" (2009:51).

stability, and blackness stands for backwardness, irrationality, chaos, and violence. This film, as part of a collection of Hollywood-style films made in the 21st century cannot escape this binary because it is how Western audiences have come to understand Africa; through a relentless colonial discourse.

The bus scene is the entry point for several main elements that are important to the film. The scene is Garrigan's introduction to the African continent, as well as the viewer's introduction to elements of *mise-en-scène* in the film that draw on differences between black and white in the scenes that follow. This scene also introduces Garrigan to the audience as a white man. It is made clear at this point that he is in fact a white male in predominantly black Africa. Through this narrative construction, the audience is summoned to view black Africa through his white gaze. Components of Africa that Garrigan sees are translated through his narrative position as a white European man in Africa and relayed to the audience. The visuals in the scene discussed above relate what Garrigan sees as black Africa. The accompanying soundtrack supplements the audience's understanding of black Africa as exciting, loose, and adventurous. Together, these visible and audible moments are the audience's first indication that "This is Africa." Dirt roads, lively music, and black folks in the routine of riding a packed bus all signify that Africa is a place of the body, of emotions, of sensuality and spirituality; it is alive! Richard Dyer argues that 'life' "is usually explicitly counterposed to the mind and the intellect, with the implication that white people's over-investment in the cerebral is cutting them off from life" (1993:138). Having recently completed a medical degree that has seemingly cut Garrigan off from life, he is now on a mission to become 'alive' again. Garrigan is soon

in touch with his bodily/sensual/emotional side. He meets a Ugandan woman on the bus and before long is under her naked black body yelling, "I'm a medical officer overseas!" (MacDonald 2006). Unlike Garrigan's previous yell aimed to break the silence of mediocrity, this is Africa, and father and mother will not hear from the next room.

There is also something more specific about this binary within *The Last King of Scotland*. Over time, the binary transforms young Garrigan from an innocent youngster simply looking to feel alive to a man riddled with the guilt of sending Health Minister Jonah Wasswa (Stephen Rwangyezi) and arguably Kay Amin (Kerry Washington) to their deaths. Garrigan's innocence, when transposed to the African context lands him in a place of anxious uncertainty. He questions the implications of his being a white man in Africa. Garrigan's initial naivety is represented in his first interaction with Sarah Merrit, the all-knowing white wife of the senior doctor he has come to assist. She informs Garrigan that he has "come at a busy time" (MacDonald 2006) for a military coup led by Idi Amin (Forest Whitaker) has just taken place. Garrigan demonstrates that he has little knowledge of the political situation and swatting bugs, responds with a gullible, "whatever I can do to help" (MacDonald 2006). Sarah gives him a look of uncertainty that foreshadows the doctor's eventual understanding that the harsh realities of Uganda's ill are beyond any help he can provide.

The next scene takes a visual assessment of the 'dark' hell Garrigan has just stepped into. Again, snapshots of black Africans in the hospital waiting room show Africa through Garrigan's gaze. He surveys the room as the camera cuts from one close up of sick black

bodies to another. Flies swarm the room and babies cry as Garrigan, eyes to the floor, exhales heavily. In the shots that follow, Dr. Garrigan and the senior doctor administer shots to children in the village as Sarah teaches grown men to read nearby. As Garrigan attends to the patients, he is visibly grappling with the stress of an impending white helplessness. The helplessness is due to an understaffed hospital and overly sick rural population of black Africans of whom 80% still prefer the witch doctor to Western medicines (MacDonald 2006). Garrigan struggles with the irrationality of the witch doctor figure as he watches him practice on a patient. Garrigan looks on contemptuously as the witch doctor rattles a healing instrument and strikes his patient on the back with the same instrument.

How does it make sense in white understandings of Western medicine to hit a patient as a means to heal? Black African life is filled with nonsensical, seemingly backward notions of living. The difference between Garrigan's administration of Western medicine and the witch doctor's practice of 'traditional' medicine is visibly represented in notions of boundaries. The white doctor's hospital is lined with perfect rows of beds, each one covered by a mosquito net. The doctor's instruments are kept in a case with individual drawers for organization that is pertinent to the craft of Western medicine. The two white doctors line the black village children up in rows to receive a shot one by one. Opposite to this, the witch doctor jumps around spastically. He administers blows with a hard instrument to a wincing patient; and yet this is what the locals prefer. Richard Dyer argues, "clear boundaries are characteristic of things white (lines, grids... and so on)," boundaries also keeps whites clearly distinct from blacks (1993:132).

The importance of the protection of boundary establishment and maintenance has long been recognized in discussions of stereotyping and representation... This process is functional for dominant groups, but through it the capacity to set boundaries becomes a characteristic attribute of such groups... whites and men (especially) become characterized by 'boundariness' (Dyer 1993:133).

In the film, TIA discourse confirms the boundaries Dyer argues characterizes representations of whiteness while at the same time disordering them. Later in the film, we are introduced to Mulago Hospital in the middle of Uganda's bustling metropolis of Kampala. Here, we see the same administration of Western/white medicine as represented in "boundariness." Black nurses in pristine white uniforms attend to patients lying in the hospital beds that line the walls. Mulago represents a disordering of the white boundaries Dyer describes for it retains the boundaries while replacing white bodies with black bodies. The white environment of Mulago is caricatured when operated by blacks. This is evident in the raised eyebrows of Garrigan who is surprisingly impressed with what black Africans have accomplished. TIA discourse suggests that boundaries are a characterization of whiteness, but can also be characteristic of blacks attempting to be whites – that is to copy white 'boundariness'. The image of blacks trying to be like whites is informed by the idea of a kind of evolutionism in humans introduced by the European Enlightenment. Like the ideologies of life sciences in the nineteenth century, classic representations of black Africans in Hollywood films are modeled on the idea of an evolutionary path whereby whites are well on their way while blacks fall behind; only

managing to mimic whites. A belief in the basic inferiority of other people is also a tenet of colonial discourse of which Hollywood has historically referenced.

Mimicry as a mode of colonial discourse is described by Homi Bhabha as “one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge” (1984:125).

Mimicry is made elusive by its ambivalence. It has the ability to denote sameness and difference, with its ‘effectual power and knowledge’ emphasized in the creation of difference. Bhabha elaborates:

Colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an *ambivalence*; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference. The authority of that mode of colonial discourse that I have called mimicry is therefore stricken by an indeterminacy: mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal (1984:125, his emphasis).

The elements of ‘boundariness’ seen early in the film at Mulago Hospital constitute the same, while the black bodies mark its difference. Later in the film, Mulago Hospital is seen again in a state of chaos in two instances: when Amin has expelled the Asian population from Uganda and the scene of Kay Amin’s death (discussed later). In both scenes, the hospital has been transformed into a sort of refugee shelter. The displaced black and brown bodies of Kampala crowd the halls and stairways. The quiet humming of productivity and order of Mulago heard earlier in the film is erupted by erratic screams and crying in these scenes. The disruption of white ‘boundariness’ in these later scenes

suggests the “slippage” and “excess” of mimicry. Blacks cannot wholly be like whites in colonial discourse, for those who come close, which is to say those employed by colonialism to mimic, difference must always be asserted: “almost the same, but not quite.”

TIA discourse subscribes to this mode of colonial discourse while at the same time reworking it. *The Last King of Scotland* adheres to evolutionist ideas of blacks becoming like whites (reinforced when the British High Commissioner says of Amin, “He’s one of us” [MacDonald 2006]), while at the same time opening up the possibility of whites becoming like blacks. This is represented in Garrigan’s attempts to cross the boundaries of whiteness into blackness. It is important to highlight that while Garrigan is a liberal white male hopeful for the adventure that comes along with crossing over into blackness, his ability to cross over is still marked by the white power that allows him to do so.

Garrigan first meets Idi Amin when Amin has been injured in a road accident involving a cow. The cow, now moaning in agony disturbs Garrigan so much that he takes Amin’s revolver and shoots it in the head. Garrigan’s trite disregard for Amin’s power (who would steal the President’s gun?) represents Garrigan’s crossing over the boundary of the black/white binary. He crossed the boundary of black/white power relations by stepping over the President to react. It is the first of many points where Garrigan’s behavior reflects the irrationality typically associated with blackness. Garrigan’s act demonstrates that Africa evokes in whites the kind of irrational behavior supposedly specific to blacks (Dyer 1993:136). TIA discourse has reworked whiteness so that rogue acts of immorality

such as Garrigan's attempts to sleep with married women (one failed attempt with Sarah, a white woman and one successful attempt with Kay Amin, wife of Idi Amin) are not part and parcel of his white naivety, rather the instability of black Africa rubbing off on him. And yet, the crossing of the boundary also represents an idea that is not specific to TIA discourse, but part of a broader pattern in the colonial narrative. The acquisition of an intimate knowledge of black Africa by crossing over the boundary produces a pleasure for the white colonial subject. As for our subject, Garrigan's national origin makes the pleasure he acquires in Uganda particularly enjoyable.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Garrigan's Scottishness assigns him a subjugated whiteness, especially when compared to the whiteness of the colonial administrators in *The Last King*. Garrigan's seemingly white liberal disposition leaves him agitated by Stone from their very first meeting in the Kampala tailor shop when Stone tells him that a firm hand is the only thing the African really understands (MacDonald 2006). Responding to his blatant racism, Garrigan mutters, "bloody English" (MacDonald 2006) under his breath as Stone walks away. This comment points to the great national difference that Garrigan makes between himself and Stone. In fact, it is this national difference that builds Garrigan's rapport with Amin. Soon after their roadside meeting, Amin summons Garrigan to Kampala to become his personal physician. Amin recognizes that both Scotland and Uganda were colonized by England, which positions Garrigan on the side of the oppressed and the subjugated. In Scotland, Garrigan is among his own sort of whiteness and with that experiences the mediocrity of such whiteness. However, Amin's acceptance allows him a superficial access to the pleasures of Kampala's black bourgeois

society. Gifted to him by Amin, Garrigan drives around Kampala in a brand new Mercedes convertible, sips alcoholic beverages poolside night and day, and has his choice of black women, including a go-go dancer Amin ‘offers’ to him.

