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**(Re)Presentations of 'Africa' in
British media; with a particular
focus on television in the United
Kingdom.**

Edem Kudzoe Kuenyehia

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements of The Nottingham Trent
University for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy**

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(Re)Presentations of 'Africa' in the British Media; with a particular focus on television in the United Kingdom

By Edem Kudzoe Kuenyehia

Abstract

This study is a particular enquiry into a Western medium's representations of Africa. It is an examination of constructions of 'Africa', occurring especially on contemporary British television. It explores contemporary British television programmes, employing a modified content analysis for an assessment of the appearance of Africa as well as performing qualitative scrutiny - a critical reading of television discourses on Africa. It seeks out dominant thematic discourses and patterns of representation to establish how 'Africa' is constructed and construed through these prominent discursive frameworks. More interestingly and uniquely, it attempts this analysis using a cross-genre approach that does not limit the framing discourses to factual programmes only but includes all programmes. Furthermore, it breaks new grounds in the application of a postcolonial critical approach to television content. It adopts a canon-questioning perspective, unravelling covert factors at play in the media's selection and structuring, the prevalence of dominant themes, the power dichotomies influencing the Othering and the subjugation of the unfamiliar.

Positioned within that postcolonial ambit, the thesis draws on the disciplines of Anthropology, International Communication and Media Studies, Cultural Studies, English, Linguistics and Literary Studies, drawing from these, aspects of analytical scrutiny and interrogation that are triggered by the representations found in the medium of popular television. It shows how discourses, language, silences and absences construct a continent and concept out of 'Africa'.

Arguments in this thesis also point towards a constructed sub-text around the reference 'Africa', paralleling Edward Said's theories on Orientalism. This thesis locates the sharpest positioning of Africa as the domain of nature, as the realm of the problematic, and as a singularised homogenized space and the silent impressionable site of external gazes. The roots and implications of this fashioning - neo-colonial and neo-imperial - are also considered.

Uniquely, the thesis' approach to television material, from a postcolonial critical perspective, moves the predominantly textually based politics of the postcolonial into the audiovisual and the mass media. The interaction of interdisciplinary approaches allows a close study of particular cultural hegemonies, at the international level.

Dedication

*To Agbeli and Margaret Kuenyehia
& to Elorm, Eyram, Makafui and Ayebia Kuenyehia*

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I am very grateful to my family, for all their dedication, support, prayers and sacrifices. Thanks for coping with my absence for so long. Many thanks to Gordon Hildreth, for patiently and diligently recording so many programmes, assisting with logistics, and the immeasurable support from start to finish.

Many thanks to my supervisor, Prof Richard Johnson, to whom I remain indebted for his personal dedication and commitment, whose retirement at the end of this thesis leaves a chasm in academia and dedicated university teaching.

Most profound thanks to my many loyal and supportive friends – Paolo Galizzi, Mattias Athley, Stephen Girvin, Santiago Echaniz, Stuart Burch, Patrick & Margaret Akar, Irene, Tim and Ralph for all the support and encouragements. That's friendship in the true sense of the word. Thanks to Simon for reading through final versions at the last minute.

Finally, I would like to show my appreciation to all unmentioned, who have contributed, in one way or the other, in my seemingly eternal quest for knowledge, to raise a voice and so be heard. Here is a voice for every one of you. Thanks for the amazing generosity towards this huge 'self-funded' mission.

Thank God for all of you.

Where there is tiredness, or exhaustion, we wish you understanding,
patience, and renewed strength.

Where there is fear, we wish you love, and courage.

And where there is fairness, equality and respect, we wish you happiness and fulfilment.

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Introduction

This thesis explores the extent and quality of representations of 'Africa' on British television. It also, however, seeks to innovate in terms of method and approach. It was conceived first within the framework of critical international communication studies.¹ This is an approach to the media that draws upon social scientific methods and epistemologies. The approach focuses on the inequalities both in terms of control and the sources of production between centre and periphery, from a perspective of political economy. I draw upon this tradition, but also explore its limits. Accordingly, the thesis moves, like the research itself, into a fuller engagement with critical theory and forms of textual and contextual analysis, drawing on cultural studies and literary-historical traditions, including a contemporary debate on the 'postcolonial'.

¹ For a review of this tradition see Mattelart and Mattelart (1998). Classic texts include the works by Schiller, Herbert (1969, 1976, 1989) McLuhan, Marshall (1962, 1964) Mattelart, Armand (1974, 1976). These were all influenced by the Marxism of the Frankfurt School and their critique of the 'culture industry'. These emphases were taken up, primarily, by scholars in the United States in the 50's and early 60's, including Dwight MacDonald (e.g. 1963), Edward Shils (e.g. 1960) and Daniel Bell (e.g. 1962). For a recent typical selection see Downing, J, et al (1995).

One way of illustrating the difference is my own changing approach to the key term 'Africa' itself. Initially I conceived Africa straightforwardly, as a geo-political designation, a continent marked by great diversity – cultural, political and physical. The topic 'Africa' was empirically obvious. As I became interested in 'Africa' as a discursive or cultural production my approach came nearer to Edward Said's (1978) conception of the Orient. The Orient is an imaginary space with much more fluid and uncertain boundaries, primarily produced by Western discourses but not exclusively, and having an effect on the actual sites and peoples evoked. As I discuss later in Chapter 2, on Methodology, I have tried to bring together the realism of critical communication studies and the stress on the cultural construction, which is a feature of contemporary critical theories. I wish to hold onto a view of a 'real' Africa, a definite physical space, with its own diverse peoples, histories, nations and cultures. A key question for this thesis is whether this Africa is misrepresented or under-represented in British media.

The starting point of this study was therefore work on the representations of 'Third World'² countries to Western audiences. Perhaps the most prominent contribution to debates surrounding issues of international communication to domestic audiences was the commissioning of UNESCO's enquiry into

² The designation 'Third World' has been a very contentious term and has gradually diminished in use. It has been effectively replaced by 'developing world' or 'developing countries'. The classification 'underdeveloped' is also on the decline, much slower in political economy than in other fields.

world communication affairs³. The eventual publication of the MacBride Report (1980), which aimed at drawing attention to inequalities in 'international communication', brought the topic of the advantaged status of the West, over 'its Others', to the attention of more people than ever before. Although this particular report concentrated on the unequal distribution of news between the nations in the North and South, the profile of the report served to put the issue of imbalances in information flow between the West and the rest of the world back on the agenda of issues in international communication studies. It marked a surge in critical debates in international communication studies that have since continued (e.g. Cleasby: 1995, Garnham: 1990, Hamelink, C. J.: 1995, Morley and Robbins: 1995, Sreberny-Mohammadi: 1995). The approach of these deliberations into the representations of the Other in the West have followed an epistemology that is principally social science based. They have explored the politics and policies that encourage some formations of the new world order and the communication about the Other. The perspectives of these studies are primarily drawn from political economy, with an emphasis on ownership, monopoly, neo-liberal deregulation, capitalist dynamics, new technologies, and often, American ownership of the mass media. Though there are some analyses of media messages, this has mainly been in terms of measurable content, though in later work there is some sign of the breaking

³ This UNESCO sponsored enquiry raised a number of concerns and recommendations that eventually led to the publication - *Many Voices One World*, MacBride (1980).

down of the distinctions between political economy, media sociology and close cultural analysis (e.g. Morley and Robbins, 1995; Ross, 1996).

The interdisciplinarity of my own focus is glaring, as the politics of the arguments leads my investigation across the disciplines – instead of beginning in a boundaried discipline, and relating rigidly across to another discipline. The interrogations here have been allowed free access into disciplines that the issues arising from the study relate to. I am reined in more by the postcolonial ethos that supports my interrogations, just as feminism, a political commitment, provides grounding for a range of other studies and interpretative perspectives. Thus, the analysis and the arguments are didactically led not by the terms of the discipline but by the issues raised in the research. Nicholas Thomas's (1999:263) supposition, that a good deal of research is not ordered by 'intellectual lineages, methodologies, modes of address and audiences' but arising from political commitments (to feminism, for example) that are neither contained by disciplines nor constitutive of any disciplines', rings very true from my own experience.

In this thesis, I have aimed to ascertain Africa's presence on British television. How prevalent is Africa on British television? To some extent this can be measured using methods drawn from communication studies as described in Chapter 2. In the main chapters of the thesis, however, I look

in detail at the ways in which Africa is constructed. I have posed questions such as, what content, and in what contexts does British television locate Africa for its audiences – in other words, what are the components, the narratives and the underlying stories that frame the core content of discourses and engagements with the general mention of ‘Africa’? What are the underlying stories about Africa that British television tell us? What range of values does the discourse of Africa legitimise?

This mode of questioning has involved the use of a cultural studies method. I have extended the international communication enquiry with a set of critical analytical approaches that include, semiotic, linguistic and literary methods. At the same time, I have maintained a close eye on the question: ‘does Africa get a representation fair to its “actuality”?’ All these questions come into the frame of investigation, into the nature of the representations of Africa on British television – an interrogation which draws not only a shared political agenda with international political economy and critical communication studies, but also on cultural studies methodologies and postcolonial questioning.

The aforementioned significant questions direct the significance and map the arguments in this thesis. What I provide in this thesis, is not simply a documentation of Africa’s negative media image globally – this is almost, a readily agreeable argument (e.g. Hawk, 1992; Hagos, 2003) – but to take

the debate further, locating, extended discursive fields that surround, contribute to, and enable the fashioning and framing of particular fields and concepts around the sign 'Africa' on British television. I have also focussed particularly on discourses in British television programmes as a particular area within which to explore the popular and mass circulated 'Africa's.

Exploring all Western media for the representations of Africa is an interesting but much larger project, requiring resources far greater than required for my focus here. British television provides a narrower focus and closer examination of these representations. I provide, in Chapter 2, full justifications for the choice of television as the medium of study, which includes the multi-genre, multi-media character of television itself. Specifying the United Kingdom also aids in the contextualisation of a particular history of relationship and representational history, as well as world or global implications of the new political economy.

The thesis opens in the first two chapters by framing the study – the first in terms of theory, and the second in terms of method.

Chapter 1 delves theoretically into three terms forming a triangle within which the politics of these arguments are framed. I seek to clarify and specify meanings of *culture*, *representation* and the *postcolonial* as far as these relate to the contexts of television discourse about Africa in Britain.

These terms are widely used in Humanities debates and the theorisation in Chapter 1 is aimed at clarifying and contextualising these issues as they have been employed in the interpretative focus of the thesis. It is also the first step in extending the thesis from the Social Science platform into the field of Humanities. The long debate on culture is relevant to this thesis, because theories of culture inform, usually implicitly, representations of Africa. I also stress, the cultural contexts of representation throughout this thesis, the way in which the media draw continuously on a larger pool of implicit assumptions. The debate about representation is relevant because the different meanings of this term sum up the tension between constructionist approaches to the media and more realist or empiricist approaches. It provides an opportunity to develop my own position in relation to these issues. Postcolonial perspectives are an important framing context for the study as a whole, posing the issue of how far the discourses arising from the colonial persist or evolve in modern media. I return especially to these issues in my conclusion to this thesis.

Chapter 2 provides an account of methodology and presents some elements of the basic quantitative study. The rendition of methodology here includes a discussion of what I call the auto/ethnographical dialogue, which explores the Personal within the study, the origination of the topic and my dialogue on hybrid perspectives that frame the topic theoretically. It further incorporates an account and a justification of the quantitative and

qualitative analytical approaches employed in the study and of the ways they are combined. I show the uses, but also the limits, of a quantitative content analysis of the media, and the point at which it is necessary to draw on more literary, linguistic and cultural approaches. I explain and also justify some of the key choices made in the course of my research, including the method of sampling programmes. The combination of messages – image, sound and language is particularly distinctive of television and requires a particular method of analysis. Chapters 1 and 2 thus form the clarifying lead into the thesis.

In the next four chapters the core discussions on the representations of Africa take shape. The arrangement of the chapters has occurred primarily and principally from the dominant issues and themes that have featured in the results of the study. The key themes kept repeating themselves, reappearing, and hence have remained most prominent. These key chapters are structured as thematic blocks, reflecting the composition of the discourse on Africa on British television.

Chapter 3, 'Africa's Great Silence', leads the discussion with a linguistic-based analysis of narratives, narrators and characters. The key questions are who speaks about Africa, who is spoken of and who is the implied audience? It explores the implicit orderings and perspectives that work within the television narrative to organise the power-relations,

between the voiced and voiceless, the representer and the represented, arising from the way versions of Africa are delivered. These embedded orderings include; both blinkers and moulds, areas of blindness, and pre-formed assumptions of the narrators, that organise the shaping of the particular television output audiences receive.

Chapter 4, 'Gazing on Africa', strides into a nature and culture debate, clawing at the thematic constructs of nature, scientific constructs and debates about what amounts to a natural framing and constitution of Africa. Led by the theme of the wild, it is dedicated to the themes of nature and culture and works as an exposition into the prevalence of Nature discourses in relation to Africa. The dominant discourses of nature over culture, as evidenced by the overwhelming number of natural history programmes in the sample discussed and shown in Chapter 4, is argued here. How 'Africa' signifies in the context of nature is drawn in an analytic deconstruction of the nature-culture opposition in natural history programmes.

In 'Homogeneity', Chapter 5, I analyse the aspects of television discourses that create and endorse a homogenisation of 'Africa'. The chapter arises partly as a consequence of there being more generic references to 'Africa' than to countries or identities within Africa. It is as much a discussion about the lack of strong identifiers for the individual countries, cultures and communities within Africa, as it is a debate about the strong signifier found

in the single term 'Africa'. Drawing on a literary method, I have outlined some of these 'ways' of constructing Africa under the designation 'tropes of discourse'. Particular representational processes, which enable the configuration of a singularised entity or discursive field in 'Africa', are analysed.

The analytical discussions in Chapter 6 are pivoted on the theme of the 'problematic Africa'. The different strands of negative discourses that altogether encourage Africa's negative image are discussed – particularly the role of news in that development. I have worked at locating the various negativised factors that culminate in the representations of a problematic Africa, and how this image of the problematised place gains wide currency. Particularly important are images of victimhood, active misrule, violence, and the need for outside intervention.

In the concluding chapter, I bring together the different strands of thematic and ideological areas that have been dealt with in the core Chapters 3-6. I discuss the traces of some historical forms of representations of Africa or similar Others in Britain and make related arguments about continuities, variations and complete changes in the representational forms. I make arguments that contextualise the findings of this study amongst other ideologies and critical debates about how Africa is treated, and how other sites subordinate Africa.

I have also sought to provoke an interrogation of the characteristics of contemporary television representations in relation to postcolonial debates. Hitherto the postcolonial debate has mainly concerned literary texts approached in the form of a literary history (e.g. Bhabha, 1994; Said, 1978; Boehmer, 2002; and for parallel criticisms see Schwarz, 1996). This thesis extends the scope of some postcolonial arguments to a contemporary, audiovisual, technological and popular medium.

The particular colonial history of Africa and Britain is an unquestionable factor in the developing 'multicultural identity' of Britain. In the light of global contemporary debates on fairness, equality, recognition of cultural diversity and acceptance, 'modern representations of Africa' becomes a crucial enquiry. One way of posing these issues is to ask how far British television discourses resonate with a colonial discourse, or alternatively qualify to be termed 'postcolonial'. The discursive field within television is not a simple reflection of the wider cultural formation but it is in constant dialogue with it, selecting, re-interpreting and re-shaping. Representations of Africa on British television are relevant whether viewed by a White British audience, with no experience of Africa, from a Black British perspective or indeed an African one. Such representations feed into, or may correct, the inherited and new discourses around race, nation and multi-ethnicity.

Chapter 1 – (Re)presentations

- 1.1 Introduction
 - 1.1.1 Diversity in the Interpretation of 'Culture'
- 1.2 The Meanings of Culture
 - 1.2.1 Interpreting Culture: High Culture; Popular Culture; Whole Way of Life.
 - i. Culture as High Culture or The Civilizing Process:
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- 1.3 The Limits of 'Culture'
- 1.4 Re-present-(ative)-(ation)-(ional)
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 - 1.6.2. Representation as Interpretation – A Realist Consideration
- 1.7 Postcolonial: Untangling the Postcolonial Subject
 - 1.7.1 Identifying the Postcolonial
- 1.8 Postcolonialism: A Broader Perspective
- 1.9. When Post Doesn't Mean Past
- 1.10 Postcolonial Elements and the Orientalism of Edward Said
 - 1.10.1 Orientalism Towards an Africanism?
- 1.11 On a Concept of Hybridity
- 1.12 A Postcolonial Television?
- 1.13 Conclusions

Language itself is a highly organised and encoded medium, which employs many devices to express, indicate, exchange messages and information, represent, and so forth. In any instance of at least written language, there is no such thing as a delivered presence, but a *re-presence*, or a representation

Said, Edward (1995:21) *Orientalism*

1.1 Introduction

The practice of delineating meanings for particular uses of a word or words employed in academic texts is a useful exercise which limits confusions that may arise from some inter-textual referencing and cross-disciplinary arguments involving such words or terms. This chapter is strategically aimed at explicating any possible further complexities that might occur within the debates in this study, as a result of using some

widely familiar terms. The terminologies and the particular usages of three key terms: culture, representations and the postcolonial are thus defined here. I approach this *specifying process* by addressing the values and limits of each category in turn and by exploring the widespread and selective uses of 'culture', 'representation' and the 'postcolonial'. I aim at gaining an understanding of those usages that help in the overall analysis of television portrayal and the composition of the subject Africa¹. Furthermore, as this thesis generally engages with contestations about representation and misrepresentation, and about even unintended meanings or expressly constructed images, it is especially imperative to try to avoid ironically repeating them through acts of misguided communication.

Rowland Lorimer (1994) discusses the indeterminacy of representation by highlighting the salient points of representation, which are primarily concerned with 'rhetoric – how things are said – and hermeneutics – how things are interpreted – rather than with truth, value and reason'. The rhetorical 'force, in terms of the nature or style' of the representation, is a crucial catalyst to its reception. He is especially interested in

what it [representation] selects and how it re-presents or re-constructs, and what gives a particular representation its force, its ability to persuade, or its attractiveness.
(Lorimer, 1994: 187)

¹ A plethora of spellings or translations including *Afrika* or *Afrique* have all been incorporated and replaced by the English usage *Africa* for the particular investigations in this study. Moreover the focus of the study is about the unravelling of the sociolinguistic, geopolitical and cultural usages involving the term 'Africa' rather than on the singular linguistic and or historical derivations for the name/term.

Lorimer's points above rightly conceive that our choices and use of language and meaning are laden with selective and modifying actions aimed at generating and conveying our preferred meaning – a specific kind of representation. In pursuit of these selectivities, I discuss the keywords 'culture', 'representation' and 'postcolonial' in turn.

1.1.1 Diversity in the Interpretation of 'Culture'

In usages relevant to this thesis the term 'culture' is deployed in many different ways. It can be said, for example, that media representations are steeped in 'cultural contexts'. Thus a significant appreciation and understanding of any representation always requires a wealth of 'cultural material' employed in the construction and the reception of that representation. Similarly, the interpretations we give actions and behaviours of Others (British perceptions of Africa for instance) are essentially influenced by what we call the cultural context: what we are aware of, have experienced, and what ideas or what meanings we attribute to particular statements, objects and behaviours. Furthermore, 'cultural forms' often specific to its circumstances, it can be said, determines the way a people approach social living in any society. In specific social environments, culture can be taken along with history and the physical environment as a key influence on behaviour, culture being understood as the norms by which people live. Stuart Hall (1997) talks of the 'cultural turn' in the social and human sciences, especially cultural studies and the sociology of culture where the salience of culture is very

importantly emphasised. His preferred meaning here stresses the process, a set of social practices rather than things (see also Williams, 1988). In each of these contexts, is 'culture' itself referring to the same idea? And does culture mean the same in all academic disciplines?

Debates in this section are engineered to provide an overview of these different views of 'culture' as a route into the more particular questions of representations. Interpreting the meanings of 'culture' can help align and clarify the ways in which one social life and particular set of social attitudes regards other identified 'cultures' – as for example particular positions within the 'Metropolitan West' view particular aspects on the 'Southern fringe'.

1.2 The Meanings of Culture

1.2.1 Interpreting Culture: High Culture; Popular Culture; Whole way of Life.

'Culture' is perhaps one of the most notoriously difficult words to define easily and straightforwardly. This is primarily because it has attracted much critical attention over many intellectual interrogations and also because it has an extended disciplinary coverage, involving the labelling, distinguishing, classifying or identification of human and social groups. Increased sensitivity to the complexities surrounding the description and analysis of these human characteristics, behaviours and social

organisations has stretched out that sphere of analytical interrogations on 'culture'.

However, the major discussions of culture as a concept return again and again to three basic definitions. These are shared, for example, across Williams's discussion of the term in *Keywords*, Kroeber and Kluckhohn's classical cultural review from an Anthropological perspective and Stuart Hall's more contemporary cultural studies account (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952; Williams, 1988; Hall, 1997).

i. Culture as High Culture or The Civilizing Process:

From a traditional standpoint, 'culture' is explained as embodying 'the best that has been thought and said in a society' (the sum of great ideas, as for example, represented in classic works of literature, painting, music and philosophy), the 'high culture' of an age (Williams, 1981). It refers to a set of elevated achievements - the cream of a society's creativity. This definition is often affiliated to ideas on civilization and classical status. Ancient Greek and Roman culture gained this classic, high-cultural status, in Europe, for instance. To achieve identification as a 'cultural' item, within the traditional view, appears to require the lapse of time and a collation of the aspects of a community or society that are considered positive and worthy of preservation. Culture in this light works well by the existence of fewer elements and easier labelling and identification, but it also suggests an ordering and selection that is artificial and may not involve large sections of the community. Culture in that sense

excludes elements of distinctive social arrangements and characteristics and is reserved for the 'distinguished' aspects only.

In many ways this very evaluative view of culture reworks much older uses. In earlier uses of the term, 'culture' was associated on the one hand with cultivation – e.g. the cultivation of animals and crops – and on the other hand with religious worship – e.g. the cult. Philip Smith (2001) traces the metaphorical transfer of 'culture' from its uses with regards to agriculture and cultivation around the sixteenth century towards its much wider application to the development or improvement of the human mind through learning, in nineteenth century uses of the term. The improvement of the individual gradually shifted to an application to societal improvement and evidently leading on to 'culture's' acquisition of a synonymous relation to civilisation.

Smith (2001) sees the rise of romanticism in the industrial revolution as the catalyst giving, 'culture' newer designations of spiritual development alone, in contrast with material or infrastructural change applied at some point in time (Smith, 2001:1). Smith further argues (2001:2), restating Raymond Williams' *Keywords*, that these historical shifts have gradually been reflected in more modern uses of 'culture'.

Mathew Arnold, John Ruskin, and F. R. Leavis were among those aesthetes and literary critics who used culture to refer to works of 'high art' – conceived to be of important educational and edifying value to

people in contact with them. Within that scope of reference, Mathew Arnold is recalled in Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952:29) as defining culture as,

a pursuit of total perfection by means of getting to know the best, which has been thought and said in the world...culture is, or ought to be, the study of pursuit or perfection...sweetness and light... an inward condition of mind and spirit. (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952:29).

The German concept of 'kultur', Smith (2001) explains, draws from this theme by the comparative associations of culture and civilization through the determination of individual or collective progress.

These definitions have tended to be revised because they have been seen as elitist and value-laden in exclusive terms. If as Williams argues, culture is ordinary, and can be the product for example, of the social institutions of labour and other working class contexts, elite definitions act to police what counts and doesn't count as cultural. On the other hand, Williams in *Keywords* especially insists on keeping all definitions in play, including the civilizational because questions of value apply also to popular cultural forms. Smith agrees that high cultural discussions of what culture is, greatly limits cultural material to the powerful, the prominent and those validated by 'experts and dominant social groups' to the detriment of the subordinated groups (Smith, 2001:2).

These criticisms also apply with even greater force when comparisons and relations are made across countries or continents. Representations

of Africa have drawn on these older definitions of the 'cultural'. There is an implicit special criterion at work in terms like 'classical', 'worthwhile' and 'great'. Such terminology has historically excluded the art and culture of African countries, while the notion of culture and civilisation resonates with the opposition between the civilised and the primitive. We therefore always need to look for residual signs of the 'high culture' definitions at work in any representations of Africa. For example, a homogenised Africa may be represented as not only 'low culture', but not cultured at all. As we shall see, Africa is also represented in terms of the dichotomy nature/culture where the African tends to the side of nature. This dichotomy will be explored in detail in Chapter 4.

Magubane, B., (1971) tracks down some of the indices adopted in the assessment of Africans in early discourses. The 'acculturation', 'Westernisation' or 'Europeanization' demanded of the subjugated African was later widely discussed and questioned. But Magubane argues that these orderings were not because of the absence of social stratification in Africa (because it existed before colonialism) but that colonialism reorganised the structures through the oppression of blacks by whites and the creation of new cultural hierarchies.

In one sense this definition is of little value in my own analysis. It alerts us however to how the representations of Africa deploy the concept of culture in a particular way to marginalize or subordinate. Similarly, fuller recognition of the 'Art' and 'Culture' originating in Africa is an

important stake in shifting older definitions. Relegation occurs in relation to other perceptions and attributions made to Africa in terms of a wide range of evolutionary discourses centring on the origins of species, economic and social development and traditionality and modernity.

ii Culture as Specific Activities and Products

There is substantial agreement among commentators that 'culture' may be employed in capturing 'a range of intellectual, and artistic activities and their products (film, art, theatre)' (e.g. Smith: 2001:2). A case in point is the implications of 'culture' used synonymously with 'The Arts. However, in more contemporary usages, this definition has come to refer to widely distributed forms of popular material: music, publishing, art, design and popular fiction or activities of leisure - time and entertainment (Hall: 1997:2). Simply put, this view, points to mass distributed culture or 'mass culture'. This definition of culture shades into the *collection* of activities that make up the everyday lives of the majority of ordinary people. 'Popular culture', a notoriously ambiguous term can refer to the cultural production of mass media or to the everyday culture of what could be called popular classes as opposed to the elite. Here the definition in terms of specialised activities slides into the broader 'way of life' definitions, which we will discuss next.

These definitions deviate from the exclusivity of the traditionalists by an inclusion of social products that are not strictly those of an elite but are

accessible to the masses. That popular connotation of 'culture' means it has a much wider influence and input and thus interests and involves social groups on a larger scale. Yet there is a persistent selectivity in this set of definitions. While it gains, in its widely accessed and accessible scope, it has drawbacks in identifying only the aspects of the community and social life that gain mass and general acceptance. Nor are these definitions at all exempt from subordinating evaluations. Much cultural criticism defines the popular or the mass as intrinsically valueless, a position taken, for example, by the critics of the Frankfurt School in relation to the cultural industries (Adorno, 1991).

In many ways, this definition of 'culture' and its attendant debates is relevant to the thesis. First television itself is a specialised cultural activity with its own forms of production, circulation and consumption (and its own forms of Art). At the same time it is an immensely popular medium widely consumed and often thought of as part of the mass media or cultural industries. Nor are the typical evaluative questions, which commonly attend the identification of mass or popular culture, absent from my own study. How far, for instance, do television representations of Africa merely reproduce the dominant versions or ideologies of the medium, and how far do they question them and open up new possibilities for different relationships?

These questions have been central in cultural studies since the publication in the mid 1950's of Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy*.

On the one hand, Hoggart upheld the taste of ordinary working class people, but on the other hand, he regretted increasing influence of modern mass media, which he identified with the USA (Hoggart, 1957). As a continuing programme of research, cultural studies has often been torn between recognising the value of popular cultural forms in the daily life of men and women and recognising the process of standardization and massification which other critics have focussed on. For different positions on these issues today, compare Johnson et al., 2004; Eagleton, 2000.

iii. Culture as a 'Whole Way of Life':

Subsequently in a more social science context, and also centrally in cultural studies, 'culture' refers to whatever is *distinctive* of the 'way of life' of a people, community, nation or social group. Or alternatively is used to describe, 'shared values' of a group or a society. The 'whole way of life' and 'shared values' definitions are often preferred over the connotations of the earlier high culture and low culture divides. This anthropologically led definition of culture moves away from the elitist and selective classification of the traditionalists, for an even wider and more enveloping definition of 'culture' including in modern societies, the 'ways of life' of all social groups in their complex relationships. Typically in early uses in cultural studies, the 'whole way of life' concern was that

of the nation, a stress inherited from German romanticism² (Williams, 1988).

This definition of 'culture' is anthropological in that it is deployed in classical anthropological studies of groups or 'tribes' etc., then adopted more generally in cultural sociologies using 'ethnography', for example, in sub-cultural studies. Anthropological uses veer away from the selective and heavily evaluative definitions, towards apparently more neutral and analytic interpretations. Interpretations of culture from this perspective lean towards a preference for a wider scope for the term (Moore, 1999).

The generously wide inclusions of these anthropological interpretations of 'culture', is to be seen succinctly in Kroeber and Kluckhohn's 1952 study of academic definitions on the subject of 'culture'. Thus according to Kroeber and Kluckhohn, uses of culture have thus been organised around disciplinary and political needs as some of these different angles of its utilization below show.

² As Raymond Williams explains, Herder's work moved the use of culture as a synonym for civilization, to the newer applications that refuted assumptions of universal histories or the application of culture to all nations and periods. Herder had been upset at the 'subjugation and domination' of the world by Europe, which he had described as 'blatant insult to nature'. Cultures in the plural sense, indicating 'specific and variable cultures of different nations and periods' was thus initiated by him and as Raymond Williams argues, this became the popular application of culture adopted by 20th century anthropology and sociology. Williams (1988) further expounds, that the Romantic movement in Germany, , under the influence of Herder had a social and historical application of an alternative idea of human development to the ideas rooted on civilization and progress. The romanticists used the idea to emphasise national and traditional cultures, which had began to include the concept of folk-culture (Williams 1988:78-79).

Descriptively, 'culture' gathers a 'comprehensive totality' of the 'sum of social life', which extends to beliefs, art, laws, orals, customs, under that descriptive understanding, culture encompasses both ideas and activities, and essentially is collective – of a people.

Historically, culture operates as a referent to that custodial collective of heritage, the overall operation/working of social heritages, which have gained significance through the historical life of the group. This definition pays attention to aspects of social life, interaction and behaviour that have subsisted over periods of time.

Possibly arising from the wide social behaviour of the group, is the *normative* usage, which sees 'culture' as a rule, a way of life, shaping patterns of behaviour. From this perspective, patterns, modes, and actions of the social group, that translate into standardised beliefs and procedures, are what culture refers to. Or if approached from another angle, by excluding the behavioural aspects, 'culture' is limited to the 'role of values', which although sidesteps the elitism of the earlier definitions, still emphasises social values within the group.

'Culture', if used to emphasize its problem-solving role, by its ability to enable people to learn, communicate, or meet their material and emotional needs, bears the *psychological* interpretative elements in defining it.

Furthermore, there is the recognition of the *structuring* that occurs in 'culture' definitions, and which in many ways pinpoints clearly evident or isolatable aspects in social behaviour, so as to see culture abstractly or concretely. In that structuring and organising, the definition grants opportunity again to the highlighting of the ideals and values as against the actual behaviours.

The quest to know how 'culture' came to exist or thrives is the perspective that supports the *genetic* leanings of some definitions. These definitions pointedly identify human input, interaction, change or influence, and the transmission of aspects of these impressions, as the crucial pointers to seeing what culture is.

These facets of the early anthropological attempts at defining culture distinguished by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) provided a classic categorisation of the different ways in which culture as 'way of life' could be approached. From a cultural studies approach it is interesting to recover William's caution about *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*. He notes how 'usage in North American anthropology is in effect taken as the norm', pointing therefore, to how even scientific discourses cannot avoid their historical placement (Williams, 1988: 80).

It is clear that, within a discipline, conceptual usage has to be clarified. But in general it is the range and overlap of meanings that is significant. The complex of senses indicates a complex argument about the relations between general human development and particular ways of life, and between both and the works and practices of art and intelligence. (Williams 1988:80-81)

Recovering Williams' caution is important for this thesis because it destabilises any purely definitional solutions to the question of 'culture'. This gains fresh emphasis from the fact that the term 'culture' itself is today, the object of fresh critiques, which we may broadly term 'postmodern'. Christoph Brumann (1999) has argued strongly against discarding the concept of culture, suggesting that there are strengths that outweigh the weaknesses argued by the critics. Brumann suggests that in the absence of a viable alternative to replace it, the concept of culture provides a useful tool for expressing the ideas that help us describe and understand differences of all kinds, (Brumann, 1999). What is at stake here is, less a simple listing of aspects of cultural definition and, more a clash of theoretical approaches.

A useful starting point for contemporary complexities is Philip Smith's cross-disciplinary review (Smith, 2001). Smith isolates a modern core usage from these various uses, centring on the following ideas.

Culture is opposed to the material, the technological and the social structural. There may be complex empirical relations between culture and material, technological and social structures but essentially Smith's echoing of the wider anthropological argument is to suggest that culture must be seen as distinctive from and 'more abstract than, an entire' "way of life". (Smith, 2001:3-4). That interpretation of culture also effectively orders it as a significantly recognisable quality in a person or

people, which is different from what is perceived as natural, unaffected and unchanged by human input.

Alternatively, 'culture', Smith (2001) contends, 'is seen as the realm of the ideal, the spiritual and the non-material. It is understood as a patterned sphere of beliefs, values, symbols, signs and discourses' (Smith, 2001:4). In many respects this classification of culture still relates to an abstracted quality, featuring a designated area of social and behavioural life that can be identified.

There is a similar tension within cultural studies between the comprehensiveness of Williams' 'whole way of life' definition (which can include everything a class or group does) and the tendency within cultural studies as a discipline to focus on consciousness, subjectivity and the production of meaning. This was a founding abstraction for the systematic study of culture within this tradition even though it has always connected meaning and identity to questions of power. This abstraction means that it is possible to look very closely at the languages and grammars of particular media often using literary, linguistic or visual disciplines. This particular theoretical, methodological move has been essential in the research for this thesis. More generally, a focus on issues like the nature of ideology, the construction of identity, the question of subjectivity, the nature of narrative and discourse have been shared concerns across disciplines of Hall's 'cultural turn'.

Thus, 'television culture', 'celebrity culture', 'popular culture', 'research culture', 'gun culture' etc., all become plausible categorisations, which work in a much more fragmented way than the original 'whole way of life' category. Many analyses of cultures on television, and the critical thrust of my study, indeed acknowledge the various dimensions of cultural classifications to be drawn from television. The 'autonomy of cultural' inhibits any attempts at labelling it simply as a reflection 'of underlying economic forces, distributions of power, or social structural needs' (Smith, 2001:4). It also requires, we might add, particular methods of inquiry and analysis.

Social Scientists have typically tried to maintain the value-neutrality of cultural analysis by abandoning any ideas of cultural superiority or inferiority and appreciating 'culture's pervasion of all levels and aspects of human social life. This is clearly a founding move for any serious cultural study. However, questions of value and judgement refuse to go away. Throughout this study, the value-neutrality of culture is upheld and advocated. The adoption of an interpretation of culture, shirks a priori categorisations of superiority, inferiority, or the definitions, which uphold particular elitist or denigrating designations of what 'culture' consists of. On the other hand however, it does not hold back from making judgements about the quality and character of televisual representations.

1.3 The Limits of 'Culture'

There have been both political and theoretical pressures that have destabilized definitions of culture as a 'whole way of life'. There has been a very radical usurpation of the use of 'culture' in recent theorisations, but these have also been responses to new political claims including a renewed political stress on social differences within and across national formations (see also Brumann, 1999).

One of the difficulties with the 'whole way of life' definition is that it tends to homogenise the culture of both the observer and the observed. It disguises differences within a social group, class, nation or indeed continent. It is hard to talk about the relations of power and difference that exist within an apparently unified cultural framework, so that there is a tendency to revert to cultural essences or dubiously 'representative' episodes or moments. Conservative nationalist representations are typically full of essentialist reductions of this kind with essences often identified with characteristics of a people or a 'race'. As we shall see, this deployment of cultural homogeneity is a common trope in representations of Africa as a whole way of (rural, tribal, ethnic) living. Concentrating on 'a whole way of life' angle also has a tendency of ignoring individual psychological traits and histories and also has potential of drawing similarity across different social groups as a result of apparent similarities in their 'way of life'.

Secondly, in comparative studies using the 'whole way of life' approach, common elements between the observed group and the observer's group are disguised or overlooked. That is to say the elements of shared qualities and practices, between the observing party and the observed social group, are not considered distinctive, and subsequently not readily acknowledged or classifiable as culture or cultural. Thus, as we shall see, in many ways global cities in the west and modern cities inside Africa share very many features in common, a reality overlooked when European Urbanity is compared with African Rurality.

Thirdly, the 'whole way of life' definition works frequently in the drawing of firm boundaries, which construct but also often disguise the relations of Selves and Others. We are encouraged to study the Other, because of our belief of their 'different way of life' from ours. Attention is not directed critically to the nature of the relationships including those produced in the course of study. 'Culture' in such definitions is lacking on recognitions of hybrid and malleable identities, boundaries and practices and also overlooks the particular perspectives from which the analysis emanates. This failure to see how Self/Other relations are constructed through representations (to be discussed in more detail later in this chapter) is of particular importance in the light of legacies of colonial relations between Britain and parts of Africa.

One of the key recognitions of the 1980's was the recognition of the relation of the problematic of culture and legacies of racism and

imperialism in the West. In domestic cultural analysis, the 'whole way of life' was more often than not that of the White nation. What was gained in terms of class was often lost in terms of Ethnic exclusivity or in Paul Gilroy's words 'Ethnic Absolutism' (Gilroy, 1992). All the features we have noticed above, cultural homogeneity or monoculturalism, impermeable boundaries and the disguise of internal difference and the neglect of common ground between Selves and Others, are familiar features of Ethnocentrism, Racism and Nationalism. It is not surprising therefore that critical theory sought other means of describing cultural fields and relations (Grossberg et al, 1992).

Culture, these recent discussions propose, is far less axiomatic or boundaried but indeed there is a lot of fluid interlacing of those designations of culture, such that defining particularities of one community as characteristics of their culture is a very arguable one (see also Hall, Stuart 1996c). The study of culture in itself Henrietta Moore (1999:9) asserts is the culprit – cultural formations are 'rapidly transforming', 'open-ended', 'mobile' and 'hybrid'. These positions rest on the notion of a much more shared material between 'cultures' than within it (Thomas 1999:263). Herein lies the futility in frequent propositions of 'Ghanaian culture' or even 'African culture'. The geographical distinctions within the continent besides, the social, political, traditional and religious lineages that run through communities within Africa can be paralleling some of the lineages found in communities in Europe and vice versa.

The extent of these similarities can be debated, but even so, the study of mass media strongly suggest as we shall see, that the old argument about cultural boundaries is far from being redundant. Mass media discourses continue to project glaringly parochial representations of other large and diverse communities. The key issue here is that boundaries are not in any sense given or natural; they are produced/unstructured, in part through representation.

Far from these debates about the values and limits of the various definitions listed above, 'culture' still proliferates in meaning within discourses. Brumann, for example, makes extensive arguments against the discarding of the concept (Brumann, 1999). Within discourses of the Other, including those in which 'Africa' is featured, it is not always clear what interpretation is accorded to the use of 'culture'. Culture can be employed in relation to the 'high culture' or 'mass culture' distinctions or the later 'anthropology-related' definitions. Depending on the background or context used in the discoursing of Africa, Africa can be peculiarly represented.

It is important to point out here that 'culture', when often defined along the traditional positions, relates to the familiar 'English english' versions of 'culture' much more than, for example, the 'Ghanaian english', 'Nigerian english', or 'Kenyan english' usage. Definitions of culture from these perspectives although not widely published, usually refer to non-

global, non-European, non-colonial, 'essentially' Ghanaian, Nigerian or Kenyan practices and aspects of living which have survived the vagaries of colonisation, westernisation, neo-colonization, capitalism and globalisation. It does in many respects indicate 'tradition'. This perspective on culture from Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, among others, is probably closest to the early 'anthropological' usage of the referent 'culture' interpretations (the distinctive elements in a people's way of life) or with a more sociological emphasis – the 'shared values' and practices of a group, or of a society. There is no understanding – very obvious in the case of variants of English – of how cultural elements are borrowed and how newly appropriated and long sedimented elements are mixed to create new formations. In each case, we need to understand the selection of elements preserved or cultivated and then identified with.

Drawing on these definitions of 'culture' from within often-studied communities reveals features of social and community life for which the terms 'Ethnic' or sometimes 'Tribal' in Western textual engagements is employed (Marcus & Clifford 1985; Geertz 1993; see also Hall, S 1996c). Where the definition of culture as art and civilization is not used, issues nonetheless arise about the knowledge of programmes, reporters, or presenters of another cultural world. We cannot assume such knowledge, which is often deficient.

The usage of culture in this thesis is more neutral. Culture is simply the elements – and the boundaries – that make up the overall life practices of a people, without the judgemental negative or positive, undeveloped or developed classifications being applied. It includes the ‘good’ and ‘bad’, the shared and the unique, the widespread and the localised. This perspective of ‘culture’ is well suited for an inclusive, yet decipherable, identification of communities and people, and for the purposes of contextual representation of my text, would be the nearest fitting and thus preferred choice for this angle of the study. It is therefore implied in any understanding of references unless otherwise stated.

Furthermore, a more particular argument about culture informs this thesis. When a particular medium is studied, as in the case of television, the larger cultural context has to be borne in mind. Culture here means those inherited and socially embedded meanings that Gramsci calls ‘common sense’ (Gramsci, 1971). Thus representations of Africa, as we shall see, draw on a wider set of stereotypes, images, myths and falsehood, which are ‘commonplace’ assumptions in everyday life in Britain and which may express very longstanding relationships with other parts of the world. In analysing media representations, it is important to ask why they do not challenge or educate these embedded assumptions.

Understanding the meanings and reactions surrounding daily practices or behaviour in a specific social group can be a guide to the

understanding of those actions. Knowledge gained from a cultural understanding and used in any interpretation of these very Other 'cultures, cultural forms or societies, can only work favourably towards moulding a representation of that 'culture/society' which is as is. Thus, it is important for commentators/reporters to have some significant insight into the way things work in a specific community, for example particular socio-cultural arrangements in an African country, to be able to comment about the situations they find or be able to re-present the situations they find in that context, authentically, and to limit the prospect of any serious misrepresentation or even miscommunication³. It is not enough not to be biased by particular leanings but it is important to be able to re-present the world of Others very near as whole as possible.