Garrigan reaps the rewards of being in solidarity with Amin. He views himself as on the side of Uganda’s powerful and he likes it. So when Stone questions the legitimacy of Amin’s power by inquiring into the disappearances of people in opposition to the regime, Garrigan becomes defensive. He replies, “This is Africa! You meet violence with violence! Anything else and you’re dead!” (MacDonald 2006). This statement demonstrates the lengths Garrigan will go to hold onto his intimate relationship with the power and the powerful that he has acquired. This statement is also to show Stone – his oppressor, that he now holds the higher hand. Garrigan *has* the knowledge, he *knows* how things operate in Africa, whereas Stone could not know because he is outside of the circle; he is not intimate.

Historically, the white colonial subject’s access to a local knowledge such as Garrigan’s understanding of Africa is an aspect of colonialist discourse. In her close reading of Rudyard Kipling’s novel, *Kim* (1912), Gail Ching-Liang Low describes the pleasure the central character takes in his familiarity with the ‘alien world’ of India:

... Kim’s transformation into a native boy is depicted as an epiphany, ‘a demon in Kim woke up and sang with joy as he put on the changing dresses and changed speech and gesture therewith’ (Kipling 1912:226). Characterized by a release of libidinal energy, the change effected by native costume leaves Kim with a freedom far beyond the narrow worlds of his white peers. The sense of

being totally familiar, totally at ease in an alien world produces intense pleasure; the awareness of not only 'being' but consuming the other's life and culture (1996:202).

Garrigan's knowledge of an alien Ugandan life and culture is privileged and not a knowledge that can be accessed by his 'white peers' in Scotland. The colonial world offered the white subject, as Ekeh says, escapism from European moral conduct, as well as rigid class distinctions. It also opened up new avenues of pleasure through the process of "consuming the other's life and culture." This is a process that we see Garrigan go through as he becomes familiar with Kampala's elite. However, Garrigan does not remain comfortably situated among the powerful for long. The anxiety set in motion by Garrigan's relationship with an unstable Amin, and his crossing over into blackness can be attributed to the ambivalence (described by Bhabha) with which colonialist discourse must always mobilize to give the colonial stereotype its currency (Bhabha 1994:66). *The Last King* is not short on colonial stereotypes, particularly in its representations of what seems to be specifically black modes of hyper-sexuality and violence. Just as Garrigan enjoys the pleasure, he also faces the challenges that come along with his privileged position. The methods through which his anxieties are represented operate on essentialized ideas of race and as a result are highly problematic, as I will describe below.

The anxiety of guilt and wrongdoing on Garrigan's conscious is represented under three different but interconnected elements of mise-en-scène: lighting on Garrigan's blue eyes, water, and mosquitoes. Made recognizable by a luminous blue in often under lit scenes, Garrigan's eyes indicate the successes and failures throughout the film of his internal struggle with white consciousness. Early in the film, when Garrigan is not yet struggling

with questions of his guilty white conscience, the blue of his eyes is bright and clear. The lighting is done impeccably so that it hits his eyes and turns them into blue translucent marbles. Garrigan finds that his skills are useful to the President. He is confident that he is an upright member of Amin's inner circle, he is earning the respect of Amin, and he is promoting good in Uganda. The pride Garrigan takes in earning the respect of Amin slowly turns into fear as the President's paranoia evolves into senseless assertions that Nicholas has failed in his role as the President's "closest advisor" (MacDonald 2006).

The blue in Garrigan's eyes darkens after his first encounter of violence in black Africa. An opposition faction ambushes the car Nicholas and Amin are riding in but they manage to make a narrow escape. The assassination attempt pushes Amin to violent paranoia. Garrigan witnesses the torture of the opposition figures supposedly responsible for the raid. In the dark warehouse the violence takes place in, the light does not catch the blue in his eyes; it masks the blue making them appear murky and opaque. Later, Nicholas splashes his face with water in his bathroom sink, washing himself of the bloodshed he just witnessed. He peers into the mirror questioning his place in the violence. The single overhead light in the bathroom falls on top of his head and casts dark shadows over his eyes. Garrigan's moving in and out of innocence and guilt and the anxiety created because of this is represented by the use of light on his eyes. Nicholas' eyes become darker as black Africa overcomes him.

Dyer's theory on lighting whites in film rests on several ideas of functionality, but two are important for my purpose here. First, movie lighting serves as a function for white

culture by valorizing the unique and special character of the individual, of the individuality of the individual (Dyer 1997:102). Garrigan's white gaze the audience views the film through makes subjects of Othered races. Dyer says, "It is at least arguable that white society has found it hard to see non-white people as individuals; the very notion of the individual, of the freely developing, autonomous human person, is only applicable to those who are seen to be free and autonomous, who are not slaves or subject people" (1997:102). With the arguable exception of Amin, the white gaze subjects black Africans to a homogeneous blackness in *The Last King of Scotland* while Garrigan is marked as an individual. The lighting on Garrigan's eyes creates a sense of individuality in his character and un-individuality in non-whites. Garrigan is special and unique in that he has a sense of consciousness, whereas black characters are not adept to such feelings. The second function provided by movie lighting coincides with the first function in the development of individuality. Lighting separates the individual from other individuals as well as from his/her environment. Dyer argues that "the sense of separation from the environment, of the world as the object of a disembodied human gaze and control, runs deep in white culture" (102,103). This notion is best exemplified by the film's opening scene described early in this chapter. Garrigan sits in front of the globe and demonstrates complete control over its movement. His ability to stop the globe's spin at will and navigate to that space at which his finger points displays the privilege and control over that environment – his is a "disembodied human gaze." The use of lighting on Garrigan's eyes makes the distinction between the object and the subject, the gazer and the gazed upon.

The image of water in the film as a tool of *mise-en-scène* is connected to the use of lighting in Garrigan's blue eyes and serves as the second indicator of his white anxiety. The sparkling blue of Garrigan's eyes is only rivaled by the sparkling blue of the swimming pool in the sun at the President's quarters in Kampala. Garrigan finds Kay Amin in the pool on a bright afternoon and kneels by the side of the pool to speak to her. The shot we see Kay in reflects what Garrigan's gaze sees: a beautiful black woman in a sparkling blue swimming pool. Garrigan is looking down on Kay and the glimmering water fills the frame. The blue of the pool water captures Kay in the frame just as Kay has captured the blue of Garrigan's eyes. The lightness of this moment is represented in the clear blue of the sparkling pool water. Their affair has not yet begun; Garrigan is not yet a guilty man. Later, when he realizes that he gave Amin false information that led to the death of the Minister of Health, Jonah Wasswa, the swimming pool appears again. This time the sky is dark and pouring rain. The sparkling blue of the water's surface is now opaque and spattered with heavy raindrops. Garrigan lies in the water letting the rain rush down over his face. The overtone of Christian baptism in this image is difficult to deny. Garrigan seeks the opportunity to be washed anew as the water rushes over him. He is washing his sins away so that he may emerge a purified man.

It is unsurprising then that Garrigan appears resilient in the next scene. The crystal blue of his eyes has returned – his conscious has been cleared. He repents his sins and pleads with Amin to let him return to Scotland. Having undergone the cleansing process and repentance, Garrigan pleads with the dark figure of Amin to let him return to a place of moral stability. The horror of black Africa has dawned on Garrigan. His crossing the

boundary of blackness has been at times fun and exhilarating for the young adventurer, but the violent underpinnings of dark Africa have turned him into someone he is not. He says, “This isn’t me”... “I have to go home now” (MacDonald 2006). To which Amin replies, “Your home is here” ... “Uganda embraces you” (MacDonald 2006). Garrigan’s ‘powerful’ position in black Africa is now unfolded as a ruse. Garrigan realizes that from the beginning, he was simply a pawn in a sadistic game much bigger than him. No amount of baptism or repentance will retain the innocence of his conscience. Black Africa and all the ills present in it now envelop him; suck the life out of him.

Africa’s “primordial chaos” and diseased violence is represented best through Garrigan’s psyche in the sequence following his discovery of Kay Amin’s mutilated body (Mbembe 2001:3). It was not enough for Idi Amin to murder Kay for sexual indiscretion with Garrigan, he had to “make an example of her” (MacDonald 2006) by severing her arms and legs from her body, then sewing them back onto the torso opposite each other; arms now sewn into leg sockets and legs sewn into arm sockets. The image of murdered black bodies stacked on top of each other is common in 21st century Hollywood-type portrayals of African stories²⁰. However, the grotesque image of Kay Amin’s stiff corpse on the operating table at Mulago hospital introduces a sort of intimacy of vulgarity into TIA discourse. Kay Amin’s character is central to Garrigan’s position within the narrative. Along with Dr. Junju (David Oyelowo), the black doctor at Mulago hospital, Kay Amin operates as the black voice of reason for Garrigan whose white consciousness does not allow him to understand what life is like for blacks under Amin’s regime. Garrigan is

²⁰ see *Black Hawk Down* (2001), *Tears of the Sun* (2003), *Hotel Rwanda* (2004), *The Constant Gardener* (2005) and *Blood Diamond* (2006)

partly responsible for Kay Amin's murder and mutilation but the montage of images going through his head (and made visible to the audience) as he drives away from the hospital after viewing her body suggests that he takes little or no responsibility. This is Africa's crime; any blood on Garrigan's hands is a direct result of his crossing the boundary into blackness.

A sequence of shots including the witch doctor in the village practicing on a patient, Kay Amin's corpse, 1970's pornographic video clips, and a close up of ants crawling out of a hole in the ground pours through Garrigan's psyche as his foot becomes heavier on the gas pedal. The depth of darkness required for such a hideous act of violence can only be attained in Africa. Garrigan's position is that of spectator into the "bottomless abyss where everything is noise" (Mbembe 2001:3). Through his white gaze, Western audiences can peer into black African life; or in this case, death. Garrigan is the liaison between Western audiences comfortable with his whiteness and black Africa: the Other. TIA discourse demands that white characters, often heterosexual men, must provide the function of the gazer. The lens provided by Garrigan's white Western male gaze creates a specific cultural meaning to events taking place in Africa that is ultimately the base of TIA discourse; the interpretation of blackness by whites.

TIA discourse is also the interpretation of whiteness by whites. By presenting what black Africa is, TIA discourse, like broader colonial discourse, presents to whites what they are not. This implies a negative category of the same. Idi Amin and Nicholas Garrigan are characterized by child-like behavior. However, Garrigan's behavior is attributed to

innocence and playful adventure while Amin's is attributed to psychotic buffoonery; one is white and the (O)ther is black. The two characters are the same but one is a negative category of the same. Garrigan's naivety led him into Amin's delusional trap. He became Amin's "white monkey" (MacDonald 2006). However, the enterprise and resilience typical of white representations in film distinguishes Garrigan from Amin. The pain and bodily suffering Garrigan undergoes at the hand of Amin in one of the final scenes of the film exemplifies his transition from child to knowing man; a transition that Amin does not make. And it should be noted that the black characters who serviced Garrigan as the voices of reason: Kay Amin, Dr. Junju, and Jonah Wasswa, are all dead by the film's closing credits. Black characters with a conscience are impotent to transcendence whereas Garrigan is finally able to shed his guilt and anxiety and transcend black Africa. Garrigan makes his 'transcendence' through a unique hybrid of 'black African practice' and Christian imagery of crucifixion.

After Garrigan has made it clear that he was attempting to end Amin's life with a lethal pill, Amin's all-black security team beats him and turns him over to Amin to administer the final torture. Amin kneels down close to Garrigan who is now slumped to the floor. He describes the implications of stealing the wife of an elder in his (non-descript) village saying, "In my village, when you steal the wife of an elder they take you to a tree and they hang you by your skin. Each time you scream, the evil comes out of you" (MacDonald 2006). Garrigan accepts his punishment with a nod and the men "pull him up" by the chest with hooks attached to rope (MacDonald 2006). The grotesque act of stringing Garrigan up with hooks marries a black African practice of ridding the morally

incompetent of their sins with the white Christian imagery of Jesus Christ's flesh strung from the cross on nails. While the first idea denotes incompetence, the latter denotes a sacrifice for the incompetence of (O)thers.

The image of black Africaness in the film is trumped by this final image of white transcendence. Garrigan is 'sacrificed' in a bottle shop in the Kampala airport. The white shelves in the shop are filled with bottles of clear alcohol that collect light then disperse it throughout the room. The white light of the room creates a sense of beauty in Garrigan's pain. The light denotes his transcendence, which justifies his bodily sacrifice. Dyer argues, "While Christ on the cross may often be an image of agony, it is also one of beauty, with the suffering itself part of the transcendent beauty" (1997:208). There was not a trace of beauty in the suffering Kay Amin underwent at the hands of Amin, but Garrigan's suffering, hanging from the hooks, arms stretched out wide, reflects the hope of his redemption. He redeems himself from the evils of dark Africa. The "transcendent beauty" Dyer speaks of is reserved for those capable of redemption, which is to say the white body – that which resembles Christ's sacrifice. It must be pointed out however, that Garrigan's redemption differs significantly from earlier archetypal white characters that cross over the boundary of black Africa. Take for examples Joseph Conrad's Mr. Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness* (1902), or Francis Ford Coppola's Walter E. Kurtz (Marlon Brando) in *Apocalypse Now* (1979), a film based on Conrad's original novel. These two protagonists are swallowed by dark Africa. They are not redeemed.

Garrigan is strung up on the pretense of Amin's black African practice, but the practice itself became overwhelmed with the resilience of Garrigan's whiteness. Leon Hunt argues that the crucifixion image in filmic representations of white men combines, "passivity offset by control, humiliation offset by nobility of sacrifice, eroticism offset by religious connotations of transcendence" (in Dyer 1997:150). The image of Garrigan's flesh stretched over the hooks differs from earlier images of black torture. It is not done with the "passivity," "humiliation," or "eroticism" of earlier torture and murders of black bodies. Garrigan's torture did not take place in the dark basement of a hospital or in a roadside ditch where many of Amin's previous black victims met their end. What is more, just as Christ rose again from death, Garrigan is also resurrected. His fellow black doctor at Mulago Hospital sacrifices his life to repair Garrigan's wounds and get him on board the airplane set to depart from the continent with the released hostages. Dr. Junju wraps Garrigan in white gauze and tells him, "I am tired of hatred, Dr. Garrigan. This country is drowning in it. We deserve better. Go home; tell the world the truth about Amin. They will believe you, you are a white man" (MacDonald 2006). His power restored through the words of Dr. Junju, Garrigan boards the plane and sets off to spread the knowledge of hate in Africa (unlike Christ, whose spirit in the Western Christian tradition spreads the word of love).

As the cargo plane filled with European hostages prepares for take-off, the threat that Amin will find out Garrigan is on the plane and halt the escape is reflected in the intensity of the soundtrack. The music gets faster and faster until the plane finally leaves the ground. Garrigan, one eye swollen closed, leans his head against the window of the

plane as the sun filters in and restores the clear blue of the one eye visible. Outside the window, Garrigan's gaze captures one more time black Africa. From above, we see a serene lake turned purple-blue in the dusk of the setting sun. The music slows to a peaceful string ensemble and Garrigan recounts the Africa he met upon his arrival. A cutaway shot of 'black African life' returns: children running in slow motion through the village. That is the Africa Garrigan came to service, but a force much greater than himself overcame him. He crossed over the boundary of orderliness and found himself in a dark place in which he could not navigate; he could only bear witness to atrocity and evil. Garrigan could not navigate the dark space, but he held onto his conscience long enough to withstand the guilt of his wrongdoings and redeem his spirit. Once back home in Scotland, Garrigan will need little more than to reveal the scars on his chest to explain to his countrymen and women what Africa is. It is a place of great pain and great sacrifice.

In this chapter I have demonstrated that the "strategic location" (Said 1978:20) of Dr. Nicholas Garrigan in *The Last King of Scotland* supports TIA discourse. His position as an outsider, most notably identified by the use of lighting on his blue eyes, situates him in a Self/Other dichotomy with his black African surroundings. He employs TIA discourse to obtain a sense of intimacy with the powerful in Uganda. His own power is limited and largely subjugated not only because of his national origin but also because Amin controls his movements and actions. TIA discourse acquires mass and a great deal of referential power in this film. *The Last King* sits comfortably among a host of previous Hollywood films that have represented black Africa as chaotic and violent. Likewise, Garrigan, as a

white heterosexual male protagonist is arranged among many other white male characters that came before him in Hollywood's "strategic formation" (Said 1978:20) of colonial adventure films. In the next chapter, "Identity and Difference in *Blood Diamond* (2006)," I interrogate the narrative position of the white heterosexual male protagonist, Danny Archer, as he articulates and appropriates TIA discourse in *Blood Diamond*.

University Of Cape Town

Chapter 4

Identity and Difference in *Blood Diamond* (2006)

More than *The Last King of Scotland*, Edward Zwick's film *Blood Diamond* (2006) essentializes the post-colonial African landscape as hopeless and savage. Like *The Last King*, *Blood Diamond's* mise-en-scène is also organized around a rigid binarism. *Blood Diamond* uses the white 'boundariness' and black chaos that *Last King* adheres to. However, if *Last King's* final revelation was that of a Christian notion of redemption and everlasting *life*, *Blood Diamond's* final revelation is wrapped in notions of 'nothingness' foreshadowed in the film's opening sequences; which is to say *death*, the epitome of nothingness. *Blood Diamond* does not lack massacred black bodies or rampant Afropessimism. These ideas are exacerbated by the dichotomy of paradise and hell put forth in the dialogue of the leading characters, particularly the Mande fisherman, Solomon Vandy (Djimon Hounsou). The film's white heterosexual male protagonist, Danny Archer (Leonardo DiCaprio), repeatedly reflects on Africa as a doomed continent that he desperately seeks to get away from. However, when Archer says, "This is Africa" in *Blood Diamond* it is about something more than pessimism, it offers him access to a certain kind of pleasure that is necessary to his subjugated white identity. Archer's bound/built body (as described by Richard Dyer) and the tropes of red African soil and black violence do well to etch out TIA discourse in *Blood Diamond* in the analysis that follows.