Later in Chapter 2, I have discussed, more autobiographically how my own originating position, possibly classifiable by some as Other, is in fact an amalgamation of different cultural influences and origins. It is not in fact a single determinable position, but a complex grid that is criss-crossed by aspects of the colonial experience, but retains receptacles from cultural forms, ideas and knowledges originating in parts of Africa

³ The ideals of contemporary journalism – the quest for information and a commitment to treating 'events and persons with fairness and impartiality' but also taking account of the welfare of humanity in a spirit devoid of cynicism – behoves journalists to provide their services but with fairness. Lorimer (1994:106-107) finds traits of journalists who, align with the media owners and business interests, interpreting according to consumption patterns; providing, the sensational, the lurid, and emphasising the bizarre, and going to great lengths for a 'good' story. Finding and representing a story can thus be stretched by the particularities of the journalist or media house and can possibly result in very different representations.

as well as in Britain. That, coupled with my inclusion in the contemporary concept of 'multicultural' Britain, accounts for a method, which seeks clarity in my position in the interconnections between the different cultural forms affecting my analytical thinking. That position needs to be understood, but the account of it is in fact a contextual placement of the Self and the postcolonial extensions of that experience and how it plays on the different determinations of what is cultural. I have also discussed at length the concept of the postcolonial and the way this piece of work is in many respects fed by postcolonial persuasions.

1.4 Re-present-(ative)-(ation)-(ional)

In *Keywords*, Raymond Williams identifies *represent* as central to a group of complex words (Williams, 1988:266-69). He dates its first appearance back to the 14th century before when *present* already existed as a verb. '*Represent* earlier acquired a sense of making a present: in the physical sense of presenting oneself or another, often to some person or authority; but also in the sense of making present in the mind'. *Represent* gained its extension, in the sense of 'symbolize' or 'stand for' that same century. The point of interest Williams notes also is the considerable overlap between the senses of (a) 'making present to the mind and the sense' and (b) 'of standing for something that is not present'. The group of words in league with 'represent' consist of: 'represented', 'representative', 'representation', 'representational'.

Taking the definition (b) above in relation to all these words, there is no suggestion of any direct experiences or involvement of the origin, the initial object, topic or idea being *represented*⁴. The representative or representation, in that instance, obviously stands in for something. Herein lies an inherent if not obvious truth that the act of representing is a physical human act. It is the action by a person or persons to show the actuality by symbolizing, signifying or using any means that can reflect the actual or original concept. The specifics and choices in the making of that representation is echoed in the definition of 'culture' explained earlier, where 'culture' is described as a particular set of social practices.

Representation moved with different uses some of which included 'the visual embodiment of something' and later in the 19th Century 'became specialised to a sense of accurate reproduction' says Williams (1988). What is representative could stand for, or be in place of another. In language and consequently communication, this feature is ever present. Language is continuously employing sounds and letters and arrangements of letters to make sense and to communicate ideas. How this is achieved is studied by the large disciplines of linguistics, semantics and semiology. The point being made here is that representation is an unavoidable aspect of communication and social exchange and it affects all people. Moreover, representation involves specific practices: it is not a simple reflection of a real world.

⁴ In these definitions, the uses of 'representation' deals with the mimetic effect, such that, there is no substantive or physical use of the object in question, but of importance is the use made of

1.5 Using Representation

'Representation' or re-presentation is an important and popular cultural studies term. It is very frequently used but works auspiciously when clarified and specified for a particular context and debate. My choice of the hyphenated version 'Re-presentation' is to draw attention to the active and or repetitive input in the process. A *re-presentation* implying a **re**created, **re**framed, **re**vised, **re**-iterative and **re**peated 'presentation': the prefix suggesting and emphasising, that the action is not deemed to be original and automatic but rather, a secondary/copy/modification/symbolic version of the initial. I explore the meanings of *representation* and their engagements in this study as follows.

At the outset there are two possible positions or arguments. These are the realist position versus the constructionist viewpoint. The former position would believe in the real and therefore envisage the possibility of composing reality's likeness by repetition, using a given medium. Put simply, the novel, play or film, or the composition of a painting is a mirroring of another idea or object. Representation in that sense indicates repetition. Repetition suggests mimesis. But repetition also means putting in motion, or setting in movement: in the sense that in an attempt at presenting a subject/image, a completely *new* process is started instead, and there can be no exact reflection with the repetition. As the constructionist position, on the other hand, rightly indicates, the

language, image or sound to discuss it.

realist point of view does overlook the concurrent inputs or the addition of new elements during the process of attempting to re-present an earlier and specific subject.

The constructionist position resembles the hermeneutic acknowledgement of the collision between data and interpreter (Gadamer, 1986:273), where a representation is purported to consist of a primary text and secondary textual elements (Gadamer, 1986:273). This is illustrated especially in the form of a media interpretation of a subject. The making of a film from a novel comes to mind. The tones of human voices, the sound and lighting effects added to the initial script to create the film, become the secondary textual elements, in effect altering the 'first'. This is not exclusive only to cinema adaptations, because television news or documentaries always have an idea or story-source, which is then related with the help of these textual elements to arrive at the presentation desired. Thus the issue of the active representation involves the secondary textual elements playing off the text, in the selection, highlighting and reshuffling and generating possible further interpretations (Duncan & Ley, 1993).

Duncan and Ley (1993:9) using (Iser, W. 1989) discuss the tri-partite contribution to textual production. The text, which is the idea to be represented, the extra-textual field of reference, which is the data used in the production of the text and the inter-textual, which refers to elements culled from other texts for the production of the immediate text. Duncan

and Ley further illustrate this argument by suggesting that the production of academic texts in light of this tri-structure suggests not a mirroring of the extra-textual within the text but rather a *re-presentation* a creation of something hitherto non-existent outside the text. There is a further complexity arising from the reader's response to the product. The reader similarly approaches the interpretation of the text using his/her own experiences of the world (extra-textual) and the context of other texts (inter-textual).

But in this instance the message/idea continues to be forwarded and each intermediate vessel shapes it. From the initial event/subject, comes different emphases and foci each time the message is relayed and through radio, television or print. A representation is made possible through language or speech and as Stuart Hall's (1996a) perspectives in his discussions of Althusser's critique of ideology reveal, 'meaning is produced as a result of discursive or theoretical work. It is not simply a result of an empiricist epistemology' (Hall 1996a: 12).

The constructionist position thus recognises the active input and influences in representations and so take this alternate stance to the realist. Thus *representation*, although very widely used, in contexts of referring to the real, mimesis or mimetic usage (identical to original), it does not always and not regularly confirm reality in symbols, as it is often defined. The constructionist position convincingly makes the point that 'representation' does evoke many variations in output. This

argument could exclude some form of mechanical reproduction. Reprints of photographs or mass-reproduced objects, using the same media and process as the original, while multiplying them, alters them, but in a different way (see Benjamin, 1933). That kind of alteration is still different from the one identifiable when representing an idea, object, image or message using a different set of media. The mediation of mechanical reproduction works differently from the aforementioned human-mediated inputs to representation.⁵

In this thesis I take different elements from the realist and constructivist arguments and combine them in particular ways. From realist positions I take a realist ontology, that is the belief in a real state of affairs that exists independently or before any particular account or observation. Thus events or conditions in the continent of Africa have an existence, relatively independently of the way they are presented on British television and we can apply criteria of adequacy to these messages. Of course the real state of affairs is not easy to establish, but it is possible to identify really gross distortions, which we can term misrepresentations. The representation of Africa as a homogenous whole is a case in point, as is the implausible belief that only suffering and violence emanates from the continent.

⁵ Whereas the constructionist debate borders on the philosophical, by interpreting spatial, temporal and various physical influences on representation, the discussions of mechanical representation play down these, especially focussing on the mass and mechanical creation of likeness.

From the constructivist point of view, however, I take the recognition of the complexity of processes of cultural production, which involve their own means, codes, languages and cultural forms. In the next section the active character of representation is stressed and the importance of versions of the real in shaping consciousness and action. These versions are not given by the nature of the objects themselves, but are a specific human production, with their own conditions and effects.

1.6 Media Representations

1.6.1 Media Representation as an Active Process - a Constructivist Approach

Stuart Hall argues that the media are involved in the 'politics of signification,' (1982:64). Thus the media produce images of the world that give events particular meanings and even importance. And also that media images do not reflect the world but actually **re-present**⁶ it. The media, through that, engage in practices that define reality but do not reproduce reality. To Stuart Hall then, 'representation is a very different notion from that of reflection'. 'It implies the active work of 'selecting and presenting', of 'structuring and shaping'; not merely the transmitting of an already-existing meaning, but the more active labour of making things mean' (Hall, 1982:64) [my emphasis]. I can't agree

⁶ My emphasis here is to indicate not only the mere process of presentation but there being an added active process of creatively selecting a focus of image or story. Then taking that image and with particularly ordered frames of footage and commentary endeavour to make meaning to others.

with this point more on account of the fact that broadcasting, like other mass communication, is an active creative process which involves careful orchestration and not a natural reflection as we imagine it to be. We need to see news and other documentaries as well as all the entertainment programmes that are broadcast not as realistic stories, but as re-presentations, and creations of the world with several degrees of likeness to reality.

Like printed texts and the earlier literary works, which passed as educational and entertainment material, the content of the electronic media, here television, is the creation of individuals and groups whose viewpoints and tastes are only part of a multitude. The avenues and alternatives available, and from which the choice is made is vast. This is especially the case if we include not only 'news' but also popular entertainment programmes.

1.6.2 Representation as Interpretation – A Realist Consideration

Thus inaccuracies during **re**-presentation known or unknown can cause *misrepresentation*. 'Mis-representation' in the media can refer to improper choices of representative elements and similarly 'under-representation' suggests insufficient choices or elements for the presentation of the subject. Whenever there is a bias, stereotype, or propaganda, in any piece of communication, it mostly occurs as a result of the nature of the representation, the way the message is

communicated. Said (1981) also emphasises the human element by declaring:

All knowledge that is about human society, and not about the natural world, is historical knowledge, and therefore rests upon judgement and interpretation. This is not to say that facts and data are non-existent, but that facts get their importance from what is made of them in interpretation. (1981:154)

Representations made in all media, electronic or not, have a significant human element to it. Does that imply that all representations are deeply questionable? Not necessarily so, but it does bring up questions of possibilities of misrepresentation and under-representation. Contemporary theories of representation stress the construction of particular realities. If we focus on 'bias', 'prejudice' or 'stereotypes' we might risk unending strings of what is right and what is wrong. Yet ignoring the fact that bias, prejudice and stereotyping occur, means assuming all humans are infallible and also that all are without strong feelings and orientation. Thus the arguments in this study encourage the acknowledgement of the inevitability of constructions of versions of a message, but also the humanity of the communicator, and the mediations these can bring to bear on the message.

Particular levels of objectivity present in a *re-presentation* may be difficult to define but one can try to identify the elements of construction that are present. We can locate themes in relation to social stratification like class, age, gender and race among others. The interest in the different and strange is exciting and interesting and can very easily lead

to exaggerations, or a preoccupation with the distinctness which draw attention to its difference. Adjectives like exotic, dangerous, humorous, pitied, harsh, are just a few examples of the resources that aid in constructing a particular 'reality' or 'difference'. Figures of speech like metaphors also assist in composing the mental picture of what is being communicated to another party. Persons in awe at something unusual to them or strikingly different from what they are used to (even though not exceptional to others) may react employing expressions that are richer and stronger and a more effusive use of discourse to describe or narrate that experience. The awe, surprise, disbelief or admiration (possibly varying with individuals) is transferred as well. There may be different realities for individuals as defined by the particular experiences from which these realities spring, but the complexity of the mass media and its inclination and presupposition of projecting the relevant 'real' to wider audiences, means that there is a tall order for what can be accepted as real. Any embellishments by the individuals mediating the message, makes it difficult to extract the objective core of the message. The media themselves, incessantly remind us (particularly with news and documentaries), of the actuality and reality of their delivery. Thus through human will, choice of language and mass communication, power, knowledge and information in one form or the other is transferred.

1.7 Postcolonial: Untangling the postcolonial subject

The theory of *postcolonialism* has strongly defied classification and definition because of its insistent refutation and rejection of labelling and Othering. My main reason for the adoption of a postcolonial critical perspective is to sift for historical sedimentations of colonial discourse and subjugating power-relations found in earlier colonialist literature and discourse, here in contemporary British television. This final section is geared towards defining uses of the postcolonial and the particular resonance this study has with aspects of it.

Defining what is constituted in the 'postcolonial' is a much more recent area of debate than that concerning 'culture' and 'representations', but has gained notoriety for its complexity and elusiveness. The label 'postcolonial' indicates the point of reference for the contestations and debates about the aftermath and short and long term effects of colonisation. Those engaging with this discussion have been widely located. They have come to be drawn from almost all disciplines: from Anthropology through to English and French studies to History and Politics among many others. In anglophone traditions, however, there has tended to be a certain dominance of literary disciplines and practices. The postcolonial has been characteristically identified, at least at first, as a form of writing.

Another source of diversity is also important. Postcolonial criticism also deals with material from many geographical locations, linked only by the experience of the colonial, whether this experience is early or late in the histories of empires themselves very diverse (Ashcroft et al, 1995). Nor is it only previously colonised lands that are to be understood in the shadow of a colonial past. Writers like Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy, for example, also see postcolonial elements in old imperial metropolises like Britain (see Chambers and Curti, (eds.) 1996).

Stephen Selmon begins on the note that 'there is no single 'post-colonial theory, and no one critic can possibly represent, or speak for, the post-colonial critical field' (1996:179). Instead he settles for plurality of the aspects of critical and theoretical positions on, what is apparently, 'a rapidly changing field of intellectual contestation and disciplinary debate' (1996:179). Postcolonial writers have been described as 'writing back' to the centre (using novelist Salman Rushdie's words) (Ashcroft et al, 2002). In many respects acts of defiance, in literary forms and critical material as well as volumes of writing, which have emanated from the previously colonised locales have been considered postcolonial. Their postcoloniality reflects not only their authorial origins of 'coming from' these colonised places, but also reflecting newer discourses and approaches to writing that unsettled the traditional forms of writing known till their emergence. These different materials, authored by names such as Mariama Ba, Tsitsi Dangaremba, Ayikwei Armah, Ngugi Wa Thinogo, Wole Soyinka, Ama Ata Aidoo and Chinua Achebe among

many others, were recognised as new literary material in English and have been sometimes also referred to as commonwealth literature, world literature and postcolonial literature. The styles and content of these new literatures was to introduce difference in their written subject as well as resistance in their forms and content. The critical fields generated by this new and exciting inevitably political energies was to become referred to as postcolonial critical studies (Moore-Gilbert, 1997; Chrisman and Parry, 2000).

1.7.1 Identifying the Postcolonial

Employing the postcolonial critical perspective in the study of television may be a tough assignment. 'Slemon and Tiffin (1989) have described postcolonial texts as involving,

[writing] that is grounded in the cultural realities of those societies whose subjectivity has been constituted at least in part by the subordinating power of European colonialism. [My emphasis] (1989:ix)

That definition takes an inclusively wide reach for all those social groups who have been affected by colonialism, but sharply focuses attention on European colonialism and the subjectivities it created through its subordinating power. It also calls the resultant product of these, 'cultural realities'.

Elleke Boehmer (1995) on the other hand, describes postcolonial writing as writing that 'critically scrutinises the colonial relationship.' It is

'writing that sets out in one way or another to resist colonialist perspectives' [my emphasis] (Boehmer, 1995:3).

Boehmer sees it as 'a literature reflecting a colonial ethos', because it, for example, deals with writing concerned with colonial expansion. Boehmer's emphasis lies with the written text as she defines it as 'literature [written] by and for colonising Europeans about non-European lands dominated by them'. One of the salient points in her description of such material is the fact that 'it embodied the imperialists point of view'. Colonialist literature was 'informed by theories concerning the superiority of European culture and the rightness of empire'⁷. That original ethnocentric approach was to expect other societies to be subservient and malleable to the 'straightening' and 'guidance' to 'The Right Way'. 'Postcolonial' literature is that which critically scrutinises the colonial relationship' and 'writing that sets out in one way or another to resist colonialist perspectives'.

My own work of critically interrogating the representations of Africa to the British reader fits in with that ethos. The essential features of criticism and scrutiny as well as the resistance tropes present in

⁷ Sally Falk Moore (1994) argues that 'on the political plane, as in the mission and in the agricultural estates of the colonies, the Europeans considered those they governed as socially, culturally, morally, and technically "backward". Thus evolutionary theory, and the conception of nineteenth-century colonial administration as a civilizing mission, resonated harmoniously together'. These 'avowed' ideologies and political strategies all worked towards the cause of Empire and also fed into the early determinants of the study of Others in anthropological undertakings.

postcolonial study are being employed here in this enquiry, albeit in application to television material.

Other scholars like Bill Ashcroft consider postcolonialism as dealing with discourses of the colonized including all cultures affected by the imperial process. It is a concept that has also saliently embedded within it, 'patterns of discursive struggles, ways of contending with various forms of colonial oppression' (Ashcroft, 2001:12). There is a further clarifying argument, Ashcroft (2001) makes, which is convincing and engrossing. He asserts that postcolonialism incorporates 'a wide interwoven text of experiences' from the colonial effect. The term 'Postcolonial', Ashcroft specifies further, represents a 'form of talk' (Ashcroft, 2001:13). All these definitions are indeed very inclusive and particularly cautious about creating marginalized or excluded persons/groups. Ashcroft's definitions make that leap from the earlier preoccupations with ideas about approaches to writing, critical material or literary material to re-emphasising it as a stance applicable beyond literature and literary criticism and indeed to everyday life – 'a form of talk'.

The salient element in the definitions made by postcolonial theorists is the interaction between the colonialist and the colonised peoples. The postcolonial concept is present because of, and engages with, the issues of the colonised subject. Applying the scrutinising eye to the discursive relationship between Britain and Africa is precisely what the approach of this study is, albeit introducing that form of scrutiny on a newer form of

material. Postcolonial texts are considered to be resisting the colonialist perspectives by writing back to highlight ways and perspectives that are predominantly colonial-influenced, including attitudes clouded in hegemonic structures of a kind, and which eventually are reflected in the contemporary communication media. Adopting and casting a postcolonial critical eye over the television material here is aimed at also helping to track remnants of colonial discourses, even in modern discourses.⁸

Other critical contestations about the 'postcolonial' have sought to clarify its position in relation to the colonial histories. If the postcolonial arrived after colonialism then there is an implication that colonialism has ended, a time, which, for most of the colonised countries, is often marked by specific liberation dates. Instead, most postcolonial criticism transgresses these formal boundaries of time and implicates the reverberations of all these encounters in all their various and subsequent forms. For example, Ashcroft et al (1995) emphasise that their definition of 'post-colonial' does not refer to 'post-independence' or 'after colonialism' but instead, prefer to call 'post-colonialism' the 'discourse of oppositionality which colonialism brings into being', (1995:117). These

⁸ Christopher Miller (1990) even argues that critical approaches to Western pieces of work are acceptable, but applying these approaches to African work is unfair as these approaches have been developed for Western writing. Thus, we need not use the same reading filters for Western and African Literature. In this instance Miller advances a separation of attitudes to Western or African material because of the tendency to rely on established Western approaches that use established Western canons.

The approaches used for one should not be the approaches applied to the other, he argues. To do this Miller contends, is, as maintained by some renowned African writers like Wole Soyinka, a second bout of colonisation and subjugation.

are the discourses that have been generated by the very acts of colonialism and thus, are traceable back to the first moments of the colonial incursions.

Other interpretations of the postcolonial have marked it as one of a set of theories and approaches to critical thinking such as poststructuralism, psychoanalysis etc). The difficulty with this very academic placing of the postcolonial is that it may neglect the political and the personal connections that brought this perspective into being, whether the experience of postcolonial intellectuals in the old imperial metropolis, or the critics of the failed promise of independence, of the defenders of still colonised people - Edward Said's defence of the Palestinian people for instance (Said, 1992).

1.8 Postcolonialism: A Broader Perspective

I seek in this section to make two key arguments in relation to my own use of the postcolonial in this thesis. First, I have sought to debate the relevance of the postcolonial perspective of this study less by limiting it to specific definitions stated by writers on the subject and more by leaning on the general philosophy or approach nurtured by the postcolonial debate. Second, I have sought to extend the rather literary emphasis of postcolonial studies by demanding an openness to modern media and other forms of expression and communication. These are equally significant materials, I would argue, for carrying forth arguments about the forms and conditions of (post)colonial experiences. Not all

expression is necessarily in print and in some ways literary postcolonial studies repeats those limitations we discussed under 'culture' above – limiting itself to very particular (and particularly valued) activities.

In these respects my own position is to align with advocates of the opinion that postcolonialism is a standpoint of critical thinking and political leaning, in similar ways to feminism (Thomas: 1999; Narayan, Uma and Harding, Sandra, 2000). Feminism as a political standpoint dates earlier than postcolonialism, but there have been interrogations between the two. One particular point of connection is a shared concern with issues of identity and subjectivity. Some feminists have indeed argued, that colonization 'invariably implies a relation of structural subject(s) in question' (Mohanty, C. T., 1994). As Suleri (1994) claims, questions of identity formation and contestations between essentialism and constructivism or clarifications between universal and situated knowledges, remain strong arguments within feminism. This chimes with a central issue in postcolonialism, which campaigns for recognition and a voice for the 'indigenous', 'subjugated', 'silent' minorities. This is where both stances of postcolonialism and feminism appear as critical forms that scrutinise power relations and question the canons of representation. The latter began with strong enquiries about power politics involved in gender and patriarchal systems, and gradually including other forms of subjugated and misaligned societies (Moore, 1988). As feminism expanded into a political stance of querying both gender power-relations and other subjugated and oppressed minorities

and the powerless, (Spivak, 1988) postcolonialism found a rapidly accommodating companion in the shared similarities of the two stances.

As Elleke Boehmer (1992) also argues, nationalism in its past and present manifestations, often works at limiting the representation and power of women, connecting with the gendered power relations that create patriarchal powerful positions. Nationalism constructs the nation so that some lord over the weakened, the desired, the emptied and thus subjugated groups (Boehmer, 1992). Colonialism has in many respects echoed that patriarchal desire and control over the colonised subjects.

Admittedly, postcolonial theorists have tried to stretch the surrounding debate about the theory itself, beyond the merely literary. Arif Dirlik has tried to bring the postcolonial discourse into the arena of global political economy (1994:328-356)⁹. There are interesting connections here between the debate on postcolonialism and the debate on postmodernism. In another field, David Harvey (1989) and Frederic Jameson (1984) distinguish between postmodern as condition and postmodern as 'critique'. Following this lead, Ankie Hoogvelt (1997:155) treats postcolonial discourse as a 'cultural condition' or 'logic' that

⁹ Dirlik (1994) locates the surge of application of the term 'postcolonial' in the mid 1980's and argues that its application was largely to academic intellectuals originating from the 'Third World'. To him, the emergence of global capitalism and other extensions of capitalism, upset the earlier relations of world situations, where the binaries of colonizer/colonized, First World/Third World etc existed. Thus the new consciousnesses have granted the multifarious 'Third World' academics (their concerns and orientations) with a respectability and a recognition they did not have before. Thus changes in the capitalist world economy, he surmises, has presented some conceptual needs, which in turn resonates with the appeals of the critical themes of postcolonial criticism.

corresponds to what she says, is 'the specific geopolitical and economic configurations of what we have earlier referred to as postmodern or globalised capitalism'. Ella Shohat (in Ankie Hoogvelt, 1997:157) steadies the argument by rightly recognising that 'the central terrain and mode of questioning' in works such as *The Empire Writes Back*, *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory* and *Decolonising the Mind* to be literature and literary criticism based. Therefore despite the stretching of postcolonial theory, it does remain quite narrow in its application.

But to what extent can the definition of postcolonial material be stretched? I am of the opinion that any means of communication, art, entertainment and information has the potential, if not the quality, of being postcolonial when it deals with similar issues, rhetorics and discourses. My arguments in this thesis force a renewed and extended engagement of postcolonial criticism in television and radio: simply an argument for the recognition of other media besides the printed form of literature and literary materials.

If the designation, 'discourses that speak of Others', the more general description applied to textual material often classified as postcolonial, is admissible, then there is no reason why audiovisual media cannot be approached as such. The philosophy questioning the discourses need not end whether the material is *written* or appears in a different form. Furthermore, the authorship of postcolonial material included metropolitan as well as Creoles or indigenes from colonial times. The

edges of the boundaries within which the postcolonial falls, including date, geographical and ideological, still continue to be heavily debated and will not be prolonged here.¹⁰ Thus it is crucial to include non-literary based forms of expression because of the similar critical scrutiny they share with literary texts. Along those lines, they are all discursive fields that carry with them forms of representation, empowerment and subjugation. To use Aschcroft's expression, they are all 'forms of talk' (2001: 13).

1.9. When Post doesn't mean Past

On the question of dating and modern material, part of the error of most postcolonial theorists is to fall into the time trap, breaking the histories of the former colonised peoples into colonial and post-colonial eras: colonial being the time before the independence and the post-colonial being the era after the end of colonial rule. The time before the colonial is evidently excluded, obviously as this was before the coloniser's experiences with the colonised, but in doing so, the exclusion shortens the history of the colonised peoples from the colonial to the present, augmenting the hegemony that contact with Western visitors marked beginning of order and civilisation for the 'natives'. If the dating of the colonial experiences of the colonised is to be significant, then the pre-

¹⁰ Dirlik (1994) again tries to do the reasoning of the postcolonial theory by identifying its meanings as (i) applying it to the 'Third World' as the literal descriptions of conditions in formerly colonised societies, (ii) applying it globally and abstractly, as referring to the global condition after colonialism or (iii) referring to a discourse of these conditions, informed by the psychic and epistemological orientations emanating from these conditions of the colonial encounter above. (Dirlik, 1994:332).

colonial and the identification of the individualities, authenticity and originality of the pre-colonial makes for a recognition of that era in appreciation of colonial experiences of the colonised peoples. It is imperative to note that for the postcolonial to be significant, the implications of the 'pre-colonial' and the 'post-postcolonial', if that were to be identified, would help give credence and meaning to the ethos that is the postcolonial.

Postcolonial critical debates have echoed different strands of arguments about how postcolonial these theories are. Questions have arisen about the dating of the postcolonial. This is reflected in the terms 'postcolonial' and the sometimes-hyphenated version, 'post-colonial'. In as much as there is agreement on theories of the postcolonial thinking, relating to material and debates occurring after the advent of colonial expansion and missions, there are debates that seek to question whether the end of the physical colonial projects are enough to merit a labelling as a post state. Such arguments quite rightly purport to draw attention to the changed state – the long lasting effects and experiences on both the colonised and the coloniser. The post in postcolonialism shares the quality as a development from the event of colonialism in similar ways as postmodern derives or replaces the modern. But although sharply marking a chronological point of experience in the onset of colonialism (which is absent from poststructuralism or postmodernism), it still doesn't signify an end of colonialism in any way.

Although there have been early differences with the hyphenated and non-hyphenated form of the term, I shall resist the linguistic extensions and the tediousness developing around the linearity and teleological developments suggested by its use, and as it in no way impinges on my particular use of the postcolonial. I shall throughout this work adopt the non-hyphenated form 'postcolonial' in a move of simplification, which would hopefully emphasise my indiscriminate attention to all kinds of marginality, subjugation and control discourses. The 'post-ness' emphasised by advocates for a recognition of the effects post the colonial is implied and embedded in all my uses of the postcolonial. I also support the much more clarified perspectives of a postcolonial, belonging not only to end of colonial but inclusive of the colonial.

In applying the ideas of the postcolonial scrutiny to this study, I subscribe not to a direct semantic interpretation of post-colonialism, which refers to the period immediately after independence but like Ella Shobat, (Ankie Hookvelt, 1997:156) prefer the interpretation, which calls 'postcolonialism': a designation for critical discourses which thematize issues emerging from colonial relations and their aftermath, covering a long historical span (including the present) (Shobat, 1993:101).

Using an identity of the postcolonial that is not structural but discursive, I work by exploring through debate, the attitudes, language, hegemonies and structures within the existing or past relationships between the colonised and the colonial parties. I draw attention to some of the early

relationships and earlier forms of discourses, and how these are resonated in discursive formations existing in modern British television towards the end of the thesis.

1.10 Postcolonial Elements and the Orientalism of Edward Said

In addition to extending the postcolonial 'canon' to include televisual discourses and adopting a broadly postcolonial critical standpoint, I have also drawn on some of the more particular analytical categories developed by postcolonial theorists. These debts are best illustrated by looking at the work of Edward Said, particularly his much-debated text *Orientalism*.

In *Orientalism*, Said theorises about the carving out and conceptualisation of the Orient, an imaginarily boundaried and formed *area of knowledge*, ideas and discussions, which is neither a political nor an economical unit, but formed from a Western projected interpretation of a 'cultural' unit to be found somewhere in the east - an 'imaginary geography' as Said puts it. Said argues that this conceived imaginary geography of the Orient is framed by beliefs, concepts and understanding as well as a result of the reflections of the Western points of view of what it envisages as exotic and different. *Orientalism* is the discourse derived from and dependent on "the Orient" Said says. This is encouraged essentially by a way of reading, or perceiving that, which is considered as different or Other. Also in *Orientalism*, Said takes to task,

Western systems of scholarship and the canons controlling the imaginative and aesthetic depiction of the 'Orient', whilst in *Covering Islam*, he expounds on the media's orchestrations of the Islamic world through its representational practices (Said, 1978; 1997). The diversity and complexities of the Islamic world are largely 'covered up' by the instant generalisations and the particular ideologies that are used in the interpretation of news from locations. The resultant episode is an image of Islam, which is ideologically positioned as a menace to the West, because of, for example, what is seen as unmodernised fanatical religiosity applied to a unified and composed Islamic Other (Said, 1997).

1.10.1 Orientalism Towards an Africanism?

These elements in the arguments made by Edward Said on the question of Orientalism are indeed matched in many similar ways by the formation and engagement with particular versions and theorisations on Africa. The exoticisation of Africa, and its Othering as culturally opposed to Western cultural forms, is one such aspect. Africa, defined or discoursed as a racio-cultural area is an oppositional foil to Western cultural forms. It thus becomes a parallel to that Orient Said talks about. This idea of Africa is a preoccupation with Black or Sub-Saharan Africa where aspects of difference are highlighted and excitedly re-engaged with. What is symbolic and symptomatic of Africa is thus distinctly not Western. Again the dominant thematic discourses and the engrossment with a unified image are contributory to the continuation and fixation of a kind of "Africanism". The specific work of *Covering Islam* differs from

Orientalism in its particular work on the media and also on the theological aspects it deals with. Graduating from his arguments on the wider representational scope of the Orientalist discourse and the affiliation between knowledge and power, Said (1997) basically drew a focus on the contemporary media and political discourse and in particular. But more specifically his criticisms are directed at American responses to the Islamic World. It is also the result of the conflicting relationship between the Western World, USA in particular and the Islamic World. There is, he argues, a consciousness of the relevance of the Islamic World and a perception of it as troubled and problematic. Said's debates in *Covering Islam* were to unearth the grounding of the 'authoritative experts', which he argues, align the discourse on Islam according to particular interpretations of economic and politically biased interpretations. In Said's criticisms of the coverage of Islam, and in the earlier debates about the concept of Orientalism, he is unrelenting in his arguments that the 'Islam' employed by the West is a simplified but a fictitious referent. It is, he suggests, 'part fiction, part ideological label, part minimal designation of [a] religion called Islam' (Said 1997:1) [Emphasis Mine]. The underlying argument in both works is that in many respects, Said finds no direct correlation between the Islam or in fact the Orientalism in common Western representations and discursive tropes, and the actualities seen in the enormously varied world that is organised for a simplified analysis.

Of course one of the main criticisms about Said's discussions in *Orientalism*, is that he endorses, latently, a conceptualisation of the idea of a "Western" cultural unit to which the Orient becomes a binary and different Other. Said later addressed this in later literature such as *The World the Text and the Critic*, refuting such interpretations. It is the empowered view of the Western perspective from which these interpretations are projected which is the crucial factor and that works again very well in application to the Western conceptualisations of Africa. For Africa is notably stripped, emptied of any similarities, or contributions to and borrowings, from Western 'cultural' forms or ways of life, and also of any diversities, but is organised along a series of projected gazes of what is of interest and intrigue to a Western inquisition.

In essence, the mode of interpretation is crucial in understanding and conceptualising other cultural forms different to our very own. Christopher Miller (1990) argues that the way of reading can be the 'culprit organiser' of these other cultural and social others. Miller argues that by reading other material through Western eyes, we organise them according to Western established interpretative indices and canons.

In the text, *The World the Text and the Critic*, Edward Said (1983:290-292) makes an important argument that the idea of the Orient is akin to the idea of the West – 'its polar opposite'. Miller's (1990) arguments discussed above also vindicate Said's position on the ways of

interpretation. It has to be made clear, that the reverse application (ways of interpreting and organising of meaning that are non-Western) is possible. This suggests that we can read Western material through other eyes, but in reality, there is little occasion for these as the discourse mediating the relationships between the West and its others is often predominantly led by the West.

Orientalism was one of the poignant studies to boost the growth of the field of postcolonial studies and postcolonialism. The critical stances it made in the groundbreaking confrontation with modes of power and knowledge, are revisited here in my own study. Although Said's work was a much more ambitious project, examining scholarly works, literature, political tracts, journalistic texts, travel books, religious and philological studies among others, the postcolonial paradigm is one that is shared by both *Orientalism* and my smaller scale study of 'Representations of Africa in a British media'. The multiplicity of sources he uses is scaled but reflected in the multiple genre types I have included. The critical analysis of British television's engagement with Africa in this thesis reveals a parallel endorsement of a conceptualised Africa, an occurrence, which evokes those reflections from Said's arguments about *Orientalism*. My own study of television as we shall see uses particular sampled texts and some critical analysis so as to escape any such criticisms¹¹ levelled at Said for his inability to identify

¹¹ Dennis Porter (1994) in 'Orientalism and its Problems' sought to question Said's failure to provide any alternative voices throughout the long span covered by his work.

alternative assertions over the scope of his analysis of a continuous discourse of some 2 millennia.

From Said's theorisations of the Orient, I have drawn, particularly, the idea that geographical boundaries are drawn around, and for, an exoticised Other. Similarly different kinds of boundaries may be made to coincide: the dichotomies between *Us* and *Them*, or *Selves* and *Others* may be made to coincide imaginarily, for instance between the organisation of the division between urban and rural. And from *Covering Islam*, I have identified and re-echoed ways in which the popular media organises meaning and discourse in selective focus and by omission. Said's discussions in *Covering Islam*, locate, the ideological leanings of experts and the media as well as particular factors such as the lack of language skills for location journalists reporting from the Islamic World. The media in effect, Said surmises, determine by action, and inaction, how the US audiences perceive or continue to understand the Islamic World. My own analytical discussions in the later chapters echo some such occurrences but on this occasion in relation to Africa.

There remain some dangers in the binary oppositions, which all forms of political theory can construct. I agree with Slemon (1996:179) that postcolonial debates have to do with a condition and experience which is an effect of the colonial encounter and which Ashcroft et al (1995)

Porter (1994) argues that this undermines Said's postcolonial ethos of providing access to counter hegemonic voices.

emphasise as referring to the 'discourse of oppositionality', which I have mentioned earlier. But Ashcroft (2001:13) has later argued that although resistance has always been at the core of the struggle between the imperial power and the postcolonial identity, it is not at all fixed around simple oppositional binaries like the one established by Europe to define its others. Different levels of engagement have marked this resistance ranging on a continuum of complicity to violent rebellion.

This is stressed particularly by those postcolonial writers who have taken a rather more postmodern line of argument than Said, by Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorti Spivak in particular (Bhabha, 1994; Spivak, 1990,) My alignment with the postcolonial position is not only led by my location as a product of the effects of colonialism but it is involved in my approaches, of writing differently, destabilizing the canons and traditionality in ways that also draw on postmodern insights. A discussion of the complex issue of hybridity – a key term in postmodern versions of postcolonial theory – may help to clarify my own position here.

1. 11 On the Concept of Hybridity

For the purposes of this discussion, the concept of hybridity I relate with does not refer to the theories about hybridity of races, which for example J.C. Young (1995) discusses. Young (1995) acknowledges that the racial theories about hybridity are often located with the historical biological theses, which define a certain kind of separateness of species, with a

hybrid being a mix of two such different races. My mention of hybridity rests more with Bhabha's 'dialogical situation of colonialism' (Young, 1995:22), and the openness to alternate cultural interpretative positions away from the univocal or hegemonic discourses. Unlike Bhabha, my proposition of hybridity is not to reverse 'the effects of the colonialist discourse and estrange the basis of its authority' (Bhabha, 1994: 112). It is certainly my position also to encourage 'the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects' (Bhabha, 1995:112) – questioning the basis of the authority of colonialist authority, but also by invoking a recognition of the equally probable positions and points of views of the colonised and silenced groups.

The duality or in fact multiplicity of identity, is in fact one of the preoccupations of Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1986) and extends the arguments in the *Wretched of the Earth* (1967) further. The condition of the native, with the burden or blessing of the colonial experience, contains a duality or in fact a multiplicity of experience, which includes both aspects of the colonising culture, and the pre-colonised culture, and the effects of both. My invocations of these forms of hybrid experiences are to draw attention firstly, to the enlightened position of the hybrid position, as Homi Bhabha has emphasised in his *Location of Culture* (1994).

My own position of being a postcolonial subject, a product of the colonising experience, is to lay claim to understanding aspects of the cultural difference that may be termed 'native' and others that may be termed 'Western' (on account of all inputs from the coloniser countries). In addition to that, there is a third isolable experience which is what postcolonial theorists recognise too – the experience of the 'colonised'. The hybrid position I declare here thus bears these three experiences of three cultural engagements. Having been positioned as this type of hybrid interpreter, I am equipped with varying critical appreciations and responses to the experiences I encounter. In the hybrid cultures, there may be marked distinctness in culture and ideas but not an exclusive or absolute Otherness that can be theorised.

As Stuart Hall stipulates, ethnicity can be worked around the idea of nation and 'race' and alternatively as a marker – recognition that we have originating places, histories, experiences, 'cultures' without being hardened into a non-malleable configuration of these identities. For we can say that

we are all *ethnically* located and our ethnic identities are crucial to our subjective sense of who we are. But this is also a recognition that this is not an ethnicity which is doomed to survive, as Englishness was, only by marginalizing, dispossessing, displacing and forgetting other ethnicities. Hall (1996c: 442)

But the interesting argument to be made is that there is a far more extensive overlapping even from these ethnic identities and locations and as cultural compositions are not exclusively and rigidly contained,

we can say that there are various shared ideas, cultures and knowledges, temporally and spatially, which is a proposition to make if we want to stretch the concept of hybridity to its edges.

The idea of the '*Diaspora*' experience is applied to 'Third World' academics and postcolonial people in other spaces, yet the experience of the nation states and communities in former colonised areas are all culturally non-exclusive and are in fact, in many degrees, composite of different cultural elements. Britain as a colonizing force for instance is analysable as constituent of hybrid experiences and identities, although Englishness still is a dominant identity, which is apparently unchangingly prominent and hegemonic. It is also a factor of language and the position of the discursive framework that determines how much acknowledgment of the various facets of the culture are in fact evolved or transformed ones. The very idea of multi-culturalism is to purport that each of the cultures partaking and identified in the multicultural milieu are in fact bounded constituents of specific cultural categories. The only understanding for this designations of difference is to be located in Stuart Hall's explanations of tracing of identities through nation and race, or a fact of clinging to forms of origination and experience, from as far back as we chose to or perceive these identities and cultural as our original ones.

Interestingly, after tempering with the ideas of culture, representation, the postcolonial and the hybridity aspects, the particular medium of

television entices a consideration for its role and character in relation to the political standpoints of this study and also concerning its framing within the configurations of postcoloniality.

1.12 A Postcolonial Television?

Apart from being present in pre and post-independence era texts (literary, scientific and political), colonialist discourse involving the coloniser and colonised are most likely to be found in many other forms of literary/artistic and cultural expressions. The versatility of language and communication in our borrowing of contexts, the inter-textual or inter-discourse/discursive associations across different genres, means meaning carries on being linked with such possible earlier uses of those subjects and contexts. We borrow stories to explain what we mean and our communication appears as extensions of earlier topics, subjects, ideas or things we have been exposed to. If communication by printed texts in literary, scientific, political and anthropological and historical genres engaged in rhetoric of a particular kind, there is evidently nothing yet that shows that a change in the medium of transmission will possibly lead to a change in the representations. Modern communications technologies only provide alternative media, if not extensions, for the expression of what was predominantly mediated mainly in printed texts, in limited genre types, as well as live theatre. In future each new technology as it surfaces would need to be scrutinised for any changes in the manner of representations and the specific role of the technology or medium in the nature of these representations.

As mentioned earlier, Britain's colonised territory in Africa in the 18th to 20th centuries did not cover the entire continent of Africa. Other Western nations had significant portions of the partitioned continent. France, for example, had a bigger surface area under its colonised rule. What is worth doing is a scrutiny of the relationships between the coloniser and the colonised parties, post-colonial/post-independence and most importantly current relationships in the late to early 20th and 21st centuries respectively. A critical enquiry into discoursing about Africa engages this question of relationships between the colonised and the past coloniser. It does work at questioning the colonialist perspectives that existed and remain in the media, along with any new adaptations in the presentation of 'Africa' as a subject. Remnants of colonialist perceptions and attitudes, in discourses and images found in scientific writing, travel journals, reports and literary material are used as a background for understanding any discovered projections of 'Africa' in the contemporary media. Thus the post-colonial angle becomes an importantly useful approach to understanding the resilience of the effects of the colonial experience in contemporary times.

This fascinating, yet greatly overlooked, presence of the colonial in contemporary media texts is being ignited and engaged with here, in the exploration of British media representation of Africa, and should provide fodder for more research. More extensive research is required exclusively on the question of film and television as extensions of

postcolonial texts. This thesis just stops short of that fuller line of enquiry.

1.13 Conclusions

This is a thesis, which in part subverts the cannon, and in so doing draws attention to the subjectivities that underpin the considered 'standard', 'usual', 'normal' or accepted order of things. The 'normalisation' of things around us masks the intricacies in our elevating or relegation of different ideologies or cultures. By interrupting those dormant and yet unfounded truths, the aim of these arguments is to set-off the debates and reinstate the possibilities of working towards a balancing of the order of representations about the Other, especially on the continuously proliferating new popular and mass media. Any such interventions need to take account not only the work of a particular media, but also of embedded beliefs – of culture in that sense, which feeds and are fed by media representations. Nowhere is this truer than in the sphere of the representations of Others, and particularly, the continuity of colonial representations and stereotypes.

Acknowledging the presence of a set of 'normalising ideologies', contained so often in discourses and representations of all kinds including those on Africa, captures the vein of canon-questioning, which is common to the postcolonial critical school. Tropes of representations gleaned from the programmes are dissected along lines, similar to the

analytical attention paid literary texts by postcolonial critics. Understanding that, primarily, our awareness of our 'culture' essentially acts as a blinker and a filter and influences greatly our interpretation of all things; helps us understand the need for the clarifications detailed in this chapter. Thus a person reading 'Representations of Africa' within this text should now be hopefully guarded against misunderstanding any 'representations' to simply imply 'representatives', but will be clearer about how such terms are used to mean, and therefore, can appreciate the salient arguments that frame this study.