Blood Diamond's opening sequence, like *The Last King of Scotland's*, falls in line with dominant representations of colonial adventure tales. Again, the film begins with the image of a map. The opening shot is a graphic of the mapped world outlined on a black background. As the solemn music plays, the other continents of the world fade away until only Africa remains. Drumbeats are added to the soundtrack and we see that the tiny country of Sierra Leone in West Africa is highlighted. As in all other colonial adventure films and novels, the map is used to detail the unknown spaces to be embarked upon. It is used to relay the notion of coming into a space. The story is taking us *to* Sierra Leone on the Dark Continent (as literally depicted in the use of black as filler color in the graphic). The opening title sequence that follows is also typical of colonial adventure films. In the sequence, we see Vandy at work on his fishing boat early in the morning. The camera points toward the dawning sun making black silhouettes of Vandy and his colleagues on their fishing vessels. A soft male voice sings in an African language as the camera captures Africa's natural beauty. Wide-angle shots of Africa's beautiful landscapes are a staple of colonial adventure tales. The use of Africa's fantastic nature reflects the supposed utopia or 'untouched' spaces of Africa's vast land mass, and provides a fantastic playground for the film's leading macho male.

Europe at the time of the colonization project represented industrial development and civilization, whereas Africa was a place of escapism from the constructions of 'modern' life. Achille Mbembe describes Africa as the "supreme receptacle of the West's obsession with, and circular discourse about, the facts of 'absence,' 'lack,' and 'non-being,' of identity and difference, of negativeness – in short, of nothingness" (2001:4).

The West has come to constitute presence and being while these opening sequences reveal Africa to be an absent space. This is Africa; a dark nothingness filled with dark non-beings. The film's next ten minutes divulge all the information worth knowing about *Blood Diamond's* striking dichotomy between the West and black Africa.

Without order or boundaries, the dark blank spaces of Africa invite chaos. As Solomon Vandy walks his son, Dia (Kagiso Kuypers), home from school, Dia tells him of all that he has learned from his teacher that day. He says, "Teacher says this country was founded as a utopia... She says someday when the war is over, our world will be a paradise" (Zwick 2006). This conversation between father and son constructs the ideas of paradise and hell that are intrinsic to the film's narrative. The essentialized idea of a pre-colonial, pre-white-man African utopia sets the stage for the horrific scene of the hell Africa is now that interrupts father and son's playful dialogue. As they walk down the dirt road, truckloads of Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels, playing loud rap music and hollering, approach them from behind. Vandy grabs Dia's arm and scurries low to the ground to their village. The next sequence of shots exhibits how rebel factions viciously take over a peaceful village (at least in Hollywood's filmic representations of a rebel takeover). Shots of men, women, and children screaming and running for their lives foreground shots of rebels in torn-up and mismatched military attire shooting to kill. With young boys doing most of the massacring with machine guns, the rebels effectively disrupt whatever utopian living was taking place in Vandy's village. Vandy breaks into his hut with a machete to rescue his wife and two of his other children from the raid. His family manages to make an escape but Vandy is captured by the rebels and led to a place

where other victims are being held (Dia Vandy is later captured by the rebels and turned into a child soldier). The head rebel, Captain Poison (David Harewood), directs the prisoners one by one to the chopping block (a turned-over fishing boat) to have their arms sliced off. With the same vulgarity as the dismembering of Kay Amin in *The Last King*, *Blood Diamond* shows Western audiences how justice is served in Africa. A prisoner approaches the chopping block and lays his arm across the wood as Poison gives his anti-government monologue: “The government wants you to vote. They say, ‘the future is in your hands’, but we now the future! So we take your hands! No more hands, no more voting! Chop him!” (Zwick 2006). With a single swing of an axe, the prisoner’s arm comes clean off. Vandy is next to have his arm chopped off but when he approaches the block, Poison gives him a good look and decides that his muscular physique will better suit the rebel cause in the diamond mines. He spares Vandy his arm and instead loads him into a truck. The horrific take-over of a simple African village by rebels (half of which have not reached puberty) running amok with machine guns, unveils to the viewing audience what transpires in the dark non-spaces: this is post-colonial Africa and it is hell.

The binary of *Blood Diamond* does an exceptional job of adhering to essentialized colonial notions of what it is to be black or white in Africa. Paul Gilroy calls this colonialist understanding ‘racial common sense’. He describes it as an “absolutist view of black and white cultures, as fixed, mutually impermeable expressions of racial and national identity, [which] is a ubiquitous theme in racial ‘common sense’” (1987:6).

Black Africa is rambunctious; the rebels handle their business with wily authority, shooting at will while whites settle injustice through diplomatic debate.

As the rebels drive away from the village, we see that scores of huts are being burned to the ground behind them. The noise of the rebel's celebration fades out and a male voice with a United States accent can be heard saying, "Throughout the history of Africa, whenever a substance of value is found, the locals die in great number and in misery. This was true of ivory, rubber, gold, and oil. It is now true of diamonds" (Zwick 2006). The rebel shot cuts to a large conference room where mostly white men in sleek business suits sit at long tables in front of laptop computers. In the background is a row of flagpoles exhibiting flags from major First World/Northern countries, The United States and Canada among them. The light in the room comes from an overhead source. It is not a stretch to say that the soft light that falls on the men's heads makes them appear enlightened or idealistic. A subtitle labels the meeting as the "G8 Conference on Diamonds: Antwerp, Belgium" (Zwick 2006). The conference scene is juxtaposed with shots of the RUF diamond mines. Poison sits at a table looking at a copy of *Hustler* pornographic magazine (a colonial representation of the hyper-sexualized black African) while monitoring the progress in the riverbed where his prisoners are digging for diamonds. The members at the G8 conference argue that the illegal trade of "conflict stones" must be stopped in order to halt ammunition and funding for the rebels (Zwick 2006). Meanwhile, Poison tells his prisoners, "The Freetown government, and their white masters have raped your land to feed their greed" (Zwick 2006). The men at the conference debate the causes and consequences of conflict stones and passively lay blame

to the developed nations that import them. Poison's rhetoric is largely the same. He identifies that it is the white masters in the developed nations that fuel the illegal sale of conflict diamonds. However, because we see Poison actually in the mines where the "misery" is taking place, he is more closely associated with the violence. Poison is greatly undermined. He is represented as an unreasonable demon; preaching that the RUF is "fighting for the people" and that there is "no more slave and master here," while at the same time administering physically demanding work to unpaid prisoners (Zwick 2006). The men at the conference are equally as guilty in the conflict diamond trade but their distance from the war, spatially and through elements of *mise-en-scène* described above, creates the sense that they are more reasonable than Poison. The deliberate arrangement of these scenes side by side invites the audience to view representations of race as Gilroy says, in absolutist, fixed, and mutually impermeable terms. In other words, the placement of these scenes creates a 'common sense' understanding that whites in the developed world do business in a sophisticated manner, while blacks in Africa do business with irrational force.

This binary sets the stage for Archer's entrance. He is a mercenary that operates between the two worlds. He smuggles diamonds from the black world for sale in the white world. Archer enters Sierra Leone on a white airplane. The shot of the airplane flying low over the cascading green hills is a sharp contrast to the previous rebel sequence. The white airplane represents modern technology and differs greatly from the primitive machetes and dirty clothes of the rebels. The only modern technology the rebels possess are the machine guns that Archer brings to them, via the airplane. However, Archer's power in

the film is mostly limited to his bodily strength and the chaotic non-spaces of Africa that allow him to demonstrate this power. Richard Dyer argues that the

The colonial landscape is expansive, enabling the hero to roam and giving us the entertainment of action; it is unexplored, giving him the task of discovery and us the pleasures of mystery; it is uncivilized, needing taming, providing the spectacle of power, it is difficult and dangerous, testing his machismo, providing us with suspense (1993:135).

The landscape provides a space in which the audience can interrogate Archer's built physique. He climbs cliffs, shoots large guns, and scuffles with Vandy on more than one occasion. The combination of Archer's machismo with the colonial/chaotic landscape situates him within a genre of heterosexual male whiteness that Dyer has termed "muscle hero" (1997:156).

Archer's built body is part of the notion of 'boundariness' specific to whiteness discussed in the previous chapter. Dyer argues that the heightened muscularity of the built body carries connotations of whiteness; "only a hard, visibly bounded body can resist being submerged into the horror of femininity and non-whiteness" (1997:148,153). Archer's bounded built body separates him from other characters – he is taut, firm and impenetrable. Unlike typical muscle heroes that Dyer argues are not indigenous to the land in which they venture, Archer is a white African; he is an indigenous muscle hero. However, it is precisely his white Africaness that he struggles with. His white conscience is fraught with questions of identity, belonging, and denial. Archer's built body is important for him to distinguish himself from his surroundings so that he will not fit in

with the Africa that he so strongly denies. Dyer argues that the built white body is a signifier of white spirit and enterprise, or in this case denial of origin, because it is the ultimate accomplishment of “mind over matter, imagination over flesh... It is the sense of the mind at work behind the production of this body that most defines its whiteness” (153,164). Whiteness is not just about the body, but also the mind behind the body. The landscape Archer sets off into is equally about exploring the complexities of his internal strength.

Archer uses his bodily strength to mask the trauma of his early life. In an intimate conversation with the American journalist Maddy Bowen (Jennifer Connelly), Archer reveals that his past is rife with death, destruction and deception; all of which he attributes to Africa. When he was still a boy his mother was raped and murdered and his father was decapitated and hung from a hook in a barn. In 1978, Archer joined the South African Defense Force in Angola where he fought alongside “the blacks” against communism (Zwick 2006). Archer only realized later that he was in the trenches at the risk of losing his life under false pretenses. South Africans were not in Angola in a battle against communism, rather, a battle over “who gets what: ivory, oil, gold, diamonds” (Zwick 2006). Archer is disillusioned by these events and it is evident in his comments regarding the presence of a higher power in Africa: “Will God ever forgive us for what we’ve done to each other? Then I look around and realize, God left this place a long time ago” (Zwick 2006). His disappointment and pessimism distinguishes him above all as an individual completely independent of origin, place, and God. Similar to Garrigan’s

distinguishing qualities highlighted by use of lighting on his blue eyes, Archer's qualities are highlighted by his built body and transcendent death (discussed later).

The superiority of his body and intellect are demonstrated best when Archer and Vandy set off through the Sierra Leone jungle to recover the diamond Vandy has hidden. Archer's role in this sequence is to lead the way through the rough terrain and to smooth over the missteps that Vandy makes. Vandy's stupid mistakes highlight Archer's intellectual superiority²¹. The unequal partnership of these two men is one that derives from colonialist discourse and is represented in their spatial relationship on screen. Archer always appears center screen while Vandy remains in the background. Manthia Diawara labels the configuration of characters on screen as "spatial narration." He argues,

Spatial narration in classical cinema makes sense through a hierarchical disposition of objects on the screen. Thus space is related to power and powerlessness, in so far as those who occupy the center of the screen are usually more powerful than those situated in the background or completely absent from the screen (1993:11).

Archer's centrality on screen is a deliberate method used to cast him as the character with power. Vandy is left to tag along behind Archer to annoy him with questions about his

²¹ In her review of *Blood Diamond*, Barbara Ransby argues, "What is absolutely indefensible... is the simplistic one-dimensional portrayal of almost every black character. Each and every one is either a bloodthirsty mindless killer and pillager or a childlike noble savage and feeble victim. The talented Hounsou is the latter. He is cast as hapless, helpless and clueless in the land of his birth. He is a big innocent good guy who would not know whether to run toward or away from the gunfire if DiCaprio did not pull him in the right direction" (2007:61). Likewise, Lansana Gberie says, "I am not also sure why is it Archer, a foreigner, who leads Vandy (who, as a denizen of the place, should be expected to know his way about a lot better) through the bush to Kono, except that the leading, macho role had to be exclusively reserved for DiCaprio (2007:141).

personal life. Archer is a powerful man, and Vandy is in the “protective custody” (Guerrero 1993:239) of the powerful man.

Ed Guerrero has identified this black/white character relationship as the “bi-racial buddy formula” (1993). Speaking predominantly of the formula’s use in the 1980s, Guerrero argues, “Hollywood has put what is left of the Black presence on the screen in the protective custody, so to speak, of a White lead or co-star, and therefore in conformity with dominant, white sensibilities and expectations of what Blacks should be like” (1993:239). While many recent Hollywood action films have broken from the buddy formula, *Blood Diamond* has reinforced it. To borrow a notion from the very first colonial films, Vandy acts as Archer’s noble savage²². Vandy is a simple fisherman in the protective custody of Archer, whose superior tracking and navigation skills will find what they are looking for. He is the innocent witness to Archer’s brutish masculinity. While Vandy also possesses a built body, ideas of his bodily superiority are dismissed by its exposure (Vandy’s shirt is unbuttoned leaving his chest and stomach bare and vulnerable) and his ‘soft’ (feminine) moral resolve to find his son. Archer’s body is never exposed and his seemingly amoral mission to find the diamond so that he may ‘get his’ signifies his superior masculinity (Zwick 2006). Dyer argues,

Clothes are bearers of prestige, notably of wealth, status and class: to be without them is to lose

²² Speaking of D.W. Griffith’s *The Zulu’s Heart* (1908), Peter Davis argues, “It establishes something remarkable... Drawing on colonial experience with its ingrained biases and distortions, absorbed second-hand, Griffith unwittingly projected, in a few clumsy and ludicrous frames, an image of black Africa that would dominate the screen for most of the twentieth century... Africans would be defined as either good or bad by their actions towards whites, which determined whether they were the Faithful Servant or the Savage Other” (1996:9).

prestige. Nakedness may also reveal the inadequacies of the body by comparison with social ideals. It may betray the relative similarity of male and female, white and non-white bodies, undo the remorseless insistences on difference and concomitant power carried by clothes and grooming (1997:146).

When Archer says that he is 'getting his' he is expressing his "concomitant" ability to act as an individual – the ultimate form of masculinity. After border guards catch Archer smuggling diamonds into Liberia, he is arrested and locked up in a prison holding cell in Freetown. During the same time, the diamond mine where Vandy was held captive is raided by government troops. Vandy and his fellow prisoners, along with Poison and his RUF soldiers are locked up in the same holding cell. Having seen Vandy with a large pink stone seconds before the government raid, Poison announces to the other prisoners that he will give a thousand dollars to the man who will get the stone from Vandy. Archer watches the commotion intently and decides that that diamond will be his. He has Vandy released from the prison and approaches him soon thereafter with a deal Vandy cannot refuse – his family for the whereabouts of the diamond. Archer keeps the news of the rare diamond a secret. He has no intention of letting anyone in on the deal – he will sell it straight to the buyers in London himself – no more middle man, he is getting his. The sole reliance on himself sets him apart from Vandy's feminine notions of family and human relationship best exemplified when Vandy is overcome with emotion (yelling and crying much like the black characters that take refuge at Mulago Hospital in *Last King*) at the refugee camp fence when he finds out that his son was captured by the RUF. Vandy causes a commotion and Archer must take hold of him and pull him away from the fence.

Part of what defines the muscle hero's natural superiority is his interaction with the foreign land and its inhabitants. As pointed out above, Vandy's honorable quest to find his son marks him as the noble savage, but Dyer argues that in any colonial adventure film,

There are good and bad, instinctual and wily, stupid and wise, primitive and orientalist natives, in any combination. The colonialist structure of the heroes' relation to the native is aid as much as antagonism: he sorts out the problems of people who cannot sort things out for themselves... The native people may have some specialized knowledge useful to the whites, but otherwise are either serviceable to carry things or else one more aspect of the land's perils (1997:156,157).

Vandy offers a specialized knowledge to Archer (he knows where the diamond is hidden) but Poison is an example of a native that is "one more aspect of the land's perils." Poison is both Archer's adversary and black clone. Both men are comprised of champion/built bodies, they both seek to 'get out of hell' (Zwick 2006) (for Archer hell means Africa, for Poison it is unclear if hell means the violent militia, Sierra Leone or Africa), and both end up dead by the film's end.

Again, like *The Last King's* Garrigan and Amin, Poison is a negative category of Archer's same. The idea of white 'boundariness' set them apart. White 'boundariness' (bound built body) distinguishes Archer from femininity and blackness and asserts his intellectual superiority, whereas Poison's bound built body further immerses him into blackness offering him no distinguishing qualities. Poison's body bulges with considerably larger muscles than Archer's. Poison's costume is comprised mainly of

sleeveless shirts and vests that leave his big biceps exposed for most of the film. Poison's large muscles create the idea that he has no intellectual capacity; in body building terms, he is a 'meathead'. His muscles cut him off from the cerebral; he does not have access to his brain. Whereas Archer uses his built physique to conquer the landscape and ultimately come to peace with Africa, Poison uses his built body to do nothing but terrorize and 'make men' out of the mass of black RUF rebels he has working under him, including young children. Archer's body is in part used to create an identity for him. His past as a mercenary is revealed in his skilled maneuvering and use of weaponry, but Poison's body is not used to create a history or an identity for him other than that of the black demon. Poison tells Vandy, "You think I am a devil, but only because I have lived in hell. I want to get out" (Zwick 2006). Even Poison's habitual practice of cutting off arms separates him from Archer. The dismembering of black body parts separates Poison from Archer because he literally cuts through the bounded body.

The hell Poison is in offers him no sense of agency. The barrage of bare black bodies Poison is surrounded by in his militia creates a hegemonic blackness whereby black skin becomes camouflaged with the dark jungle backdrop and the dark spaces of the prison cell and an RUF camp at night. There is no black agency to speak of in *Blood Diamond* because the mass of exposed black bodies, best exemplified in the holding cell where Archer sees Vandy strip naked, creates a singular dark hue that no black character can possibly speak through. Barbara Ransby describes the black characters in *Blood Diamond*:

What is absolutely indefensible... is the simplistic one-dimensional portrayal of almost every black character. Each and every one is either a bloodthirsty mindless killer and pillager or a childlike noble savage and feeble victim (2007:61).