Chapter 2 – On Methodological Issues and Extensive Results.

2.0. Introduction

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2.8 Conclusions

Methodology must not be confused with its subject matter. The purpose of methodology is to describe and to examine the logic of composition of research methods and techniques, to reveal their powers and limitations, to generalise successes and failures, to find domains of appropriate application, and to predict possible contributions to knowledge.

(Krippendorff, 1980:10)

2.0. Introduction

This chapter is dual purposed: firstly, it is dedicated to reflections on methodology and secondly it presents the results of the initial sampling of British television content, since the study as whole has a strong empirical element and relatively new applications. It begins with a discussion of the ethics of the personal and discusses the experiences that map and generate the questions and the curiosity that constituted this study. I have sought to include, what I call an interrogation of the

Self in relation to my topic, exposing the basis of my interest in representations of Africa on British television. This includes the logical and logistical reasons for choosing television and the continent of Africa. Secondly the chapter acts as a report on the collating of material and the selection of examples used in the analytical discussions in the thesis. The chapter also conducts an argument about appropriate methods of cultural analysis, especially as between quantitative and qualitative methods of analysing media 'content'.

2.1 The Self and the Topic - Influences of a Personal Kind

I would gladly ignore and let lie the experience that prompted interest in the topic, yet it is nearly so central to the study I believe some discussion of it is in place.

Engaging with or employing the Personal, I believe, positions the life of the study; we can see where the personal life affects the representation being made by virtue of one's experiences, intentions, knowledge and point of view; the voice being seen as part of the message. Too many times research has been 'the alien eye', 'the objective' or the commitments of the researcher have been disguised or hidden – such research provides little understanding to the reader of the interests of the researcher in the topic. The form of my reflexivity or self-consciousness is to lay bare my personal terms and my dialogical interrogation of the materials and culture I am observing in my research.

My personal encounter with the 'knowledges' and the discourses on Africa that prevailed in Britain at the end of the twentieth century was probably what could be described as a 'culture shock'. My forming environment in Ghana (which can be subsumed as African) was one which incorporated colonial and imperial histories and experiences as recently as the 1990's, set against the older or established indigenous socio-cultural experiences that predated the colonisation of 'Africa'. I am inclined to describe my wealth of personal experience, of information and knowledge as coming from a range of diverse cultural milieus; multicultural and intercultural and thus making me amenable to varied socio-cultural environments. My first 'culture shock' was to realise that, by and large, most people in a 'historically coloniser' country like Britain, do not have a similar understanding of the existing diversity in world systems or particularly former colonies. They also do not appear to have been multi-cultured, or been imbued with the hybrid cultural identities from colonisation in similar ways as the colonised people have. I encountered a lack of awareness of the fact that models of socio-economic systems existing in the West were present in parts of Africa. There also appeared to be a lack of knowledge of the equivalent but different approaches to living in parts of Africa- an absence of empathy for socio-cultural, political and economic life systems in parts of Africa, which were very often and very easily subjugated as undeveloped. In my experience, cultural and social life existing in Africa appears to be perceived and discussed as timeless and static, with an apparent

fascination that a pastoral way of living, essentially 'African', is prevalent in Africa.

For many an African intellect, making conversations in United Kingdom, a completely new tutorial often begins as one tries to inform tactfully and effectively by answering questions, affirming that there is indeed no language called 'African', nor is there an 'African food' or 'African dress' per se, but one can specify much narrower language, food or dress types, specific to different locations or succumb to labelling all such things by attributing them to their origins on the continent. Again I have been initially surprised at the questions that insinuate that there is complete rural life in Africa. There seemed very little awareness of the organised systems that operate in the cities and metropolitan communities as well as in the villages and rural areas. Some questions such as 'how long have you lived in England?' I have further probed, and have found a curiosity about how I achieved my level of spoken English. Often my responses, that Ghana is an English speaking country and besides the sixty odd languages in the country, English remains the national language and lingua franca for most metropolitan people, yields surprises. The magnitude of the size of the continent of Africa means that there are communities who live closer in geographical distance to the west than to others in the same continent. There are differences far and wide in people, cultures and socio-political arrangements which are very distinct, visible and real to many such people living in countries on the continent, but appear seamlessly merged into one unified community from without.

Only 'experts' or persons with dedicated interest, such as visitors to Africa, seem to be more enlightened. My curiosity has been compounded by these experiences and interactions and having been considerably informed on global affairs by the Ghanaian media and substantially educated in school about the West, I could immediately make out the imbalances in the information flow especially from the public sector media when relocated to the West. The public sector media in Britain is undoubtedly large in scope and coverage and its turnover of programming far exceeding the turnover in a country such as Ghana at the turn of the 20th and the dawn of 21st century, yet there is clearly a lot more particular mention of individual Western nations such as Great Britain, Spain, the Netherlands etc., in broadcast programmes including news reports in the Ghanaian media for instance, than the British media's recognition of individuality and singularity in Others outside its recognised world hegemonic nations. The limited news on countries in Africa woefully compares with the amount of detailed news items about the West that the Ghanaian news media covers daily. All in all, it beggars belief how very little is widely known about political and socio-cultural life that exist in the continent of Africa in a country with such a modern and prolific media, information resources and a very high literacy rate. Instead, and much more significantly intriguing, is a predominantly one-sidedly constructed 'Africa' which still seems to persist in my experience of the Western media.

My experiences strengthened the resolve to explore and to critically examine the British media, especially, to chart the processes, characteristics through which Africa is represented on British Television.

Being within any country in Africa, the representations of 'Africa' that transpire abroad do not resonate similarly within. Africa constructs differently to the Ghanaian, South African, Libyan etc. To them the experience of the geographical Africa is closer and the myths and imaginaries about Africa and about themselves are less dominated by the negative. Any recurrent theme or idea of primitivity, wildlife, famine and wars among others may be acknowledged more within some communities and completely distant in others. Predominantly, there arises a need to explore a medium in the West to try to locate some of the factors that create and Other Africa and how this transition takes place within the transmitted content. Thus this enquiry approaches the question of media representations of Africa, by critically reading the messages on Africa, the discourses and images on television for an understanding and illumination of the nature of television representations on Africa.

The 'Representations of Africa in the Western Media' was what I proposed to explore, at the onset. I began with a curiosity towards the different meanings, and the relationships between these meanings, revolving around the mention of 'Africa' in the West. I wanted to explore the relationships and divergencies between the geopolitical name 'Africa'

and other signified uses or connotatively developed sub-texts around the same sign. The way 'Africa' is employed discursively in language and portrayed in images to Western audiences was of particular interest to me. I had read a number of texts, newspapers, listened to radio stations and watched popular television in the United Kingdom for two years preceding the study. The most striking realisation for me was how peculiar news about the 'developing world', hitherto referred to as the 'Third World', and Africa, appeared when broadcast on television, and how discourses in popular programming often cast 'Africa' as a predominantly primitive and negative domain and as a strikingly crude and adventure-filled, undiscovered site. I was not ignorant of the processes of the production of news broadcasts and popular television programmes, which I knew had significant human controls. Of course I am particularly aware of the human fallibility of the media personnel, who have to make choices and to tie together the information they gather. I was anxious to explore the workings in a Western media's discourses about Africa to satisfy my curiosity about how a strongly distinct sidelining and Othering of Africa occurs, apart from identifying the dominant thematic constructs that surround the mention of Africa. Immediately, the recognisable researchable questions glaringly include, why Africa seems to command the position of a distinct 'Other' – enchanting and yet problematic, massive in size but a simplified unit. Why has there been suggestions globally, of Africa as a sorely misrepresented continent? (MacBride, 1980; Hawk, 1992; Hagos, 2001)

Adrian Cleasby et al (1995) in a study of whether British Television presents a truly full and fair reflection of other non-British cultures, issues and events, found that, in both factual programmes and news reports, there had been falling levels in international issue programmes and a consequent narrowing of the range of issues which is broadcast on television in the United Kingdom. The Western media is indeed either avoiding the rest of the world or is misrepresenting it. Their study examined documentaries and current affairs programmes transmitted on industrialised countries of the north and non-industrialised countries of the south between 1989-90 and 1993-1994 on the then four main terrestrial channels. To understand the kinds 'Africa', familiar to mass audiences in the UK, close examination of media content appeared unavoidable.

2.2 What Media? Why TV?

Exploring all media forms seemed an impossible task for one researcher and it seemed most appropriate to choose a medium that incorporates more sensory layers in communicating. For that audiovisual quality television was obviously the most appropriate medium at the time. Television in the UK is still a modern and widely subscribed mass medium. It is one medium with unparalleled capacity for raising public awareness, and an ability to initiate and develop interests in a subject across various age groups and backgrounds (Lang & Lang, 1953; Hall, 1975; Larson, 1979). The ease of collating printed material has meant

that the printed press has proved more popular research fodder than the electronic media, but the gains the electronic media continue to make over the print media as daily sources of information is immense and thus is gaining as much scrutiny and analysis.

This is partly because of the 'dominance of visuals' as argued by Rowland Lorimer (1994:208). Not just moving pictures or complements to a newspaper text, television visuals 'structure the story and a text is built around those visuals' (1994:208). The visuals, in this case moving images, are manufactured assemblages co-ordinated to signify and carry particular meanings. The act of taking any photographic image involves the active process of selecting and de-selecting that which is to be included in the picture. Through focus on animal habitats or negative themes, slums or city skylines and through programming of particular genres in television for instance, we are made to see selective regularities that exist in the world. In much the same way, the un-encountered images become all the stranger and more unfamiliar when we eventually see them. An audience's association of geographical spaces or textual references with particular mental pictures is encouraged by the continual organization of the sites with particular framing themes. The stereotyping of space and place is encouraged by caricaturing them or simply because the media dwells more on those images and scenes rather than others. Thus studying these occurrences on television is very appropriate.

2.3 Why not News Alone

To locate ideas, contexts, including perceptions framing the content on Africa and to examine these against a perspective of imaginative, historical, anthropological and travel discourses involving Africa, an exclusive examination of news programmes was ruled out. The plan of this study thus was to explore television representations of 'Africa', which go beyond television news reports, and dwell on the numerous other inter-textual television material on the subject. This is to acknowledge that the scope of contemporary television genres through which images and ideas about Africa can be transferred is wide and varied and admittedly large, and thus all require scrutiny¹. These genres include: natural history programmes, travel programmes, advertisements, comedy series and serials, one-off films and dramas, documentaries and news programmes, and magazine entertainment programmes such as *Songs of Praise*².

Although researchers continuously take the view that news on television is not equal to reality, but encompasses constructions or creations of reality, which I largely agree to, one cannot help recognising that to deem all audiences deeply analytical of all programmes they watch is

¹ In discussing media content, Rowland Lorimer sees 'cultural production' as existing in 'dynamic tension with the society of which it is a part'. He argues that, the values or realities of society find a re-expression in light entertainment, while 'news and current affairs patrol the boundaries of the acceptable or usual, mostly in the world of business and politics'. It is lamentable, he argues, that the media's vivid reflection of culture is only being recently incorporated in the interpretation of media production (Lorimer, 1994:279). It is thus congruent that a wider examination, taking cognisance of the cultural re-expression and exchange within the medium is at least incorporated.

² BBC1's magazine religious and musical programme

simply an impossible submission. To a large section of the population, television is a relaxing medium from which images and commentaries are indicative of social conditions, eyewitness accounts or fictional or non-fictional material. Thus television does manage to attract and sustain viewer interest, which is indicated in its role in the home and the many uses to which audiences put it (Ellis, 1992; Buscombe, 2000; Fiske & Hartley, 2003). The variable degrees of attention audiences give television, and the fact that it contributes to and processes our daily social, political, cultural melange of ideas and experiences suggests it is a formidable tool for a mass community such as Britain's (Morley, 1992).

2.4 Sampling Issues

2.4.1 Nature of the Sample – Setting out a Criteria.

Enquiries of the media are already unbalanced, leaning heavily towards media effects enquiries rather than production causes and contents. There are three main types of television studies: studies of content or text, of audience or readership, and of production. Text based and audience based studies are the predominant forms of television studies with production studies a poor third (Johnson et al, 2004). But surveys of a particular theme or issue across the full range of television genre are rare. The focusing of scrutiny is most often on particular television genres, angled towards one aspect only. For example studying only the news would produce, as we shall see, a very particularly negative image of Africa.

A second key issue concerns the temporal dimension of the sample. Contemporary television is indeed an interesting category to explore as one encounters popular mass media traditions that indeed replicate sociological and cultural conditions of the here and now. Material used has to be fairly current ruling out the use of historical archives that are dated, distant from contemporary contexts and cultural experiences and are hard to access in the case of electronic material. The contemporaneous nature of the programmes or discourses does not rule out the opportunity to discuss long-standing patterns of representation, taking account of past discursive frameworks and so illuminating ongoing processes of change and continuity.

The requirement of contemporary material required, in turn, a method for sourcing from recent and ongoing broadcast programmes. Collating and analysing television content can be difficult and to garner representations of any nature in the media over time is also complex. To achieve the task of exploring and collating information, a sample had to be designed, that provided the structures for the quantitative study, taking into consideration a series of relevant variables and the voluminous amount of fleeting data that had to be screened for material.

By using samples of time frames of television broadcast in two different times of the year, I aimed at obtaining an example of content with a start and finish. Specifying start and finish criteria are all aspects of sampling procedure and employed in content analysis. This method of sampling

has even since been used in the composition of a report on Multicultural broadcasting published in November 2002 (Hargrave, 2002). Thus to measure quantitatively the frequency of the occurrence of the subject of Africa and the genres that mainly engage with Africa and the channels that include more or less on the subject, this approach proved useful. It was possible to ask, is Africa misrepresented, under-represented or over-presented, in relation to particular genres.

I sourced UK television content on Africa by gleaning, thoroughly, all published programme schedules for programmes that make mention of, or have a component of discourse related to Africa. These were all selected, recorded, screened and transcribed accordingly. News programmes were sourced differently using a 'collate, screen and discard approach' to ascertain their appropriateness or relevance. This involved recording all news programmes over the sample period, which were then screened, selected or discarded.

Gathering this sample for use in the quantitative study, and later in the examples used in illustrating the arguments, provided a guide as to the presence of, and the nature of these discourses on Africa on British television at this time. The important rules structuring the sample therefore included, a defined start and finish, cross-seasonal viewing periods, free-on-air broadcast programmes, and the inclusion of peak viewing times. The data accrued was sourced making use of the March/April and October/November months of the 1998 calendar year.

These four months are selected deliberately because they mark the transitional periods of Spring and Summer, and Autumn and Winter programming Schedules respectively. Dated from the 1st to the 30th/31st of these months, the sample also tries to incorporate any variations in channel scheduling for the seasons. The cross-seasonal period also ensures a balance of programme types and is as effective as a year-long screening, which utilizes much more resources and would have much more redundant material for a study limited by time and size.

For the purposes of structuring the sample and also for sourcing programmes with far reaching readership as well as programmes that were easily accessible to most television viewers in the United Kingdom, I chose the free-on-air channels to achieve this purpose. At the time of this research these free-on-air channels included BBC1, BBC2, ITV1, Channel 4 and Channel 5. These were all available via the older and widely used analogue terrestrial broadcasts. During the life of this study, digital transmission has been gaining wider receivership and accessibility, and this is still growing, yet the high costs of digital receivers means that the newer digital channels of BBC3 BBC4 ITV2 ITV sport, BBC News 24, and many other paid-for cable and satellite programmes are not extensively accessed by the UK public. Multichannel penetration in the UK is around 56.7 of all UK households, while digital subscription has reached 53% as at March 2004. Analogue free-on-air television still remains the widest coverage with served and marginal areas exceeding 99% of UK households. The collective coverage

of the main networks (BBC, BBC2, ITV and Channel 4), defined as the core coverage, is a significant 98.5 %. (OFCOM, 2003, 2004)

I have also targeted peak viewing periods, to capture all 'watershed' programmes or programmes that enjoy larger audiences figures and are thus the core budgetary programmes of the channels. To safeguard omitting any programmes that start or finish within the peak periods and to include all scheduled news broadcasts on all the channels, my peak viewing period extends to cover the hours of 17.00 and 2300. Some of the Channels have since extended their news broadcasts to later times, but this did not affect the sample. The limiting of the sample to the peak viewing periods has also aided in the management of the staggering amounts of television hours that had to be primarily screened to catch a mention of 'Africa'.

In summary the primary aims of the content study were as follows: to locate the presences of 'Africa' on British television, inclusive of, but noting the variables of duration, genre and channel: to measure the quantitative extent of references to the subject of 'Africa'; to measure the extent of these references of these genre; and to provide sufficiently varied examples for closer qualitative study.

2.5 Methods of Analysis I

2.5.1 Quantitative Analysis

The initial questions were concerned firstly with quantity. Simply, this was an attempt to measure how much viewers get to see or hear about 'Africa' on British television. The breakdown down of this information by time, channel and genre also gave a foundation to the more qualitative aspects of the study. Without limiting the study to the geopolitical definition of 'Africa' alone, the content study had a wider scope to include all programmes containing discourses that broached the subject of Africa whether set in Africa, filmed in Africa, fictional or non-fictional and which dealt with other derivatives of Africa such as 'African'. The interrogation of the characteristics of these 'Africas' on British TV is extended in the qualitative analysis that follows in the four main chapters.

The empirical nature of the study begins with this quantitative exploratory analysis of British television content.

2.5.2 Basic Results of content study – Breakdown of Results of 'Africa's' occurrence on UK television

The overall results of the content study show that there is indeed a significantly low coverage and mention of Africa on British television. Table 2a below, displays the overall showing of programmes that broached the topic of Africa within the sample. There is no distinction

between the levels of engagement per programme with the topic of Africa at this stage.

Distribution of programmes mentioning Africa across all channels

Table 2a. Number of programmes per channel

TV Channels	Total Number of items mentioning Africa	Percentage share of programmes across all channels
BBC1	43	36.4
BBC2	16	13.6
ITV 1	23	19.4
Channel 4	18	15.3
Channel 5	18	15.3
TOTAL	118	100.0%

In this first breakdown, BBC1 clearly leads with the number of programmes that deal with or mention Africa. It is interesting to note that ITV1's coverage is also significant with nearly 20 percent of the total number of programmes in the sample found to mention Africa. BBC2 has the least number of programmes broadcast with 'Africa' content. The average distribution of programmes mentioning Africa within the sample amounted to 23.6 %.

Breaking down these global figures to the monthly distribution of programmes, with Africa content per channel, shows that on the whole the channels with more content on Africa maintain their dominance as reflected in Table 2b below.

Table 2b. Breakdown according to monthly output of programmes in sample

Channel	March	April	October	November	Total
BBC1	11	8	14	10	43
BBC2	4	3	2	7	16
ITV	9	7	4	3	23
Channel4	8	3	3	4	18
Channel5	5	4	3	6	18
TOTAL	37	25	26	30	118

A further breakdown is given in Table 2c below, and expresses the same data in terms of the total time occupied by programmes related to Africa within the sample, compared with the total time for scheduled programmes covered by the sample.

Duration of programmes with African content with total available broadcast time

Table 2c. Duration of programmes mentioning Africa per month

Month	Available duration monthly, for sample period (in minutes)	Net duration spent on programmes mentioning Africa (in minutes)	% of min
March	55,800	538	0.96
April	54,000	433	0.80
October	55,800	358	0.64
November	54,000	605	1.12
Total @ 1/3 of Year	219,600	1,934	0.88

It highlights the overall frequency of programmes mentioning Africa measured against the calendar year. Based on the comparative estimated hours available each month for broadcasting as shown in the left column of table 2c, discourses involving Africa appear very minimal throughout the calendar year. From the sampled months, March has the highest number of programmes dealing with the subject, yet it is worth noting that in spite of the appearance of significant news breaks in October, it has the lowest percentage of time spent on 'African' programmes. The

three other months have closer counts on the amount of time spent on programmes that simply mention the subject of 'Africa'. Newsbreaks on Africa, such as in October, often reflect the incidences of famine or war or visits by 'global figures' later discussed elsewhere in this study.

In relation to the subject the average number of items per month working from the total of 188 programmes available in the sample is 24 programmes. Although this is a mere 1.57% of initial total monthly averages of 1,525 scheduled programmes broadcast on the five channels around the same peak viewing periods (17.00-23.00hrs) used in this study³. This takes into account all nature and all other programmes of long duration set in 'Africa'.

The third breakdown focuses on the corresponding performances for both channels and genres in relation to African items. Table 2.d immediately below illustrates this distribution along the distinguished genres on one hand and the television channels on the other.

³ This is calculated using an estimate of 10 programmes per channel at peak viewing (17.00-23.00hrs)(6 hours) over one month. Sample covered 5 channels over 122 days amounting to 6,100 scheduled programmes. The programmes mentioning Africa are calculated as a percentage of these figures.

Table 2d – Number and duration of programmes with African content by genre and channel

Television Genre	B B C 1	B B C 2	I T V 1	Ch 4	Ch 5	Total of all programmes	Total duration of advertised programmes on Africa in minutes	Total actual Africa content in minutes
News	29	-	17	7	1	54	1,512	141
Other News Programme	-	2	-	-	-	2	85	15
Documentary	-	4	3	6	-	13	606	539
Natural History	7	9	-	1	16	33	1,263	1,086
Travel programme	3	-	2	1	1	7	179	60
Film/ Drama	3	-	1	-	-	4	406	350
Magazine or 'factual entertainment'	1	1	-	-	-	2	94	78
Comedy/ Situation comedy	-	-	-	2	-	2	56	35
Advertisement	-	-	-	1	-	1	3	3
Total for all programmes	43	16	23	18	18	118	4,204	2,306

Out of a total of 219,600 available minutes for scheduling on all five channels within the four months, programmes that mention Africa constitute 1.05% inclusive, of all natural history programmes and all other programmes of long duration set in Africa.

I have also included, a breakdown above highlighting the total duration of each classified genre within this sample. *Total duration of advertised programmes on Africa* in Table 2d refers to the total duration of all the programmes as advertised and covered by the sample. The *Total actual Africa content* on the other hand is the actual duration spent discoursing Africa. This is arrived at, by eliminating sections of programmes that

deal with other subjects or sites and measuring the specific time spent on the subject of Africa.

In news programmes the *total actual Africa content* narrows down to the duration of specific stories dealing with Africa. News stories on 'Africa', this study has shown, tend to be very short reports fitted into a longer programme involving a diverse range of stories with various broadcast airtime.

I have used the following genre categories. *News* covers the regular daily newscasts on each channel. *Other news programmes* caters for Newsnight, which is BBC2's news magazine programme. The next category, *documentary programmes*, includes both series and one-off documentaries and may cover a wide range of themes. The other categories are *natural history programmes*, *travel programmes*, one-off *films and dramas* and *magazine programmes* or *factual entertainment programmes*.⁴

It is worth mentioning here that the strengths and pre-occupations of the specific channels are reflected in the results as shown above. For example, BBC1 makes a stronger appearance on the natural history and news genres. It featured 29 of the 54 news programmes that mention Africa among these five channels. Significantly the higher the news and

⁴ This category is used by Brunson et al (2001) to describe such programmes as lifestyle and makeover programmes. I have included religious programmes like *Songs of Praise* within that grouping.

natural history count, the probability of the subject 'Africa' emerging increases. The absence of a dedicated news programme on BBC2 is reflected by the low count in the tables on BBC2 news. Yet its weeknight current affairs programme *Newsnight*, ensured BBC2 had twice registered in the sample for two programmes that included the subject 'Africa'.

To further magnify some variables within these units, I have included some breakdowns of some of the factual programme distribution, falling within the sample.

Table 2e – Factual programming as percentage of Sample

Channel	Total Num of items in sample	Number of documentaries in sample	Documentaries in percentage of each channel's output	Documentaries in percentage of total sample
BBC1	43	0	0%	0%
BBC2	16	4	25.0%	3.39 %
ITV	23	3	13.0%	2.54 %
Ch 4	18	6	33.3%	5.08 %
Ch 5	18	0	0%	0%
Total	118	13	15.34 %	11.02 %

The percentage of broadcast space taken by factual programmes such as documentaries is very small. From the study sample only 11.02 percent of all the Africa-content programmes were in the documentary format. Also it is worthy of note that BBC1 and Channel 5 had no documentaries relating to Africa within these four months. Channel 4's documentaries make up 5.08% of all the programmes in the sample. The documentary output of Channel 4 is still only 1.08% of all other programmes on Channel 4 within the sample.

The low output of factual documentaries reflects the decline in documentaries as predicted in an earlier study of television documentaries carried out by Adrian Cleasby et al – that study of output also concluded that

the relative dearth of documentary programmes dealing with people and events central to Africa may go some way to explain the difficulty British viewers have in understanding the context which underlies the conflict in Rwanda. It may also reflect upon the 'Skewed perspective of TV coverage' (Cleasby et al, 1995:36)

Drawing a comparison between natural history programmes and other factual documentaries, the added-up time for the output, filmed wholly or significantly outside the British Isles, and broadcast on the five terrestrial channels for each of the time blocks studied is represented thus.

Table 2f – Length of documentaries and natural history programmes in sample (in minutes)

	BBC1	BBC2	ITV	Ch 4	Ch 5
All documentaries	0	167	115	256	0
Natural history	185	359	0	52	501
Both genres	185	526	115	308	501

Channel 5's lack of documentaries in the sample related to Africa is compensated with a large number of hours actually spent on natural history programmes filmed in part or whole in Africa. In spite of the profile and larger number of BBC 1 and BBC2 's natural history programme count, the actual duration of programmes dwelling on the subject appeared longer with Channel 5. This is so because Channel 5's

natural history programmes are frequently nearly an hour long and were much more frequent than the weekly episodes of *Wildlife on 1* and *Animal Zone* on BBC2.

The accelerating decline in documentary output appears to be due to the growing competition in the sector for other entertaining programmes that attract larger audiences. The higher audience figures provide backing for television license fee usage for public sector channels and also commercial backing for the independent channels. Alternatively the low cost and growing interest in the fly-on-the-wall documentaries, reality television shows or social experiment television genre where individuals are filmed progressively by taping their lives in different situations, artificial or natural have taken more space on peak television periods, reducing the time allotted to documentaries. The opportunities being generated by the multiple channels of paying satellite, digital and cable television networks have meant that documentaries have not altogether disappeared, even if they show to small audiences.

2.5.3 Limitations of Quantitative Study/Content Analysis

Content analysis as a media research approach has its uses. Content Analysis of media texts, requires the classification and the measuring of occurrences of a particular phenomenon (Rosengren, 2000; Berger, 1998). The basic assumption implicit in content analysis is that an investigation of messages and communication of such nature gives insights into the people who receive these messages, Arthur Asa Berger

suggests (1991:92). From a methodological point of view it may not be entirely mathematical to determine if there is little or too much of a representation but it is possible to assess the representation based on its nature and quality, to understand contextually how effective, and along what lines, the representation leads. An analysis of content is expected to reveal clues fundamental to the establishment of mental images and knowledge on the subject. With a clear knowledge of what is being sought, we can assess how much is present in the media as demonstrated in the tables earlier in this chapter. Knowing how much of the particular type of content, the media under focus contain, enables a more informed discussion of the issue. Having identified the levels of recurrence and the prominence of tropes, themes and issues, the result feeds the resultant discussions about the why's and how's of such practices. Lutz and Collins (1993) also advocate the use of content analysis to interpret photographic material, but they assert that

quantification does not preclude or substitute qualitative analysis of the pictures. It does allow, however, discovery of patterns that are too subtle to be visible on casual inspection and protection against an unconscious search through the magazine for only those that confirm one's initial sense of what the photos say or do. (1993:89),

However, content analysis, as Gillian Rose (2001) maintains, has limits when it comes to visual images. Rose contends that content analysis rules are not equipped to address aspects of visual imagery. And by focussing nearly entirely on the '*compositional* modality of the site of the *image* itself' (2001:56) it fails to answer questions about the production and audiencing of images. Furthermore content analysis has been

criticised as not being able to deal with the cultural significance of images, especially when the links between these images and their broader cultural context are weak. Drawing from both qualitative and quantitative approaches for material that is diverse and has varied cultural links and which in itself is not a singular mode of images, or narratives or sounds, becomes imperative. The multiplicities of the medium of television and the array of genres, in addition to the variety of cultural inputs expected from the study, required a choice of elements of both research practices to maximise results. The content study element is thus a smaller complimenting aspect of the main approach, which we can term 'a critical study'.

Doing television research is always going to prove much more difficult than the study of print material and a study like this, which probes across genres, takes much more effort than exclusive studies such as studies of news reports. Some of the hurdles were logistical. Firstly, because the study sourced empirical material for the critical analysis, there was an amount of raw primary data of hours of television programme to trawl through for the identification of the relevant programmes. Sorting the sample by time frames, apart from limiting the extent of material, also helped draw an overview of the structure of the UK media, the channels, the genres, and the programming content. Secondly, transcribing the television programmes into 'television texts' for the purposes of a critical study of this kind and for integration into the debate proved demanding and not as straightforward as analysing

printed texts. Time is of the essence here and with a media content that is fast moving. The structure of a sample and an analysis of content are substantially significant in recording those levels of content relevant to the subject of Africa. But that record is not conclusive or adequate for a critical analysis that seeks out far more intricate interpretations of the discourses, the relationships occurring, the cultural and linguistic contributory elements among others that encourage the overall themes and discourses.

The results of the content study, above, produced specific results showing that Africa is not heavily featured on British television. The content study results also serve as the main resource of material for the quantitative analysis – the critical reading of the television discourses and texts. To maintain a contemporaneous outlook, however, I have selectively included programmes and examples throughout the duration of the study (1997-2004). This enabled the analysis of an extensive range of discourses on Africa, a wider scope of interpretation and continuity in the scrutiny.

2.6 Methods of Analysis II

2.6.1 Qualitative Analysis

My approach to analysis is to scrutinize the West from within, using the questions that arise from the classifiable identity of the 'Other' – seeking out how a part of the Western epistemology (a global hegemonic order)

perceives and discourses the 'Other' through the examination of the stories it tells about the unfamiliar 'Others'. The positioning of the questioning eye of the 'Other' within the studied is to enable a closer to ethnographic study, a reverse anthropological study of the more common Western studies of its Others. It also is an opportunity for the cultural and knowledge capital of both communities to be employed in the measuring of attitudes between them – thus becoming a study that encourages a by-pass of some of the predominant perceptions of bad and good, wrong and right perceived in connection with the 'non-industrialised South', and also to examine the 'industrialised West' from an 'African' and not a 'Western point of view'.

2.6.2 Cross-genre Approaches

The application of a genre inclusive method in this study is a relatively new approach in light of television cultural research, but as argued earlier, intertextuality in television material is present such that cultural and contextual material and is often carried forth and referred to in other discourses – an indirect but effectively engagement of knowledge, messages and meanings from one issue to another.

James Halloram (1974), writing in the introduction to *Race as News*, pointedly brings out the lessons in Unescos' *Proposals for an International Programme of Communications Research* (UNESCO 1971). The crux of that discussion was that we need to know about things that are socially significant by putting forward problem oriented research

that cover all aspects of communication processes. Studying the media in isolation, he asserts, does not work. The wider social, economic, historic and political setting in which the media belongs is relevant for the interpretation and understanding of questions posed about the particular media. It is thus imperative that we cannot assume the media to be in isolation of the representations in it or of the inputs of the media personnel or of the relationships the media and its audiences have with the continent of Africa for example. Similarly the elements brought to the study by the researcher should, if known, help enrich the understanding of the complex whole, which media representations are.

Halloram (1974) put it quite plainly in suggesting that,

One of the most important things research can do for those working in the media is to make the implicit explicit and to make people aware of the nature and implications of those basic assumptions which underlie their day-to-day activities (Halloram 1974: 12).

His further argument, that the media have the capacity of more than reinforcing what already exists is apt. The media's influences are not always instantaneous and radical transformation of docile audiences, as the 'hypodermic needle' effects school once argued, have long been replaced by 'uses and gratifications' arguments, 'reception theories' and 'cultivation theories'⁵. These new debates all followed the recognition of

⁵ The Hypodermic needle theory was rampant in the 1920s when the real impact of the media was questioned and anticipated. Uses and Gratifications theory was expanded by Bulmer and Katz (1974) when they listed uses for which individuals might use their media text particular purposes to suit them. Stuart Hall's model, expounding that a text is encoded by a producer and decoded by the reader, fuelled the reception theory with the encoding - decoding principle. To him, these codes might be read differently by each, but the producers' expectations of the

a non-passive audience, but still acknowledge some degree of absorbency from the media messages. It is true that the media can be seen as instructing the masses with the appropriate behaviour for various conditions, positions or circumstances. Of course they supply 'information which extends far beyond one's immediate experience' (Halloram, 1974: 12), expanding our definitions for things, our knowledge of a diverse range of situations and circumstances which would otherwise have been unavailable. Mass media communications constantly produces stereotypes though these are also displayed by other agencies (Halloram 1974:12). The presence of an array of implicit signifiers and elements, like the playing of music originating from any of the communities or countries in Africa to accompany a film sequence set in one of many other areas on the entire continent, or the presentations of icons of wildlife and nature to foreground stories, or reports that are being shown about some individual communities within countries on the African continent, are examples of attempts at presenting Africa by constructing images expected by audiences.

audiences helps them mould the message using recognised conventions or codes and thus positioning the audience. A strategy he calls "preferred reading". The "cultivation hypothesis" stems from studies at the University of Pennsylvania led by George Gerbner and essentially promulgates arguments that, television has an effect that is cumulative and significant over the long term. Gerbner argues that the mass media cultivate already present values and familiarities, but by propagating these widely and directly to the audiences, binds them together in what he calls 'mainstreaming'. That perspective also believes that the public perception of social reality is thus moulded over time albeit subtly by the long-term exposure of smaller effects and the grounding of commonality. This historical centering of the effects model appears more appealing and plausible and is a position closer to my appreciation of media effects. All the same, this study avoids a central discussion of the effects research, as this is an already popular area of mass communication research (Severin, W.J. & Tankard, J.W., 1988).

Through the genre of comedy for instance, the media shares topics, situations and circumstances, which we are encouraged to be seen as unusual and absurd, requiring and eliciting laughter. Even though these are all labelled light-hearted and not requiring serious thought, there is evidently an understanding being created that the attitude towards the particular situations or discourses are ludicrous (see analysis of *Going Native* in Chapter 5).

Just as comedy operates on the surface as a light non-serious genre, yet conveying images and setting structures and values, news works on different levels too. News is widely acclaimed as a genre that solicits seriousness and is presented as such. The inter-relationships between the value judgements, attitudes and ideologies affect the selectivity structuring and agenda-setting that goes into the composition and constructing of news. These genres although perceptively far apart, borrow contexts for the shaping of future messages. It is thus imperative that on the matter of representations or constructions, an inclusive approach be adopted as I have done.

I have thus included in the critical analysis, all genres that appear within the sample as in the content study. This inclusive approach is later justified by the results, and the thematic arguments further on in the study, reveal how the discursive frameworks and themes sometimes override genre distinctions. This shows that representations are not the

preserve of particular genres such as news or documentaries, but as debated above, carry forth through popular texts, contexts and messages.

2.6.3 Context and Critical analysis

This interpretation of 'context' relayed by Michael J. Toolan, (1988) is an apt one, which I have also adopted as the implied meanings for 'context', used right through this thesis.

[The] context of an utterance or text is the non-verbal, extra linguistic environment of the utterance, which may be of crucial help to us as we try to make sense of the text. (Toolan, 1988:268)

Thus instead of limiting the study to a content analysis, based centrally on quantification and natural science methodologies, I have adopted a more mixed approach, which involves an adapted content study, an element of compositional interpretation and a critical analysis of the programmes as uncovered.

The adapted research strategy employed in this research bears similarities with what Derek Layder (1993) proposes as a multi-strategy approach to research but is effectively a *combined approach* as advocated by Johnson et al (2004:168). Both intensive and extensive research paradigms are used with one complementing the other. The motives for employing quantitative research approach is to locate micro level factors, if any that are contributory to the results that I have reached. It is true that the nature of the problem under study, as well as

the available scope of research strategies plus the availability and accessibility to data and resources for the project, encourage my eventual choice of strategies and data.

The blending of the two approaches, albeit with varying levels of importance, is to take advantage of the ability to integrate the context of the problems on several levels to their interpretation, and not to simply measure through figures the nature of the constructions of 'Africa'. Also to be taken into account are the unfolding nature of the social activities involved. An only *content count* approach would belittle the problem to a widespread yet easily located and solvable issue whereupon the core factors would be missing. In the same way a close-up study of a particular programme would reveal the complexity of sound and image but then it may be less easy to argue for its representativeness. Representation issues, however, have an element of meaning and interpretation would be better elicited on diverse sources by a close-up analysis. In addition cultural analysis is not concerned with individuals and their 'attitudes' but rather seeks to tap into cultural formations or structures that are circulating more widely. This changes the terms of argument about the 'representativeness of the sample'. Small samples, that are strategically chosen, may give access to key themes and tropes that are central in a particular cultural field (Johnson et al, 2004).

Furthermore the appropriateness of the research strategy is often realised on the situation, as the material is uncovered, much more than

pre-composed and imposed plans on the investigation. The need to be flexible to plan, yet give in to other more appropriate strategies I believe, yields the optimum results. Not to be mistaken for random approach Derek Layder makes it clearer, suggesting that

the multi-strategy approach involves judgements about the nature of social life and society and these imply certain things about the most appropriate ways of doing research. (1993:108) [my emphasis]

In addition, 'eschewing methodological purity, yet producing important insights' in a kind of study such as this one, which 'combines the detailed exploration of texts' with other related fields, 'often prompted by auto/biographical experiences' is a route to a 'richer understanding of the process' through which these television texts acquire their meanings (Johnson et al, 2004:168).

2.7. Qualitative Analysis: Critical Studies

For analysis the study engages a critical studies approach, applied to the television programmes as texts, viewed in a critical postcolonial perspective and background. The adoption of a postcolonial critical reading in the analysis of the programmes is to identify the colonial and postcolonial discourses that are present in these texts. Critics of literary writing and anthropological writing that dealt with the colonial relationships and conditions of the colonised as well as the ideologies of the coloniser have stayed with the traditional printed texts (Moore-Gilbert, 1997; Chrisman & Parry, 2000). My position is to acknowledge

and show these new forms of media as equivalent extensions to similar discourses akin to the earlier textual pieces and suggesting that these are all susceptible to that general postcolonial condition and situation and worthy of similar interpretation. Television, Film and Radio are modern electronic extensions of information, entertainment, education and literary products in general and form a significant and staunch cultural resource in the modern world. Tropes of colonial discourse right up to neo-colonial discourses transcend the written text and are present in these popular and contemporary forms of communication. All told, the analysis of text conducted here with this study does provide insights into the ways in which particular uses of techniques of television and film-making construct a particular kind of world.

2.7.1 Qualitative Analysis: Semiotic, Linguistic, Literary

The mode of organisation and ordering of the main units of analysis used in the critical study of the television texts has been helped by the natural results of the initial study. The prominence of particular blocks of themes in the discourses and the preponderance of some tropes of discoursing, have led my order of arguments to focus on these very visible traits of British television programming on Africa and to discuss these dominant themes using a critical reading method backed by four disciplinary leanings. The disciplinary persuasions of the analysis in the chapters are along the lines of linguistic in Chapter 3, anthropological in Chapter 4, literary in Chapter 5 and semiotic in Chapter 6, though frequently these methods are combined.

The linguistic analysis in Chapter 3 originates from the theme of dominant voices and silences. I wanted to show how Africa voices and characters were subordinated to White Western commentaries and commentators. This suggested the use of methods drawn from the study of narrative. The organisation of the author, narrator, message, addressee and reader drawing on narrative analysis (Toolan, 1988) provided a platform for analysis in that sense. The cultural analysis in Chapters 4 principally works on the nature/culture opposition, which has been examined especially in feminist anthropology. Like much anthropology also, this chapter is interested in myth and legend. Chapter 5 works along the identification of particular literary tropes and structures: synecdoche and metonyms as well as a form of discourse analysis. It treats discourses as textual compositions and analyses the different ways Africa is assembled as a homogenous space. In Chapter 6, I make some use of Barthes (2000) semiotic version of myth to show how particular negative representations of Africa connect up with a wider set of meaning and assumptions about Africa. Although this provides an interesting variety to the ways of exploring representations on television, I have adopted each analytical persuasion led by the nature of the findings and the arguments in each chapter. None of these analyses however quite capture the complexity of the televisual text.

One way in which these different analyses can be combined is through the notion of discourse. 'Most uncontroversially, "discourse" is used in linguistics to refer to verbal utterances of greater magnitude than the

sentence.' (O' Sullivan, et al, 1994:92) "Discourse" is the social process of making and reproducing senses' (1994:93). Evidently, our social, historical and institutional formations, produce these discourses and these institutionalised discourses shape our understanding of what things mean. (O' Sullivan et al, 1994). In this study the discourses studied are as defined above but with extensions beyond the simple verbal utterances to include other situational elements like accompanying images, voice tone and moods. Unlike printed texts, television provides other visible and audible situational elements that comparatively allow a more readily decipherable unit of discourse. Apart from the critical reading of television discourses and texts for interpreting the facets and workings of the representation of Africa, I do so borrowing from postcolonial perspectives. In particular, I draw on the notion of discourse, which stresses on the relation of language, power and identity, a combination we owe to the work of Michel Foucault. (e.g. Foucault, 1980).

2.7.2 Complexity of Television as a Cultural Text

On the whole, a chief concern of this study is with the specificity of television's contribution to media discourses and the strengthening of particular representations of Africa. Even Foucauldian notions of discourse do not capture this multi-layered complexity. Television provides fleeting images – frames of communication that disappear in seconds but that are laden with multi-sensory messages. The televisual text is intrinsically complex, combining moving images, words, music

and other sounds. It is unlikely that methods drawn from any one discipline would be adequate to grasp this complexity.

One way of expanding the television text in linguistic terms is to include the co-text; 'the verbal or linguistic environment' of the utterance. The co-text is the text, which precedes or follows, or we would say accompanies, any form of text (Toolan, 1988:263). In television specifically, images and sounds (fragments of the television text) are crucial in helping the comprehension of the available or relayed message. According to Toolan the co-text stands apart from the context in that the former is made available and can be read, seen and heard by all readers, while the context involves the implied and received parts of the message not spoken but required for the understanding of the messages.