African blackness in *Blood Diamond* is essentialized by the limited roles for black characters highlighted by Ransby.

Even Vandy, the leading black character with perhaps the most agency, falls into colonialist assumptions of superiority. In at least one way, Vandy is like Archer in his struggle to reconcile what 'his people' have done to each other on the continent. Similar to Archer's struggle with what whiteness has become in Africa (he tells Bowen, "you come here with your laptop computers, malaria pills, and little bottles of hand-sanitizer and think you're going to change the outcome?" [Zwick 2006]), Vandy struggles with what blackness has become on the continent. At one point on their journey to find the diamond, Vandy asks Archer, "I understand why people want our diamonds, but how can my own people do this to each other?" (Zwick 2006). The colonialist language comes out in the two distinctly different usages of the word "people" in Vandy's question. The first use of "people" quite obviously refers to the predominantly Western white diamond buyers (portrayed in the film when Archer is explaining to Bowen how blood diamonds make it onto the market). Vandy can understand their desire for the stone; its value in Western markets makes sense to him. The second use of "people" refers expressly to the black Africans, or RUF members that dig for the illegal diamonds. This film continually pits white Western buyers against black rebel providers as discussed earlier. The idea that the rebels sell the blood stones to Western markets to fund their cause, a feasible idea,

does not make sense to Vandy. Despite the violence and vulgarity associated with the rebel's cause, the fact is that they are portrayed as an illogical bunch whereas the international diamond trade has an equal amount of blood on their hands, but is portrayed as a completely logical operation. Ultimately, this is the exact course that the civilizing mission of colonialism took at home to win over the metropole. The colonizers had to first paint the natives as uncivilized and illogical in order to justify their bloodshed on the continent, mostly in the name of Africa's natural resources. While this film decries the reality of these colonial practices on the continent (most notably when King Leopold's Congo travesties are mentioned), Vandy's comments strangely reaffirm the idea of the civilizing mission.

In the same conversation, Vandy introduces a notion of TIA as used by black Africans. Vandy tells Archer, "I know good people who say there is something wrong with us inside our black skin. That we were better off when the white man ruled" (Zwick 2006). This brand of Afropessimism as used by a black character is problematic for a number of reasons. Namely, the problem lies in the gaze. Like *Last King*, the story of *Blood Diamond* is told through Archer's white gaze. Western audiences are comfortable with the white male gaze on black Africa – it has suited Hollywood audiences for decades. Variations of TIA have been used by black Africans for time immemorial, however, its use by a black African in a performance constructed by Hollywood for a Western audience suggests that not only do white Westerners pity the black victims of African catastrophe, but black Africans pity themselves as well; even proposing that they were better off "when the white man ruled." In this instance, the white gaze provides a specific

cultural context and meaning to the use of TIA by a black character. Whatever TIA has meant among black Africans falls beyond the scope of this project but nonetheless is greatly different from what TIA means in this context. This is yet another example of a TIA component in *Blood Diamond*; the implication that blacks also believe in their own inferiority; that black Africans concede their own doomed fates.

Despite Archer's desperate desire to assert his difference from his black African surroundings, it is exactly this notion of black TIA that he uses to achieve a sense of belonging. As mentioned in the previous chapter, TIA is a fragile combination of intimacy and difference. Present in the Self/Other dichotomy is an underlying desire to be like the Other; to be intimate with the Other. For Archer, to be included in practices of the Other is about finding some peace with his origins. In an early scene, when he first meets Bowen at a bar in Sierra Leone's capital city of Freetown, Archer verbalizes his desire to share in Afropessimism. Archer tells Bowen:

“The Peace Corps-types only stay around long enough to realize they're not helping anyone, the government only wants to stay in power until they've stolen enough to go into exile somewhere else, and the rebels, they're not sure they want to take over otherwise they'd have to govern this mess, but TIA... This is Africa” (Zwick 2006).

Archer's pessimism is affirmed by the Sierra Leonean bartender (Ntare Mwine) who agrees with him by repeating the statement, “This is Africa” to Bowen. The bartender's approval of Archer's comments marks an important element of TIA as used by a white

character: intimacy. Much like Garrigan's quest for intimacy with power in his use of the phrase, Archer seeks an intimacy with Africa, his home.

However, the racialization of male whiteness in a largely black country limits Archer's quest for intimacy; he is of the soil but cannot quite share the identity of the majority. He realizes that he can never be fully accepted into black Africa because of his white privilege. The bartender who had previously supported Archer's pessimistic comments on Africa later demonstrates that Archer's whiteness still sets them apart. After briefly discussing the RUF's approach to Freetown, Archer tells the bartender that it might be time for him to get his family out of the city (Zwick 2006). To this, the bartender responds, "And go where? Just fire-up the chopper and fly away like you people? This is my country, man. We were here long before you came, long after you're gone" (Zwick 2006). The bartender is placing the dichotomy between himself, a countryman, and Archer, an outsider in a broader historical context of colonized and colonizer. The colonized were there long before the colonizer came, and will be there long after the colonizer is gone. These comments foreshadow Archer's final revelation that he finds a home in Africa (discussed later).

Despite Archer's ability to come and go as he pleases, dominant discourse on race and power views Archer's whiteness as having limited influence. Compared to Bowen's Americanness, Archer's Southern African identity is a subjugated one. He knows that her power on the continent exceeds his. Archer tells Vandy, "I know people! White people! Without me, you're just another black man in Africa!" (Zwick 2006). Archer understands

that it is not he alone who can aid Vandy in the search for his family; he must rely on Bowen's superior resources as an American journalist to find them. Archer states that without him, Vandy is just another black man in Africa, but in a sense he also knows that without Bowen, he is just another white mercenary in Africa; unable to affect real change. Since Archer expresses knowledge of his limited access to power, it is necessary for him to assert to Bowen that he knows what it is like in Africa. Archer takes pleasure in expressing an intimate knowledge of Afropessimism – an intimacy that Bowen could not possibly attain in her short stay on the continent. The knowledge Archer accesses and subsequent endorsement by the black African bartender creates a position in which he can contend not only with Bowen's powerful whiteness, but also with his own struggle of what it is to be a white African in a postcolonial moment.

Archer's pessimism and internal struggle with his white Africaness is represented in the red soil motif. In one of the film's pivotal scenes, we are introduced to the trope of Africa's red soil that reappears throughout the film. As an element of *mise-en-scène*, soil symbolizes that which gives nutrients and life. The soil has given Archer his life but he struggles against it because of the horror he has suffered in Africa. When Archer visits his white boss, Colonel Coetzee (Arnold Vosloo) in South Africa, Coetzee takes him out to his grape vineyard and asks him to kneel down close to the ground. Coetzee picks up a handful of the red dirt and tells Archer, "This red earth, it's in our skin. The Shona say the color comes from all the blood that's been spilled fighting over the land"²³. This is

²³ While outside the scope of this project, it is still important to note that director, Edward Zwick can be heard in the director's commentary saying that the screenwriters of *Blood Diamond* likely fabricated this Shona saying. He says, "Truth be known, I'm not really

home; you'll never leave Africa" (Zwick 2006). This is a moment that marks time's progression and Africa's inability to move forward with time.

The Shona's saying suggests an ancient origin of Afropessimism (because the trope of the African tribe in Hollywood relates ideas of ancient/timeless practices and traditions). Archer is of the ancient African soil and has partaken in its bloodshed, when Coetzee tells Archer, "you'll never leave Africa," he is essentializing Africa's timelessness, pessimism, and bloodshed. Ultimately too, Coetzee is foreshadowing Archer's death on African soil – he in fact never leaves Africa. However, this idea of a traditional African saying somehow being married to Archer's struggle with white Africaness and subsequent Afropessimism is as much of a colonialist assumption as it is wholly incorrect. Coetzee's words suggest that the Shona had a sense of Afropessimism. The bloodshed on the soil and the age-old saying that Coetzee gives to Archer to make him see that he is of the land proposes that the Shona's pessimism is somehow linked to Archer's internal struggle. However, far from being intricately linked, the two ideas do not even operate within the same discursive formations. For the Shona, indigenous thought did not have the discursive categories: "Africa" or "Africans," therefore Afropessimism simply did not exist. Coetzee snatches the Shona saying and reshapes it to incorporate it into TIA/Afropessimism discourse.

"Discursive capturing" (Garuba 2002) occurred frequently during the colonization of Africa. In his study of colonial and postcolonial geographies in Chinua Achebe's novel,

sure there is a Shona myth that says this about the blood being spilled over the land and makes it red. I think that's a little bit of a writerly fancy that I indulged in" (Zwick 2006).

Arrow of God (1964), Harry Garuba describes how native knowledges came to be captured and overwritten by a new colonial discursive regime:

The fluidity and ambiguity of native notions of land ownership and property had to be replaced with the fixity and certainty of European concepts. To put it in another way, the dynamic orality of traditional concepts of land and ownership must be replaced by the stasis of the written document; and this, not because the old ideas have failed but because a new discursive regime is being put in place (2002:98).

The “new discursive regime” imposed itself on an indigenous population with no concept of rigid written documents detailing land ownership. In much the same way, TIA discourse imposes itself on an indigenous saying that when manufactured, did not have a concept of a doomed Africa. Coetzee incorporates the traditional saying into TIA discourse to access some sense of belonging to the land as the indigenous Shona surely do. This is the same method of ‘extraction’, so-to-speak, that Archer uses when he employs TIA to access a sense of belonging in Africa. Both techniques work to assimilate 21st century Afropessimism into white popular thought by way of Archer’s strategic location within the narrative.