Within television texts as with other messages, representation – meaning the creation of images and ideologies in discourses about an issue – can be seen in different forms and systems. A crucial complexity of the televisual representation is found in the case of photography, for example which can be seen as one set of signifying practices (Hamilton, 1997). Photography involves the selection of scenery or image, and the freezing of the time and expressions and events. It always involves a selection of products dictated by ideology, culture, mood, intentions, availability, lighting, and many more variables directed by the photographer. Analysing the discourse in relation to the compositional elements of the visual is a rich resource when analysing audiovisual material.

To complement the critical reading of television texts, I have also used a recently acknowledged approach for examining images, films and television. *Compositional Interpretation* has been recently identified as the term, for part of the analytical approach I have adopted to extricate representation in locating the message, content and context and the visual impact of a programme. Gillian Rose (2001:48) discussing Monaco (2000:152-225) explains that some aspects of moving images, including film television and video, can also be described using this terminology. Although the terminology of compositional interpretation finds root in the description of paintings and later applied to photographs and other still images, it appears to be a terminology that applies to a descriptive approach which is predominantly image led or image centred. Rose clarifies Monaco's distinction between a *mise-en-scene* (its spatial organisation), and its *montage* (its temporal organisation). The *mise-en-scene* refers to the pre-filming choices about what to select and capture and the *montage* refers to the post-shooting decisions, which include the arrangement, exclusion and inclusion of the obtained shots.

Another parallel instance of the analysis of complex visual representations is the phenomenon of the museum exhibition (Lidchi, 1997). In exhibiting, selected segments of social, cultural, political and economic lives of society are captured in the artefacts, and the aesthetic and functional products of the society. Taken out of time, context or geography, these displays show off the difference in the displayed Other

and are another distinct mode representation. The museum form is especially interesting here because of its multi media character, its evocation of national and ethnic identities and the association between modern museum criticism and post-colonial theory (Coombes, 1994).

More generally, there are many forms of representations besides literary and linguistic discourses, and however authentic and real the artefacts or images may be, the fact is undisputed that they are mediated by human instincts, ideas and intentions and thus can be deconstructed in the light of the identity of the displayed and the displayer.

That aspect of human mediation is taken into consideration during the analysis and the debates on the discourses and the composition of programmes. The study stops short of performing an extensive analysis of television production methods.

Thus like exhibitions and museums, and photography, television is 'a practice of representation' (Hall 1997: 8). Just as Stuart Hall argues, television works 'like a language', not necessarily on the immediate/minute level as choice of sounds, words or expressions, yet on a higher, more enveloping level, it involves choices, to photograph or show one image and not the other, what to show about an idea or say about it, when to show it (watershed, off peak, early morning etc.) and where. The custodians of the media have this prerogative and the

subjects are left with very few avenues of determining the mode of their presentation or resisting and reacting to the commentary about them.

Hall (1997) writing under 'Spectacle of the Other' suggests these representations are present in contemporary cultural forms of news, photos, advertising, film and popular illustration (Hall, 1997). They pervade our lives. The film camera is the intrusive object for the actors at an event, but which remains quite invisible to the viewer. It remains the only thing with the ability to record both sound and a moving picture: two senses that flesh out more of our interpretatory sensors to the message. Its presence at the event, frequently translates as a medium that cannot lie and thus commands a degree of authenticity with the viewer. An analysis of this nature takes into consideration the prompts that are made to elicit responses for instance, and to keep an eye on the edits – to be conscious that some of the tricks of producers of news is to edit material in a way that the edits also appear unobtrusive as well as unedited.

2.8 Conclusions

Putting forward a case for the justification of particular modes or approaches to research is often an enlightening and clarifying aspect of the research and the results of this study provide significant and substantial backing to the methods employed. The exploration of new material here in this study gives it an edge and an interesting route to modern television research but also warrants a clarification of the

interdisciplinary perspectives as well as the merging of approaches. I have sought, in this chapter, to weave into the research methods, an integration of the self through an 'auto-ethnographical' recount of the role the personal played in the formation of the research ideas and the element of personal experience and mapping the journey into such interrogations. The context of the study is as important as the co-text, and working with both further clarifies the arguments. Furthermore, I have also tried to balance that interdisciplinary focus derived from the domains of English, media and cultural studies with a close-to positivist approach, familiar to the social science methods of communication studies which, in the form of the content study, tries to create leverage with the humanities by including the extensive results of television content study. The second component thus provides that breakdown of some of the quantitative results based on the content study. On the whole the content study showed how little mention is made of Africa on British television but it also provided the main approach to sourcing the programme examples and discursive frames and themes and provided fodder for the critical analysis of the discourses and themes.

Chapter 3 – ‘Africa’s Great Silence’: Voices Discoursing ‘Africa’

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Aspects of Narration
- 3.2 Narrative Paradigms
- 3.3 Narrators and Characters; Selves and Others
- 3.4 Multiply Voiced Narrations.
 - 3.4.1 Institutional Voices – The Production Voice
 - 3.4.2 Implied Author
- 3.5 Characters as Narrators: Silences and Absences
- 3.6 Characters and Commentators: British Voices, African Other
- 3.7 Visibility and Power
- 3.8 Layered Narratives
- 3.9 Representation through Audience Templates
- 3.10 Conclusions

I first became aware of Africa’s great silence on Lake Kariba in northern Zimbabwe, this was nature’s domain and we were the privileged guests¹

Jill Dando

BBC1 *Holiday* Tuesday 13th October 1998

3.0 Introduction

The opportunity and ability to narrate, or to obstruct other narratives from forming and emerging is a factor very crucial to the understanding of power generally, and also of the arguments about culture and imperialism. The power of the gaze stems from looking at and speaking to, to see and talk to without being seen. And as David Spurr writes,

¹ This statement by presenter Jill Dando in *Holiday*, BBC1 of Tuesday 13th October 1998 [19.00–19.30hrs] poignantly underlines the ethos of this Chapter: ‘Africa’s “great silence”’, studying the positioning of the persons and voices that comment about Africa. Jill Dando sets the tone of that silence in crucially excluding any local humans and underlining the identification of Africa as empty of equivalence – ‘Nature’s domain’ (see Chapter 4 of this Thesis). A supposition that Africa is great, beautiful, but silent, the voice of the Africans or the humans in these parts she visited being immediately non-visible, non-existent.

reporting begins with looking. Visual observation is the essence of the reporter's function as a witness. But the gaze upon which the journalist so faithfully relies for knowledge marks an exclusion as well as a privilege: the privilege of inspecting, examining, of looking at, by its nature excludes the journalist from the human reality constituted as the object of observation (Spurr, 1993:13).

Catherine Kohler Riessman sees the story as the object of investigation in any narrative analysis. As she rightly suggests, an analysis of narrative allows us to see how respondents 'impose order on the flow of experience to make sense of events and actions in their lives' (Riessman, 1993:13). We can examine the story of an informant and see how it is put together, the linguistic and cultural resources it draws upon, as well as the ways in which that story persuades the listener of authenticity. Therefore an analysis of narrative reveals not only the content to which the language refers but also *forms of telling* about the experiences, she urges. Riessman further writes that:

Nature and the world do not tell stories, individuals do. Interpretation is inevitable because narratives are representations.... Human agency and imagination determine what gets included and excluded in narrativization, how events are plotted, and what they are supposed to mean. (1993:3)

This chapter scrutinizes the observers as well as the observed. By studying the dynamics of the manufactured and packaged media discourses on Africa seen on British television, I take a close look at the inter-relationships existing or occurring between the different narrators and different

narratives within these 'Africa stories'. Can we classify contemporary television discourses on Africa as narratives from specific gazes, or is it a conversation that includes significant inputs from the subjects? The immediate distinction between narratives and conversations lies in the absence of an interactive engagement present within conversations. Narratives, on the other hand, seem predominantly one-sided deliveries influenced by indirect inputs/factors from the listener and the subject matter, but often do not involve equal interactivity of parties or active intervention from the listener as is present in a conversation. Nonetheless, as we shall see, as dialogic approaches to language suggest, narratives always imply an 'addressee', the receiver of the message.

The ability of human language to refer to events or things, to physically removed episodes, is also very well exploited by narratives as the story is placed in the past, brought to the present, when and where the narrative is actually delivered. Toolan (1998) rightly highlights narrative's different qualities of recalling spatial and temporally remote happenings, from other modes such as commentaries or descriptions.

Narratives can be multi-faceted, and television narratives especially demonstrate complex levels of arrangements and arraignments of narrators, actors or characters in each story. The roles played by these voices and characters and their influences on the stories and their subjects

crucially highlight and organise the nature and form or representations that are being made. By disentangling the messages and hegemonies surrounding the on-screen and off-screen narrators and/or characters, the active and passive characters, the protagonists and the subject we can understand more about the meanings that lie underneath the many facets of narrations about Africa. My main foci here in this chapter are the employment of characters, the dynamics of voices and/or the points of view, as well as the angles of analysis and interpretation applied to the subjects of observation and narration. Within this inquiry also comes the question of the 'constructedness' of the gaze of the onlooker. I also explore points such as the dominant narratorial voices, the viewpoints affecting the particular framing of the discourses, through to the power relations created by the narrator and narrated and by the observer and observed dichotomies.

In the early part of this chapter, the discussions revolve around the existence or non-existence of significant characters in programmes: the roles of the observers and the observed, as well as the prevalent or dominant voices projecting the messages. There is an exploration of the presences and absences of characters, the use of different voices at different levels of narration – such as continuity presenters, news anchors, on-screen and off-screen presenters and narrators, interviewees (mainly white), and some Africans – native to the locations. The connotative meanings and associations embedded in both the spoken and unspoken parts of the

programmes provide a vast amount of material to try to understand the interplay of the hegemonies and ideologies, as well as cultural and political influences effecting the forms of 'Africa' in such discourses. By the end of the chapter the complex layering of narrators, implied authors, preferred reader, narratives, perspectives and points of view and ideological influences are illuminated by the help of the examples from the programme extracts: the array of voices, present or absent, obvious or discrete, as well as the levels of prominence and the authorities of such voices, as they contribute to the familiar framing and structuring of discourses on Africa, is seen.

Beginning with an introduction to the framing and packaging of discourses on 'Africa' in these discussions, I work through questions about the owners of the narratives, (the television stories); the speakers, authors, as well as the intended and actual audiences. The arguments I put forward in this chapter are thus essentially about the visibility or invisibility, presence or absence, and contributions of any kind by the observed to the discourses used by the observers. Simply put, I explore the roles of narrators and characters within narratives in the representations of Africa we eventually see.

3.1 Aspects of Narration

Like other forms of narratives, there are key aspects of narration to be identified in television. These can be identified as the real or actual author, the implied author, the key narrator, the characters in the story and the intended or implied addressee or preferred reader.

The illustration below, maps that course of the narration

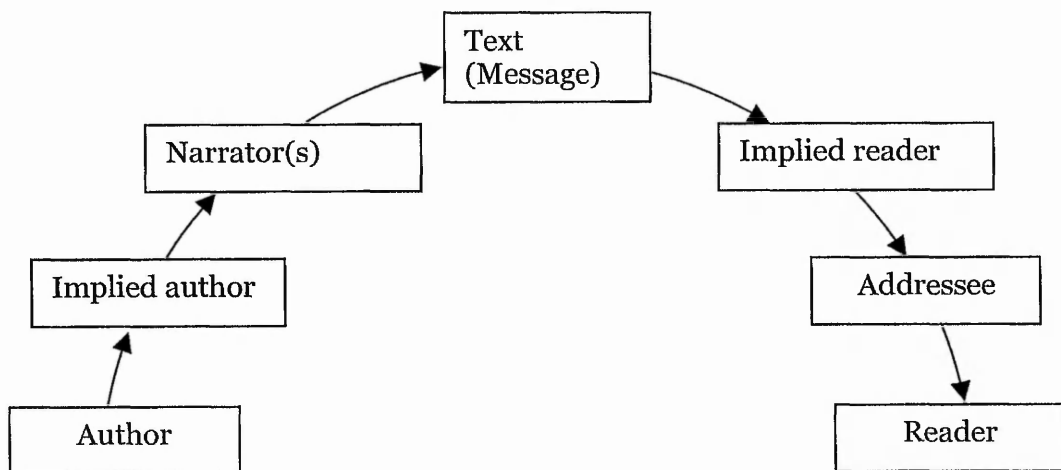


Fig 3.1 Narrative Link

The narrator is either 'internal' to the narrative, that is a fully present character in the programme, or may be a voice-over commentator on the events as seen on the screen. He/she can be an anonymous presence through the programme or placed at the beginning of the programme to introduce it, or may even be made integral as an ongoing facet of the text.

This 'external' narration is often a figure of authority, with an 'overview' that sees further than the characters.

3.2 Narrative Paradigms

My approach to untangling the voices and narrators of the representations, involves answering questions such as: Who owns *the main voice* in the narrative? Often this is our guide into the story: the main narrator. With television, the actual narrator may be heard or even seen. The narrator is the visible teller of narratives, not identical with the actual author of a text. Thus in *Congo*², the programme is advertised as narrated by John Lynch but is actually written and produced by Brian Leith.

My next question is, 'who or 'what is the subject?' In other words 'who are the characters in this narrative?' They may be human or non-human, abstract or concrete. For example 'Africa', as we shall see is often a key character in the narratives discussed in this thesis, but is an abstract construction, a myth.

Of importance too are, the listening and watching positions of a narrative, the perspectives from which the messages can be interpreted and

² BBC2 *Congo* 'Footprints of the Forest' 30th January 2001. Written and Produced by Brian Leith. Narrated by John Lynch.

understood. Again there is a distinction to be made between actual listeners and watchers and the reading positions that are implied or presupposed, as constructed in a parallel text. Backgrounds and contexts required for the interpretation of the messages are our clues as to how the messages are being understood, and importantly what the observer/narrators aim to achieve from the particular ordering of their messages. In sum the questions that arise aim to establish (a) who are the dominant voices? and (b) how are these becoming naturalised? Again the regularisation or normalisation of the dominant voices becomes evident when they cease to be unusual and/or minoritarian.

3.3 Narrators and Characters; Selves and Others

So far we have taken some key categories from narratology. However, as Said (1981) argues, discourses also produce relationships, especially between the Self and Others. In narratives, Self–Other relations may appear as the relationship between author or narrator on the one side and the objects and characters of the narrative on the other.

There is often a polarisation between the Self and the Other, as the Other occupies a peripheral position or qualifies as the embodiment of the unfamiliar, qualities unusual to the Self, considered to be bearing qualities that are different from the point of view of the centre. James Duncan (1993)

highlights two tropes of rhetorical devices present in discourses of the *Other*. Firstly there is the observation, which involves the complex process where the reporter is positioned in a place of 'knowledge' and 'capability', observing collecting and explaining the observed subject which is this *Other*. Secondly the Self incorporates the Other into the 'history of the self, but referred to in an earlier, and more primitive period thus reinforcing the superior site of the modern viewer'. Duncan rightly makes the case that Nineteenth century European representations of Africa can be seen to reflect these tropes. His suggestion appears valid for contemporary television too. In those British television programmes on Africa that have an actual location in Africa, the *observational trope* is even more pronounced. The presenters or narrators position themselves at a place of knowledge and capability as the all-seeing outsider, sourcing and interpreting incidents to audiences who also have the opportunity to accompany their perception through the film footage, sound and tone. These audiences are drawn into the observational roles too, and the narrator aligns himself with the audiences to effectively do that. A character of television as a medium is that it often requires a commentary to follow the visuals or vice-versa. This is where the explanation presented by the 'knowledgeable' and 'experienced(ing)' narrator holds much more authority currently than in any other form of media. Their assertions are backed by their apparent presence in the footage or their expert/omniscient view of events in the

piece, all of which is supported by the images and sounds that the audiences can see and hear and trust the narrator is encountering.

For example in a BBC news report, correspondent Martin Dawes provides the focus for the observer in his alignment with his audiences in viewing the famine situation and the war in the Sudan. But Dawes also provides the expert commentary in his assessment of the situation on the ground, accompanied by carefully arranged film footage of the scenes within which he appears, and those which he comments on shortly after. One cannot distinguish whether he actually experiences all the scenes in the footage, but his unbroken commentary right through the piece gives the impression that he has knowledge and experience of all the scenes, even those in which he doesn't appear but comments about. Martin Dawes narrates that,

This is a recruitment drive for what the soldiers see as holy war. The song is a hymn of praise for suicide bombers who've flung themselves against tanks. From the northern provinces recruits are arriving at militia centres. And all the time in the famine areas of the south, the biggest aid operation of its kind in the world is saving lives; an extended cease-fire for those areas is given unprecedented security. It had been hoped that the cease-fire could turn into something more permanent, but in August American missiles hit a factory in the Sudanese capital; they said it was manufacturing chemical weapons and was associated with Osama Bin Laden – the man America accuses of being behind the bombing of their embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Sudan denies this. British support for the Americans meant the embassy in Khartoum was closed with tragic consequences for a softly, softly peace initiative backed by a British minister. The Sudan government says they had been invited to London for Peace talks with the rebels.... The feel of war is never far away in Northern Sudan; older school pupils wear combat style uniforms. Sometimes its' as if

the world is talking about two separate places, but unless there's a serious effort to deal with the Sudan in all its complexities, then there can be no end to the cycle of war, famine and massive aid. Martin Dawes, BBC News, Khartoum.³

The footage starts with a close-up of the presenter standing beside the still portrait of a severely malnourished African child. Then a computer animated globe rolls zooming in the continent of Africa to show the locations of Sudan (pinpointing Khartoum) and Kenya. In another scene without the correspondent Martin Dawes in shot, there appears to be a group of Sudanese men, some in military uniforms, bearing flags or guns, singing and dancing with musical instruments with a lead singer with a microphone. There are also busloads of people with some men leaning out of the windows, and flags in front. More film footage includes siren calls, shots of cargo aircrafts landing, many more images of domestic compounds with malnourished and sick children, sitting and lying down, and close-up shots of the faces of the children. There are also images of ruins of a (bombed) building, the locked gates of an embassy, and a government minister talking on camera to Martin Dawes, the correspondent.

Even though we might be under the impression that Martin Dawes has knowledge of events and images, and possibly the individuals and scenes catalogued in the camera shots, he appears in only three of the numerous

³ BBC 9 O'clock News 22nd October 1998

scenes. His narration, on the other hand, is unbroken and threads the story right through until his signature sign-off sequence shows him against a backdrop of a busy and undisturbed street in Khartoum with local Sudanese people working and walking and apparently going about their daily business.

Similarly, descriptions and narrations by nineteenth century scientists, travellers, colonial administrators or novelists claimed to be accurate representations of other places, because writers at the time were perceived to have first hand experience or knowledge of these other sites and people (Pratt, 1986). That essence of striving to convey experiences of a near truthful nature is still aimed for by producers in contemporary television. Attempts at substantiation and justification of elements of the narrative in these genres in television, and sometimes in radio and film are pursued by the makers of the programmes, who are at pains to present us with statistics, evidences, images or sound to support the stories. This may even extend to attempts to deliver real-time programming. This suggests their desire to relate or ground their own credibility to their audiences. Just like the news reporter on the scene of an incident, the holiday or wildlife presenter on location, and even the voice-over narrators for the documentaries perform the role of the experienced and knowledgeable mediator through whom the audiences connect with the subject of the story. The authority of such narrators is evident in the fact that they are, to their

audiences, the apparent sole bearers of all the dimensions of the information and experiences that they relate to the reader, recipients or audience. In all the documentaries on nature and wildlife presented by David Attenborough or Simon King on the BBC, each narrator epitomises the encyclopaedic information about the subjects, the location, the stories and the specific times. Their solo performances and all-round knowledge, including scientific and statistical details (albeit put together by a team of acclaimed scientists, editors, photographers and a media body), re-enforces their grounding in the medium as experts or authorities of that contemporaneous subject.

3.4 Multiply Voiced Narrations.

In any communication, besides the noticeable speaking voice of the message, many small but subtle factors contribute to the creation of the personas or voices that become the carriers of the message. They also affect and are included in the message being relayed. In television especially, there is a multitude of personas on several levels constituting a complex network that works as a carrier of the messages relayed. That network includes personas right from the corporate media institution itself, through to the individual programme makers and editors; and even further to the visible on-screen presenters or visually absent guides who are immediately familiar to audiences. Some of the burden of narration may also be carried by

characters in the story itself. All these personas add to and mould, by and large, the final message in subtle or overt ways.

3.4.1 Institutional Voices – The Production Voice

The making of documentaries and news reports about certain issues and topics can be more difficult for some media houses than others. Their size, ideals and preoccupations enable or hinder the particular types, styles and contexts of the programmes that they produce. The production of any such programme is subjected to the funds and ideologies of the body commissioning it. The institution's goals, ideological leanings and background inadvertently shape the outcome or final, overall discursive field around the subject.

The role of institutions such as the BBC in the making of a nature or social documentary is important in explaining some elements such as the choice of location, the cost of the programme and the access to sources or relevant information for the programme. Even the ability to film the programme itself can be influenced by its association with one or another reputable institution. Filming in South Luanga National Park, or access to accused in prisons and police cells for interview about child rape in South Africa⁴, are easier hurdles for an institution with the size and repute such as the BBC

⁴ Channel 4 *Dispatches Investigates* – 'Apartheid's Children. 30th April 1998

and with a significant turnover and resource base. Furthermore the filming of the *CONGO* and *Wild Africa* series required an extensive resource base. The films included many aerial shots and satellite photos, films of many rivers, underwater footage, life in the forests, the savannahs and deserts, as well as footage shot from very high mountain summits and cliffs. Consequently we have the showcasing of a vast catalogue of wildlife and habitat which emulates a blockbuster film production incorporating elaborate cinema work, such as speeding up footage – all requiring an assembly of logistics and immense resources and skill. Such evidence leads one to argue that a resource-rich backing makes it feasible for the BBC to commission or author such a (programme) series about nature covering all aspects of the continent of Africa, or the basin of the River Congo in particular. To have such an established reputation also contributes greatly to how the institution's journalists gain access to material and stories for filming, and also to how its products are eventually perceived and accepted internationally. By this the BBC is arguably a canon of electronic media, providing a kind of hegemony through its ideals and ideologies, and hence the perspectives of its staff.

Yet the active role and influence of the BBC in the filming of documentaries for example about child rapists in South Africa, is often glossed over. Of course as is the case with all other programmes, the influences that encouraged the accesses to the stories, the sites, the research material

among others are edited out or taken for granted. In any case the stories are definitely not how an unaccredited individual would experience them first hand, not to mention that the point of focus, which is put forward to the audiences in Britain is a single one, without alternative angles, perspectives or viewing angles being available from the programme itself. To give an extreme example, even the modern reality TV phenomenon is not totally transparent.

In Channel 4's 'Going Native'⁵, the experiment of survival in an 'African Homestead' is plugged and the audiences are taken through the trials and hardships experienced by the family from London trying to survive in a Swazi Homestead. The experiment is not exclusive to the visiting Nestor family, as we hear them mention that the film crew had to help with their own supplies of English food, as the younger children could not eat the food cooked on the homestead. Following that incident, 'máke Nestor' admits she and the children had to be given a lift back to the homestead, on that occasion, because Nestor's young daughter was very ill. Of course there is no direct suggestion in that declaration of who gave the lift, but 'Máke' Nestor's admission and apparent gratitude to camera confirms that the film crew provided that assistance. There is no other access to private vehicles to travel to and from the homestead in the entire experiment. There are also several occasions where one can just overhear an English woman's voice

⁵ Channel 4, (2002) *Going Native: 'African Village'* London: RDF Media

sympathetically asking questions or agreeing to solutions to help the ailing child. Right through the series, there is never a shot of the film crew, their vehicle or camp or any literal evidence or appreciation of their presence or input into the entire experiment. However, as the Nestor family and the Shongwe family speak to us and into the camera, one can detect an interview process, where the responses and narratives are elicited from these on-screen characters but with the interviewer's presence or questions eliminated from the footage so as to appear as if the experiences are exclusive to the characters of the Nestors and Shongwes, who we actually see on screen.

Revisiting the example of *Congo* – 'Footprints of the Forest' above, this natural history documentary exploring the basin and environment of the river Congo, we are introduced to John Lynch as narrator, at the onset of the programme. Again in this instance unlike the on-screen presence of David Attenborough in the nature programmes he fronts, it is only the voice of John Lynch which presents us with all the necessary information. By inadvertently not acknowledging any other sources to the story narrated by him, the impression is created that John Lynch is the author and knowledge base of the information we receive, and an intimation that he also experienced all the events and situations he narrates so well. The imperceptible clue to many such narrations, and also indications that John Lynch may not hold much credit except for reading a script, can only be

found in the titles at the end of the film. And in this specific programme, there is an acknowledgement of Brian Leith also as the writer and producer, with David Thrasher and Neil Nightingale as the Editor and Executive Producer respectively. These persons as well as the technical crew (e.g. cameraman, sound technician and logistics personnel) have some bearing on the representation of the specific Africa that is presented here.

The narrator here plays a limited role in the packaging of the story, or of what is presented, except for his style of reading the script, including his tone of voice. Everything else is designed, filmed, edited, and organised by the producers and directors towards specific results. A romanticised or realistic or negative Africa is achieved through all these inputs, through an 'author' that is collective.

3.4.2 Implied Author

Television like most other media in Britain effectively tailors the presentation of programmes, aimed at British audiences, to resonate with British cultural assumptions. The point of view, the standards of measurement, cultural symbols, practices and understandings of Britain become a strong interpretative template against which these Others are measured, albeit indirectly. There is an identification of the familiar presenter or narrator's voice with the self. Quite often, the guide and

narrator is the assuredly familiar and well-known person or voice, with similar cultural backgrounds to his targeted audiences. This guide directs audiences into the strange and distant worlds beyond them, drawing parallels between what is discovered and what is familiar to these 'home audiences', as a way of creating meaning and understanding. David Attenborough and Simon King for example, become the comfortable and experienced leaders of BBC's audiences into the animal 'kingdoms in Africa'. From the continuity in their presence comes a familiarity and a confidence of the audiences, in what these presenters have to say. As such each edition of *Wildlife on One* or *Animal Zone* on BBC2 preserves some underlying elements of the familiar Africa, including the animals and the landscapes and stories of survival they relate.

3.5 Characters as Narrators: Silences and Absences

Across the range of programmes, Black African characters are noticeable by their absence. This is partly a consequence of the salience of nature programmes, but even other genres omit, or silence, or subordinate their African voices. The invincibility of the complexities of existence within African peoples in the apparent global media, which is in effect saturated with the majority and powerful cultures of the West, effectively pushes the lives of African people to the marginal position of the Other. Where we do encounter the Other in the programmes, there is arguably a failure to

acknowledge any authority or power of the subject, a lack of appreciation of cultures and lifestyles of these people in view of the fact that they are not afforded a voice of their own. On the other hand, the commentators and even the characters in the programmes are overwhelmingly British and White. Again I am suggesting a relation of power in the process of representation.

3.6 Characters and Commentators: British Voices, African Other

From the programmes on Africa, one finds a characteristic dominance of the British narrators and presenters whose narratives rise far above other voices. Nevertheless there are occasions where the main protagonist or presenter tries to engage experts or interactive input from other people to enhance or enrich the experience. In most of these interactions in the samples of programmes with Africa as the subject, there is very little to no interaction with the local black Africans. What is often the practice is an interaction or interview with expatriates or 'white Africans', again with intimations of familiarity and shared culture.

In interviewing Dr Joel Smith of World Vision, and Dr David Fletcher of UK World Food Programme, the BBC East African correspondent Martin Dawes gives voice to the British experts. However, without talking to any person native to the area, to obtain an angle from the locals who are the

subject of the discussions, denies them a voice⁶. Further perpetuating this imbalance, the visit of the Pope to Nigeria or President Clinton to some African countries is presented with the Pope and Clinton as the main focus of the coverage⁷. While the media contained footage of speeches of these main actors and their 'messages to Africa', there is no actual footage of local religious leaders or political leaders making any speeches or pronouncements. Again in these circumstances, experts in Britain and the US are consulted about the implications and the effects of the visits, in the studio in London and by satellite link from the US. The narrator and his experts appear to exclude Clinton's hosts – except for some of their ceremonial dances and celebratory performances. The result is an elevation of the narrator and other commentators above their subject through that de-voicing and disempowerment of the local. This practice dominates in programmes commissioned by UK companies and aimed at audiences in the UK. In programmes series such as BBC1's *Holiday*, BBC1's *Wildlife on One*, BBC1's *Songs of Praise*, ITV's *Wish you were here*, BBC2's *Animal Zone* and many more, the above is true. The exclusion of any interaction with black African people further perpetuates the de-voicing of them, and in effect maintains the US and THEM arrangement in the overall narrative.

⁶ BBC1 9 O'clock News 7th April 1998

⁷ Channel 4 News 23rd March 1998 7pm – Two separate news items featuring Clinton's 'Tour' of Africa (Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Botswana, Uganda and Senegal) and Pope John Paul's Visit to Africa (Nigeria).

In an episode of ITV's travel and holiday programme, *Wish You Were Here*⁸, the presenter Anthea Turner interacts only with the visible white South Africans or European expatriates in the presentation of the holiday programme showcasing the game reserves of Phinda in South Africa. To her Phinda was equivalent to Africa.

Well this is my first time in Africa and I've never been on a safari before, so this is just going to be one big adventure for me.⁹

Dwelling further on the themes of adventure, she shows to us the overawing luxury of the safari resort with the excellent facilities suitable for tourists but then she simplifies the image of Africa by leaning heavily on insinuations of Africa as a game reserve, with animals and adventure.

Well this is going to be my home for the next few days, an African sand forest. The Lodge has no fences to keep the animals out, they come and go as they please around and about the sixteen luxury suites scattered around the forest. Les told me no trees were disturbed during the building of this lodge.

She introduces us to the next other visible person in the film who is a white male.

[Her] minder for the week was Les Carlyle, a conservation expert and one of the key people behind the rebirth of Phinda.

⁸ ITV 1 *Wish You Were Here* (featuring the British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Awards). Shown 16th March 1998 19.00 –19.30hrs.

⁹ *op cit.* Anthea Turner

Les Carlyle acts as her escort and guide right through the programme, providing explanations and answers to her questions. Then we are introduced to yet another white male South African game ranger who instructs her on the rudiments of animal tracking. Continuously with reminders of the seriousness of the job and the expertise they provide, our encounter with the 'Africa' Anthea relates to, is one that has white male experts in control of affairs, while the role of black Africans appears negligible. Another apparently active character is a black game ranger in the team of three persons accompanying the presenter whose name or role or voice we do not hear. The 'silent' black game ranger only appears 'backgrounded' in the footage, actively working or accompanying the other white game rangers we have been introduced to on the game tracking expeditions¹⁰. Other Black Africans play a different role where we are shown quick frames of singing or performing black Africans as beneficiaries of the ethical nature of the holidays sold.

So, Anthea acknowledges Les Carlyle – and soon after, Mike – and then the homes of the locals, built with the proceeds of the holiday scheme:

¹⁰ This is particularly reminiscent of the arguments put forward by postcolonial critics, who criticise partial accolades to particular individuals ahead of others by virtue of their origins. The well-known example often referred to is the elevation of Sir Edmund Hillary as the first man to conquer Everest, while Tensing Norgay was just considered his Nepalese companion. The colonial explorer's presence in a site is the recognised one.

Commentary – Anthea Turner	Summary of Footage	Music
Mike our ranger gently reminded me this was a serious and potentially dangerous business, he also decided to teach me the rudiments of elephant tracking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medium-range shot shows Mike the Ranger encouraging Anthea to follow his example of sticking a finger in a pile of fresh elephant dung, and then sucking on it. Anthea visibly expresses her disgust in facial expression only. - Several wide-angle shots of landscape and vegetation, with pauses from commentator. - Scenes depicting Anthea and other characters in a pick-up truck driven through the game reserves, dust tracks interspersed with close, medium and long-range shots of wildlife along the route. Shots taken from outside vehicle, possibly a second vehicle not visible in the film. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drum sequence; rhythmic and continuous, hand played drums accompany footage. - Sound of an indigenous and powerful (yet not visible) South African solo voice singing. - An all-male choir (Iscathimiya) singing, accompanying some visuals.

To justify the Award by British Airways of a conservation prize to the Phinda resorts, there is a juxtaposition of the scenes from the luxury of the Lodge, its furnishings and pools, with the wooden round thatched huts, and a black male conducting a large local youth choir singing the Southern African Anthem 'Nkosi Sikele Africa'. The explanations she offers are that the resort had helped build much-needed wells, new classrooms and a fully equipped clinic for the people. We are then shown scenes of a lesson-in-progress inside a local classroom with a black African teacher and pupils, while Anthea Turner surmises:

But the real point of all that luxury is that it directly benefits people who live in a very different sort of accommodation.

At the mention of this other accommodation and 'people' we are immediately shown a round thatch hut and the group of school children singing. Thus there is an acknowledgement of the existence of other local people even though throughout the programme there is no direct involvement or interaction with them. Their roles as performers though are preserved. There is an unwitting admission of the lifestyles of the 'local people', suggestively made in the statements about the improvements to these, resulting from holidaymakers staying in the luxuries of the Phinda resort:

In actual fact some six thousand local people now benefit directly or indirectly from the reserve And the Phinda Community Development Trust have built wells, new classrooms, local schools and even a fully equipped clinic.¹¹

The programme lasts half an hour and is not exclusively set in Phinda or in Africa. The programme looks at other sites, which include Villamoura, a named location as being the Algarve in Portugal, which reveals a distinct identity past the initial identification of its location. In comparison with visits to the 'Phinda resort in Africa', this Portuguese region is given a specific identity as 'a beautiful part of Europe and it's great to see it's finally getting the help and protection it deserves'. Classical music accompanies the

¹¹ From ITV1's travel and tourism programme *Wish You Were Here* with the 'Tourism For Tomorrow Awards' edition. The half hour programme is not exclusive to Africa. Other sites, outside Africa, are visited. Interestingly, the segment on Villamoura is done with more specificity to naming of the location and details of the surrounding areas. Portugal is mentioned only once in the presentation. The Algarve and the lifestyle promoted there are exciting but are not exoticised.

entire presentation while there are sweeping views of the resorts, beaches and metropolitan centres, as well as the accompanying presentation by Martin Roberts. The interviewed persons are Gioverto Jordan and Steve Richardson, who are given considerable space to present their views. By comparison it is Anthea who tells us what to think of Phinda. The difference between the Villamoura and the Phinda presentation is that although both mention further specifics about the location of the sites such as Natal in South Africa and the Algarve in Portugal, Anthea Turner's presentation of Phinda, dwells on the good to the people yet the people are just seen and not heard¹². Her repeated associations of Phinda's experience with Africa, pointedly identifying the holiday experience to her viewers as African (unlike the European segment) is an example of how programmes about places in Africa are particularly exotic over European ones.

When people talk to me now about the magic and the mystery of this continent, I understand what it's all about, but you have to be here to actually know that. And when you think of the tourist we are actually helping people here to help themselves, that's got to be a good thing and its got to be what this is all about – tourism for tomorrow.

Anthea equivocates in the presentation of sites through the duality of reports that she gives. The empty and private locations of the resorts she showcases and the escapist experiences she describes at the luxury lodge are

¹² I have further performed extensive analysis of the interpolations of the needy passive African within Chapter 6 of this thesis, while Chapter 4 explores aspects of the construction of an exclusive natural field in Africa.

in conflict with the six thousand people, the wells, school and clinics that benefit from the reserve.

This tradition of the invisibility of the local people is not limited to magazine programmes or documentaries only; news reports on 'Africa' use similar modes, quite remarkably different from the interactive styles of journalists when reporting national and local news around the UK. With news on 'Africa', my study shows 100% domination by a white UK presenters and white UK experts, who are interviewed. No expert in any of the locations was given a voice in any of the news items. Even with Bill Clinton's 1988 tour of Africa, there is little interaction with the people of the countries he visits while his team and experts in the UK, and in the US, provided the comments on the news programmes. The prevalence of absent local people could be argued to be an act of denial and eventual subordination of the inhabitants of the site being presented, while the authority and power wielded by the vocal and actively visible characters on-screen over the silent or absent characters strengthens.

3.7 Visibility and Power

African subjects in television discourses may, as we have seen, be subordinated by their absence. It is also common however, for African subjects to be visible but voiceless, to be positioned by a gaze but not

empowered. The position of the observer can be considered a position of power. This can be seen in the relationships between the observer and the observed, the subject and the explorer. The pattern of subordination through the gaze is, of course, characteristic of the visual media. The framing of the picture or story is particularly distinctive with the camera's particularisation of the topic. By comparison, radio, which excludes the visual, allows the adding of one's own mental images. Print too allows a greater scope for imagination and freedom of imaginative visualisation.

In television, the camera leads the focus and the viewpoint, and the narrator performs the analysis of the 'seen' (scene). By looking at, assessing, rationalising, talking to, or talking about, the observed, the observer commands a position of power, which is reinforced by the camera. Both observer and camera are employed for strategies of hierarchization, marginalization, objectification and other forms of selection. The subordination of the observed is not necessarily a calculated effort, though it privileges the backgrounds of the narrators. Their aims and implied audiences can dictate the telling of the story. Eventually the position of the teller, grants them control over the subject and how they tell it.

Whilst the tropes of observation and reporting of silent subjects is, of course, the mainstay of animal programmes and wildlife documentaries, the same style of presenting seems at first unacceptable in lifestyle or

socio-cultural programmes on humans. It could be said that humans require a degree of presence that accords them representations as humans with some equivalence to the observers. Providing them with a voice or opinion, or expression of their thoughts, should ensure this. Historically, however, strict observation without giving voice to the observed has been applied not only to animals, but also to humans placed as Other in terms of race, gender, and anthropological categories. News reports and documentaries often use the reporter as the eye and viewpoint of the incidents with occasional interactions with the observed. By narrating the entire story unseen from start until the final sign off, the reporter is able to perform the omniscient narration and to talk about the observed, who appear, but may not speak freely. The embodied voice thus speaks about other bodies, gaining a position of power and interpretation, and disembodiment the other voices. The omniscient view used in any narration on people and cultures in Africa is reminiscent of practices of colonial and early anthropological observers, as well as contemporary wildlife documentaries exploring African subjects as discussed extensively in Chapter 4. Avoiding interaction, assuming solitariness, the discoverer, assuming and making pronouncements on the science of the topic, or by exalting the sites above the people, all these devices empower the observer/presenters to their audiences and thus weaken the observed.

Re-presentations of an 'identified other', position the observer in opposition to the observed. All the common circumstances between the observer and the observed become entrenched, ignored or naturalised while 'differentness' or strangeness becomes attractive or is sought, highlighted, exploited or commented on.

The absent voices of Africans who appear in problem stories become the voiceless paradigm encouraging the representation of a people – passive, powerless, destitute, sufferers of inexplicable famines and wars, and unable to cope. Their non English-speaking qualities often encourage the perceptions of no education and helplessness in understanding their circumstances. In other programmes such as natural history and wildlife programmes where the local people are photographed often secondary to the subject of programme focus, they are again outside the conservation spirit or appreciative privilege, which the narrator and his preferred reader is accorded. They are frequently, when in shot, incidental to the main focus of the image or discussion, not speaking to camera as the white Africans or expatriates or the presenters.

Narratives are tools that humans use to understand their experiences. Even when the objects or characters are animals, the narratives give them human significance. Natural history stories parallel human narratives. Even so, I have discussed a representational strategy that excludes humans and their

culture by positioning them as silent and observed. What has also been shown is that this way of subordinating subjects can only be achieved through a medium including both sound (voice) and image.

3.8 Layered Narratives

We can also identify narratives that have the quality of being layered or multiply voiced.

In the following, the multiply voiced nature of narratives is discussed using the example of BBC1's *Songs of Praise*¹³. Here the main narrator and implied author fronts an array of sub-narratives and authorships used in this style of programme making.

The layered narrators are only immediately evident on television from the different voices that tell the story. When the continuity announcer announces the next programme, she has a hidden individual identity and assumes the identity of the television station. Thus she becomes the BBC telling us what is on offer and what to expect, ushering in a named and identified individual who takes us on a 'journey to Zimbabwe' – 'Pam Rhodes mixes the spiritual with the spectacular'. The BBC in the form of the

¹³ BBC1 *Songs of Praise* 25th October 1998 Presented by Pam Rhodes, Producer Diane Reid, Editor Hugh Faupel. Schedule time – [17.40–18.15hrs].

continuity announcer informs us of what to expect from the next programme but also indicates how we must receive it. They set the tone for the preferred readings, not only suggestive by the predominant themes of wildlife, safari and tourism that lace the religious broadcast but also hinted at, at the start in the suggestions of the spectacular – a romantic and escapist agenda for a relaxing Sunday evening of the British audiences.

The fielded narrator¹⁴, and implied author Pam Rhodes takes us on a journey into *her* 'Africa' – spectacular, spiritual, missionaries, old British locomotives and hoards of wildlife, and on the journey with her we are expected to see, follow and share her experiences. Pam Rhodes is the presenter and main character, who bears the responsibility of relaying to us *her* experiences of '(An)Other'– 'the observed'. There is an immediate interplay of several characteristics mentioned in this chapter about the framing of discourses on Africa. Pam Rhodes immediately introduces the spiritual, with resonances of nature, safari and empire. The template for interpretation of Pam Rhodes' Africa through these gazes and narratives began to be set earlier in the programme. The particular discursive formation begins to be mapped by references to particular themes and pointers.

Dawn at Victoria Falls, one of the seven natural wonders of the world. These falls are one of the magnificent sights in this

¹⁴ Most UK television travel programmes follow this pattern, ranging from comic travelogues like Michael Palin's round the world trips to Floyd's 'Cooking Around the World'.

beautiful country, so come with me now on an exciting journey as we travel by plane, train, boat and truck to explore Zimbabwe, its wildlife, its scenery and Songs of Praise goes on safari.

*[Introductory music sequence]

In this week's *Songs of Praise* a love affair with the wildlife of Africa, a well-travelled minister with a mission, challenging children in the bush and get your ticket and climb aboard the gospel train.¹⁵

Here the narrator introduces other characters such as the 'well-travelled minister with a mission', the 'children in the bush' among others. Again the indication of a preferred reader for whom the programme is geared, or who is expected to understand the nuances and explanations by the narrator, shows from the style and themes of the narrative.

Welcome to Zimbabwe which is not only a popular destination for wildlife enthusiasts from all over the world but is also the place that the world council of churches have chosen in which to celebrate their fortieth anniversary later in the year. When the missionaries came here they brought with them their favourite hymns and so the words might not be familiar to you but the tunes certainly will be.¹⁶

Pam Rhodes suggests her audience's awareness of the missionaries but most interesting is her declaration that 'the words might not be familiar to you but the tunes certainly will be.' Besides explaining what a safari is to her preferred audiences (she makes those connections by linking of subjects generally to 'most people' and 'wildlife enthusiasts from all over the world'),

¹⁵ BBC1 *Songs of Praise* Sunday 25th October 1998

¹⁶ *ibid*

Pam Rhodes is certain of the audiences' familiarity of the tunes. A song interlude, *when the saints go marching in* follows.

Pam Rhodes' interaction and topics of discussion with the characters vary.

Commentary – Pam Rhodes	Footage
<p>A safari is what most people envisage when they plan a trip to Southern Africa, but what is a Safari? Well it comes from the Swahili word meaning 'journey'. And our journey takes us from the top of this mountain, that Rhodesia's founder Cecil Rhodes called the 'view of the world' to the sun-baked gold landscapes of the south. From the famous Victoria Falls to Lake Kariba; home to thousands of elephants and the rare black rhino. Responsibility for looking after Zimbabwe's wildlife heritage is the National Parks department and Glen Tatham is the chief warden. [BBC1 <i>Songs of Praise</i>]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medium and close-up shots of Glen Tatham, a white male warden, - Tatham talks to camera, providing opinions in answer to questions edited out. - Range of close, medium and long-range shots follow Glen Tatham on his duties, including inspecting guards, made up of Black African rangers, walking in long grasslands with a range of wild animals running. - In background to the images is the sunrise. The vast open spaces of the country. - Glen Tatham talks in close shot about personal faith, the wildlife and about the vegetation.

* Glen Tatham is the first of several persons interviewed in the programme.

The interaction with Tatham, shows a person of authority who is also the warden, the preserver and conservator of nature. He inspects a guard of honour, workers made up of black Africans. He is the first of the embodied voices whose opinions Rhodes pays attention to.

There is a short musical interlude immediately after which the next profile is introduced. *Songs of Praise* proves to be the exception to the rule in programmes that exclude local black African people. In contrast to *Wish You Were Here*, and most of the other programmes mentioned in this study, this particular programme includes a larger amount of Black Zimbabweans, albeit people who work in areas relevant to the themes pursued by the programme. This differs from the dominant White male voices and experts who are interviewed about experiences in Africa and with nature and wildlife. Emily Mukosera is a Black Zimbabwean Woman whose job as a tourism officer earns her participation and a voice but on the elicited questions of her faith, praising the Lord in tune with nature, plants and animals. Here again, Mukosera's talks, as if unencouraged, to camera about her experiences of her faith and the nature and wildlife, but then her talk appears to prelude her performance of a religious song, a hymn in her language. This performance tallies with the frequent performances of the 'Africa University Choir', other church choirs and singers in this programme set in Africa, but the voiceless yet performing native African we see in the Phinda edition of *Wish You Were Here* underlines the incidental performer but voiceless position of the African in all these programmes. Undoubtedly, Emily Mukosera in *Songs of Praise* sings a few lines (demonstrating her good singing skills – a good performer), whilst the footage is eventually accompanied and concluded with an edited instrumental piece of the same

song. It is a song, which again is familiarised in the instrumental accompaniment.

A white missionary, Friar Neil Pierce, who is also headmaster of the Cyrene mission school, is given a voice. He does not perform but talks of past friars and missionaries including, Ned Patterson who was educated in London. Pierce talks about the present and past work of missionaries and church issues drawing links with the West – again dwelling on the familiar links.

Commentary – Pam Rhodes	Footage
<p>This is Cyrene Chapel, one of the many mission schools found across the country. Missionaries have been attracted to Zimbabwe since the Portuguese came here back in the sixteenth century and even today many people owe their education and their health to the work of missionaries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distant shot of dawn/sunrise, shots of waterfalls followed by close-up shots of helicopter blades zooming out to include aircraft take off and flight. - Close-up of presenter shown inside helicopter taking a flight over Victoria Falls and lake leading to aerial shots of countryside, vegetation and wildlife. - Close-up, medium and long-range shots of crocodiles descending slowly into river, wild bulls in savannah, tourists doing bungee jumps and in jeeps in wildlife parks and a Rhinoceros. - Black Zimbabwean parish minister in interview with camera. Standing alongside are his wife and two young children. - Next set of frames show a singing church congregation. - Scenes from a square in the city centre. Distant shots of Harare city skyline. Long-range shots revealing some metropolitan activity with no shots of skyline. Shots of craftsman, close-ups of sculpture and craft pieces. - Switch to shots of a pride of resting lions, armoured park wardens including Glen Tatham. - Animated map showing travel course. Music.

More film footage shows singing in the Cyrene mission church. The camera pans left, slowly uncovering painted religious murals on the walls of the church, which our host friar explains, was encouraged by the work of the early missionaries. There is further congregational singing, but the film takes us back to sequences at the Bulawayo train station, where the presenter Pam Rhodes talks about the arrival of the British-built engines:

In 1897 the railway came to Bulawayo and the missionaries were quick to climb aboard. Of course, in those days things were rather basic although now it's possible to travel that same line in a rather more luxurious style on the train deluxe.¹⁷

The film work here panders to recollections of the colonial and the more nostalgic evocations of the past memories for the preferred reader/audience. The railways and the Bulawayo sequence include close-up shots showing men shovelling coal into the furnace of a steam engine. The sound of the trains tooting horns, the return to images of national parks and close-ups of the mechanics and movement of the train, are all arranged to agree to a rhythmic motion, all of which correspond to the singing and the music. Of course, one cannot deny the particular shaping of the picture here as the images and Pam Rhodes touristic narrative selects and guides the particular readings of these encounters.

¹⁷ BBC1 Songs of Praise 25th October 1998

Commentary Pam Rhodes ¹⁸	Footage
<p>The line from Bulawayo to Victoria Falls travels through Wangi National Park. Our train is pulled by a Manchester Class 15A Garrett locomotive, shipped out to Rhodesia railways in 1952 and still going strong. This is 'Dete' Station, halfway on our journey from Bulawayo to Victoria Falls and as you can see everything has come to a grinding halt, because up the line another train has been derailed by an elephant. 18 tracks off the line. So eh! We don't know if we are going to get to Victoria Falls at all. And if travel nowadays is this unpredictable imagine how difficult it must have been for the missionaries in those early years. So Richard, how would those missionaries have got around?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Africa University Choir, singing <i>The Glory Special</i>. Singers performing a choreographed dance on a hilltop overlooking distant metropolis and wide sweeping savannah of the countryside. - Varied shots of Choir's performance and dance interspersed with close-up and medium shots of parts of a moving locomotive train. - More scenic shots of grasslands and trees, then of trains and carriages the Victoria Falls, whole shots of hotel buildings and inside shots focussing on concierges.

An interviewer is not seen, but is heard addressing questions to Reverend Richard Mombeshore Hwanange, a black Zimbabwean vicar who responds in English. He explains, facing camera, that the old missionaries travelled on bicycles, donkeys, horses and trains, and sometimes 'they were using their own feet'. Asked whether people think Christianity was imposed on them, he replies that 'very few people would think that, the majority in this country really appreciated what the early missionaries did'. Mombeshore's interview provides him with a voice, although with a set agenda on the theme of colonial past, he is one of the few characters in the programme that interrupts the white British agenda set in the programme.

¹⁸ ibid

The next character – the fifth – is Guest-Relations Manager of a hotel. Staying with the tourism theme, Doris Shields talks in English about the history of the hotel and the chapel. Her sub-narrative about the chapel is accompanied by images of a wedding service, the interior of the chapel, and the hotel. Like Friar Pierce and Glen Thatham, Pam Rhodes is seen interacting with them and asking the questions. Thus there is a conversational interaction with the white characters – an interaction which the presenter finds familiar, and these characters do not only answer but provide their own inputs into the discourse. The black Zimbabwean characters belong to another narrative strand – they are included in the programme along the specific thematic engagements that the unseen interviewer or excluded questioning provides.

Besides these, characters such as Morrison Mabhula, a Black male of the National Railways of Zimbabwe (who talks about sharing gospel with customers), a craft and curios shops operator, Paddy Morrison (a white female Zimbabwean), white-water rafting instructor Cephas Moyo (another black male), a female travel consultant, and Braison Tivatyi (a bungee jumping co-ordinator) are all featured with images of their workplace incorporated in the film footage.

A musical interlude starts with the Southern African classic song 'Awumba We' sung by the 'The Holy Heavenly Brothers' costumed in Zulu dress made from animal skin patterns. The rendition of 'Awumba We' is in English and one other language. Again for the British audiences this is mainly a touristic package of *Songs of Praise*, encouraging the perpetuating themes of 'the performing black "Africans"' and 'the nature-wildlife discourses'.

The arranged footage continues to be an interspersed of different angles of zoomed-in shots of Victoria Falls and is also used as the backdrop for the performers. Another choir (unnamed), made up of black Zimbabweans, sings songs with majority of the film footage showcasing the country's tourist attractions such as shots of sunsets on the river, yawning hippopotamuses in river, herds of antelopes etc.

Later, Pam Rhodes is also seen arriving and stepping off a light aircraft to meet National Park worker Fausto Carbone (white male). Fausto Carbone talks more about animals – the wildlife and conservation work on endangered species. Very interestingly, there is an inclusion of music performed in an open square of an apparent metropolis. This is the first shot that includes a city space with musicians and a crowd of Zimbabwean onlookers – yet there is no acknowledgement of the metropolitan life. The performance and music takes principal position as the image frequently and

rapidly returns to adventure and wildlife, with images of children at play in Msango Camp. Pam Rhodes continues, that

at Msango camp children from all over Zimbabwe get a chance to experience Africa's wildlife at first hand¹⁹

There is another song interlude with a fireside scene at night, and children with camp guardians singing. Again the scenes of this campsite are clearly confirmed to the nature and holiday theme, as shots of vegetation, landscape, and sunsets on the horizon, are woven into the scenes of the children's campsite play. The next sequence involves a light aircraft – flying against a backdrop of beautiful scenery followed by a performance by a mass choir – formed for the impending Conference of the World Council of Churches in Zimbabwe. The choir (all black Zimbabweans) sing the conference anthem. A 'prayer from Zimbabwe' is the concluding element of the programme and it involves a prayer recital from Zimbabwe by children: the lines of which talk about the beautiful country, the wildlife, thanks to God for the wonderful creatures. The prayer recital is staggered with several children, again interlaced with film shots of lions in the wild. A musical interlude concludes with the same song sung by different groups who had already participated earlier in this film, sung in English and one other Zimbabwean language. Spectacular aerial photographic shots covering the landscapes and the Victoria Falls provides the images that front the music.

¹⁹ BBC1 *Songs of Praise* Sunday 25th October 1998

Pam Rhodes signs off the programme by saying:

Well, that brings us to the end of this unforgettable journey across Zimbabwe which has covered thousands of miles and hundreds of years. From the Christianity first brought here by the missionaries to the living faith of Christians in Zimbabwe today.²⁰

An intriguing element of this programme and the presenter in the context of the colonial and post-colonial interpretations is that the Presenter is called Pam Rhodes. Even if she is no relation to the 'founder' of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) – Cecil Rhodes, the recognition for some of the audiences is there and the interpretation and association with the colonial and the historical is compounded. The film works at locating these familiarities in the religious songs, the white characters and their voices, as well as the themes of nature, wildlife and safari. Pam Rhodes' engagements and interviews selectively work at eliciting nostalgia for the colonial achievements, underlined by the suggestions of the selected characters given voice, while most of the Black Zimbabwean characters perform and demonstrate, but do not share the same platform of interactivity given to the white characters.

²⁰ BBC1 *Song of Praise* as above

3.9 Representation Through Audience Templates: Viewpoints and Conformist Presentations.

Of important mention is the fact that quite often in representations of Africa, there are no efforts to jolt the reader/audience from what they have come to expect from 'Africa' over time. Representations of Africa tend to conform to a recurrent series of interpretations, themes and suggestions that frame Africa within some limited subject areas. There are often little or no background explanations and no attempts at analysing the topic from the point of view of the African societies/communities or a failure of critical perspectives. This trend is chiefly, but not exclusively, the case in news genres. Interest in Africa flares and then founders. News explodes on television when interest is thought to have reached a high peak. Usually this is at a point of dramatic occurrence and as news and issues considered interesting are the dramatic ones, the audiences lose the contextual preparedness for such peak encounters. Their encounter at a point of 'exciting' incidents means they lose the pre-forming contexts that help in the interpretation of the message. Continuity in such exposure to peaked incidents carves the particular understanding and the contexts developed for the interpretation of the messages. As the WAR in Liberia, the WAR in Sierra Leone, the WAR in Congo are dramatically experienced by the television audiences to be brutal and affecting only at their peak, audiences are continually left with limited contexts and messages to build up mentally and to approach other discourses about Africa with. Thus the Liberian war

becomes the interpretative knowledge base for the Sierra Leonean and Congolese wars. The cycle continues – and as earlier and later discussions in this study show, this is encouraged by and encourages the homogenisation of ‘Africa’.

Roger Govea (1992:94) suggests that post-colonial interpretations of Africa’s politics have been done in the shadow of the cold war. He argues that these interpretations were pro-western if the subjects maintained colonial ties and did not veer from Western recognised paths.

3.10 Conclusions

‘Africa’s great silence’ can be heard throughout British television. A silence created by a dearth of characters that are African, and a lack of interrogation with opinions and positions that are from these sites in Africa. The ready engagement with the familiar, and frequent attempts at identifying issues, objects and topics in places visited in Africa with Britain, works at grounding the United Kingdom as the centre, and these visited places as peripheral to this centre. The debates of this chapter sought to show the striking absence of voices, presences and perspectives that could be classified as originating from Africa. Using the structure of the narrative as an approach to organising the frames of discourses on programmes linked to Africa, I began by locating different authorial positions of the narrator in television. The discussions also sought to organise the structure

of the television narrative into the real author and the implied author, from whom the messages originate, and which is directed at a specific kind of reader.

The penchant for the alignment of the story with the familiar and the expectations of the reader, makes the narrative on Africa empty of strong black African characters and narrators who are local to these communities being commented on. Instead the programmes reveal a tendency of the presenter narrator to locate the familiar in the agenda they form, the themes they concentrate on, the questions they ask and answers they elicit from their interviewees, and the frequency of interviewing and interacting with White expatriates and White inhabitants in the sites in question. The way the programmes are presented to the intended or preferred readers are all noticeable in the allusions and contexts encouraged by the narrators. This I argue leads 'Africa' by the perspective of the British presenter, and possibly the expectations of the reader, which then continues to frame Africa in those dominant thematic structures. Again, the absence of a comparative level of reasoning on Africa conducted by Africans themselves, or the absence of an intelligent interaction and interviews with these Africans (apart from solely presenting them as performers or objects of gaze and analysis).

Thus through an exploration of *Voices Discoursing Africa* comes a clearer view of the narrator on 'Africa' – one that has a dominant 'observatorial' and commentating position, and shows a recurrent narrow scope on Africa through the same repeated gaze and/or perspectives.

Chapter 4 – Gazing on Africa, Grazing on Nature: ‘Africa’ and the Construction of Nature’s Cradle.

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Wildlife Programmes – Predominant Discourses on ‘Africa’
- 4.3 Analysing Nature Documentaries – Science versus Literature
- 4.4 Captivating Africa!
- 4.5 Colonising Instincts and the Exclusion of Culture
- 4.6 Experiencing the Media’s Africa – Missing Contexts
- 4.7 Constructing ‘Wild Africa’
- 4.8 Of Monsters, Strange Beasts and Animals
- 4.9 Animating and Dramatising Nature
- 4.10 Establishing Fear
- 4.11 Africa of Fluid Boundaries
- 4.12 Nature versus Culture
- 4.13 Nature as Culture
- 4.14 Constructing the Equivalence of Natives and Animals
- 4.15 Ambivalences: The Wild and The Dangerous and The Wonderful and The Beautiful
- 4.16 ‘Africa’ as Nature in other Genre
- 4.17 Reminiscencing the Colonial
- 4.18 Conclusions

Dawn over the Congo, the heart of darkness is full of surprises, full of life. Is this the last place yet to be explored or is it the first place? Cradle of human origins.... These rainforests are a whirlpool of evolution, but where do we fit into the Congo whirlpool?¹

BBC2 (2001) *Congo* ‘Footprints of the Forest’.

4.1 Introduction

Following the themes of presences and absences in ‘representations of “Africa”’, discussed earlier in Chapter three, this chapter explores the way ‘Africa’ is constructed and construed within a nature and culture dichotomy. The chapter explores the dynamics surrounding the representation of

¹ BBC2 *Congo* ‘Footprints of the Forest’ produced and broadcast 2001. Narrated by John Lynch, written and produced by Brian Leith, executive producer Neil Nightingale.

humans and animals, nature and culture in media images and discourses of Africa. On one front it examines how television as a medium uses nature and wildlife to signify 'Africa' via the inclusion and exclusion of particular themes, peculiar subjects and discourse patterns. On another hand, it also examines the structures that encourage a significant tilt towards the representations of animals and the landscape, geographical and ecological, whilst abandoning the social, cultural, popular and political aspects of that setting. How 'Africa' works to secure the connotative reference to wild animals, harsh landscapes and austere weather needs to be unravelled. The early observations show that the reference 'Africa' works in the British popular media as synonymous with adventure, danger, freedom, wildlife and animal watching – the Safari experience. Consequently, by association 'Africa' invokes to many a suggestion of that which is rustic, wild and untamed, and furthermore a site that indicates survival, hardship and the transience of life. All of this is set in a beautiful, yet paradoxically harsh setting. 'Africa' by mention, metonymically invokes the image of the giant game reserve, but how does this signification work? Are the contemporary images of Africa inherited from colonial discourses of civilization, governance, hunting and photography for natural history studies, early anthropology, travel writing (including fantastical descriptions of strange beasts in distant lands) or are these entirely new constructions, that depict

the relaying of underlying neo-imperialistic tendencies of the media and media personnel or desires of audiences in the West?².

4.2 Wildlife Programmes – Predominant discourses on ‘Africa’

The results from the study of content of broadcast programmes about Africa on British television show that natural and wildlife programmes alone constituted twenty eight percent (28%) of all the sampled programmes as the illustrations in table 4.1, figures 4.1 and 4.2 below.

Table 4.1 Nature Programmes as Percentage of Africa-Related Programmes

Genre	Quantity in total sample	% of total sample	Time/duration in minutes	% distribution of overall airtime in sample
Nature programmes	33	28	1085	44.5
All other programmes	85	72	1352	55.5
Total Programmes	118	100%	2437	100%

² The parallels or distinctions that can be drawn between historical discourses and engagements, and contemporary discoursing about Africa, are explored further in Chapter 7 of this thesis, with examinations of causal elements in colonial rhetoric and the implications and effects these have on changing or continuing the framing of Africa in the UK.

Figure 4.1 Nature Programmes as Percentage of Africa-Related Programmes

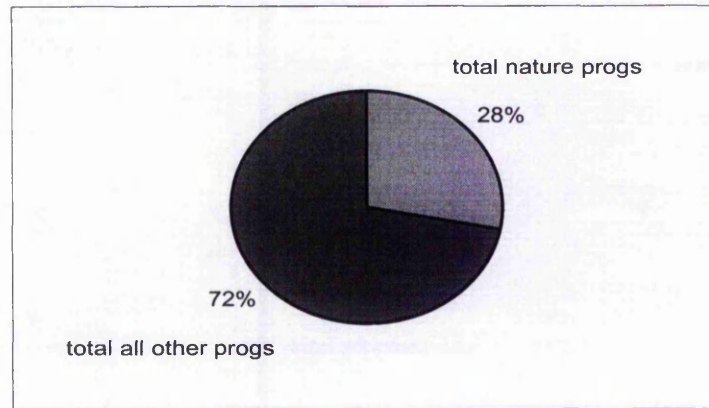
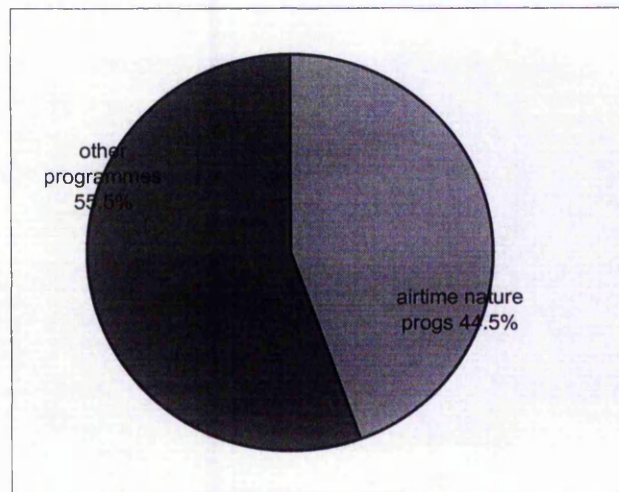


Figure 4.2 Percentage Distribution of Overall Airtime in Sample



The amount of peak airtime these nature and wildlife programmes actually occupied was even significantly larger (fig. 4.2). Although 28% of the programmes listed in the sample were on the subject of nature and Africa,

this percentage in reality occupied a significantly larger airtime than all the other programmes put together. From the overall total, shown in the diagram above, African nature and wildlife programmes alone amounted to 44.5 % of airtime. That figure reflects nearly half the entire airtime accorded 'Africa' and it is significant that it is all devoted to the themes of nature and wildlife. That figure contrasts with the residual 55.5 % of programming time for all other genres and themes including political issues, news and documentaries that deal with Africa as a subject. The medium's relation with the subject of 'Africa' is thus evidently strongest on the nature, wildlife issues. Arguably this strong showing of nature programmes, over all other genres engaging with the subject of Africa, strengthens my contention that the British media leans more heavily towards the representation of 'African' nature or animals and their habitats than other aspects of African experiences.

On a more general observation, popular programming on British television during the time of this study reveals a significant content of animal-related or pet-themed programming. These programmes incorporate a wide range of animals, including both domesticated and wild, originating in temperate or tropical climates. The programmes range from human-animal interaction documentaries such as; *Vets in Practice*, *Animal Hospital*, *Battersea Dogs Home*, *Barking Mad*, *Animal Police* (RSPCA), *Rolf's Amazing World of Animals*, *Crufts*, and *Animal Airport* on the one hand,

and the more strictly observatorial styles of the wildlife documentaries like *Wildlife On One*, *Animal Zone*, *Wild Africa*, *Orang-utan Rescue*, and others on the other hand. Such proliferation of programmes on the subject of animals does reinforce suggestions that British audiences are 'animal-loving': a pre-condition of the interest and popularity of settings (such as those within Africa with wild animals). It is interesting that most of these animal programmes are framed in a non-fictional genre, with insinuations towards educational and informative presentations of animal behaviour. Displaying a latent belief that animals are incapable of deception, audiences sway towards a less than sceptical approach to animal programmes. In this respect, animal programmes resemble news and documentary programmes, rather than entertainment forms.

In terms of their framing, nature or natural history documentaries are scientific programmes that fit into categories of the factual as against other declared fictional entertainment on television. Natural history programmes follow, record and present their subject as objects of study. Besides the entertainment potential of such programmes, there is an intimation of education or information. The responses to nature programmes are thus more likely to be serious than responses to 'non-scientific' ones. Yet still, messages from all genre types cumulatively aid in constructing our images, contexts and meanings whether fictional or factual.

4.3 Analysing Nature Documentaries – Science versus Literature.

Jordanova (1986) admits that there is still a reluctance to appreciate that scientific writing is similar to literary material. Beginning by identifying language as the primary object of study in exploring scientific or literary writing, Jordanova (1986) further believes that a focus on the discourses common to scientific and literary writing would aid an understanding and appreciation of the closeness of these polarised genres. Science then, is representation in as many ways as literature is, or in this context, fictional television material constructs a version of the real world. What distinguishes fact from fiction or science from literature?

Jordanova (1986) suggests that science and literature are closer genres than is often argued. Her idea of applying methods of literary criticism to scientific texts like asking questions about genre, reader–writer relationships, the use of linguistic devices and constraints on the message, among others, is very much the approach adopted in analysing the nature documentaries in this chapter. Jordanova's position highlights the fact that writing – and in this context television programming – under the category of science or literature can have unconscious constraints of many sorts that map the form and content of arguments.

Noxolo (1999) also identifies the invaluable role literature plays in the reading of science, for as she effectively argues, scientific representations effectively draw from commonly held assumptions and imagery. Like scientific texts, nature documentaries carry with them a perception of authenticity and fact, as they are often perceived as devoid from subjectivity and prejudice. The way in which they are presented, including the truth claims made in their presentation, are all within a positivist and empirical approach to discoursing about nature and animals.

Television provides an opportunity to producers to use selected images to reinforce any assertions put forward in a message³. Other claims to factual and scientific presentations include the programmes' use of statistical, historical, and other accuracy measurements, explanations of weather conditions, as well as the state of the vegetation and the habits of the animals. The appearance of objectivity is also achieved by the compelling tones and all-round persuasiveness of commentaries, which, together with the images, establish the commentator's authoritative knowledge of the subject⁴.

³ For example in a news story about the Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky 'scandal', the taped telephone conversations between Linda Tripp and Monica Lewinsky's are played on air, yet to create a visual the producers add subtitles, a still photograph each of the two women, and an image of a rolling cassette labelled 'The Lewinsky Tapes'.

⁴ Aldridge and Dingwall (2003) also share that position. They suggest that wildlife programmes occupy a 'privileged realm', one 'reinforced by the authoritative mode of the presentation' and by the 'trusted and familiar' characters of the presenter' (2003:439). This is evidenced by the reassuring, knowledgeable and composed stature of presenter David Attenborough in many of BBC's wildlife programmes.

They are growing fast, are very inquisitive, and by seven weeks already seem keen to start building; the activity that would take up most of their adult lives.... But in Africa you don't count your chicks before they've left the nest.... The python is on the move again, and the snake is one of the few predators that can get into a hamerkop's nest.⁵

The excerpt from Andrew Sachs' commentary above, details the ages of the hamerkop as we see it in the film footage and their habits including the arrival of the ominous and the dangerous. Obviously the narrator has already seen the footage and is aware of the impending predation by the snake on the chicks. The perspective we gain of him is his knowledge and experience of 'Africa'. He appears to know all about Africa, he knows about these animals before they are born and when they will die.

As Jordanova (1986) rightly explains, the scientist mounts an authorial position in writing, which is doubled by the perception of the establishment of an account of reality. In any case, writing, as programme production, produces readers like audiences and creates a one voice to many eyes/ears scenario. Furthermore, a particular piece of work will operate differently to different audiences who will locate different associations, conflicts and meanings as they resonate to them. In short the language employed by the author is the main means through which they construct their identity, assume their roles, their points of view and their contexts (Jordanova 1986).

⁵ Channel 5 Sunday 8th March 1998 *Call of the Wild* - 'Legend of the Lightning Bird'. Narrated by Andrew Sachs.

The nature and wildlife programmes (with their omnipresent and omniscient eyes, third person pronouns and most often, physically-absent narrator)⁶, powerfully project significant authorial pointers and factors, such as choices of naming, personification and the selection of figures of speech, even including the selection of the type of genre to use in the communication of the specific message. The genre often projects an omnipresent and omniscient perusal with its use of voiceover narration (often added in the studio), extensive knowledge about all the subjects and locations concerned with minimum visibility of humans in the film footage. The narrator thus appears Godlike – present in all the scenes and circumstances and the sole voice recounting all aspects of his/her subjects' life, circumstances from the past to the future. Bearing in mind that it was only recently in the eighteenth and nineteenth century that saw the marking of distinct scientific and literary categories (and also the period during which the novelist gained acclaim as the accurate recorder of life), science and literature or fictional writing, have hitherto not always been separate categories. The partition being recent, buttresses the argument, that science

⁶ Sometimes the narrator is an on-screen presenter, as in the series of Wildlife programmes (including *Wildlife on One* featuring David Attenborough) and other times we have an absent narrator such as in the *Call of the Wild* series on Channel 5, where for example Andrew Sachs also provides us with the 'enlightening' narrative organised around the sub-theme or topic of the programme (e.g. [an] 'Amazing Nature' or 'Cat's Kin'. Whether on-screen or a voice-over narrator, the presenters/narrators of the nature and wildlife genre often occupy the position of an extensively knowledgeable and confident personality. Their awareness of the intricacies of the lives and habitats of the animals including a whole host of supporting information such as the changing weather patterns and references to other related issues comes across in the short time they are with us on screen. To us, the voice of the narrator instructing us on these other creatures (them, they/ it, us) carries the authority of the author of the information we are reading. This role of the author, narrator and voice has been discussed further in Chapter 3.

and literature may have co-existed and been approached and interpreted with similar responses until the arbitrary divisions around the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Their difference as textual and communicative material are in fact little and our imposition of categories on writing types as scientific and literary are separations which we now accord them, and are for our own convenient classifications and labelling. On that note, deconstructing 'scientific' nature documentaries should be on par with analysing other 'cultural' documentaries, films and other genres. The importance of such analysis, relating more to how they engage with their subject (in this context 'Africa'), than their purported 'mode of presentation' under an extent of 'truthfulness or non-truthfulness'.

4.4 Captivating Africa!

It is evident, that the rich and diverse natural wildlife (animals, flora and fauna), found on the African continent, is a great attraction and the subject of many entertainment and education-oriented television programmes targeted at people outside the African continent. Although pre-colonial and colonial exploratory years saw a high level of interest in the acquisition and control of the African continent and its peoples, these political and anthropological interests appear to have diminished, with present-day interests shown by television in the United Kingdom in Africa, only strongest in the wildlife and natural scenery that can be found on the

continent of Africa. Wildlife documentaries are suggestively aimed at exploring and showcasing animals in their natural habitat, their behaviours and habits, as well as the harsh and beautiful landscapes that can be found in other parts of the world. Africa remains in that context a captivating subject, intriguing and engrossing to the viewer. Ambivalent reverberations are relayed to the site of perusal. On one hand is the conservational gaze, which desires a conservation of the sites, in pristine, untouched, and unspoilt conditions. The *conservational gaze* excludes all factors that have potential to mar the ‘perfect state’. Humans are thus excluded from the picture for these reasons. The researchers and producers of these animals aim to inform and educate us of their habitats yet discourage, by their presentations, any involvement of humans. The ‘natives’ are excluded and so are the documentary production team⁷. What we eventually see is the cultivation of a romanticised picture – suggesting a setting that shows evolutionary history in the present in Africa – the ‘origins of life’. On the other hand there is an admiration of the scenery and animals that is underpinned by a desire to colonise, to introduce order and organisation, to possess and enjoy the animals and the adventure and the thrill that surrounds them. That yearning to order according to our perspectives is

⁷The elimination of producers and their equipment from most of these wildlife documentaries is given another perspective by Bousé (2000). Concentrating on a classification between adventure/presenter-led wildlife programmes and ‘blue chip’ production, he marks this distinction between the two by the absence of politics, people or historical reference points. Aldridge and Dingwall (2003) argue that the absence of these factors in the ‘blue chip’ film makes it widely marketable abroad (e.g. in non-English countries, transformed with new voiceovers) and preventing it from dating (from the clothing, hair, equipment or general material input into the film).

even stronger in conservation pieces. Thus when we see the scientists in *QED* – ‘Betsy and the Bongo’⁸ there is a considerable effort to correct the balance of life in Africa. *QED* – ‘Betsy and the Bongo’ is a programme that trails the works of American scientists, including the lead scientist Betsy, working in American Laboratories, on Mount Kenya, and on ranches in Kenya, performing artificial insemination and feeding. The team have access to an array of sophisticated equipments including aircrafts and laboratories, all in a large effort to save the Bongo, an endangered species in Africa. All these underscore a representation which proposes on the one hand, the good intentioned and extensive effort to save the Bongo, and on the other hand the danger posed by the ‘Africans’ who come across as a threat to the ‘frail’ Bongo. The spectacular aerial photography (shot with sophisticated equipments), as well as the personal and tender touches given the animals in the film, in the protection from poachers, present, not only the overt message of environmental balance and protection, but also the suggestion of the disparaging destruction of the Africans of their environment. In another animal programme examining elephant poaching, the ‘destructive tendencies’ of the spear-wielding half-naked African men are once again of concern. As the commentary is heard:

These prisoners are poachers, they have come to lay waste to a living emblem of the continent. The great grey giant: Africa’s wild elephant. It is the so-called architect of the jungle, everyday it eats up to a hundred and eighty kilograms of vegetation and drinks roughly 230 litres of water. For tens of

⁸ BBC1 *QED* – Betsy and The Bongo 13th October 1998 [21.30-22.00hrs].

thousands of years it has had a staggering impact on the balance of life here, now the scales of that balance are tipping against it. A battle has long been raging over its ivory tusks; Africa's white gold.

...Today the African elephant is looking down the loaded barrel of extinction. ...How did the once mighty elephant fall so far so fast? The answer in a word is people!⁹

These two programmes are examples of the 'African-destroyer', 'European-developer' ideals discussed later in Chapter 6. The Western narrator's point of view with which we identify, and the American scientists grand efforts, illustrate the suggestions of an underlying or latent yearning to introduce order and organisation of a familiar kind – to colonise.

In a great majority of the nature programmes collected for this study, the footage shows significant exclusions of humans, especially 'natives', possibly present or integral to the sites where this wildlife exists. In Channel 5's *Life at the Edge*– 'The Tallest Story' the commentator declares that 'giraffe live in the wooded savannah of Africa'¹⁰[my emphasis]. He continues with 'In East Africa there are three types of giraffes...'. These statements are the only two directions to the identification of the geographical location as available in the commentary. Two herdsmen herding their cattle appear in the distance foregrounded by giraffes feeding. Their activities can be seen clearly but there is no acknowledgement or explanation as to their presence. Excluding this specific scene, there are no more images of humans, and no

⁹ Channel 5 *Against all Odds*. The African Elephant. 16th March 1998 19.30-20.00hrs

¹⁰ Channel 5 *Life at the Edge* – 'The Tallest Story'. 14th February 1998. 19.30-20.00hrs. Catspaw Production.

mention of humans or natives in the entire programme. The music accompaniment to this programme, however, interestingly includes music types that are difficult to pinpoint to a particular community, but are recognisably from somewhere inside Africa, setting the scene as 'Africa'. The producers accompany the film with music (singing, drumming and the playing of other non Western instruments) performed by traditional groups from different parts of Africa. A further elaboration on the use of music as a homogenizing agent is available in Chapter 5 of this thesis. In Channel 5's *Hairy Hunters* - 'Cat's Kin', the programme follows feline animals in the wild and there is no suggestion of possible humans on the site. In Channel 5's *Call of the Wild* - 'Legend of the Lightning Bird' as in *Wildlife on One* - 'The Hippopotamus' (which receives extended analysis later on in this chapter), there is no direct mention of humans or natives. The footage excludes any express signs of human habitation or existence and the absence of humans and signs of culture and human life suggest the sites to be exclusively wild animal domains. Yet indirectly human existence is locatable, albeit after a careful study of the insinuations and references that are used in the representation of the animals and their prowess.

4.5 Colonising Instincts and the Exclusion of Culture.

Writing on the consequences for primatology of the social relations of race, sex, and class in the construction of scientific knowledge, Donna Haraway

(1989), suggests that primatologists or researchers in the field after the second world war failed to grasp the fact that their positions within systems of racism and imperialism were partly responsible for the interrelationships of people, land and animals in Africa and Asia as they saw it. Haraway believes many of these researchers desired a nature that was 'pure' and unspoilt by contact with humans so they 'sought untouched species, analogous to the 'natives' once sought by colonial anthropologists'.

Haraway states that:

But for the observer of animals, the indigenous peoples of Africa and Asia were a nuisance, a threat to conservation—indeed encroaching "aliens" — until decolonisation forced white western scientists to restructure their bio-politics of self and other, native and alien (Haraway, 1989:7).

Again, Haraway (1989) observes a shifting of boundaries between humans and animals in the transition from the colonial to a post or neo-colonial standpoint. There is to be identified also, a shifting of focus from humans to animals with decolonisation.

For the mass media today, this suggests that the exclusion of indigenous African peoples from the landscapes in nature documentaries is reflective of a desire to maintain the scientific perceptions of 'natural purity'.

As the colonial politics and post-colonial backlashes questioned the gaze and scrutiny of the humans in Africa and the new world, as objects of study

(sometimes defined as racial anthropology), the exploratory gaze moved to the scrutiny of the animals set in these same sites, with similar tropes of measurement.

Revisiting the BBC's production of *Congo*, the dramatic photography of vegetation and wildlife in the basins along the Congo river, which runs mainly through three countries, is accompanied by rhetoric filled with stark colonial and racial anthropology discourse. Narrator John Lynch declares:

Dawn over the Congo, the heart of darkness is full of surprises, full of life. Is this the last place yet to be explored or is it the first place? Cradle of human origins! These rainforests are a whirlpool of evolution, but where do we fit into the Congo whirlpool?

We have always seen these forests as a forbidden wilderness, one of nature's final refuges. Untamed and alien to mankind, yet the deeper we go into this fabled heart of darkness the less threatened it seems to become. The Congo is home to the largest number of primates on earth, and it's the only place where our three closest relatives can be found, Gorillas, Chimpanzees and Bonobos....

The only animals these chimps fear is man. Normally the first sign of human would send them packing into the bush, terrified of an even more ruthless killing. But these chimps couldn't give a damn. They don't know enough to fear man....

They even threaten to attack. It's a terrifying experience....

These naïve chimps don't know enough to fear a potentially deadly enemy. They may never have seen a human before which is almost incredible. Can there really be a large place in Africa, where mammals live in complete innocence of human beings?¹¹[my emphasis]

¹¹ BBC2 (2001) *Congo* 'Footprints of the Forest'. Written and produced by Brian Leith, edited by David Thrasher and narrated by Brian Leith, this particular episode trails European biologists Marcel Magesa and David Morgan, exploring the southern edges of the Ndoki National Park.

The rhetorical question Lynch poses at the end of these re-emphasised declarations of the innocence and ignorance of the chimpanzees and their aggressive conduct to man (the two white biologists and the camera crew) instantly underlines the argument that the longing to explore, to discover a 'purified state' devoid of humans is very high. To the production crew and scientists, this may never have been seen, hence the suggestion that these are being explored for the first time. Incredibly that assertion assumes either that historically no native African peoples have ever trod these parts and that the creators of the Ndoki National Park (the people of Congo) are not aware of the content of the site they have sought to preserve, or a denotation that the discovery by the western scientist is the only hegemony of discovery. There are inadvertent admissions in the narrator's effort to paint the unadulterated, site and to re-establish the rhetoric of 'discovery'. His fervent reminders to us of these 'forbidden' sites, 'untamed and alien to mankind' becomes incompatible with his assertions that the only animals these chimps fear, is man (and the 'terror of an even more ruthless killing'). He manages to insinuate the animals' fear of local poachers, continuing the African's 'danger to nature' discussed above. Thus his representation of that 'always' forbidden site ('nature's final refuge'), deconstructs into an oppositional assertion if we accept that, 'normally', humans send the chimps scampering. In effect, the narrator's excitement in the representation of this new 'discovery' becomes a construction that tries to

ignore other potential facts about the story. The agenda in that programme is simply a 21st century television discovery of the fabled 'heart of darkness'.

As with many other television texts, the audience's vision in any nature documentary is restricted. Within that visible image frame that television allows, the audience can only follow the producer's chosen image, packaged by the film crew, who are in this case akin to the primatology observer or scientist. The producers therefore, in casting an exclusively animal cast in a natural history rhetoric, pander to the colonial anthropology setting where observation and commentary about the observed was more common than any interaction or interviews with the observed.

In some respects it can be argued that Africa just operates as the setting where some of these objects of interest lie, yet the lions, the giraffes, the elephants, the rhinoceroses and hippopotamuses in their natural habitat have become in many ways strong signifiers of 'Africa'. Large wild animals suggest Africa in the same way as mention of 'Africa' immediately evokes images of these animals. It must be said that UK nature documentary programmes are not, on the whole, exclusively set in Africa. The genre also features other animals located outside the African continent, and in temperate habitats, and therefore includes other sites such as the North Pole, South and North America and even sites within the United Kingdom. Nature and wildlife are not exclusive to the continent of Africa, yet no other

part of the world has come to be so powerfully signified by its animals. This kind of presentation where a single factor of nature dominates the picture cannot be said of other continents like Asia, Europe, South or North America.

The large populations of temperate weather animals, like herds of migrating wildebeest cattle, and the well-known wild animals such as the lions, giraffes, leopards, cheetahs and zebras among others, are the dominant associates to nature programmes and to Africa. If these wild animals, the main actors in these nature programmes, were to be found in other settings apart from Africa, then even the present engagement with Africa would be significantly smaller, if not negligible.

What else exists in Africa besides its wildlife? The exclusion of culture, which has been argued over time as that which defines and distinguishes humans from animals, promotes not only a partial picture of Africa but projects Africa exclusively in that animal/nature image alone. What is included and what is excluded in the overall representations of Africa, and what is included in the presentation of the nature and wildlife, helps one assess the balances or imbalances in the images the media relays.

4.6 Experiencing the Media's Africa – Missing Contexts.

British everyday life includes only very brief references to African history or culture. Museum exhibits as well as the histories that the British public comes across often position Europe as the driving force in African history. There is limited information even today about the Africa known or readily available to the European, further fashioned by the unusual historical experiences that have ensued between some of these European countries including Britain and parts of the African continent making up their own 'African experiences'. Basically, the relevant contextual information required for understanding and making sense of information about Africa is limited in many, if not all, parts of the media. An exclusive analysis of news reporting as a genre, would significantly exclude Africa as well as provide very limited results in the attempt at sourcing what media audiences appreciate in Britain. To illuminate the incidence of occurrence and the characteristics of the 'Africa' engaged with on British television is to extend the scope of reference on it – its discursive field.

4.7 Constructing 'Wild Africa'

A determination to produce programmes for specific purposes, or of particular entertainment value, leads to a structuring and construction of these programmes along the rigid ideas of what prevails in Africa. Too

often, programme commissioners direct the development of a programme on Africa towards the themes of the wild and untamed space.

To appreciate the argument that television constructs a particular image of Africa by how it represents it, one needs to look closely at the different elements in the discourses and themes that occur in their particular contexts on the subject of Africa. These elements of construction range from the use of language, the choice of words, the employment of metonymic, metaphoric, literary and linguistic devices, the arrangement of text, sound and picture, the domination of particular themes or issues, and fluidity between references from one subject to another, by the interchanging of terminology or meaning. For example, the evocation of images of the kingdoms of animals in nature documentaries filmed in Africa, draws on the context of the historical references to, and contexts of, African Kingdoms. The list could include issues on how the media excludes particular subjects and themes and focuses on those on its agenda. The entire structures of these discourses on Africa can be deconstructed to reveal layers of structuring of meaning engaging many of the afore-mentioned factors and more, to suggest particular readings or representations of Africa.

It can be suggested that there are set images invoked by the referent 'Africa' which the media also try to capture in the filming and broadcasting of programmes. Returning to *Secret Lives*-'Desert Mist', a nature

documentary narrated by Piers Gibbon, we find a characteristic organisation of communication around ideologies and concepts that aid in the particular framing and construction of a purposed image. The commentary accompanying the footage reveals clearly a nostalgic fixation to an unchanging image of a nature reserve and survival setting that is signified in 'Africa'. Even the introductory sequence below clearly shows this.