Archer’s eventual transcendence and peace is represented through the red African soil when it appears again at his death. As discussed in the previous chapter, internal transcendence is paramount to the white colonial adventurer’s character development. As much as the colonial adventure film is about the hero setting out to conquer a space, it is also about conquering the perils of his own mind - to rise above the rest in intellectual

and bodily strength. The recognition of black African tradition (or saying) in the narrative construction of white transcendence is essential to an understanding of TIA in *Last King* and *Blood Diamond*. The African tradition in *Last King* of suspending Garrigan in the air with hooks sunk into his chest is connected to Archer's transcendence through the trope of red African soil with the indigenous Shona saying as the backdrop; both 'discursively capture' black African traditions for their transformations.

In the last quarter of the film, through another series of routine gunfire and explosions, Vandy and Archer find Vandy's son and reclaim the diamond. Having been shot in the side during the crossfire, Archer struggles to make it up a ridge to escape on the airplane that first dropped him off in the beginning of the film. Archer's breathing becomes more and more laborious as Vandy carries him over his shoulder. Finally, deciding that he cannot continue the journey, Archer retires to the ground and props himself up on a rock. He unwraps the diamond from the cloth and holds it between his fingers. His face becomes soft and he laughs at the little stone he has sacrificed his life for. Archer gives Vandy the diamond saying, "No more, no more" (Zwick 2006). Like Dr. Junju in *Last King*, Vandy offers to save Archer by carrying him the rest of the way. However, Archer has been transformed through their journey, he is now concerned for Vandy and Dia's safety; he refuses Vandy's offer and tells him, "You take your boy home" (Zwick 2006). In the last exhibition of his machismo, Archer, now barely able to breathe, snipes and kills gunmen as Vandy and Dia continue to the airplane. Archer has not only facilitated the reclaiming of Vandy's diamond, but he has also facilitated their escape from Sierra Leone, giving Vandy his handgun and Bowen's contact information for assistance on

what to do once he has left the country with the stone. Archer turns to Bowen to provide the resources required for Vandy to sell the diamond and regain the rest of his family. From his dying place on the hillside, Archer calls Bowen on a mobile satellite phone and concedes that he is really happy he has met her (Zwick 2006). When Bowen asks where he is, Archer responds, “I’m looking at an incredible view right now (rolling green mountains and blue sky)... I’m exactly where I’m supposed to be” (Zwick 2006). He hangs up and the camera cuts to a shot of blood dripping from Archer’s hand onto the soil, coloring it red. Archer picks up a handful of the red earth and studying it with his eyes, rolls it between his fingers. A slow piano composition starts playing creating a sense of harmony. The camera cuts to a wide-angle shot of Archer on the hillside. The soft light of the setting sun falls on his final resting place generating a feeling of peace and comfort. He closes his eyes, leans his head back and he is gone. The next shot is of the white airplane Archer rode in on flying away into the sunset – he has missed his departure; Africa is his final resting place. Garrigan left the continent a scarred man, and Archer will ‘leave’ at peace with his Africaness.

In this chapter I have demonstrated that the “strategic location” (Said 1978:20) of Danny Archer in *Blood Diamond* supports TIA discourse. His position as an outsider, most notably identified by his bound/built body, situates him in a Self/Other dichotomy with his black African surroundings. He employs TIA discourse to obtain a sense of intimacy with Africa, the place of his birth. He essentializes Africa as hopeless and struggles to accept it as his home. The discourses of TIA and Afropessimism acquire great mass and referential power in this film. Like *The Last King*, *Blood Diamond* also sits comfortably

among a host of previous Hollywood films that have represented black Africa as backwards and savage. More so, this film contributes to an ongoing dialogue about Africa in Hollywood that situates African conflict on the forefront of entertainment for Western, largely United States, audiences. This “strategic formation” (Said 1978:20) of socially conscious Hollywood films invites white heterosexual males like Archer to explore the moral aptitude of Western audiences. The next chapter resubmits the theories of TIA discourse I have put forth and concludes my intervention.

University Of Cape Town

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Colonial Desire

The Last Kind of Scotland (2006) and *Blood Diamond* (2006) employ a colonialist mode of hierarchical racial representations. The white-man-in-Africa narrative has taken many forms since Hollywood's inception, always remaining loyal to the colonialist assumption of white superiority. African settings in Hollywood narratives have remained a playground for white, typically heterosexual males to explore not only the range of their physical talents, but more importantly, a space in which their intellectual capacity could also be explored, challenged, and expanded. Our protagonists, Dr. Garrigan and Danny Archer fit neatly into this colonialist template. They set out to challenge black Africa and subsequently black Africa challenged them.

Dr. Garrigan found himself in a position of limited power among Uganda's elite class. His access to that power gave him a sense of pleasure that he could never have achieved in his native Scotland. He used TIA to hold on to the pleasure of that power. However, as the thrills of life in black Africa were revealed to be merely a farce in Idi Amin's reign of terror, Garrigan experienced a great displeasure. Black Africa had swallowed him. He was a pawn in a power game that he was not aware was being played. Thus he was challenged to 'rise above', or transcend black Africa and he succeeded in doing so in the film's final scenes. Garrigan's strategic location within TIA discourse gives great referential power to broader colonial discourse. The mise-en-scène element of lighting on

his blue eyes and the image of Christian crucifixion relay heavily that whiteness remains the dominant ideology in representations of Africa in the West.

Archer's bodily strength and training as a South African mercenary garnered him a physical superiority that he used to navigate the dark jungle and city streets of a war-torn Sierra Leone. Archer's quest for intimacy is veiled in denial of origin. He does not cross the boundary, rather maintains his distance from those around him. His bound/built body distinguishes him from his black African surroundings. However, he still lays claim to the idea of Africa. He says, "People here kill each other as a way of life, it's always been like that" (Zwick 2006). Archer's transformation from a man resentful of his African origins to a man finally at peace with his African identity is greatly influenced by his strategic location within popular colonial discourse in the sense that no white man can leave the continent without having undergone significant change.

TIA in these films relies heavily on epistemological notions of Afropessimism, but when accessed by white colonial subjects, they suggest a sort of intimacy and ownership of that which is specifically black African. The 'reappropriation' of Afropessimism is a part of the complex dynamics of "colonial desire." Gail Ching-Liang Low says that

the complex dynamics of colonial desire and power which lie behind the persistent need to reappropriate the libidinous spaces imputed to non-Western cultures. Colonial subjectivities produced by the powerful divisions of self and Other seem paradoxically to be dogged by a relentless nostalgia and desire for the excluded Others. This is apparent in the fascination with 'native' culture and, particularly, with 'going native' even when the 'demarcating imperative' of colonialism aims to divide 'white' from 'black', colonizers from colonized (1996:3).

While both films are committed to essentializing the differences between white characters and black Africa, there is also a particular fascination with the Other. The modalities of this fascination in these films are mimicry and discursive capture – the same methods employed during colonialism. TIA in *The Last King of Scotland* and *Blood Diamond* is an expression of intimacy and ownership while still maintaining distance by differentiation. The boundary between that which is expressly white and that which is black remains intact. As Low says of Kipling and Haggard's identifications with the Other in India and Africa, these representations mirror the complex, contradictory, and ambivalent narrative of colonialism (1996:268).

Works cited

Adhikari, M. (2007) "Hotel Rwanda: Too Much Heroism, Too Little History – or Horror?" in *Black and White in Color: African History on Screen*, Vivian Bickford-Smith and Richard Mendelson (eds.), Oxford: James Currey; Athens: Ohio University Press; Cape Town: Double Storey, pgs. 279-299

Africa's Media Image (1992) Beverly G. Hawk (ed.), Praeger Publishers

Bhabha, H. K. (Spring 1984) "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse" in *The MIT Press, Discipleship: A Special Issue on Psychoanalysis*, vol. 28, pgs. 125-133

--- (1994) *The Location of Culture*, New York: Routledge

Bickford-Smith, V. (5-8 July 2001) "Screening Saints and Sinners: a brief exploration into the construction and diffusion of filmic and video images of black and white South Africans in Western popular culture c.1975-1989" Paper presented at *The Burden of Race? 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness' in Modern South Africa conference, Johannesburg*

Black and White in Color: African History on Screen (2007), Vivian Bickford-Smith and Richard Mendelsohn (eds.), Oxford: James Currey; Athens: Ohio University Press; Cape Town: Double Storey

Bickford-Smith, V. and Mendelsohn, R. (May 2003) "Film and History Studies in South Africa Revisited: Representing the African Past on Screen" in *South African Historical Journal*, issue 48, pgs.1-9

Bickford-Smith, V. (May 2003) "Reviewing Hollywood's Apartheid: *Cry Freedom* (1987) and *Dry White Season* (1989)" in *South African Historical Journal*, issue 48, pgs. 23-34

Bowles, S. (28 September 2006) "Films Find Heart in Africa" *USA Today*

Calhoun, D. (February 2007) "White Guides, Black Pain" in *Sight & Sound*, vol.17, issue 2, pgs. 32-35

Cameron, K. M. (1994) *Africa on Film: Beyond Black and White*, New York: Continuum

Ching-Liang Low, G. (1996) *White Skins/Black Masks: Representation and Colonialism*, New York: Routledge

Chocano, C. (27 September 2006) "Movie Review: 'Last King of Scotland': Forest Whitaker Portrays Ugandan Dictator Idi Amin, Gillian Anderson and James McAvoy

Costar” in *Los Angeles Times*, <http://www.calendarlive.com>. Accessed 10 September 2009

Dargis, M. (27 September 2006) “An Innocent Abroad, Seduced by a Madman” in *The New York Times*, <http://movies.nytimes.com/2006/09/27/movies/27king.html>. Accessed 10 September 2009

Davis, P. (1996) *In Darkest Hollywood: Exploring the Jungles of Cinema's South Africa*, Ohio University Press

Diawara, M. (1993) “Black American Cinema: The New Realism” in *Black American Cinema*, Manthia Diawara (ed.), London: Routledge, New York: Routledge

--- (1998) “Toward a Regional Imaginary in Africa” in *The Culture of Globalization*, Jameson, Fredric & Miyoshi, Masao (eds.), Duke University Press, pgs. 103-124

Denby, D. (02 October 2006) “The Current Cinema: Power Players: ‘*All the King's Men*’ and ‘*The Last King of Scotland*’” in *The New Yorker*, http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/10/02/061002crci_cinema? Accessed 10 September 2009.