Commentary – Piers Gibbon <i>Secret Lives</i> –'Desert Mist'	Footage
<p>Its name means a place of nothing, yet <u>this bleak realm</u> is a <u>fountain of life</u>. The question is how does life survive here in the Namib Desert?</p> <p>In the heart of the day they gather to quench their thirst. <u>Relief comes to the African plains</u> whenever there is life-giving water....</p> <p>This is the Africa we know, across the continent the <u>life</u> and <u>death struggles</u> play out, always set against the same backdrop.... The waterhole – the river, these are crossroads of life. Where there is water, the drama of <u>survival</u> is perennially staged. <u>Water has shaped the creatures of Africa</u>, it has defined their behaviour, their intricate relationships, their anatomy itself. What would Africa do without water?</p> <p>The answer stretches over two thousand kilometres along the continent's southwest coast in a vast desert called the Namib. [my emphasis]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishing shot, then long-range and high-angle shots of pack of lions hunting down a zebra. - Action shots, tracking left to right, zooming in and out, on animals. - Further low-angle and close-up shots of elephants. - Camera takes in scenes including a range of wild animals, panning left and right, changing quickly to reveal animals. - Distant shots, panoramic of scenic images of vast sandy deserts. - Setting of images show a horizon of the afternoon sun. - Distant and long to medium-range shots incorporating an array of picturesque and breathtaking natural scenery, as well as very close-up images of wild animals. - Images are arranged to display speed, agility, as well as grace in the fighting and hunting skills. - A range of very distant, panoramic and medium-range images of arid deserts, low-lying grasslands and vast open spaces with fierce-looking animals.

The statement 'this is the Africa we know' captures the entire line of reasoning of the programme makers. The piece is clearly tailored to correspond to the image of Africa as a big game reserve: deserts, hot weather, life on the edge, wild animals and exotic vegetation, drought and bleak survival. The rhetorical question, 'how does life survive here?' brings the theme of death, danger and survival immediately to the site and context, and is further buttressed by the reference to a desperate situation in the picture painted of the 'crossroads of life', and the important arrival of 'relief'.

To suggest that 'water has shaped the creatures of Africa' is to assume by agent exclusion, that there are no human beings in Africa, if not insinuating that the humans in Africa are like the animals, all classifiable as creatures – shaped and moulded by the vagaries of the landscape, climate and vegetation.

Often there are more overt directions of audiences to the rural and the wild. In another adventure programme, the programme starts us on the edges of a modern metropolis and although acknowledging its presence in the distance, re-directs the camera and topic to the exciting wild and precarious experiences to be found elsewhere. Following an introductory sequence with the sound of 'African' drumbeats, the presenter announces to us that:

This is Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia, formerly South West Africa. Behind me are the new parliament buildings. Namibia has only been a separate sovereign state since 1990. But it's out there, beyond the fringes of the city, where the true Namibia starts. The Namibia where elephants and giraffes roam free and where tribes live a lifestyle unchanged in thousands of years. And it is to this remote area of Namibia that a group of 12 school children from the North East are about to go, to experience a holiday of a lifetime¹² [my emphasis]

The camera image switches immediately as the on-screen presenter indicates, moving from the initial wide and distant shots of the high-rising skyline of Windhoek in the background of the shot of the presenter, to dirt tracks running through miles of grassland with mountains in the distance, and interspersed with images of 'tribes people'.

The selective Namibia being presented is not the metropolitan city of Windhoek. The new parliament buildings and hustle and bustle of the city as implied by the presenter is not the 'true' Namibia. That particular part of 'Namibia' is denied any closer encounter, as we are limited to the very distant shots of the city behind the on-screen presenter. The 'true' Namibia in his intimation and of the programme makers and editors is the rural countryside with its 'tribes' and apparent unchanged lifestyles, where adventure can be found and where the alternative to modernity and metropolis lies. We are thus transported 'out there [into Africa] beyond the fringes of the city... where giraffes roam free and where tribes live a lifestyle

¹² ITV1 Kids on the Kunene. 29th March 1998 [14.05–14.35hrs]

unchanged in thousands of years'. Herein lies the construction of particular 'Africas' to serve specific purposes.

4.8 Of Monsters, Strange Beasts and Animals

There is also a constructed binary that creates both a familiar and an Other in the engagement with nature and animals. The exotic and unfamiliar animals are presented as interesting and beautiful and have an air of mysticism and amazement about them. These Others are great exhibits, desirous and untameable, but unattainably dangerous in their severe settings. On the other side lies the familiar, such as domestic animals and pets, that are colonised and controlled and live under guidance and discipline. These are transformed and tamed to take orders and be useful when needed, and as friends. The invocation of the strangeness of animals in the wild in the representations of Africa is reminiscent of early representations of Others, peoples, animals and places when little was known about them. The mystery surrounding these African animals is traceable to very early writing (further discussed in my conclusions to this thesis) where reports of 'strange and wilde beastes' that lived on the 'dark continent' abounded. In the language of some natural history programmes, the narrators could be easily reading from an early explorer's notebook.

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*¹³ (1902) is easily remembered here. Narrator John Lynch's words whip up interest and evocations of a shared excitement and terror but draw on the mythical and the fairytale. In declaring that these forests have always been seen as forbidden and as one of nature's final refuges he continues to draw the picture of the 'unbelievable' – 'untamed and alien to mankind'. In his excited tone of voice, one can identify a fervent desire for this kind of find and he leads us on a journey 'deeper [as] we go into this fabled heart of darkness...' to find 'our three closest relatives' the primates. And the location of the Gorillas, Chimpanzees and Bonobos brings the exciting discovery, he suggests that 'all three share striking similarities to ourselves...' Lynch's journey is clearly guided by a desire to find a particular kind of Africa in the Congo and, it appears, is at pains to remind us repeatedly of the wildness, the fearsome reputation, the remoteness and the forbidden space that he takes us into. Like Joseph Conrad above, the discourse is strikingly similar to an early 19th century discoverer's tale. Lynch's mission with the camera is

an exploration of the Congo in search of human origins and human nature. Why has no one looked here before? Maybe because this place has such a fearsome reputation, white man's grave, heart of darkness. And some parts of the Congo are so remote, so wild that it seems no man has ever walked here before.¹⁴ [my emphasis]

¹³ The *Heart of Darkness* has been re-published many times. See recent versions in e.g. Zabel, M. D. (ed) (1987), Watts, Cedric (ed) (1990) etc.

¹⁴ BBC2 *Congo* 'Footprints of the Forest' BBC2 30th January 2001 Narrated by John Lynch

An equivocation appears, when he relents towards the end of the statements above. His previously authoritative and definitive delivery – through the repetitive but authorial style he adopts – veers from the scientific and natural history slant, to storytelling. Between those lines is a story that is unsubstantiated in the assertions that man has never walked these parts, but instead hearkening towards even earlier tales of ‘strange and wilde beastes’ living in ‘this faraway land’.

4.9 Animating and Dramatising Nature

In contemporary television documentaries on nature, one can locate the active construction of drama and excitement in the presentation of the exotic wildlife and fauna, which is the subject of this type of genre. The application of special effects sequences and strategically shot photography, sounds, and the commentary are put together to achieve obviously desired results¹⁵. Along the lines of storytelling, these fictional facilitators, useful for generating and maintaining interest, suspense and entertainment in cinema, are employed for the presentation of the documentary.¹⁶ The

¹⁵ Aldridge and Dingwall (2003) describe it as a ‘complex symbiosis between science and spectacle’, a characteristic of modern wildlife films that appear committed to the cinematic origins of the wildlife film in the early cinema era, when cinema’s commercial and financial motivation gained root. (2003:438)

¹⁶ Again, the nature and wildlife documentary has frequently revealed a format that is made up of a strong narrative – a start, a beginning and an end (Aldridge and Dingwall, 2003:439). Thus there is an incorporation of a drama-suspense-happy ending/climax into the narrative. (2003:437) The setting of the tone for the event is often provided by suspense and intrigue while the event (might be the wildebeests’ river crossing or the birth of tiger cubs, or the hatching of the snake eggs) marks the crescendo of the film. The happy or sad ending is then woven gradually to conclude the narrative.

example of *Congo* used above is one such programme, heavily laden with dramatised effects especially in the choice of language but also in the arrangement of music, the narration, the tones and the film sequences. The scope of editing techniques for creating dramatic effect and for generating and maintaining interest, in an otherwise plain film about animals, is extensive. Using enveloping phrases and an evocation of terror, the introduction to the 25th October episode of *Wildlife on One* went as follows:

In the rivers and lakes of Africa lives an animal which has the reputation for being the most unpredictable of all. Even crocodiles are wary.

Already the themes of wildness, danger, and fear are established in relation to 'Africa'. The authoritative tone in the announcement, yet without disclosure of the actual 'unpredictable' 'animal', that lurking dangers are to be expected in the rivers and lakes of Africa, evokes a terrifying suspense. The narrator, by default, is asserting knowledge of all the rivers and lakes of Africa and the contents therein. Even fearful crocodiles, we are told, are wary of such an animal. Such is the height of the terror to be encountered and the unpredictability of it that this opening line is enough to captivate the viewer, invoke fear in him/her through the emphatic sweeping declarations, as well as other excluded information. Again this is somewhat reminiscent of medieval stories circulating about the strange and sinister creatures that live in a distant undiscovered place.

The narration of this introduction is performed in a stealthily deep and emphatic tone with a long silent pause allowing the aura of trepidation to be transferred – supported by arranged film shots of crocodiles. The footage then continues in short frames, enlarged frames and quick zooms: sequences of shots that zoom in and magnify splashes of water backed by noises, grunts, and squeals of an unidentified object. The accompanying sequences work from total concealment through to a gradual and careful unveiling of the star ‘animal’ with only quick, close-up shots of some body parts revealed. The presentation is arranged to a classical music piece with the abrupt and sharp tunes aiding the dramatic performances created through the sequences. As the suspense grows a sudden explosive splash of water and sound together with loud squeals, alongside a carefully choreographed arrangement of several camera shots and angles of movements in the undergrowth and the water, is used to reveal the ‘star’. The sounds (including music) and dramatic sequences in the close-ups and the gradual rising crescendo add excitement to the sequence. Large splashes and explosive noise and pictures accompany the poetic script and fast theatrical music. The ‘star’ is thus eventually announced after that long narrative pause to allow the music, picture sequences and sound effects, with the climax being made in an emphatic, authoritative yet sinister tone: with a shuddering announcement – the Hippopotamus.

In many ways I agree with Philo and Wilbert (2000) that animals are not 'merely passive surfaces onto which human groups inscribe imaginations and ordering of all kinds, because their representations differ with different people. Animals are not canvasses and they can potentially destabilise, resist or transgress human framing, such that their representation may in the end be influenced by this, yet their part in the drama is to 'hippopotomose'. Even though the subordination of the animals is not the primary concern here, the availability of technology and access to design, and the packaging of programmes in chosen formats allows us see that their performance in the representation is significantly orchestrated.

4.10 Establishing Fear

This re-presentation of the hippopotamus is craftily made and the animal is positioned centre stage with a dramatised performance in the attempt to tell the story about the hippopotamus and its life in its natural habitat. That broad opening statement: 'In the rivers and lakes of Africa', whilst adding grandeur and size to the strength and curiousness of the mystified hippopotamus also effectively denotes that the hippopotamus lives in all (every) lakes and rivers in Africa. This is again partly contributory to the thematic contexts of the unpredictable, unsafe and inescapable sites that are

the mystical and fearful 'Africa'¹⁷. That is not to mention the fact that the statement also unifies the continent, reducing its complexity, magnifying the role and position of the hippopotamus in relation to Africa and enlarging in as much as emphasising the 'natural' theme. Hypothetically a statement like 'In the rivers and lakes of Europe' in a similar dramatic rendition as the one discussed above would be less enthralling to a European viewer. Such a presentation seems to work contextually with 'Africa' in a way that would be difficult to suggest in relation to Europe, North and South America, or even Asia.

To effectively achieve the dramatic arrangement and exciting sequence, the producers use an accompaniment of classical music, which is at home in a theatrical setting, and work the performance and actions into a crescendo. The motions of the animals are arranged around the rises and falls in the tempo and temperament of the music with oscillation in noise volumes. The animals then appear to be performing to an orchestra although the performance here appears real and deadly.

¹⁷ A much more extensive discussion of the evocation of Africa as a site of fear and the indulgence of danger and panic is carried out in chapter 6 of this thesis under the title *A Problematic Africa*.

4.11 Africa of Fluid Boundaries

There is no mention of the exact location of the herd of hippopotamuses being filmed and there is also no focus or elaboration on the political assigns of the geographical setting that could help the viewer to narrow down the location of the setting, or to at least eliminate other sites of Africa from the mental contexts viewers employ to interpret the communicated pieces. It is very common to find programmes that focus on animals in Africa, name the animals as 'the African...' or mention the nature reserve (like the Masai Mara) without explaining more about its location. An example is an advertised programme broadcast during peak time on Channel 5 called 'African Waterhole'— a general study of animals that drink from a specific, yet undeclared location.¹⁸ An advert of a waterhole that is African in identity or quality, is not as familiar as it is apparently normalised in that programme. It is strange to call this waterhole African; it is after all a waterhole for animals.

The BBC's big budget nature programme of 2001, broadcast in four separate themed episodes was also titled *Wild Africa*, which although is indicative of the focus on wildlife and natural habitats in Africa, effectively strengthens the identification of Africa with the characteristic wildness with wild behaviour against the hegemonies of tame or civilised. 'Wild Africa' also stretches across borders and localities, the boundarylessness is inescapable

¹⁸ Channel 5 *African Waterhole* 20th June 2000 19.00-20.00hrs

in the adopted overarching thematic groupings of 'Rain Forests', 'Mountains', 'Deserts' and 'Savannah'.

Discourses concentrating on Africa as home of the mysterious wild creatures without much counter-balance in re-presentations of any other aspects do enforce an image that appears one-dimensional. Most often nature programmes, like these ones filmed on location in parts of the continent of Africa, assume a focus on the harshness of the habitat, or on a particular breed of animal and its living circumstances and its native home designated as 'Africa'. But these constructs often neglect to include the spaciousness or complexity of the site or to define the magnitude or specificity and particularities of the habitats and their non-generality in real application. It is only in reading the final credits can one actually locate the filming venues and, if noted, assist to narrow the location to one or two countries if not towns, parks or plains. For example the hippopotamus episode described above, finishes with titles reading:

The BBC wishes to thank South Luangwa National Park,
Zambia, Zambia National Wildlife and Parks Service, Kenya
Wildlife service. Producer: Martha Holmes. Series producer:
Scholey.

Filming thus was carried out in specific protected wildlife parks in South Luanga in Tanzania and in Kenya yet references to the habitat of the hippopotamus in the entire programme is made to a homogenous site which is defined as 'Africa' precluding any specificities or exclusivities to help

narrow the focus. The image that this construction gives is that hippopotamuses can be found from coast to coast all over the continent of Africa. Africa then emerges as a smaller site, and is a dangerous place to be in the midst of fearful crocodiles and the most dangerous hippopotamuses.

4.12 Nature versus Culture

This distinction between Nature and Culture is often accentuated in Western societies. It is also often given a gendered character where nature is feminine and culture masculine. But arguments by Jordanova and Haraway indicate that nature and culture may be much closer to each other. What constitutes nature or culture, like what distinguishes fact from fiction, and indeed men from women is in part a process of classification.

Defining the distinction between culture and nature is not easily achieved. As Horigan (1988) demonstrates, the field of the debate is wide and the distinction between nature and culture has had a long history in western thought. Horigan recalls an unresolved debate between Socrates and Hermogenes in the Plato's *Cratylus*, where Socrates argues the existence of natural relationships between words and the things they represent, whilst Hermogenes argued contrarily that naming and therefore language is by convention and agreement (the signs of culture) and not naturally

occurring. Hermogenes' argument suggests that naming is arbitrary and by habit and not dictated by any links between object and name. The thrust of the argument is the fact that it revolves around the distinction of things naturally occurring and those affected by human artifice. The polarisation of nature ('physis') and convention ('nomos') or culture goes as far back as classical philosophy. Seventeenth and eighteenth century political philosophers, according to Horigan, stretched the debate further by explaining the institution of political society to be an evolution from a state of nature to a state of culture. The idea of a shift between the states of nature and culture is not necessarily historical but mainly a conjectural one and useful for stipulating humanity's traits. Horigan argues that the opposition of nature and culture or human and animal have persisted into contemporary human sciences because of their usefulness in establishing and legitimising the autonomies of human sciences as disciplines. Whilst providing the human sciences with culture as their focus and justification, it also helps isolate what belongs or does not belong to culture. The debates isolate culture as an autonomous state that is isolated and opposed to nature/biology. Culture then is unique to humans, a distinct phenomena that defines humanity, and is seen in the ability of humans to impose meaning on the world through language. As Leslie White (1949) writes, the faculty enabling the development of ideas, beliefs, languages, customs and civilization in general is exclusive to the human species and it is these events that contribute to culture. Animals are distinguishable from humans

because of their existence in a state of nature and their lack of culture or the faculty enabling the experience of cultural phenomena. Arguments suggesting, that culture is what defined humans, progressed by the late nineteenth century in social and cultural anthropology into suggestions of a separation between race and culture. Recurrent, in all the arguments over the years, is an opposition between nature and culture based upon a belief in fundamental differences between animals and humans.

Horigan (1988) suggests that the distinction between nature and culture is continually linked with the distinction between animal and human. But then the historical distinctions of the savage and the wild man among others constitute a problem for such a distinction. Is the figure of the savage a kind of animal, or does he belong to the mythological creatures of the ancient world? And where does the wild man belong between the two oppositions of nature and culture, does he inhabit nature and still possess human culture? Horigan sees the wild man situated in both states, possessing human attributes such as culture alongside danger and freedom, akin to the state of nature and to animals.

Gradually the establishment of a hierarchy of nature to culture pervades the discourses and popular culture in writing and the media. The parading of a single hegemony of civilization, development or modernisation can be seen to be present albeit covert, shrouded by arguments of power and

government and economics. What is recapitulated here are past ideas of 'unilinear evolutionism', which were prominent thinking in nineteenth century anthropology along with beliefs that all humans could ascend to the pinnacles of civilization through the same cultural and evolutionary stages.

4.13 Nature as Culture

Constructing the natural 'Africa' is efficiently achieved with the focus on the natural in Africa, but when this is done at the expense of human socio-traditional and cultural elements, there is an effective grounding of an image of Africa that is lacking in its own appreciable cultural, social and traditional facets. The absence in the media of social relationships and structures inside Africa, comparable to ones in the West, makes it a sharply different Other. The transference or reversal of metaphors and references in the language of the discourses about 'Africa' establishes a domain of 'the animal kingdom'.

In *Call of the Wild*¹⁹, one of Channel 5's nature programme series, in an episode titled 'Legend of the Lightning Bird', the programme adopts the same entertaining elocution and articulation in the commentary narration by Andrew Sachs as in the BBC1 programme narrated by David

¹⁹Channel 5 *Call of the Wild*. "Legend of the Lightning Bird" was first shown on Sunday 8th March 1998 [21.00-21.30] with the voice of Andrew Sachs narrating the commentary.

Attenborough. The *Call of the Wild* is a programme that can be categorised as factual, yet with the tactical use of language the opening commentary, as quoted below, reveals heavy borrowings of the themes of mystery, legends and myths as well as metaphors:

Africa is the continent of mystery, of snow on the equator and great collections of animals that can be seen nowhere else. It is the continent of mythical beasts, of great cats and giant serpents; the stuff of legend.

But one of the most widespread tales of Africa concerns not these spectacular creatures but a bird. A bird that is said to be a rain-maker, to have control over the coming of the rains on the flooding the rivers, that is sometimes called the lightning bird and is said by the legends to be the king of all the birds of Africa.

To be king of Africa's birds presupposes something rather special. Is he chosen for his size if so it has to be the ostrich?

Is he chosen because he is powerful or that he has powerful allies...?

Channel 5 *Call of the Wild* March 1998 [my emphasis]

The delivery encompasses the representational tropes of the scientific or factual nature documentary with the connotations of the wild, – or the dark and sinister sites to augment the theme of strangeness. Asserting too, that this *mystery* is widely held by 'Africans', implies an association of all African peoples with the belief or knowledge of the lightning bird or having a singular tradition or set of values and beliefs that is in close proximity with nature. The commentary, in using unitary references to these themes, simplifies Africa and thus clouds the complex and varied distinctions that exist within the continent Africa. This sweeping approach implies that all African peoples are in fact familiar with such 'tales of Africa...' and so adopts a re-presentational standpoint of juxtaposing the nature with the

traditional. By asserting that these tales that exist are 'African' myths and legends that concentrated on the 'beasts', great cats, giant serpents and mythical creatures is to enshrine the statement, 'Africa is the continent of mystery...', in fact. The 'tales of Africa' also suggest untruths and the unknowns in the domain of Africa even to Africans [my emphasis]. The theme of mysticism is enforced further in the demonstration that Africa is full of the unknown. The transference between the documentation of nature and the indirect accounts of the anthropological and traditional stories of that 'Africa' is how the nature signifiers are successfully used to delete other agents and subjects in the representations of 'Africa'. Herein lies the fluidity between factual and fictional programming on the subject of Africa.

The story of the hamerkop is a nature and scientific one narrated as culture – imbued with tales of royalty, strength, beauty and feudal systems.

So lets see.

...the legendary king of Africa's birds. But the lightning bird is not king because of his size or strength or beauty. The legends say he is king because every other bird brings a contribution of sticks to help build the hamerkop's nest.

Found only in Africa, the hamerkop is the single representative of a family that comes somewhere between the herrings and storks... The hamerkop or hammer headed stork is... about a foot high... lived over most of Africa, except for the deserts and forests. Their most typical habitat is along the narrow streams that wander through the savannah such as this one in Tanzania.²⁰ [my emphasis]

²⁰ Channel 5 *Call of the Wild* 'Legend of the Lightning Bird 8th March 1998 [20.00-21.00hrs]

Here again, as in David Attenborough's commentary, the narrative build-up is tiered to the 'star actor'. The description of 'Africa' preceding its entrance is filled with dramatic prose that claims widespread presence of the hamerkop bird, not to mention the widespread existence of, and belief in, the legends myths and tales; for example suggesting generally that 'the legends say he is king because every other bird brings a contribution of sticks to help build the hamerkop's nest'.

The argument is not by implication refuting the existence of this legend or any such kind in any community in Africa. The argument questions the wide application of the legend to the entirety of Africa. The narration, which is asserting the legend as tradition and akin to Africa, is implying that all Africa knows of such legends or myths or have experiences of the Hamerkop. Again there is absence of any specificity in the location where the Hamerkop and its habitat were filmed except it was in the proverbial and easily sited 'Africa' with a named example, of the location of a savannah, as one of the sites where it can be sited.

Channel 5's 'The legend of the Lightning bird' does in the opening lines acknowledge 'Africa' as a continent but like many current practices in nature programmes of its kind, has significantly no direct reference to humans. Yet in spite of the direct exclusions of humans there is an inherent implication of humans and their contexts in the discourses describing the

wildlife in 'The legend of the lightning bird'. The narration suggests as in the clauses 'a bird that is said...' or 'and is said by the legends...' or 'is he chosen...', thus providing an unnamed story source. The unwitting identification of humans, humanity, social, traditional and those cultural elements show again how agents have been deleted. The narrative text's use of the folklore and traditional material from a social context to construct and re-present the 'natural Africa' against an active elimination of native humans still unwittingly acknowledges their existence and presence in the sites that are being depicted as exclusively natural.

The use or application of metaphors in the discourses also aid in that wider construction of 'Africa' as the 'domain of animals'. How this works can be unintended by the narrator, but inadvertently provides an effective way of ascribing or assigning the site to the animals and establishing them as intelligent and independent and in control of a social, political as well as a geographical domain in the subtext 'Africa'. Humanising animals by using human pronouns is one such approach. The attribution of human pronouns in 'his size or strength...', 'he is chosen...', 'he has powerful allies...', humanises and establishes the kingdom of the animals. Furthermore, the questioning 'is he chosen because he is powerful or that he has powerful allies...' invokes the themes of power, rivalry, kingdoms and warriors, which are early historical associations with human societies on the continent of

Africa. But this line of narration is efficiently woven around a humanised and traditionalised figure, which in this case is a bird.

This is similar to Haraway's arguments about how 'tales of primate lives narrate either nature or culture, or both' (1989:146). She suggests that, within primate narratives, animals are placed in culture – the 'realm of the human' – by highlighting aspects of their behaviour and life that are considered familiar and human. Giving animals attributes that are human – a name and identification as a mother, child, father, head of pride or king – all communicate the lesson, that these have individuality, thoughts and a Selfhood.

In the film footage of the Channel 5 programme *Call of the Wild*²¹ mentioned above, the geographical sites of savannah plains, streams, nests of the hamerkop and general vegetation, are juxtaposed with some of the more well-known wildlife such as lions, both male and female, with young. There are also other wildlife, such as birds, wild animals and the flora and fauna. The construction of the familiar 'Africa' is achieved again with those inclusions of lions, grasslands, trees and searing hot weather. The shots also focus on the processes of nest building, and feeding and nesting habits. There are no humans or signs of them in the film and no mention of people, with remotest reference being in the mention of the legend of the lightning

²¹ *op cit.* Channel 5 *Call of the Wild*. 'Legend of the Lightning Bird'; The hamerkop.

bird and what it is. Thus the pre-occupation with the 'social', 'cultural' and even personal habits of the wildlife (as would be said of a human being) creates a re-presentation that images Africa as essential for its wildlife and for whom Africa is worthy of note. The animals *own* these parts and it is *their* land and territory. 'Africa' then features as a domain in the world where wild animals reign and organise their existence and survival in very harsh conditions and a landscape that works with secret camera observations such as this one. It is therefore a land that is still in many senses untouched and undisturbed.

An occasional hint of specificity is made that:

In this part of Africa these old nests are most often taken over by Egyptian geese for whom the entrance hole is a very tight fit. [my emphasis].

The commentary quickly reverts to the 'boundarylessness' and sweeping references to 'Africa' thus continuously situating Africa as a predominantly nature and wildlife site.

In Africa an unguarded clutch of eggs is very unlikely to survive over night. One of the most common small nocturnal predators is the Genet; a tree climbing relative of the mongoose.

Again this piece of narrative is set against a sequence of footage showing rats, geese, and other smaller animals connected to the hamerkop's nest. The representation thus continues on the creation of a wildlife haven, an exclusive place that is Africa, and that Africa is.

4.14 Constructing the Equivalence of Natives and Animals.

This next selection from the commentary is full of similar active framing of the 'natural wildlife Africa', whether this is done knowingly or innocently.

A Verose eagle owl is the largest owl in Africa and on that continent eagles are held in great respect and even fear. When this ominous bird is seen to spend its day extensively guarding the palace, the legend that the lightning bird is king must be considerably strengthened. The hamerkop is said to be the bringer of rain and to have control over the flooding of rivers. In some parts of Africa a witch doctor will suspend a live hamerkop at the height at which he wants the floodwaters to stop, in the belief that the bird will halt the rising waters to avoid drowning. A clever man will know just where to hang the bird so that in all except very wet years the flood will stop short of the bird, encouraging the belief that both the bird and the witch doctor have magical powers... A crocodile moves close to the bottom of a waterfall, he knows that when the river floods the fish would try to move upstream, they would accumulate at the bottom of the fall and he would be ready for them.

They are growing fast, are very inquisitive and by seven weeks already seem keen to start building; the activity that would take up much of their adult lives.

But in Africa you don't count your chicks until they've left the nest.

The python is on the move again, and the snake is one of the few predators that can get into a hamerkop's nest. [emphasis mine]²²

There is a human aspect featured in the form of a witch doctor, but again the witch doctor is placed on a par with the humanised crocodile. The crocodile's knowledge, wit and strategy is suggested in its actions in lines such as 'a crocodile moves...he knows when the river floods...he would be ready for them'. This line accompanies a footage showing the slightly visible

²² *op. cit.* *Call of the Wild* 'Legend of the Lightning Bird' Channel5.

crocodile swimming in the river. The description of the practices of the witch doctor ('clever man') in the art of stopping floodwaters is very similar and close to the description about the movements and antics of the ('clever') crocodile, as both are indicated by the pronoun 'he' and the fact that they both need knowledge for success.

Humans are present but absent in the references to the myths and are by insinuation the 'myth makers' and the 'witch doctors', 'kings'. The animals are used to refer to humans and traditional forms that relate to humans. The text from *'Legend of the Lightning Bird'* shows how humans are used connotatively to construct and showcase the ingenuity, flair and strength of the wild animals. But this kind of representation places humans on the exterior with little or no importance to the context containing these arduous animals and thus diminishing their importance. These 'animals in the wild' feature as intelligent and strong survivors whilst any prospective 'native' humans become marginalized, diminished and altogether animalised.

Again, long pauses of silence within the commentary allow the sounds of silence, the savannah and the calling-noise of the wild animals that encourage an escapist setting and emphasise an illusion of observance, non-disturbance and exploration.

4.15 Ambivalences: The Wild and The Dangerous and The Wonderful and The Beautiful.

In nature programmes, Africa is often presented with a deep ambivalence, as both threatening and entrancing. A good example of this dual framing in either the 'paradise' or 'peril' tropes is seen in a nature programme by Channel 5 named *Paradise in Peril* – 'River of Sand'. This extract of commentary reveals the prevalence of the themes of destruction, hardship, disaster and desperation, famine and drought, an evocation of a landscape that is primitive through a dire and deadly setting. The narrator invokes sympathy for the occupants of this landscape, which is harsh and unfriendly. Africa in general, and Tsavo in Kenya in particular, feature as the countryside which is represented as rich in nature and beauty and animals, yet it is harsh and unwelcoming to them. The narrator declares he is compelled to observe the desperation that is unfolding in this land of 'peril'. 'Africa' is represented in the discourse here as the setting of struggle and survival and all animals and flora and fauna suffer from this enemy:

For four long years the rains have failed and each year I have watched the country²³ die a little more each time the rains fail. How the animals survive any dry season amazes me. If the rains don't come this year it would be a disaster. Each day the situation becomes more desperate and the more desperate it

²³ Without an earlier mention of the specific country in question in the opening narrative, the title and general references to 'Africa' and 'country' could only indicate the homogenisation practice and the resultant temptations at referring to Africa as a country. The narrator is in fact observing the wildlife or game park containing animals in a specific wildlife plain called Tsavo in one African country – Kenya. However this is not stressed as well as the discourses constructed around the generic Africa. Chapter 6 deals with this tendency of 'generalising discourses on Africa' with more extensive discussions and illustrations.

becomes the more I find myself compelled to stay and watch.
For some it's already too late....

It has a high food value. It's ironic that the means of survival
should turn out to be the cause of death....

But this is how Simon Trevor who made this film describes the
great drought that overtook the country around his home in
'Tsavo', Kenya. This one lifeline saved some of the animals
during that drought and he called that lifeline the *River of
Sand*.

Out on the plains the situation is getting desperate. She was
the matriarch of the herd. The others are confused now that
their leader is dead they don't want to leave. ²⁴

Simon Trevor is the observer and narrator and named filmmaker here and
except for his authorial voice is physically absent from the sequences, but
this extract positions or places the audience according to his perspective.
The piece is almost a eulogy to 'the dying living' in the displayed setting.
Beauty in danger is the discursive subject of the presentation.

The visual presentation focuses largely on the impending doom in the land,
of the muddy and drying riverbeds, decomposing and skeletal remains of
dead animals, and dying trees. There is no specific animal 'under threat'
because all are. The generalising paradigm used here once more suggests
that all living creatures, all of life, is under threat in this *Paradise in Peril*,
but significant also is the applicability of this doom to Africa.

²⁴ Channel 5 *Paradise in Peril* – 'River of Sand' 29th November 1998 [20.00-21.00hrs]

Of course this image is incompatible, say, with metropolitan images of streets, buildings, traffic jams or art theatres. This is a domain of animals, (close to nature) civilisation and humans are a long way away. Yet do humans suffer the same inhospitable land, as these images and narratives suggest?

4.16 'Africa' as Nature in other Genre

The prominence and predominance of the themes of *nature* in discourses about Africa are not exclusive to nature and wildlife documentaries. In genres like news and entertainment programmes such as BBC1's *Songs of Praise*, Africa is still linked with nature. Some of the items in this study reveal the frequent relation of Africa predominantly to the habitat even when the subject is not perceived to be a natural history one. The landscape and natural resources function as a setting, bearing strong signifiers that permeate the discourses. The contexts within which these discourses work, revolve around many nature-related themes including conservation, extinction, ecology and survival, among others.

An ITV1 *News at Ten* story devoted a headline item taking up 10% of the entire duration of the news. This particular news story was about the struggle by a honey buzzard trying to return to its wild home in Africa. Trevor MacDonald announces the headline:

And flying home with a little help from friends, the migrating bird that wanted to go to Africa, but ended up in Scotland.²⁵

The bird is personalised in the report and its experience sympathetically followed. The humanised standing of the honey buzzard is seen in the degree of attention that is given to its return journey home ‘over there, to her winter home of Africa [where] she must relearn the skills of the wild’.

This ‘homecoming’ makes this news story, like many others, a composed one, if not observably so, simply by the availability of news footage – detailed footage of the commencement of the bird’s journey, footage of the bird travelling in the aircraft’s hold to its destination. The “ways” of the honey buzzard’ is reminiscent of the tropes of natural history discoursing. Again, like the elements present in nature documentaries, this news story indulges in an all-natural and wildlife representation and encourages an imagination of the romantically WILD Africa, home of trials and survival that this ‘endearing’ honey buzzard has to learn to endure. Contained in this discourse is the theme of wildness and survival in the choice of language and metaphor – references that elicit our concern as well as invoke our admiration for the lost bird and our liking for it – whilst also painting a picture of what the difficulties of its life in ‘Africa’ would be. The tone and language suggest again, a desire to colonise, to make the honey buzzard into

²⁵ ITV: *ITN News at Ten* with Trevor Macdonald. Monday 2nd November 1998 [22.00-22.30hrs]

a pet. That desire comes across in the discourse in the way that it pictures a difficult life and experience ahead for the bird with the references to the wild Africa, concerns about its survival and other significations of hardship, coupled with the urge to acquire, take care of and protect. The ambivalent treatment can be seen in usages like: 'rare sight', 'rare species', 'endangered', 'fearsome creature', 'weak', 'rescued', 'survive', 'amazing', 'everyone is nervous', 'sanctuary', 'the bird is absolutely fine', 'she has remained calm', 'I am absolutely delighted with her', 'she has just been a star', 'save her', 'still very ill', 'struggles to fly', which convey a sense of concern for the plight of the lost bird whilst at the same time domesticating, if not humanising it.

Evocation of Africa as the animal habitat is continued effectively by the direct references to Africa generically. Africa is constructed as the winter home of the honey buzzard in this particular piece but the text constructs more about a hardship and wild Africa that this bird has to cope with. The bird left Sweden, is taken to a sanctuary in Edinburgh, flown to Gibraltar, and is to make its way to 'its real destination in the Congo'. These remain as the only near specific mentions of the countries involved in the news item. Nothing much is purported about the experiences of the bird in Sweden or Edinburgh or Gibraltar, but there is a lot of concern expressed about the bird's survival in its 'home' in Africa. Also there is a focus not on Congo but on Africa as Congo. So Congo is readily and conveniently replaced by the

generic Africa and the references to the nature and wildlife themes are then readily and steadily used in the discourses.

In an edition of BBC1's *Songs of Praise* filmed in Zimbabwe²⁶, the presenter's expressiveness about the landscape and the frequent return to the subject of the wildlife enforces the link between the Africa and Nature/natural habitat signification:

Dawn at Victoria, Falls, one of the seven natural wonders of the world. These falls are one of the magnificent sights in this beautiful country, so come with me now on an exciting journey as we travel by plane, train, boat and truck to explore Zimbabwe, its wildlife, its scenery and *Songs of Praise* goes on safari

...

In this week's *Songs of Praise* a love affair with the wildlife of Africa, a well travelled minister with a mission, challenging children in the bush and get your ticket and climb aboard the gospel train²⁷

A rendition in very vivid expressions continues about the wildlife, the landscapes, and the experiences of the people who live in this part of the world and their experience of these animals. This programme is a magazine entertainment programme and requires humans to sing the 'songs of praise'. There are some Zimbabweans interviewed and others filmed singing, yet the theme of animals and nature and landscape permeate significantly the entire engagement with this site. Zimbabwe is shown to

²⁶ BBC1 *Songs of Praise*, Sunday 25th October 1998. [17.40–18.50hrs]

²⁷ *op. cit* Presenter Pam Rhodes.

have humans and society but the excitement/pre-occupation with the theme of the wildlife and adventure and stunning landscape rises above all other themes. As 'Zimbabwe is Africa' and Africa is mirrored by Zimbabwe, the patterns of representing Africa are brought to the fore even in the case when a geographically defined area of the continent is in focus.

It is symptomatic that *Song's of Praise* often includes interaction with the environment, and the people in the setting for the particular show, yet this particular edition in the way it is presented adds to the enforcement of an unchanging and romanticised image of an Africa expected by the audiences in the West. The programme leans heavily on the themes of nature and wildlife and introduces familiarisation with the landscape through exploring Britain's past 'empirical legacies' in Africa and also interaction with expatriate White/'British' Zimbabweans questioned as if temporarily visiting or working in the 'Africa'.

4.17 Reminiscencing the Colonial

A close look at the text of the commentary in *Songs of Praise* reveals a subtle nostalgia for the colonial. Reminders of the past, when colonisation was present in Zimbabwe/Rhodesia/Africa and the reminiscences of the early missionary activities, the 'discovery' and naming of the sites, the

interviews with the expatriate personnel and the effusive praise of the nature and landscape are symptomatic of that colonising nostalgia.

This reminiscence of the colonial surfaces in the script of *Secret Lives* – ‘Desert Mist’²⁸ too. In the only short mention of humans in this nature documentary, the Herero are discussed on a par with the landscape and the wildlife; their descriptions re-echo earlier travel writing that follows an observational and distanced discussion. The Herero are like the creatures of the wild Africa. They are positioned as Other to Us, and invariably closer to the animals. The description of their clothes is a reminder of colonial discourse. ‘Stewards’, ‘hearken to the age’, ‘colourful Victorian’: these usages suggest the distant past but also remind the audience’s familiarity with historical things like stewards, and Victorian age.

The Herero are the proud stewards of the Namib. Their colourful Victorian clothes hearken to the age when missionaries ventured here during the nineteenth century.²⁹

In another such programming, Channel 5’s *Life at the Edge*³⁰ presents a sociological–anthropological programme, which exceptionally includes natives. The subtitle ‘The Kitsepo Stick Fighters’ hints at the ‘closeness to nature’ and the rurality of the content, but masks the much larger coverage of birds, animals, trees, plants and geography of the setting in the Sudan. The specificity of the setting is not clear or mapped by political geography

²⁸ *Secret Lives* – ‘Desert Mist’ Channel 5 5th March 1998 [19.30-20.00hrs]

²⁹ *ibid*

³⁰ Channel 5 *Life at the Edge* – ‘Kitsepo Stick Fighters’. 8th April 1998. [19.30-20.00hrs].

but only by nature. The programme centres on the 'stick fights' of the Kitsepo people, who are very dark in complexion and live a 'harsh' 'rudimentary' life with the acknowledged danger of wild animals, tsetseflies and malnourishment. Their differentness is again the exciting draw and reason for their objectification. The commentator makes a point of highlighting these, even referring to their gradual acquisition of 'external' influence. He says to us the audience, 'note the baseball cap', 'western goods are treasured'.

That the Kitsepo are unique, yet primitive, with the prospect of the corruption of their 'conserved' life is an underlying aspect of the message of the film which again sets a polarisation of one against the Other – a higher form versus a lower existence.

4.18 Conclusions

Africa is often presented as a site of extreme conditions. Mass media discourses follow particular, if contrasting, representations of the entire continent. The arguments in this chapter show how television discourses about Africa, show rigidity in representation. Africa features as a romanticised space where the beauty of its vast, yet harsh, geographical features creates a temptingly exciting destination for adventure. That 'beauteous landscape' is also adorned in representations, with the varied

and interesting flora and fauna as well as the popular animals of the wild. The natural Africa appears very popular and fairly engaged with, in programmes and in comments about the wildlife, the environment and sustainability of resources. The discoursing of nature is even translated into culture. The beliefs about Africa are transposed onto the animals and their mannerisms and behaviours. The romanticised Africa then ends with any inclusion of humans. Humans feature less and less in these programmes and the representations hardly reveal any humans native to these parts shown. The few discourses that hint of humans, view them as intruders and obstructive if not destructive factors in the idealised site that is the media's 'Africa'. In the natural history programmes on British television, the patterns uncovered in this study reveal that, "Africa" as nature' is the predominant and recurrent discourse of television, and 'Africa' in many ways is equivalent to nature.

The implicitly gendered nature of this gaze upon Africa is worth discussing here. Africa is positioned in all the discursive frames that identify it as a romantic unexplored site as feminine. 'She' is rich in resources, in these case animals, with vast attributes to be explored and experienced. 'She' is in a way virginal in the construction of the sites of nature, and as discussed earlier, preferred uninhabited and untouched and unpeopled. Alternatively the fecundity of Africa with so many species to her name brings to mind the image of 'Mother Nature'. These forms of gendering can be traced back to

the early travel narratives of Mungo Park, David Livingstone, Henry Morton Stanley, and the writings of Rudyard Kipling. As we shall see in Chapter 6, Africa has been gendered in other ways, feminine as victim and masculine as a source of violence and aggression.

The next chapter on homogeneity takes the arguments of exclusion and generalisation further and explores how the media effectively creates this widening of the discourse.

Chapter 5 – Homogeneity: The Homogenisation of Africa in Television Discourses

- 5.0 Preface
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Tropes of Discourse
 - 5.2.1 Synecdochal Representations
 - 5.2.2 Metonymal Representations
 - 5.2.3 On Stereotypes and an Imag(e/i)nation of Africa
 - 5.2.3.1 Fixity and Familiarity: The Stereotype in a Comedy and a 'Reality' Programme
 - 5.2.4 Implicit Racialisation; Distinguishing Arab and Sub-Saharan Africa(s)
- 5.3 Ethnic Minorities versus Multiple Minorities
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 - 5.4.1 Music as a Homogenising Agent
- 5.5 Conceptualisations of an African Essence: Mystical Africa
- 5.6 Media structures – Editorial Processes and Ordering of 'Africa'
 - 5.6.1 Simplified and Directed Gazes
 - 5.6.2 Hiding Specificities
- 5.7 Comparative Discoursing Europe, Asia and Africa
- 5.8 Othering as Homogenisation: Others as the Same, Us as Diverse
- 5.9 Conclusions

...and all I can say to you is that, this is Africa...

BBC 2 March 1998 *Modern Times* – 'The Godmothers'¹

5.0 Preface

One reason or justification for the wider focus of the enquiry – an exploration of re-presentations of Africa and not of individual African countries, sub regions, smaller communities or sub-cultures – is particularly answered by the inclusion of this chapter, which engages with the questions about media constructions of a 'reductionist' perspective of

¹ BBC 2 *Modern Times* – 'The Godmothers'. First broadcast Wednesday 18th March 1998. 'The Godmothers' is a fly-on-the-wall documentary following a Christian group (Mother's Union) in their fundraising and charity work for a rural locality, Ankole, in southern Uganda. This pronouncement is in one sense a tautology, and in many senses a voicing of the imaginary mythological ideologies held about Africa. The 'discovery' of the epitome of the 'Africa' celebrated in that exhilarating proclamation is later discussed in this chapter.

Africa, what I have termed 'the homogenisation of Africa in British television'.

I have attempted to explore Africa as a whole, seeking out not only the different themes, signifiers and messages that are suggested to be emanating from the countries and communities within the continent, but also the constructions of the continent of Africa as a whole, as well as the latent and overt signifiers which are worked into the representations of that smaller or larger 'Africa'. Such perception is based also upon the supposition that when discourses on British Television refer to many parts of the continent of Africa, the characteristics of a much wider and symbolic 'Africa' is prominently attached and visible. I say 'many' because there are some few exceptions to this pattern, for example, one can identify the conceptual divisions of Africa where some countries in the North are distinguished from the remaining and larger southern countries, classified as 'Sub-Saharan Africa'. I will suggest here, to be explained and buttressed in the arguments later, that in the television discourses examined, the designated Sub-Saharan region is often closer to the more likely signified, familiar and recurrent 'Africa' than the countries or regions lying to the north of the continent. 'Africa', is not entirely interchangeable with the international geo-politically defined Africa (indicating the entire continent called Africa and including all within the recognisable land mass). Instead the prominent and popular television image of Africa shows a re-imaged

and adopted adjustment of the borders of what constitutes the continent: re-definitions that are influenced greatly by racial, colonial, economic, ecological, political and developmental blinkers, that aid in the interpretations of what is, or where Africa starts and ends mentally.

The hypothesis which encourages the particular focus of this part of the study, suggests that the name or reference 'Africa' appears to be very eagerly and readily used in discourses to do with any subject within a large number of themes which are associated with or thought to be emanating from, present in, or a feature of the continent. Themes of conflict and war, hardship and survival, primitivity or sub-development, wildlife and wilderness, and close proximity to nature are just some of the engagements in that context.

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will concentrate on how Africa is *simplified*, *unitarised* and *homogenised*: how representations of Africa propose absence of difference or variety by mapping specific themes and subjects onto 'Africa' and vice versa, and also by constructing sameness, singularity and stereotype through generalisations of themes and subjects in discourses that connect them with 'Africa'.

The chapter is also aimed at seeking out reasons for the popular media's development and use of a unitary representation of the continent of Africa, and also at uncovering factors that encourage the thriving of such a constructed identity. Even as far back as the colonial and pre-colonial era the use of 'Africa' in the West was to refer to a very simplified and homogenous subject in many respects, characteristic of the treatment of the Other. A more extensive interpretation of elements of that historical relationship between Africa and the West and its relevance to present-day constructions of Africa is tackled later, in Chapter 7 of this thesis.

The chapter thus focuses on how British television encourages a fashioning of both a romanticised homogenous Africa as well as generally unvaried and trouble-ridden site. Through the use of 'tropes of discourse', I have listed ways in which the formation of an entirely homogenous concept of 'Africa' is achieved using multiple examples from British television.

I have picked and organised media re-presentations of 'Africa' into specific tropes to help illustrate, clearly, how homogenisation of Africa occurs. These tropes are not exclusive or isolated but are often linked to one another, and the play between one and the other can be noticed from some of the supporting examples and arguments. Firstly, the four-fold homogenisation tropes, highlighted by this study as media constructions of 'Africa', include what I have decided to order and label as follows:

Synedochal re-presentations, *Metonymal* re-presentations, *Stereotyping*, and *Implicit Racialisation*. A further trope, which characteristically incorporates the collective working of these earlier tropes, but highlights the active framing and summarisation of the discourses is *Generic Discoursing*. A range of devices facilitated by the media, which encourage the composition of the homogenized Africa, are identified in *generic discoursing*. Towards the end, I have extended the discussion to explore the contributions *Othering* makes in bolstering that *homogeneous 'Africa'*.

The sections below tackle each homogenisation trope or discourse and how they work, while engaging with the subject 'Africa', to enforce the specific and collective images, once again using discourses found in British television programmes.

5.2 Tropes of Discourse

5.2.1 Synedochal Representations

Firstly I identify 'Synedochal representations' – these, like the figure of speech from which I have derived the label, 'the synecdoche', use a part of the context, theme or geographical site to represent the whole – Africa. How this works in popular television is recognizable in the presentations of, or employment of, smaller units or sites, and elements of culture, society, politics or economy peculiar to parts of, and regions in, African countries,

and passing these off as representative of or significant to Africa as a whole, removing the Masai Mara or the Serengeti from what they are – geographical sites and specifically national parks within countries in eastern Africa – and elevating them to symbolise or pass for the whole of the continent, Africa in its entirety. Similarly, the Rwandan genocide becomes an 'African disaster' or life in a remote 'homestead' or village in rural Swaziland is represented as (typical of) African life, fashioning a kind of 'Africa' that is not 'real'². The 'real' Africa transcends the images, sites and pre-occupations that we are made to envisage in such a narrow focus. This type of homogenisation pervades all programmes but is probably most prominent in the nature documentaries and news programmes engaging with the subject of Africa, possibly because these genres deal with the subject of 'Africa' more than any other. Interest in Africa as reflected by programming on British television is dominated by concerns with nature and occasionally items of news.

David Attenborough's commentary in the opening sequence of *Wildlife on 2* – 'The Giraffe', although indicating the continent's magnitude in size, quickly regresses by insinuating that 'Africa' is a site that is easily described and explained from the generic statements he makes use of, in the commentary of that natural history programme. For example, he begins with the pronouncement that :

² Channel 4 *Going Native*, 'African Village'. 2001 Produced for Channel 4 by RDF Media

Medieval legends told of a strange creature that roamed the shores of Africa. ...Giraffes roam on the African plains...
The open grassland of Africa support...³[my emphasis]

The recurring phenomenon noticeable in Attenborough's lines is his establishment of a simplified site that is uncomplicatedly made up of shores, plains or grassland. The repetition of 'shores of Africa', 'African plains', or 'grassland of Africa', posits the continent as a flat savannah terrain that is suggestively experienced just by observing the footage of the game reserves where the film crew filmed the piece. The constructed spaces of 'nature in the "wild"' become as interchangeable with the entirety of the whole continent, and thus the predominance of a specific image of Africa, framed with the enveloping references to 'Africa', works at establishing the idea that a specific part of Africa substitutes for the larger and entire continent. For audiences who are not acquainted with any of these locations, the images encouraged in these presentations would be convincing as a conclusive image of Africa, when in fact these representations only show a part of a bigger more sophisticated picture.

An ITV news story about famine in southern Sudan quickly expands the theme of famine death and destruction, once again as an African problem. This is achieved in the captivating headlines that accompany the story:

³ BBC2 *Wildlife on 2* Narrated by Richard Attenborough - Sunday 18th January 2001

The Scramble for life as Sudan faces a new famine⁴

With the above announcement, the news anchor, Trevor Macdonald, begins with a mention of the country, even though the famine in question was affecting only parts of Southern Sudan. Macdonald's introduction to the news story is alarming, but quickly becomes very generic as it begins the transportation of the famine from the remote parts of southern Sudan to become an 'African' famine:

Aid agencies are warning of another great famine in Africa with up to a half million lives at risk⁵

In addition to that is the correspondent's introduction, which is also very similar in its style and presentation of the famine and of Africa. Tim Ewart's report emphatically begins with:

The spectre of starvation is haunting Africa again⁶

The rest of the story loses its specificity to the location in parts of Southern Sudan and gains a widened focus to 'Africa' through the repeated and general references to 'Africa' alongside images of severely malnourished

⁴ ITN *News at 10*, with Trevor McDonald – ITV1, Thursday 23 April 1998 [22.00-22.30hrs]

⁵ TV News Anchorman - Trevor McDonald's opening statements, introducing a report on famine in some parts of The Sudan –23 April 1998 as above.

⁶ Correspondent Tim Ewart's report on Famine in some parts of The Sudan. Anchored by Trevor Macdonald as cited above.

infants and emaciated Black people. Southern Sudan, through that problem of drought and starvation, is made to epitomise the whole of Africa. Very interestingly, the suggestions of famine, drought, hardships and Black people themselves make the story a very African one. It is worthy of note here that there is neither a single reference to 'Arab', nor any Middle Eastern associations in the story. Sudan's Arab identity is not of importance here as much as her 'Africanness'.⁷

Another classic example of the 'synecdochal trope', where the media uses a part or a theme to represent and demonstrate the whole, is in the BBC production of *Congo*⁸. In a three-part natural history programme that sought to explain the wildlife of central Africa, the natural history programme purported to explore the catchments of the Congo river basin, the rainforests and the natural history of the area tracked by the route of the river Congo in central Africa. The presentation (commentary included), however, showcased 'Africa', using snippets of history, hoards of film footage of wildlife and excitingly modern aerial photography shot above the river Congo and the rainforests in the countries through which the river

⁷ The images accompanying this news programme show only Black African People in several stages of malnourishment and poverty. With images of famished children and arid landscapes and aid workers we still get no glimpse of possible affluence in Khartoum (the capital), or of any Arab Sudanese, or any other images showing normal life and work in other areas of the very large country. In as much as the news item aims to reflect the plight of the emaciated people and to highlight their plight in the few allocated minutes, the overall image carried across is deficient, narrowed and strengthens the one-sided perception of Sudan and Africa.

⁸ BBC2 *Congo* 'The River that Swallows all Rivers', 'Spirits of the Forest' and 'Footprints in the Forest' January 2001 Narrated by John Lynch. Written and Produced by Brian Leith. Executive Producer Neil Nightingale

runs. The presentation is a spectacular cinematography of parts of the rainforest described as the jungle and a rendition of a discourse that hearkens to the early Africa-exploration rhetoric. The essential reduction of, and subsequent homogenisation, quickly transpires through that singular elevation of the specific site under observation by the film crew. This Congo was equivalent to 'AFRICA'. Narrator John Lynch's wide-sweeping comments continue:

Can there really be a large place in Africa where mammals live in complete innocence of human beings?⁹

'Africa', inherently in the entire discourse, becomes specifically the basins surrounding the river Congo and its inhabitants, the primates, 'our closest relatives', that inhabit these parts. John Lynch generalises further:

A lost world for over a century, the Congo remains the potent symbol of darkness and wilderness. This is the last place in Africa to be explored and tamed.¹⁰

Through the use of gradually diminishing signifiers that are also of a country, a river and also of habitats in parts of a river basin, the narrative of *Congo* effectively replaces this Congo with 'Africa' easily and smoothly, interchanging the larger with the smaller and suggesting that 'Africa' is equivalent to 'The Congo' in many respects. Consequently the geographical habitat identified in 'The Congo', then 'the Congo river' and finally the bio-life located immediately around the river basin become THE habitat in

⁹ *Congo* 'Footprints of the Forest' BBC2 30th January 2001 Written and Produced by Brian Leith. Narrated by John Lynch

¹⁰ *Congo* as above

Africa. The stories, both historical and scientific, arising from the proximity of this river basin, become representative and stand for the story of the continent – wherefore the entire Africa takes on these qualities or more-so is laden with these particular descriptions and experiences which the narrator finds in this particular location under scrutiny.

5.2.2 Metonymal Representations

Another facet of the creation of homogeneity in media discourses involves the trope I have chosen to describe as *metonymal*. Metonymal representation is drawn from the figure of speech metonymy, which refers to the act of substituting one subject/object with another that is related by association. Thus the metonymal trope involves discourses where the context and message is constructed with the involvement of subjects, themes, ideas and sites that are associated with the original subject. Often the replacement of the original concept with the associated or related idea is based on the understanding or perception held of either the original or the substitute.

For the purposes of this argument Africa, and a multitude of themes and subjects which are 'related' to it in the mass media, are our focus. Themes such as famine and war or wildlife safari and other related contexts become interchangeable in contexts when the continent of Africa is the subject of the comment. 'Africa' as a whole readily and generously encapsulates these

many associated subjects, as well as their images that come into discussion. When drought or famine is reported to be present in a part of the continent, the wider assertions and conclusions that the continent has been plagued by drought and war among others are quickly drawn. Drawing background information is not made vertically to explore the particular locality and the root of the existing problem, but associations are made horizontally by associating and linking problems from the immediate to further a field to demonstrate the typicality of the events. This kind of association works from material considered to be relevant to the context or familiar to the audiences but again ultimately encourages the cultivation of stereotypes and misrepresentations. As the ITN news report about 'famine in some parts of The Sudan' mentioned above shows, the statements easily project the theme of famine as 'an African' problem. By suggesting that 'the spectre of starvation is haunting Africa again', [my emphasis] Tim Ewart and Trevor Macdonald both see famine as something synonymous with Africa. And although that statement would appear to be affirming a recurring issue, it nevertheless makes the issue a familiar and omnipresent one, by not distinguishing that this is a specific drought problem arising in some specific parts of Southern Sudan only, and not in other previous famine locations, and thus not a widespread issue. If there were to be an analogous rise in unemployment in an area of Northern Sweden the news story would not be presented as an alarming European problem but would often be very specific to the part of Europe or Northern Sweden where the problem is. For

example a headline declaring 'the spectre of joblessness is haunting Europe again' is an unusual headline for such a case in point, even though all communities and countries in Europe have suffered rises in unemployment at one point in time. And any such generalised association of Europe, or even Sweden, to one dominant issue or reference such as unemployment would not be welcome and would be unusual. The interchange of drought with famine or starvation occurs more readily and is less visible as one can lead to the other. It is the replacement, through regularisation in discourses, of Africa with famine or starvation, and vice versa, that encourages later easy references to one when the other is mentioned. The arguments of synecdochal and metonymal constructs above, graduate into the more rigid and constant associations and identifications located in the stereotype.

5.2.3 On Stereotypes and an Imag(e/i)nation of Africa

Stereotypes also work effectively in homogenisation as they are already rigidly limiting in their nature. Stereotypes simply explained are the fixated images of the Other. Tessa Perkins (1997) contends that the stereotype is general, partial and selective in its characteristics, displaying easily identifiable traits that are frequently negative. The stereotype is often extracted from a narrow feature of the characterization of a whole group. She finds stereotypes trite and sprouting from our classifications in social interpretation and representation. They apply across some typical social

binaries: young and old; men and women; teenagers and toddlers: between or among races classes or nationalities; the able-bodied and the disabled.

Perkins does indeed break down the received notions and ideas about the nature and qualities of stereotypes which say that they are simple, erroneous, pejorative, dealing with Others or minorities (or oppressed groups), and not structurally reinforced. She rightly identifies the simple but complex nature of stereotypes, recognising the 'kernel of truth'¹¹ (1997:75) in the stereotype. She argues that the social or commonly accepted definitions of the Other would be insignificant were there no positive correlation between the content of stereotypes and the characteristics belonging to the group concerned. The form taken by stereotypes in a capitalist society, she argues, stems from the stereotyped group's structural position.

The defence Perkins puts forward, that stereotypes have ideological functions and work as a 'shorthand' or as an easily recognisable way of transmitting a lot of complex information and for categorising social groups, is interesting but not adequate. Certainly its easily recognisable and quick reference traits are a crucial feature. Television texts, in a bid to

¹¹ Some theorists oppose the 'inaccuracy' of hypothesis of the stereotype with a 'kernel of truth' claim. This stems from a lot of empirical research including racial stereotypes, Perkins argues. (1997: 75)

achieve quick audience recognition for a short time span are continually tempted to use it.

I much prefer the stauncher approach of identifying the above stratification and categorisation qualities of the stereotype but further acknowledging 'the element of social position' – the power relations that often support the creation and grounding of the stereotype. They are rarely directed upwards or towards the centre or created around qualities societies recognise as coveted qualities. They are also unchanging and thus capture and box characteristics of the social grouping.

Homi Bhabha (1994) identifies the 'stereotype' as the major discursive strategy of fixity. He describes fixity as a mode of representation which is paradoxical, with its connotations of a rigid or unchanging order alongside connotations of disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition, a 'sign of cultural /historical/racial difference in the discourse of colonialism' (1994:66). Thus the stereotype, Bhabha explains, 'is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always "in place", already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated...' (1994:66) – a force of ambivalence that is central to the concept of the stereotype, encouraging its discursive elements. Bhabha argues convincingly, for a shift from the 'ready recognition' of images as positive or negative to 'an understanding of the process of subjectification' which stereotypical

discourse enables.¹² The occasion of ready reliance on dominant yet negative images of the Other reinforces the stereotypical backbone to images of the Other and can explain the eagerness to identify Africa with wildlife, mud huts and starving children as if these were the only and easiest ways of recognising the subject. Bhabha's approach is to ease away from a normalizing judgement of the representations in colonial discourse and instead, to unravel the 'productive ambivalence of the object of colonial discourse'¹³, locating that desire and derision and the difference projected unto the Other through fantasies of identity and origin. Thus in summary the Other gains, for us, the identity of singularity and simplicity in definition in these stereotypes. We know the other well enough by the simple stereotypes with which we identify them. E.g. Africa – Conjures up Safari, wildlife, hardship, famine victims, etc.

Parodies of fixated images of the animal-skin-clad, spear-wielding-savage, take new dimensions in contemporary cultural representations, where new stereotypes in the cloak of older ideological concepts get the license. The permeation of ideological concepts into discursive frameworks and the

¹² Homi Bhabha's identification of the stereotype as one of the major discursive strategies of colonial discourse and its uses of 'fixity' with its paradoxical qualities makes it a significant element in discourses relating to the colonial, worth identifying in this debate about the encapsulation and homogenisation of Africa. To him colonial discourse leans heavily on 'fixity' when ideologically constructing the Other: A concept he describes as a 'sign of cultural/historical/racial difference connoting rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition'. Bhabha's theorising about the 'force of ambivalence', which is present in the colonial stereotypes for example, is that it is 'a form of knowledge and identification vacillating' between what is 'already "in place"' [known] and 'something that must be anxiously repeated'.

¹³ *ibid* p.67

broadening of the total continent of Africa into such stereotypes, qualifies for scrutiny.

5.2.3.1 Fixity and Familiarity: The Stereotype in a Comedy and a 'Reality' Programme

The situation comedy, *In Exile*, commissioned and broadcast by Channel 4 constructed homogenising identities through the adoption of the stereotype 'the African dictator'. It was set in London about an *African dictator*, from an imaginary (non-existent) country of Kumeria in Africa. The exaggerated antics of the characters are aimed at generating laughter, yet the underlying stereotype of dictatorships and Africa is powerfully relayed in a drama that poses the idea that this was commonplace and also elaborated the theme of the rigidity and silliness of rulers in 'Africa'. What interests this study is the commonality and 'Africanness' of this state of affairs that the notion 'African dictator' entertains here, which is not entirely overlooked in the laughter but is grounded through the memorability of the jokes – Perkins' recognisability of the stereotype. To be funny the ideas need to be emphasised and to be well understood by the audience through repetition, emphasis, and very clear insinuations. This is effectively what *In Exile* worked at, dictator and African, gradually migrating into a similar area of meaning and social understanding establishing a firm association. Of course there is some element of truth in identifying a dictator from a country

within Africa. But the stereotype of 'African dictator' is a selective description with a particular ideological significance which, as with many stereotypes, works by its attribution to a vaguely bounded but Other group. As I argue later in more detail, THE European dictator would be a most strange concept to be perceived inside any country within the European continent. Also in spite of the concept of dictator being a European one and Europe having experienced dictatorial rules in Italy and Spain and Germany for example, such stereotypes encapsulating the entire continent haven't developed in the way 'THE African dictator' has. Furthermore the talk of THE Asian Dictator or North American or Australian Dictator would be most strange concepts to television audiences. The ease of association of all of Africa to that attribution of dictator again feeds the homogenisation of Africa and vice versa.

Channel 4's programme *Going Native*, is another example of stereotyping of an African community and society. Like other 'reality' programmes such as *Fantasy Island*, *Temptation Island* etc, Channel 4 called this one 'African Village'. The idea of 'going native' or 'African village', (not in a Scottish or English village) carries forth again the readily stereotypical 'primitive Africa'. The programme makers appear at pains to present what they suppose is a typical African village. The construction of a (stereo) typical 'African life' runs through the programme if not represented by it. The

synopsis of the programme hearkens to stereotypes as some of the underlined words show:

Going native takes a British family to live for ten weeks in the heart of the African bush... The children of the British family must go to the nearby school (average class size: 45 pupils), while Dad must try to raise money as a migrant worker staying in the shanty towns. The Mum is obliged to cook for the whole homestead, and must obey a strict dress code at all times. How will the family's perceptions of African life be changed by their experiences of actually living there? What lessons will they bring back from the time they've spent in Africa? What are the advantages of life in an African village?¹⁴[Emphasis mine]

But the specificity of the location of shantytowns, the social and economic organisations of the homesteads and the strict dress code all highlighted in the programme are deliberately overlooked for the captivating motive behind this 'reality' show. The programme is a rich example of numerous occasions of typification, through the imaginary ideas about the Africa.

There are such key elements of Bhabha's points to be found in this production, as the village is far from any modern city and in many respects is a homestead of an extended family far from the comparative facilities the family from London 'enduring' the experiment have at their disposal. By selecting the location with the thatch houses and the six-mile journey to the nearest vehicle, and the absence of hot or cold showers, we are being presented a stereotypical life in an African Village, not a typical one. This is

¹⁴ RDF Media. *Going Native*. Synopsis from www.RDFmedia.com/reality/GoingNative.asp
Accessed 23/7/2004

a stereotype in Homi Bhabha's sense of something that is there but must be 'anxiously repeated'. The homestead chosen in Swaziland for the experiment of living in an African village works. It is the stereotype that living situations in Africa are all very basic, uncomfortable and tiresome for the visitors. Although the daily living conditions, rules and customs are specific to the homestead, the programme simply fails to acknowledge that normality for the hosts – this was simply, Africa. The stereotype (of going native in the 'African Village') focuses on the *undeveloped, uncomfortable* and the *un-modernised* society and suppresses modernised and complex metropolitan societies in Africa. There is an anxious repetition that this experience continues to exist and is widespread.

Later programmes of the same kind like *French Leave*¹⁵ use a title that isn't indicative of the 'back to the rustic' or hardship themes. In *French Leave*, the families try out a new life in the countryside in the south of France. Programmes with a setting in Europe such as this one suggest a more pleasant vacation, with a representation that does include positive and some varying experiences from any anticipations held by the visitors or the audience.

¹⁵ *French Leave* Channel 4 (2003). Many other programmes with similar objectives like *A Place in France* or *A Place in Greece* have a distinctively non-homogenous representation compared to the way the whole of Africa is framed in a single programme.

In summary, stereotypes of Africa ensue from images that are prevalent and dominant hence with a 'kernel of truth', but are also suggestive of the social and cultural positioning of Africa in relations of power. The fixity Bhabha argues enforces that rigid pummelling of the same images, and their unchanging nature, which as this study proves, endorses stereotypes that are applied widely to Africa and which inescapably embosses an image of a homogenised, simplified, unchanging and narrowed Africa in the mind of the viewer.

The erratic nature of coverage of Africa revealed in this study means there is a lack of continuity and coherence in discourses about Africa, but more essentially, the resultant elimination of the historical contexts which further limit the scope of reference for the understanding or even perception of the diversity and complexities that surround the entire subject, countries, people and continent of Africa. A representation that suggests Africa must – like the stereotype of fixity which fixes the themes, social and cultural geography – be static in history, unchanging, unmediated, unmodernised and with a defined cultural scope.

5.2.4 Implicit Racialisation: Distinguishing Arab and Sub-Saharan Africa(s)

A fourth homogenisation trope engages with the identifications and the situating of 'Africa' based on covert racial categorisations.

Some discourses on Africa significantly narrow and re-define the geographic definition of Africa. This occurs through the designation of only part of geographical Africa as 'Africa' or by commenting on Africa as if implying only a part of the larger whole. More often than not, 'Africa' indicates sub-Saharan Africa. The independent identities of northern African countries of Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Egypt and Tunisia are more distinct and developed, in discourses in which they are discussed, than other countries. Programmes that mention Egypt or Libya or other 'North' African countries tend to exclude references to the enveloping 'Africa'.

When 'Africa' represents Sub-Saharan Africa, it invokes suggestions of a distinction based on racial categorisations that separate and exclude communities that are considered to be Arab or affiliated to the Middle East such as Libya, Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia or Morocco or Northern Sudan. In this context, engagements with Africa do not suggest Africa as the geographical land mass constituting the continent but something else: 'Black Africa' or sub-Saharan Africa inadvertently as Africa, even occasionally excluding South Africa on economic and political grounds. For example, Egypt's role in civilisation becomes identified as Egypt's while clearly excluding its association with Africa in any area of that achievement. The suggestion that the pyramids are feats of civilisation created by people within Africa is very conspicuously missing and not broached. In *Travelog*

Treks – ‘Alexandria in the Niger Delta’¹⁶ – Stephanie Calman, discussing the people, culture, religion, rites, rituals and sights in this tourist documentary draws links and associations between Egypt and Egyptian civilization and Roman, Greek, Turkish influences and associations with British writers and prime ministers. What is of interest here is that there is no singular mention or identification with Africa in the discourse in this documentary as other countries of the continent are often portrayed. The commentary instead makes mention of the Suez Canal, the costs and political developments around its development ruins of roman shopping malls, the catacombs, customised dining rooms, the crusaders etc. The representation is of the ruins of a past civilization, a contemporary municipality including heavy town centre traffic, nightlife and busy streets – a showcase of some elements of modernity – alongside evidence of early civilisations.

Egypt does stand out in this travel piece with individuality and often with associations as an Arab and Muslim civilisation. In fact many discourses associate Egypt and much of North Africa with the east and the Orient, where in the racial anthropology of the 18th and 19th centuries of racial order and classification, Orientals are rated highest, whilst black Africans are conceived to be below Caucasians in the order of ‘racial’ intelligence and development (see Shanklin, 1994). Thus by incorporating Egypt’s history

¹⁶Channel 4 *Travelog Treks* ‘Alexandria in the in the Nile Delta’ - 11th October 1998 [13.10-13.25hrs]. Presented by Stephanie Calman

juxtaposed with its modern metropolis and associating it with eastern and oriental cultures, the programme successfully excludes the African identity it could have celebrated. This is also often true of representations of other countries in the North of Africa.

5.3 Ethnic Minorities versus Multiple Minorities

There are interesting and revealing parallels to be drawn between the representations of a whole (or part) continent and minorities within one country. The engagement with a generic Africa or African peoples or cultures within the British popular media for example can be compared to the generalisation and simplification of Ethnic Minorities within Britain and vice versa. Under that descriptive tag of "Ethnic Minority" comes a large selection of people of diversely different backgrounds and languages. These fringe yet culturally diverse identities are considered alternative to the standard and recognisable dominant hegemonies. The process of summarising all opposing and comparably smaller identities into singularised and unitarised identities is very widespread.

Critics of media coverage of race such as Christopher Campbell (1995) have often derided the partialisation and particularisation or selective fixations on only particular themes and focuses to do with African-American people, eliminating all the variety and fullness of their culture, which eventually

limits the subject to a few pointers. Consequently, the narrowing of the focus and the limitations on any dynamism present in the subject forces the subject into a homogenous frame of knowledge.

The existence of a minority group, for example, of African Americans in the United States and of Afro-Caribbean peoples in the United Kingdom is a good example of the creation and the maintaining of such minorities. Census and other statistical series draw up categories of 'Black', 'Asian', sometimes with more particular units of classification such as African, Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani, Chinese, Japanese. It is much less usual to specify the full range of cultural and regional differences among ethnic minorities. The British resident Nigerian, Ghanaian, Malian or Ugandan, or more specifically the Ibo, Ewe, Mende or Buganda among others, lose their identities to be swallowed up by the simpler enveloping identity of 'Ethnic minorities'. By comparison the media's narratives use linguistic and grammatical elements to draw attention to specific classifications of diversity within the native British by using distinct identifications of Welsh, Scottish and English and further descriptive labels such as Yorkshireman, Brummie, Irish, Eastender, 'Scouser', Glaswegian, Cockney, Geordie, and Mancunian among many others. To that extent, the manifold cultural, social and linguistic characteristics that could be applied to Caucasian peoples within the British Isles are acknowledged. Indeed they are noticeable within media discourses as are other European national and regional designations

of identity – Scandinavian, Eastern European, Mediterranean for example. There is an implicit racialisation here that permits specificity for White European populations but refuses it for Black people.

The racial categorisation of the Other may, on the other hand, be an extension of the practice of pooling the ethnically diverse minorities into the classification of 'ethnic minority'. Recognition of the diversity within the 'ethnic minority' or what is more appropriately the 'multiple minority' is very low. There is a propensity to acknowledge or identify only the generic racial classifications that are 'Black people' or 'Asian people' as unitary labels making up ethnic minorities. That proclivity also propounds the difficulties in identifying or appreciating the multiple diversities that are present outside in the whole of the African nations. Niger, Tanzania, Western Sahara or Angola among others are examples of independent sovereign nations within Africa which are all independent but have weaker signifiers as independent countries unless with an association with the enveloping Africa. Many other European countries and Southern American countries and even countries of the Asiatic region such as Malaysia, Nepal, Indonesia and India have stronger individual identifiers that suggest that the British public knows enough about them not to require a larger more generic reference to assist in placing them contextually.

5.4 Generic Discoursing: Homogenization by Association

In the process of producing popular programmes, television professionals, produce highly selective representations with familiar associations, which they see as accessible to their audiences. The particular devices include the use of musical motifs with African associations, invocation of a mystical African essence, the directing of gaze through titles, labelling and other forms of compression, the masking of specificities and the refusal of parity with other parts of the world. These are all processes of the active framing of Africa through summarisation, simplification or exclusion as well as through the packaged presentations that are reflective primarily of media dynamics.

5.4.1 Music as a Homogenising Agent

One prominent aspect of generic discoursing which is audible in programmes themed as African can be located in the role played by music. Whilst commonplace in programme production, music plays an important role in assisting to create meaning, effect and to complement images. The use of music in nature programmes or other documentaries apart from entertaining, indirectly carries subtle messages, in the temperament, tone, pace or style. The types of messages or atmospheres constructed vary with the wide range of music but very importantly, the choice of music in the construction of geo-cultural sites in the media is indicative of the site as we are meant to envisage it. This is why the representations of parts of Africa in

nature programmes and other programmes with music considered African is misleading. The employment of music from specific communities in Africa as backing music for a variety of programmes, works at endorsing a concept of a single standard or type of music all over Africa. Actually music, like language, culture, beliefs, and food, differs widely across the continent. The contribution of music to a constructed homogenous 'Africa' is seen when music from one country is adopted because of its availability or familiarity or 'enjoyability' in accompaniment to footage filmed in another country on the continent. Thus musicians from different backgrounds and styles and languages are considered interchangeably representative of 'Africa'. For example some of the music accompanying channel 4's *Going Native* is not Swazi and in the same way, a significant amount of music accompanying natural history programmes often have their origins in countries in Western Africa or Southern Africa but are used in accompaniment to filming conducted in the Serengeti or the Masai Mara in Tanzania and Kenya respectively.

5.5 Conceptualisations of an African Essence: Mystical Africa

Presentations that evoke mysticism or a *mystical Africa* occur in television programmes. These often dwell in evocations of experience and are often in discourses about Safari or adventure in Africa. In such occurrences, we see 'Africa' as a realm of beauty, excitement, and extreme experiences that are

overwhelmingly enjoyable and hence inexplicable. In this instant 'Africa' works as an entity and the sites of experience are again non-discriminatory. This statement from the voice over narrator of ITV's *Kids on the Kunene* illustrates that aspect:

In the fading light, the magic of Africa begins to work on the group. The warm tropical breeze and sense of complete freedom is a heavy mixture for the youngsters. For most it's their first taste of independence now no one is talking about wanting to go back home¹⁷[my emphasis]

What that magic is and how it works on the group is left to the audience to interpret and visualize, which again suggests that the audience do have earlier encounters, previous knowledge or some contexts relevant to the precise imaginations about 'Africa' to fall back onto in order to complete their visualisation and understanding. The visiting children were drawn from Wellfield Middle School, North Tyneside in then North East and there was substantial background coverage of the children's activities prior to visiting Namibia. Their prize for a school project involved 'swapping their classrooms for an African Adventure'. The children's experience proves far from being specific to Windhoek or possessing any nuances of being a Namibian experience, but it gathers excitement rather as an experience that

¹⁷ Kids on the Kunene ITV 29th March 1998. Set In Windhoek Namibia. Teenage Children from the Wellfield Middle School visiting Namibia for the first time as a prize for the winning entry in a North East Schools Project, UK. (Large portion of the programme is set in the UK and broadcast on the regional Yorkshire Television) Drum beats and gongs and music from multiple sites in Africa are used to introduce and also accompany the programme.

is firstly considered on the level of possessing the children and affecting them. The effects border on the surrealistic and mystical. That feeling is clearly made out as 'inexplicable' and exists in the 'you should know that' realm of things – assumed, imagined and what is to be expected in Africa. As presenter Anthea Turner proclaims in *Wish you were here*:

When people talk to me now about the magic and the mystery of this continent, I understand what it's all about, but you have to be here to actually know that.¹⁸

Similarly when one of the characters in BBC's *Godmothers* declares on the pulpit of a local church in rural Uganda that, 'All I can say to you is that this is Africa', we are left intrigued by the magic to be experienced.

One gathers from the tone of excitement juxtaposed with a setting of rural houses, footage showing forests and the locals singing, clapping and demonstrating warmth, that there is *an essential Africa* being captured here – a sense of the natural, spiritual or religious that forms the quintessential Africa being experienced. The Godmother's exhilarating description and illustration is short of any concrete or physical elements that could be pointed as epitomising Africa. The excitement and the overawing experience of meeting 'different' people, a different community, different lifestyles and an unfamiliar yet recognisable setting is summed up in her expression of 'this is Africa'. Even in the 'Tourism for Tomorrow

¹⁸ ITV *Wish You Were Here* (Featuring the British Airways Tourism for tomorrow Awards). Monday 16th March 1998 [19.00-19.30hrs]

Awards' edition of the programme *Wish You Were Here*, presenter Anthea Turner's comments confirms the existence of this widespread belief in that mysticism and unrealism that Africa exudes by concluding that

when people talk to me now about the magic and the mystery of this continent, I understand what it's all about, but you have to be here to actually know that.¹⁹ [my emphasis]

In all these examples, the engagement of an essence of Africa is present. The words of the characters and narrators seem to endorse a mystical element that is a summation of all things 'African'. *The Godmothers* endorses and promulgates the rural image of Africa in much the same way as the showcase of *The Zoo Keepers* through the arrangement of dusty tracks in game reserves and open air markets and the character, Ingrid's, sentiments about the hot weather on alighting from the aircraft in Zimbabwe as epitomising 'Africa'.

In all these summations of Africa, there is actively at work an eroding of diversity and the ingraining of particular experiences as 'African', experiences worthy of the kind of Africa that is expected by the visitors and possibly imagined by the audiences. The homogenisation tropes work through these large or small leading utterances and summaries to reflect and deliver what British audiences continue to expect and imagine about Africa.

¹⁹ ITV *Wish You Were Here*. (Featuring the 'British Airways Tourism For Tomorrow Awards'). Monday 16th March 1998 [19.00-19.30hrs]

5.6 Media structures – Editorial Processes and Ordering of ‘Africa’

5.6.1 Simplified and Directed Gazes

By selecting and including or excluding these particular incidents and specific scenes, images and experiences shown for arguable reasons – possibly because they are most entertaining or educating – the programme makers unquestionably homogenise Africa through their directed practices. Accordingly the homogenisation occurs through the highlighting of only the elements and parts of the continent popular with or reachable by the media’s resources. The suburbs of Niamey in Niger, inner city life in Mozambique, the skyscrapers of Abidjan, the towns in Mauritania or the people of The Central African Republic very rarely feature on any programme on television. There appears to be no impetus for interest in these.

Other media structuring occurs on the editing desk, such as the construction, and labelling of topics and subjects as Africa or African. Some of these editing acts, performed for the generation of interest and in the hope of achieving higher audience figures as well as, much ironically, intended for clarity, localisation and precision at presenting the topic becomes part of the justification for the homogenisation of Africa. Titles are particularly indicative here:

Hairy Hunters of the African Plains.²⁰

*

African Waterhole²¹

By painting such pictures with presentations based on presumptions, these resulting labels enable the message to be simplified and clarified and also to further retain interest in its entertaining and appealing prospects. But such titling harks back to the titling of fairy tales.

Generic discoursing involves active generalisations in media texts to avoid particularity and hence create summaries as a result of limited airtime besides sometimes aimed at adding some exaggeration excitement to the subject. It is reminiscent of the earlier discussed historical engagements with Africa earlier in this chapter about the carrying out of veiled desires or intentions of grandeur and importance. David Attenborough's frequent sweeping statements about the natural world and Africa are typical of such acts of generic discoursing. The beauty and awe of the lives of the animals and the programmes are relayed in the exuberant expressions of size, danger, wit and other effusive expressions that evoke admiration.

In the rivers and lakes of Africa lives an animal, which has the reputation for being the most unpredictable of all,²²

²⁰ Channel 5 *Hairy Hunters* – 'Cat's Kin' 30th March 1998 [19.00-20.00hrs]

²¹ Channel 5 *African Waterhole*. 20th June 2000. [19.00-20.00hrs]

²² BBC1 Sunday 25th October 1998 *Wildlife on One* [19.30-20.00hrs]. Narrated by David Attenborough

Announces Attenborough in an authoritative yet dramatised tone, a statement which is as most generalising as it is simplistic. In that announcement, we find a statement that suggests knowledge of all lakes and rivers on the African continent and their contents. There is no distinction of countries, regions or other units, 'Africa' functions on a level with a country or town. There is no specification of which localised sites within the continent are intended, before and after the pronouncement above. Apart from insinuating that Africa is small and simple enough to be well studied and covered in a forty-five minute documentary, it also effusively presents the hippopotamus as common to all rivers and lakes and practically can be seen in any part of Africa.

If we take for example 'King of Kingfishers'²³, a natural history documentary about Kingfishers, the programme is mainly set in, as stated, the 'rainforests of Northern Australia' where the birds are observed in the wild. 'Africa' is featured as one of the habitats of one of the types of Kingfishers mentioned and shown. But very little background images of the location are visible in the footage. The programme is specified as set mainly in parts of Northern Australia and no general references to the whole of Australia are made, but the only shift in site and mention of a Kingfisher's habitat in Africa immediately presents the issue of a generalised comment such as:

²³ BBC1 - *Wildlife on one*, 'King of Kingfishers'. Set mainly in Rainforests of Northern Australia with a small part in African Savannah

On the great lakes and waterways of Africa lives one kingfisher
that doesn't have to fish from a perch.

5.6.2 Hiding Specificities

News reports of US president Bill Clinton's visit to some countries on the continent of Africa were promoted as *Clinton's Tour of Africa*. Even though Clinton visited only Ghana, Uganda, South Africa and Senegal among the fifty five possible countries on the continent of Africa, the media presented a singular host – Africa, in such a manner that the countries he visited became like regions or cities for stopovers rather than independent sovereign countries with independent and distinct qualities within them. This approach smacks of and is a reminder of the pre-colonial engagements with Africa, when explorers discovered or toured Africa. Even though politically initiated, the media still fails to differentiate identities within the countries visited or to distinguish clearly that these are all different peoples with different governments. One could argue that the places visited by Bill Clinton are not the main subject of the coverage because little is seen of these places he visits. The main focus and presence of the media is the president. Thus Clinton's travels become the homogenising thread as the continuity is re-enforced in his arrivals, acceptances, his messages of aid and hope and his meetings with governments. The generic packaging worked with other props on the 'tour' to reinforce an adopted and repetitive

image of Africa. These props although political orchestrations are engaged on by the media with a little more coverage to reflect the 'African experience' by the US president. The media focuses on parts of Clinton's visit that fitted in with the 'African image'.

There is for example, a 'Lapse in security', 'moment of danger', as Clinton is mobbed on his first stop on his African tour. The sense of fear and trepidation is immediately introduced into that story to meet the expectations of violence: threatening Africa. Besides the radiation of the sense of violence and danger and equating all of this to 'Africa' from the particular location, it is also indicative that the country of visit is considered a stop, port of call and a site in the Africa visited rather than the airport and capital of a specific sovereign country. Furthermore in the reports, the Clintons lend a hand on a building site in a township, which allows the introduction of the 'poverty theme' by the reporter and the emphasis in the suggested poor people. The 'Safari and nature theme' follows shortly after with the Clintons' holiday and visit to a nature park to observe animals. The coverage of the visit to Goree Island (the old slave forts) in Senegal introduces a newer dimension, the question of slavery: Africa, home of slaves. Thus the recurring and dominant themes related to the continent of Africa are well recycled and are ever present in each encounter with 'Africa'. The variety of other messages and themes of manufacturing, education, capital growth, progress and Westernisation are hidden or lost behind these

preferred themes of focus. With the pre-occupation of the journalists on the Monica Lewinsky Scandal and curiosity about president Bill Clinton's composure on this trip away from home, one gets the impression that the centrality of the attention for these news bulletins lie centrally with the president. The sites and locations he visits appear as distant backdrops for the main protagonist – Clinton. Clinton is the controlling theme in the following headline examples, although his visit to South Africa gets more coverage by the press than the five other countries:

Commentary²⁴ –	Footage
President Clinton is flying to South Africa as part of his Africa tour.	- Studio shot of News anchor
On Tour in Africa, President Clinton hinted of a fresh White House Initiative.	- Studio shot of News anchor
Commentary²⁵	Footage
President Clinton has become the first United States president to visit South Africa.	- Distant shots of Bill and Hillary Clinton descending the steps of their aircraft to meet the South African Foreign minister on the tarmac. Only few seconds of medium shots of aeroplane and Clintons meeting with officials. This footage contains no other images.
President Clinton has visited a Black Township on the first day of his visit to South Africa... one of Cape Town's notorious townships.	- Footage here contains earlier shots of Clintons descending from aircrafts, walkabouts, posters welcoming the president, supporters alongside the road and Clintons at a 'photographic opportunity', giving a helping hand to Women builders.