Dunn, K. (April 1996) “Lights... Camera... Africa: Images of Africa in Western Popular Films of the 1930s” in *African Studies Review*, vol.39, no. 1, published by African Studies Association, pgs. 149-175

Dyer, R. (1993) *The Matter of Images: Essays on Representations*, London: Routledge, New York: Routledge

--- (1997) *White*, London: Routledge, New York: Routledge

The Economist, (03 February 2007) “Africa on Film: The Continent's Celluloid Moment,” vol. 382, Issue 8514, pgs. 50-50

Echevarria, V. (May 2008) “Hollywood Comes to Africa” in *New African*, Issue 473, pgs. 60-62

Ekeh, P. (1997) “European Imperialism and the Ibadan School of History,” in *Problematizing History and Agency: From Nationalism to Subalternity*, State University of New York at Buffalo, pgs. 1-60

Erasmus, Z. (2008) “Race” in *The New South African Keywords* (eds.) Nick Shepherd, Steven Robin, Athens: Ohio University Press; Johannesburg: Jacana Media, pgs. 169-181

Fanon, F. (1986) *Black Skin, White Mask*, London: Pluto

Garuba, H. (2002) "Mapping the Land/Body/Subject: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies in African Narrative" in *Alternation* 9.1, pgs. 87-116

--- (October 2008) "Race in Africa: Four Epigraphs and a Commentary" in *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. 123, No. 5, pgs. 1640-1648

Garuba, H. and Himmelman, N. (2009) "The Cited and the Uncited: Towards an Emancipatory Reading of Representations of Africa in Recent Hollywood Films," TS

Gberie, L. (May 2007) "When the Spinning Stops" in *New African*, Issue 462, pgs. 140-141

Gibbs, J. (2002) *Mise-en-scène: Film Style and Interpretation*, London: Wallflower Press

Gilroy, P. (1987) *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, London: Hutchinson

Guerrero, E. (1993) "The Black Image in Protective Custody: Hollywood's Biracial Buddy Films of the Eighties" in *Black American Cinema*, Manthia Diawara (ed.), London: Routledge, New York: Routledge

Gugler, J. (2003) *African Film: Re-Imagining a Continent*, Oxford: James Currey; Bloomington: Indiana University Press; Cape Town: David Philip

Hall, S. (1990) "The Whites of Their Eyes" in *The Media Reader* (eds.) Manuel Alvarado, John O. Thompson, London: BFI Publishing, pgs. 7-23

--- (1996) "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" in *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, Padmini Mongia (ed.), Hodder Arnold Publication, pgs. 110-121

Henderson, C. (Winter 2002) "'When Hearts Beat Like Native Drums:' Music and the Sexual Dimensions of the Notions of 'Savage' and 'Civilized' in *Tarzan and His Mate*, 1934" in *Africa Today*, vol.48, issue 4, pgs.90-124

Himmelman N. and Wildman, K. (2009) "(Product)Red: A New Brand of Afropessimism?," TS

Hollar, J. (May/June 2007) "Bono, I Presume?" in *Extra!*, vol. 20, Issue 3, pgs. 21-25

hooks, b. (1990) *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*, South End Press

--- (1994) *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations*, London: Routledge, New York: Routledge

Jafaar, A. (13-19 November 2006) "Hollywood Hears Africa's Call: Improved conditions, gripping tales fuel moviemaking boom" in *Variety*, pgs. A1 and A6

Jowett, G. (winter 1992) "Hollywood Discovers Apartheid: The Depiction of White South Africans in Recent American Films" in *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, vol.19, issue 4, pgs. 172-179

Julien, E. (1999) "Visible Woman; or, A Semester among the Great Books" in *Profession 1999*, Modern Language Association of America, pgs. 225-235

--- (2009) "Now You See It, Now You Don't: Josephine Baker's Films and the Problem of Color" in *Black Europe and the African Diaspora*, Darlene Clark Hine, Trica Danielle Keaton, and Stephen Small (eds.), Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, pgs. 48-62

Lindfors, B. (1999) *Africans on Stage*, Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press; Cape Town: David Phillip

Lowry, B. (30 November 2006) "Film Review: *Blood Diamond*" in *Variety* http://www.variety.com/index.asp?layout=print_review&reviewid=VE1117932223&categoryid=31, Accessed 10 September 2009

Magubane, Z. (2008) "The (Product) Red Man's Burden: Charity, Celebrity, and the Contradictions of Coevalness" in *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol.2, vol.6, pgs. 102.1-102.24

Mamdani, M. (2009) *Saviours and Survivors: Darfur, Politics, and the War on Terror*, Pantheon Books

Mayer, R. (2002) *Artificial Africas: Colonial Images in the Times of Globalization*, University Press of New England

Mbembe, A. (2001) *On the Postcolony*, Berkeley: University of California Press; London: University of California Press

Mudimbe, V.Y. (1988) *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Ndahiro, A. and Rutazibwa, P. (2008) *Hotel Rwanda: Or the Tutsi Genocide as Seen by Hollywood*, L'Harmattan

Ngugi, N. (June 2003) "Presenting and (mis)Representing History in Fiction Film: Sembène's *Camp de Thiaroye* and Attenborough's *Cry Freedom*" in *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, vol.16, No.1, pgs.57-68

Onipede, O. (1974) "Hollywood's Holy War on Africa" in *Africa on Film: Myth and Reality*, Richard Maynard (ed.), Hayden Book Company, Inc., pgs. 72-74

Patterson, L. (1974) "In Movies, Whitey is Still King" in *Africa on Film: Myth and Reality*, Richard Maynard (ed.), Hayden Book Company, Inc., pgs. 75-80

Pedersen, M. (2009) "'Bling bang': diamonds for dummies: *Blood Diamond*, Directed by Edward Zwick (2006)" in *Journal of African Media Studies*, vol. 1 No. 1, pgs. 181-185

Pfaff, F. (1981-82) "Hollywood's Image of Africa" in *Commonwealth Essays and Studies*, vol.5, pgs. 97-116

--- (2004) *Focus on African Film*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Poniewozik, J. (19 December 2005) "The Year of Chairitainment" in *Time Magazine*, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1142281-2,00.html>, Accessed 10 September 2009

Ransby, B. (February 2007) "In DiCaprio's Africa" in *New African*, issue 459, pgs. 60-61

Schwarzbaum, L. (06 September 2006) "Movie Review: *Blood Diamond* (2006)" in *Entertainment Weekly* <http://www.ew.com/ew/>, Accessed 10 September 2009

--- (27 September 2006) "Movie Review: *The Last King of Scotland* (2006)" in *Entertainment Weekly* <http://www.ew.com/ew/>, Accessed 10 September 2009

Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism*, Peregrine Books

Spurr, D. (1993) *Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, Duke University Press

Stam, R. and Spence, L. (March/April 1983) "Colonialism, Racism and Representation" in *Screen*, vol.24, issue 2, pgs. 2-20

Stein, R. (06 October 2006) "Whitaker Mines Amin's Heart of Darkness in 'King'" in *San Francisco Chronicle* <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2006/10/06/DDG97LHNJA1.DTL>. Accessed 10 September 2009

Tlelima, T. (September 2007) "Hollywood's Depiction of Africa: Opinion" in *Screen Africa*, vol.19, pg. 42

Travers, P. (December 28, 2006) "Film Review: *Blood Diamond*" in *Rolling Stone*, Issue 1016/1017, pg. 121

Vonder Haar, P. (10 December 2006) "Film Review: *Blood Diamond*," *Filmthreat*, <http://www.filmthreat.com>. Accessed 10 September 2009

Voynar, K. (03 September 2006) *The Last King of Scotland* in *Telluride Review* <http://www.cinematical.com/2006/09/03telluride-review-the-last-king-of-scotland>. Accessed 10 September 2009

Zezeza, P. (07 February 2007) “Angelina Jolie Discovers Africa”,
www.Africasource.com,
http://www.africasource.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&i=144:angelina-jolie-discovers-africa&catid=36:essays-a-discussions&Itemid=346. Accessed 01
October 2009

University Of Cape Town