²⁴ BBC1 9 O'clock News 25 March 1998 [21.00-21.30hrs]

²⁵ BBC1 Breakfast News 26th March 1998 [07.00-07.30hrs]

5.7 Comparative Discoursing Europe, Asia and Africa

In comparison with the continent of Africa, diversity in Europe is often recognised and any juxtapositions of the conceptualisations of Africa as a 'country', 'unit', 'subject' or 'homogenous community' against the collection of countries and identities that makes up Europe, easily shows that. Some of these television representations of Africa, shown in arguments in this chapter appear absurd when Europe or other continents are framed within similar discursive structures as often occurs with 'Africa'. Communities and countries within Europe have stronger identifiers and narrative contexts in discourses and it is clear that more is known about these and included in the representations; sometimes explaining or not requiring explanations, justifying and drawing similarities with the point of reference of the narrator. Identifying with other parts of Europe, its countries and cultures, and using these as the point of seeing or referencing, interpretation means that the Other in that context is the Other of Europe and the West.

Edward Said (1978) in his celebrated text – *Orientalism* – sought to highlight the conceptualised regime of knowledge that was placed around the Orient as a referent. The Orient acquired meaning as the domain of culture, philosophy and thought that is non-Western and originates from the East. Said's exploration unearthed elements of Western representations of the non-Western Other. The Orient significantly did indicate a geographical as well as a theoretical site which was unitary in as far as it

referred to knowledge and ideology originating from the East. However, that unitary association is less pronounced in the media than in academic text. Generic constructions of an Oriental region are less distinguishable today than of Africa. 'Asian' is now a racial category like 'Black and White', but there are prominent distinctions made between Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, South East Asian and other Asians. This type of distinguishing is less pronounced in the case of Africa possibly because Africa is one geographical mass in a way that the Orient is not and also because skin colour is taken to be a strong marker of identification and grouping in these descriptions whilst there are seen to be variations in colour in the 'Orient'.

Omissions in programme commentaries of references to obvious individual identities of autonomous nations within the geographical continent is significant. The lack of strong media references to nations within Africa as independent and different, probably because of unfamiliarity with any strong identities of these individual nations is a cause and an effect of repeated generalisation. Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso, Western Sahara or Lesotho among others are examples of independent sovereign nations within Africa which in spite of their individual autonomy, have even weaker signifiers within these media or television discourses on British Television, as independent countries, unless associated with the enveloping and much more overbearing signification of 'Africa'. Many other countries within Western and Eastern Europe such as Latvia, Estonia and Georgia or

Southern America including even countries of the Asiatic region such as Malaysia, Nepal, Indonesia and India have stronger individual identifiers which suggest that British audiences are availed of their independence and uniqueness much more than is accorded most countries under the label 'Africa'. These other non-African countries do not need as much generic referencing to geographical, cultural, social or political stereotypes in order to identify them. Their ties of familiarity to British Television Audiences appear to be higher and more unambiguous than most countries in Africa. African countries are often denied their individuality and grouped together to still take advantage of the easier association with the stereotypical as well as the romantic and pre-formed Africa.

In analysing the role of broadcasting for example, Chaney, (1986) points out that the concept of the 'nation' is a very abstract collectivity, which is too big to be experienced directly by the individual. For individual Africans, that suggestion is very true from the perspectives of their individual nations or ethnic identities and thus makes an African collectivity even farther out of reach, more abstract.

5.8 Othering as Homogenisation: Others as the Same, Us as Diverse

The combined effects of all the tropes and discourses discussed above is to create an effect of Othering. Othering plays a role in illustrating and designating identity, by clarifying and determining the relationship between 'Us and Them' through the binaries and polarising characteristics we can list about each other. In discoursing the Other, we effectively examine and locate the intricacies that make us different and limit the diversities of the other while using Us as the focal point. When media discourses suggest Africa, it is against the backdrop of Western or British socio-cultural and economic terms. Inadvertently an innate measuring and comparison process dictates the differentness of Africa from the familiar Britain. In connection with people, Africa becomes reduced in size to be comparable to Britain. And along the lines of culture, development and other modern concepts, 'Africa' conveniently fits within the oppositions of racial, cultural, meteorological elements, and is thus maintained in thought and comment that way. These differences are maintained even though there are variations in these and many other experiences within the two sites, for example warm weather in Britain or cold weather spots in Africa. Also the presence of 'White Africans' becomes an impossible condition to identify with and so is peculiarly absent from discourses about Africa. An analysis of how narrators adopt tones of familiarity and association with White characters is further dealt with in Chapter 3. The 'tropes of Othering' works

at positioning Africa at one end of the identity spectrum, away from the familiar and the nearby. The binaries work at near and distant, culture and nature, black and white, peaceful and warring, discoverer and discovered, primitive and civilised, rich and poor, developed and undeveloped (developing), intelligent and non-intelligent, disciplined and lacking discipline among many others. Difference and strangeness are of interest to us more than similarities or sameness. By focussing on the differences and positioning African things, ways, places and peoples as the oppositional Others, all such elements are easily classifiable as homogenous and bearing the same qualities and distribution. The other's different qualities stand out as much and the overall similarities are suppressed. In relation to the argument about homogenisation the key difference which sums up all the rest is that the WE are immensely diverse and the THEY are all the same.

The form of homogenisation is very significant, as we shall see in more detail in later chapters. Africa for instance is often retained in the form of the hunter-gatherer, overlooking the modernity of its cities. Africa is contrasted with the 'developed', 'metropolitan' domain that is the configuration of the western mind. Africa is ironically what we see about ourselves in the west, the perfect depositary of our lives, processes and domains. To say Africa is undeveloped is to say what we are not – we are developed. Africa however can retain primitivity while we are civilised; Africa epitomising the legendary and mythical while our realities remind us

of our current existence and experiences, Africa is warring while we are at peace and very orderly, Africa is rustic and natural while we inhabit a site tamed and ordered by humanity. Africa gains the status of the depositary, the epitome of the things that we do not find in ourselves – things desired and things eschewed. That ideology often colours the representations of what television makes of Africa. It caters to our desire for the different and the unusual and in producing these stories of Africa for us, continues the making of legends and myths about a land ‘a land far away, where strange beastes and wild savages live’ (See also Moore, 1996).

5.9 Conclusions

In this chapter and with the help of excerpts from some popular contemporary television programmes one can see how through specific tropes of discourses and practices a homogenised construction of Africa is achieved and maintained.

Beginning with some of these processes, which I have classified as synecdochal, metonymal, stereotyping and racialisation, I set out to clarify some of the forms innate in these media discourses. There is, throughout the tropes and thematic occupations of these discourses, the permeation (maybe a little less pronounced) of the interchanging of widened signifiers with Africa or the extensions of the signifier ‘Africa’ to relate to a selective

list of ideas and issues. The repetitiveness of Africa and these issues and ideas registers their normality to audiences, but the general absence of specification and historicization throughout the discursive engagements with the topic of 'Africa' continually grounds the constructed homogeneity that is 'Africa'. Furthermore, generalised discourses about ethnic minorities, I have argued, purport to narrow down from the extremely varied and complex groupings within these to a simple unit. Descriptions and discussions of Ethnic Minorities like this pander to a dichotomy where there is a majority central group around which these minorities exist – a centre versus periphery philosophy. Although this is not-debateable in actuality, the effect of the lack of recognition (in country) of the satellite identities within these minorities, as they are within the main majority, works at simplifying and homogenising them. That practice mirrors the global state of affairs and of international communication – concerning the relations between developing regions and the industrialised ones. I have tried to link this argument with the relationship between Britain (centre) and Africa (periphery) and have reasoned why there can be similar projections onto Africa. There is recognition of some of the editorial elements in the ordering of particular perspectives of 'Africa'. And finally using suppositions of Europe and other continents, the generic discoursing of Africa is counter-illustrated.

In sum, the debates here highlight many of the aspects of collective naming and framing of 'Africa', demonstrating how 'Africa' is constituted in contemporary media discourses and what the constituents of the complex symbolic-geographic-metaphoric-textual 'Africa' are and what they reveal. These generic constructions and framing affect the overall image of the continent, its cultures, countries and its peoples almost always in negative ways. In the end, there is little new knowledge conveyed to the British public but only their own common sense assumptions recycled and confirmed.

Chapter 6 – Africa as Problematic Other: Discourses of Negativity and the Problematization of 'Africa'

6.0 Introduction

6.1 Theorising Television News.

6.2.1 News Values

6.2.2 News Perspectives

6.2.3 Ideology, Influences and Language in News

6.3 Television Genre and the Negativity of News.

6.4 Dominant Paradigms – Negative Themes in Representing Africa

6.4.1 Poverty, Famine and Ill Health – Africa as Passive Victims

6.4.2 'Africa's Misrule: Failure Dictatorship and Ill Governance'

6.4.3 Wars, Conflicts, Genocides – Active But Dangerous; Self Destroying

6.4.4 Salvation and Order from Abroad – The Discourse of Outside Agency

(i) Global Missionaries

(ii) Discourses of Development and Civilisation

6.4.5 A South African Story – An Apparent Exception

6.5 Conclusions

If Africa is a scar on the conscience of our world, the world has a duty to heal it, heal it we can and we must.

Tony Blair 2002
WSSD, South Africa

6.0 Introduction

In a speech delivered at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa, excerpts of which were broadcast in news reports worldwide, Britain's Prime Minister, Tony Blair, addressed the gathering with suggestions that 'interdependence' was a key characteristic of today's world, such that the problems of one country are those of another¹. He reaffirmed, in the quote above, a statement he had made at the British Labour Party conference in Brighton in 2001.

¹ British Prime Minister Tony Blair: Speech to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa [2/9/2002]. Full text available at <http://www.number10.gov.uk/output/page1724.asp> (Accessed 1st February 2004)

He had affirmed at that Party Conference, that

the state of Africa is a scar on the conscience of the world.
But if the world as a community focused on it, we could heal
it.
And if we don't, it will become deeper and angrier.²

He added that Africa's side of that deal was

true democracy, no more excuses for dictatorship, abuses of
human rights; no tolerance of bad governance, from the
endemic corruption of some states, to the activities of Mr
Mugabe's henchmen in Zimbabwe.³

Discounting any analytical interpretations that could be made about the suitability of the analogy and the prospect of healing scars, this speech concluded that Africa was deeply problematic, and had failed at solving its own problems, which were in turn affecting the global community and thus needed the intervention of the West. Apart from adding to the recurrent homogenisation of 'Africa', in comparison with the treatment of other continents, that speech feeds into a global media discourse which sees an Africa that is fraught with 'political failures', 'endemic poverty' and always requiring Western help to improve it. It is a kind of discourse that can be traced back through the years, absorbed with problems that faced parts of Africa from the pre-colonial era through to the present day. It is a

² Tony Blair, Quote from Speech to the Labour Party Conference – 2nd October 2001
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/1575434.stm (Accessed 5th February 2004) This speech was delivered a month after the September 11th 2001 Attacks on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon in New York

³ Tony Blair, Quote from Speech to Labour Party Conference – 2nd October 2001
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/uk_politics/2001/conferences_2001/labour/1575135.stm
(accessed 4th August 2004)

representation which sees Africa as deeply problematic and requiring the Western models of democracy, religion, civilization, economic and social restructuring to improve it. Time and time again, the dominant discourses in international politics presented in news, sees Africa as a unit with an easily identifiable social, political and economic approach that is predominantly always flawed, and has need of advice, guidance, Aid in all forms, and the model of exemplary conduct from the West.

The United States President, Bill Clinton and subsequently President George W. Bush's visits to the African continent in March 1998 and July 2003 respectively, were in many ways heralded as messianic by the media. The impression given in the mass media was that these short visits, to a few selected, 'commendable' countries, was to mark the approval of the West of some African countries who had earned their ration of Western support and Aid (recalling the five loaves of bread and two fishes).⁴

In this chapter, my aim is to locate and document dominant and continuing patterns of negative representations of Africa in television discourses, as well as the conceptualisations of inadequacy, helplessness, violence, danger

⁴ Furthermore President Clinton's visit to Africa meant that the American media and much of the world's media went to Africa too. His return meant Africa was no longer newsworthy. But a significant section of the US press corps still focussed on Clinton while he was in Africa rather than on Africa. This was reflected for example in the dominance of American local issues such as the 'Monica Lewinsky scandal' in majority of the questions and discussions put forward by 'experts' and commentators during coverage and press conferences during the trip. Africa was on the news agenda with Clinton's tour but lacked coverage with Clinton's domestic issues of the time. The expert analysts on Africa also discussed possibilities of aid, and which countries were deserving of it.

and failure. The dominant references to the negative seen in the use of expressions such as 'struggles to cope', 'indiscriminate brutality' 'steadily worse', 'died of hunger' 'forced to flee their homes', 'frustration is mounting'⁵ among others, frame Africa in the news along those negative thematic lines. Starting with an exposition on the genre of news, including some discussions on news values, news perspectives and news ideologies I explore issues on television news and the negativity of news. The central debates in the chapter follow, with criticisms of the prevalent themes and patterns of negative representations of Africa occurring in programmes on British Television. The threads of negativity and the points to be made about the relationship between the old rhetoric of 'civilisation' and the new discourses of 'development' are made and draw the arguments together. The chapter thus isolates and presents the 'problematization of Africa' in Western media discourses as a result of concentrations on negative social, political, economic issues about Africa in the mass media.

6.1 Theorising Television News.

News in its crudest interpretation refers to new information, but the proliferation of mass information systems triggered a deluge of criticisms against news media for a preoccupation with the negative. The UNESCO sponsored 'International Commission for the study of Communication

⁵ BBC 1, *The Ten O'clock News* – Civil War in The Sudan. Thursday 12th February 2004 [22.00-22.30hrs]

Problems', (Macbride, 1980); the Uppsala conference of Africa, published in *Reporting Africa*, (Stoke et al, 1971) and the Glasgow University Media Group's *Bad News* (1976) and *More Bad News* (1980) explorations on news, to name a few, have all questioned communication practices that are prejudicial to some sectors.

The theory of news and how it is presented has often been treated as a straightforward and uncomplicated genre as media houses often market their news content as fast, immediate and authentic. This is particularly true of television news. Yet there are complex sets of elements at work in the production of news, to achieve the authority, authenticity and formality in their relay. These elements can be highlighted by attempting to appraise some of the news values, news perspectives and news ideologies intrinsic to the making of these news programmes and also indicative of the possible social reaction and consumption of the news.

6.2.1 News Values

Criticisms have been levelled against the Western news media's treatment of minority ethnic peoples and also the coverage of people outside the West. These criticisms have included condemnations of the deficiency in background reporting as the report by Stokke et al (1971) concluded. Other

studies such as reported by Campbell (1995) see fixations by television news on particular styles of reporting about specific peoples.

There is a lot of truth in arguments by Stokke et al, (1971) that television is more preoccupied with reporting actual events than devoting airtime to serious background reporting which might give an insight to the roots of the problems later reported. It is a more pronounced deficiency where communicating news from countries and communities in Africa is concerned. The lack of a wider more extensive knowledge on Africa among large numbers of British people and the failings of the British media in filling this information gap, well enough, leads to an even more confusing and distorted image of actual situations.

The first time viewers become aware of a country's problems is when it has erupted into an 'inexplicable' violent end, says Colin Legum (1971: 204). The lead up to this 'disaster' is not noticed or is sometimes ignored. This is most often because these 'lesser' problems are not considered worthy of the allocation of prime time television slots. Then the sudden rupture and the implications of it become difficult to explain. The inexplicable eruptions of events and incidents in news has a consequence of confusing audiences or even suggesting that there are unreasonable players in the conflict or disaster. In agreement with Legum, I would argue, that the media needs to widen its selection of 'newsworthy' stories to include more stories from the

countries they cover. This would assist audiences in their understanding and interpretation of actual events as they later occur.

Occasionally it is argued that media audiences are uninterested in other places unless in the event of an 'extraordinary' occurrence happening there. Stokke et al (1971; especially Himmelstrand in this volume) argue that if this argument is true then popular programming should be able to offset this, but they found in their study that it did not. As with the unifying practices of 'African News' the lack of substantive backgrounds also narrows the perspectives projected of Africa. Again this is a worthwhile argument because even though the media may not be able to predict the occurrence of an event, the excitement attached to the 'Bad news' in the absence of any previously identified 'Good news' grounds the infamous nature of the site reported. More generally, as Hayden White (1980) argues, our ability to measure and to accord importance to important events in history, is aided by our retrospective glance-back at the events. In absence of a retrospective glance-back in most television news, audiences may have the difficulty in making any sense of the events. Also, the practice of the lonely 'Africa reporter', covering the entire continent for some media houses has its limiting effects on the percentage of news output, the diversity of the content and the quality of the interpretation of the events in the report. Against the image of the single reporter responsible for the 54 African states we have hundreds of reporters covering the UK alone. Such a reporter based

in South Africa for example cannot provide the quality of background reporting on issues in any of the countries farther away. The poor quality of videophones and absence of broadcast footage for some key reports suggests that there is little resource allocation for the coverage of news in parts of Africa. That attitude towards the continent's potentially large news source, underlies a deeper structuring that places Africa as of far lesser importance.

The argument could be made, that the majority populations or dominant forces perpetuate the sidelining of the less visible. That argument can certainly be applied to the coverage of ethnic minorities. In a previous research on how television newscasts perpetuate racial myths in white America, Christopher Campbell (1995) discovered that there was a tendency of local television news stations to present news items with African-American people in the traditional stereotypical moulds. These moulds perpetuate the dissemination of images of African Americans either in the 'positive' stories of entertainment and sports or in the negative news coverage, which relate them to crime stories. Campbell (1995: 132) talks of the sameness of the racial mythology embedded in broadcasts across the United States, and attributes this to the homogenising practices of local television news organisations. These practices appear to represent a hegemonic consensus about race and class and further encourage a sustenance of myths about life outside of white 'mainstream' America.

Furthermore, Campbell (1995) suggests that by ignoring life outside middle America, which he identifies as dominant culture parameters, local news contributes to an understanding of minority culture as less significant or marginal. By neglecting or dismissing the attitudes and perceptions of people of colour, journalists compound that sense of marginality, Campbell stresses. Campbell makes scathing criticism of the stereotyping of non-white Americans as 'less-than-human', immature, savages and derelicts, which perpetuate the distancing of minorities as other and often dangerous. In his argument, by its very nature, television news relies on visual imagery for comprehensive narration. But by identifying the race of the subject and through the use of language such as 'natural' and 'raw talent'⁶, the newscasts continue to frame the news about these people in a particular light. Thus the 1990's still saw a persistence of stereotypes albeit, subtler mythologies about minority life on television news in America. Campbell's debate persists further that, in spite of Hall's (1980) identifications of 'preferred', 'negotiated' or 'oppositional' readings, which majority of viewers would identify with, the news media does contribute to a majority culture ideology and would be rarely aware of the stereotypical thinking which according to Gaertner and Dovidio (1986), lies deep in the 'cultural forces and cognitive processes' (1986: 85) of non-minority life. The arguments put

⁶ In Channel 4's World Football Season, a section covering football from the African Continent was titled, *Live and Dangerous*. The presenter further uses expressions such as 'Africa has a lot of raw talent' waiting to be discovered. Whatever the intention of the presenter was, that particular expression underlines Campbell's arguments that a selective use of language which sees one group of society as less than human or capable of discovery and transformation, belittles them and works as a negative perpetuation of stereotypes.

forward by Campbell (1995) and Gaertner and Dovidio (1986) are arguments about scenarios that mirror, on a global scale, the representation of Africa in the West. The parallels can be seen in dichotomies of the dominant culture, ideologies that further marginalize and statically frame less visible and less vocal part. The little-featured news on Africa and its cultural, social, political and economic interests become very fragmented and static in content and structure against the dominant ideologies of the West. This suggests a *mould* of inflexibility with which representations of minorities appear to be portrayed as in Campbell's report (1995), and which appears to shape the representation of Africa on this much wider scale too. It brings back to mind arguments made earlier in Chapter 1, that the portrayal of Others often works by the selection, isolation and emphasising of the unfamiliar 'cultural' constructs of the Other which is useful for generating higher audience interest and also enables easier popular entertainment programming.

The patterns of representation include the key pointers Campbell found. These may be as much uncalculated and unconscious as strategic acts by the media. Ignoring, neglecting and dismissing the attitudes and perceptions of the minority, the regurgitating of particular phrases and language and the apparent fixations on specific areas of the minority culture by the media as opposed to the dominant culture perpetuates the cycle that grounds the minority culture further into minority status. Western media news coverage

about Africa, because it is directed at a Western audience, fails to cover the larger context, which could make sense of the erratic nature and explosive content of fragmented African news. In the absence of an informative account of context, audiences, and perhaps producers must depend on the 'common sense' about 'Africa' with British Culture.

The other factor would be the fixated concept of the Other, which focuses on difference. This conveys the impression that there are not large similarities between the marginal and the dominant, between Africa and the West and between White America and African-American America.

Stretching that argument even further, any changes in the whole of Africa, be it modernisation, Westernisation or development offers little in the way of difference and thus does not make for captivating television news society already familiar with such processes. A modernising Africa hardly makes television news.

6.2.2 News Perspectives

Another angle to understanding news is to explore the perspectives that help mould the manufacture of news. News is inherently a manufacturing process, which is unobtrusive to the daily recipient of the news. The active (editorial) selection and discarding of words and images to provide

assemblages, explanations and to construct narratives and descriptions of incidents is a testament to that manufacturing.

Altheide developed his conception of the 'news perspective', describing it as a 'complex of economic, organisational, and personal factors that determine the biases and slants built into news reporting' (1974:1). This complex of factors include the manufacture and appropriation of images, the industry factors such as limited airtime, a market aimed at larger audience figures, and the internal and external political ideologies influencing the output.

Modern news presentations work at giving a sense of vivid imagery to the events, transposing and staging the drama that is 'humans in crisis'. Most news broadcasts on television play along this structure in an effort at maximising and generating audiences and their attention and interest. The short time-span available is also a factor in the 'spicing up' of news. The compression and sharpening of stories for audiences is a drive to maintain interest in news as a genre but also indicates further, the strands of influence that affect what we know as news. News from Africa does not escape these practices. What makes for a distinctive treatment of news from Africa is the very limited availability there is of such news on television as indicated in the earlier sections of this chapter and the study as a whole.

The composition of 'Africa' in news goes even further and other factors encourage these particular framings.

6.2.3 Ideology, Influences and Language in News

Roger Fowler argues that 'language is not neutral, but a highly constructive mediator' (1991:1). His argument is that, what we find in all news media including press radio and television is not as objective, unambiguous and undistorted as journalists would have us believe, although it is what journalists purport to believe that it is their professional ethos to 'report the facts'. Fowler asserts that the content of these media are not facts about the world but rather in a very general sense 'ideas', 'propositions', 'ideology'. Backed by the findings of the Glasgow University Media Group and the University of Birmingham, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies⁷, Fowler confirms that events get reported, not because of their intrinsic importance but because of a complex and artificial set of criteria for selection that operates. The selected items undergo a transformation process, which sees an operation to encode the event to suit the type of medium, including the effects that the knowledge of the target audience has on such encoding. These mediations Fowler rightly argues underline the

⁷ Publications by the Glasgow University Media Group include *Bad News* (1976, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul); *More Bad News* (1980, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul). Other publications critiquing the news include Hall, S., Critchler, C., Jefferson, T., Clarke, J., & Roberts B., (1978) *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, The State, and Law and Order*. London: Macmillan.

fact that 'news is a practice' (1991:2) which is not necessarily a neutral mirror but intervenes in the ordering of reality.

Additionally, Colin Legum, writing as far back as 1971 about journalists and the dictates of a good balanced report from an international location, cites South Africa. South Africa during the years of Apartheid as a good example of how journalists reported one-sidedly on how good or how terrible life was, because either view can be backed by images and facts and descriptions. But an account that is truly reflective or accurate of the situation is one that reflects both views and mirrors the extremely complex nature of the society. That argument is as applicable to television now as it was about the print media in the 1970's and it can be projected from the complexities of South Africa to the larger and even more complex characteristics of the continent of Africa.

Furthermore, it is a practice familiar to journalists and reporters that although each prepares and tables a news item, there is a screening and evaluating for what gets published and reaches the audiences and at what times based on internal decisions on priority interests made by an editor. These 'filtering and gatekeeping processes', Lorimer (1994) argues, are applied right through the wider industry from global news agencies and reporters to national bureaus, and in various individual media houses. The

particular ideologies and influences guiding that filtering can often result in sketchy and ethnocentric end products. (1994:236-37)

6.3 Television Genre and the Negativity of News.

From the sample time frames used to investigate the subject of 'Africa' on British Television, news programmes make a higher mention of Africa than any other genre. A significant 46% of all the programmes in which 'Africa' was featured, came from news reports. Although the engagements with Africa on these news programmes are mostly in brief news items, it accounts for the most coverage of Africa on British Television. (The next significant mention of 'Africa' applies to nature and wildlife programmes at 28% of the total sample). As I have already argued, news about Africa is also grossly underrepresented on British Television. So news about 'Africa' in British news emerges as small explosive pieces. The stories erupt, grab the headlines and vanish as quickly as interest in them wanes. Apart from the hunger for marketability that is displayed by extraordinary headlines, stories are also frequently framed as 'African news', quite far removed from the contexts and contents of the specific story. Categorising the story as African, gives the media an opportunity to suggest that they have covered the region or continent.

All the News programmes in the sample carry negative news stories, with the exception of only 1.8% of the programmes, which I have classified as

ambiguous. Categorising stories of Africa into negative, positive and ambiguous, is to distinguish the stories along the overriding themes which feature in them, and to ascertain the more frequent themes which occur, where negative stories, for example, include stories (which from a content appraisal of keywords and phrases) with strongly negative connotations as illustrated in the table below:

Table 6.1 – A Selection of words used in two stories, which are identified as African or relate to Africa

<i>BBC2 30th April 1998 – 'Apartheid's Children'</i>	
- New war	- Police Officers
- Country's violent past	- Corrupt
- Painful stories	- Increased dramatically
- Alarming increase	- Poor
- Child rape	- Incest
- Sodomised	- Violence
<i>BBC1 – 9 O'clock news. Headline – 'Horror in Nigeria'. 19th October 1998</i>	
- Fireball	- Sabotages
- Killed	- Disrepair
- Ruptured	- Deaths
- Caught fire	- Bursts
- Exploded	- Throng
- Grim	- No Facilities
- Task	- Crude
- Severe	- Mass Grave

The ambiguity classification of these stories is based on their characteristics – of not directly expounding negative stories but ultimately drawing on

associations and contextualisations that mask any positive elements⁸. Throughout the study, I came across no programmes that I can classify as positive. This not quite the case with other television genre. In the Chapter on Nature and Culture, I analysed representations that evoked a certain romanticism, and mysticism associated, however, not with humans but with African wildlife.

Scrutinizing news reports, documentaries and the few comedies that mention 'Africa', shows that there is a distinctive divide between these types of programmes and the other types of programmes identified and classified in this study⁹. News Programmes and documentaries are both approached as factual and truthful material by both programme producers and audiences alike, yet as we have seen from the sample, 98% of the main topics of the programmes and their framing was negative. In this way the most common form of African coverage is almost the most negative. An interesting exception here is comedy, where humour is used to ridicule through the exaggeration of the negative. As we shall see, when we explore

⁸ BBC1, 9 O'clock News, 8th March 1998. – With Reporter, Mark Doyle. This news item illustrates such vast amounts of references to the negative that significantly overweigh the positive elements. The news programme carried a story, about seven year old 'war orphan' Tenneh Cole. She had been sent back to Sierra Leone after an operation in Britain to remove a bullet lodged in her head and had been found safe and well after being forced to flee fighting in her home town. This ends the story's positive note – delight in the finding of the 'War Orphan' alive. On the whole the story paints a very grim picture of war, the reminisces of death, flight, fear, fragility, hunger and violence from more fighting in Sierra Leone, all of which caused the little girl to flee and endure a precarious existence. Our sympathies are drawn on, for the upheavals in such a little girl's life, which in turn elicits our derision at the circumstances that encourage that upheaval.

⁹ The identified genres from the samples used in the study include: News; Holiday programmes; documentaries; Entertainment magazine programmes; Nature and Wildlife programmes; Film and Drama and Commercials.

the theme problematic 'Africa', comedy can accentuate negative stereotypes by making them laughable through the use of humour.

Such classification is not a geographically specific within the African continent but is rather theme sensitive, influenced more often by the characters or by the contents of the stories, than their geographical setting, which might be 'anywhere in Africa'. Those stories that relate to the themes of race, poverty, war, genocide, wildlife and famine significantly appear framed as Africa stories. Not all these stories are framed from the onset as Africa stories, but by association and contextualisation, along certain lines, and in the majority of samples in this study, reveal a heavy relation to Africa from the thematic contexts of wildlife and the 'negative' incidents as mentioned above. This works by contextualising and associating the news item with negative connotations, rather than investigating it. These connotations are often associated with whole clusters of occurrences and issues.

Roland Barthes' essay on Mythologies and his argument about the tri-dimensional relationship between the signifier, signified and sign describes how this process works. Barthes suggests that the evident and immediate image, text or utterance is the first and easily recognisable basic or denotative message (2000). Beyond that first message lies a further message. I shall take here, an illustration from British television, which is

very similar to the original example Roland Barthes' paints of a black soldier saluting a French flag. Thus a television image may show a black child with sunken eyes and distended stomach with very thin limbs. That initial image (the form) then is translated with the help of its signifier (the concept – the language of famine), to arrive at a deeper mythical message of death, void, danger, all features we associate with Africa (the sign). In many respects the reverse can also apply, so that if a cultural professional (from Aid agencies) wishes to convey a message of death, destruction and extreme need, a photographic image of a famished black African child may be chosen to convey this message.

There is a greater propensity for news programmes to sum up news items emanating from any part of the Continent of Africa under the title of 'Africa News'. That homogenisation appears linked more to stories from Sub-Saharan Africa and negative themes from all over the continent. That homogenisation, extensively discussed in Chapter 5 of this study, and especially noticeable in news reports, is not evident in the news from other geographical continents, making North American News, Australian News, Asian News, European News or South American News appear less commonplace than African News. News items originating from within the continent of Africa are temptingly dressed in the 'African' garb and passed as 'African news', or accessorized with snippets of general facts from the wider continent such that one may unwittingly associate the current subject

with other subjects sites and themes that may be unrelated to the current issue just by the association with 'Africa'. The consequence is the construction of a unified image or site even if the purpose of labelling is simply to assist the audience in locating the source of the news or place of the incidents.

Reducing the diversity and magnanimity of the continent to a singular analysable site enables a sense of overwhelming amounts of war, death, destruction, evil leadership and famine, when these preoccupations of the mass media find airing in news about Africa. When famine in a remote part of southern Sudan, some regions of Ethiopia and in a couple of Mali's desert regions are presented (albeit at different times of occurrence) as big African famine stories, the rest of the continent become unwittingly portrayed through that linking, as victims or famine prone. This disregards the scores of other communities in many countries with lush tropical rainforest regions and completely temperate zones.

6.4 Dominant Paradigms – Negative Themes in Representing Africa

Besides the concentration of negative representations in the particular genres of news and documentaries and comedy as discussed above, there is kind of branding of Africa ordered around some central themes. Negative

representations of Africa in British television fit into several themes, which together reveal a discursive progression with a definite ideological logic.

First, Africa is represented in terms of victimhood through the themes of poverty, sickness, famine and natural disasters. The stress here is on the passivity of populations, their lack of agency. Secondly Africa is represented in terms of incapacity, failure and inadequacy. This relates particularly to governance and the failure of states. Thirdly, Africa is represented in the terms of, notoriety, disorderliness and simply puzzling circumstances. This registers the dangerousness of Africa. Here Africa agents are ironically active but destructive. These dominant discursive frames point to the necessity for intervention and outside solutions. This supplies the rationale of Aid and Development – and furthers a rhetoric of civilization and control. The groupings of themes below are illustrated with the help of particular programmes which, however, often combine all four themes.

6.4.1 Poverty, Famine and Ill Health – Africa as Passive Victims

An ubiquitous treatment of Africa in television discourses is around the theme of sickness. The themes of ill Africa comes through in mimetic and metaphoric representations. The representation of a sick continent comes across in the predominance of news and documentary pieces that mention malaria, HIV AIDS, bilharzias and all other actual diseases, which afflict

people on parts of the continent. These discourses centre on evocations of death from diseases, helplessness, the prevalence of curable diseases, the substantial amounts of people sick from malnutrition, hunger and water borne diseases etc. These actual ailments, in truth, afflict people severely in specific parts of the continent. Again as argued frequently in the earlier chapter on homogeneity, there are people within parts of Africa who have not experienced some or any of these ailments but are afflicted with the general representations of the nature of these stories.

A very recent aspect of physically ill Africa comes across in the debates about the spread of HIV/AIDS. The discourse about HIV and AIDS presents an Africa that is very widely infected and which has little control over the future. Again that coverage of people in some countries in parts of Africa is presented in adjectives, percentages and general association which transposes to an embodiment of 'Africa' that lies ill with AIDS and too poor to afford to purchase the drugs to stave off death. This representation of Africa has elements of truth in it, as the problem of AIDS in some communities within some countries in Africa is a large one¹⁰. Yet the representations of Africa as severely diseased with most of its population infected people with the HIV virus is not accurate, and grossly overweighs other issues and topics that could reflect more about what goes on within

¹⁰ India in 2003/2004 for instance, is considered to be the country with the second highest infections. If country statistics are provided, then the breakdown of HIV/AIDs per country becomes less significant compared with countries with already large populations.

these communities in Africa. Inadvertently the maximum exposure gained from the exaggeration and concentration on the topic draws some attention to it and may be helping in generating funding for work on it. But it is also significantly a reflection of panic from the Western journalists and news editors, the television discourse about AIDS and Africa's earlier position as recipient of problematization attribution makes it easier to configure the AIDS discourse predominantly around Africa¹¹. The continent of Africa, when including humans¹², thus epitomises for many readers of these representations, a space of perilous existence, with epidemics frequently occurring and the kind of helplessness that separates African's and their existence from the West.

The current global commentary of HIV/AIDS focuses greatly on Africa and seems to be in recent years (2000-2004) a very topical and leading ingredient of the problematization of Africa. Although no British television programme dedicated to HIV/AIDS falls within the study period, the reference from many other discourses to the subject is rife. News stories covering discussions about the spread of HIV/AIDS, commentators on

¹¹ An argument can be made that the concern about the spread of HIV Aids and the economic ramifications for some of the giant companies operating in South Africa, as well as the quagmire of the allowances to be made for the copying of retroviral drugs for the sufferers has pushed the exposure of the situation to the world media's attention. One would ask, is the focus on HIV AIDS in Africa driven by a sympathetic plight to the sufferers or is it because of the battle to acquire AIDS medication ignoring the patent holders and the denial of a link between HIV and AIDS by South African Premier Mbeki.

¹² The exclusion of humans from the site of Africa, the representations of people as a threat to nature and the portrayal of the polarities of romantic Africa in landscape, vegetation and wildlife against perilous existence of natives in Africa is also and more extensively discussed in Chapter 4 on Nature and Culture.

general topics about global issues and programmes development in Africa, point to an 'AIDS pandemic in Africa' which however accurate the statistics, does not specify enough, the distribution or allotment of these and to generalise HIV/AIDS to all of Africa. Even regional news programmes highlighting HIV/AIDS spread among the African community in Britain grounds the Africa and AIDS association.

This is also significantly, partly the responsibility of Aid agencies and NGOs who, in a bid to source support for their operations, solicit the help of the news media and media visible campaigns. Yet without these interventions one can add that there would be even less coverage or mention of Africa in Western News.

The example below shows the compressed context and explanation for famine in a part of southern Sudan – Bahr al Ghazal. Some causal factors in the famine including years of civil war and the close-up camera shots of some of the victims reveal a situation with history, but the condensed story, the sudden urgency found in the tone of the report, the talk of emergency and the select film footage of both past and immediate conditions, works to convey a sense of an eruption – a famine that is not a gradual process eating away and destroying a community, but a sudden occurrence that, like a quake, requires instant attention.

Commentary	Footage
<p>More than 350,000 people are said to be <u>facing starvation</u> in an area of Southern Sudan already battered by years of civil war. Aid agencies have launched an emergency appeal to <u>bring relief</u> to the area Bahr al Ghazal. More than a million people have died during fifteen years of conflict in Sudan either from the fighting or the resulting food shortages. Rebels in the mainly Christian south are at war with the Moslem led government based in the north. Our East Africa correspondent Martin Dawes has been to Bahr al Ghazal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Zoomed in shot of news anchor - Close up shot of news anchor - Pan out – showing news anchor at desk and side preview screen on right. - Still image, half body shot of severely malnourished and emaciated black child. - Zoom into animated globe roll, on side screen and direction to location of Sudan from larger map of Africa and Bahr el Ghazal
Reporter – Martin Dawes	
<p>This is an emergency that may yet mark the failure of international will. The feeding centres and Aid infrastructure are being established to cope with an estimated three hundred and fifty thousand people in need, as always it seems its the children who suffer first and worst</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wide angle shots of famine victims, in movement and resting poses. Some of them naked. - Distant and medium shots of arid and very barren looking landscapes. - Zoomed in shots of more emaciated black children. - Camera pans sideways to show children with distended stomachs, flies on their lips and eyes. Other black adult famine victims also appear in shots.
Respondent (Dr Joel Smith – World Vision)	
<p>They stop growing erm losing weight, their arms are very thin, legs are very thin, big stomachs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medium-range zoomed in to close-up of Dr Joel Smith, Aid worker, titles on screen. - Speaks to camera
Reporter – Martin Dawes	
<p>Those who walk to the Aid centres are the strongest but united nations estimates it's fulfilling only twenty percent of the needs of the people it can reach. The entire Aid operation is recovering from a two-month ban on Aid operations imposed by the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medium and close-up shots of a number of men in military uniforms carrying guns and strings of ammunition over shoulders and waist stand near malnourished black child

<p>Sudanese government. Switch on and switch off has become a regular feature of the UN's longest running air relief operation and the regime in Khartoum is preventing the use of more of the bigger type of transport aircraft which experts say are now as essential to get in as much food as possible</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Several varied shots of aircraft in air - Distant shots of air-drops of bags of Food Aid.
<p>Respondent – (Dr David Fletcher – UK World Food Programme)</p>	
<p>Its certainly <u>extremely frustrating</u>, and it makes our operating conditions very difficult, and it means that we just cannot get sufficient resources in to people that are still currently in desperate need</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Side panning to reveal Dr David Fletcher and then zoomed to portrait shot. - Speaks to camera
<p>Reporter – Martin Dawes</p>	
<p>As the civil <u>war drags on</u> the threat of famine is a <u>weapon</u>, the government in the north wants international Aid givers to put pressure on the southern rebels. But in the countryside away from the feeding centres an <u>awful tragedy</u> is building. People are <u>scavenging</u> for grass seeds to eat. <u>Aching bellies</u> are partially filled with leaves and wild fruit. The rains are coming but no one has any seeds to plant. Hundreds of thousands of people are being <u>held to ransom</u> by the government of Sudan and the United Nations is <u>unable or unwilling</u> to challenge the policy of using Aid as a bargaining chip and all the while this part of the south is heading towards a <u>ghastly famine</u>. Martin Dawes BBC News Southern Sudan¹³ [my emphasis].</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distant shots of dusty airfield with stationary relief aircraft. - Change shots to reveal some workers loading plastic containers off the aircraft - Extended shots, zooms in to reveal children helping with delivery. - Change shots to reveal women clothed only around the waist and balancing children on sides and backs with cloth and sifting through soil for seeds. - Resting shots of more famine victims.

¹³ BBC1 9 o'clock news 'War in Sudan'—Sudan story is the 7th in total of ten stories of the day. The story lasted 2mins and 45secs inclusive, in total. Its position in the news of the day suggests it is of lesser interest even though it is still an 'African' news item covered by the Africa Correspondent. BBC1 7th April 1998

Although the themes of ill governance and misrule, discussed in the next section, saturate this text of commentary, the passivity and helplessness of Africa from the story and from the discourse of the narrator characters is very telling. For many viewers of this news piece the clue that this is not a sudden issue is the mention of the 'long running civil war'. But on the whole, the news story follows the pattern of other famine news stories about Africa, by urging the helplessness and desperation of victims and the immediacy and desperation of need. Dawes reports that 'the rains are coming but no one has any seed to plant'. There is also the unwillingness or inability of the United Nations to influence or rectify the situation. There is a sense of perplexity at the 'awful tragedy', the 'ghastly famine', the 'aching bellies' and the 'scavenging people' forebodes doom and the representatives of the world food programme and UK World Vision give their assessment of the situation, but the 'famine victims', in spite of their numbers state no views.

Furthermore, the above example, especially in its footage, focuses on the Black Africans affected by drought and famine. Quite truthfully this famine is localised in only a particular region of Sudan, which is predominantly black. Unlike some other programmes which in the discussion of the Middle East associate Sudan with North Africa and Egypt, the mainly Black subjects of this footage and the complete absence of any identification with the Middle East or Arab countries adds to my arguments in my chapter on

homogeneity – that there is an ease of associating negative and problematic themes to a selected configuration of Africa. The poverty, famine and ill health image is firmly located within Africa and identified only with it. The difficulty of Aid reaching 'starving people' in this instance is caused by the war and conflict, which leads to the subsequent debate about the intimations of an active but dangerous society. When not passive victims of ill health, famine and suffering, 'Africa' features prominently in the themes of violence in war and conflicts.

6.4.2 'Africa's Misrule': Failure Dictatorship and Ill Governance

The frequent references to the 'failure of Africa' are based primarily on charges of bad governance and refusal to abide by Western models of government. Experts and analysts on television, in discussing the visits of Western leaders, often worry about credence to 'corrupt African governments', or signal the importance of these visits as a signal of good behaviour. There is a continuity of these perceptions in television news discussions, which sees African governments as Third World (and third rate), by the standards set by the Western world. Representations of the themes of dictatorship and ill governance occur, not exclusively on their own, but find currency or gain credence through the general news coverage of Africa on wars and conflict, famine and drought and underdevelopment

and debts. Again as with other themes particular cases stand in for Africa in general.

The recent onset of the Zimbabwean land dispute and the criticisms against Zimbabwe's president Robert Mugabe has also encouraged a barrage of comparisons and evaluations of other countries in Africa against a dictatorship or democracy discourse, bringing further intimations that African countries and governments need policing and scrutiny. Leaving aside any political implications of global relations and interactions between countries, the essential argument being made here is that the representations of Africa as helpless politically and managerially and in much need of specifically Western models of management hearkens to the elevation and subjugation structures whether one system of governance is better or not¹⁴. As discussed in an earlier chapter, this stratification occurs as the result of the application of particular points of view, sifted by familiar contexts and interpretative markers.

¹⁴ In many respects journalistic analysis of African nations are performed against a 'paradigm of modernization' Spurr (1993:71). It is a proviso that considers Western peoples as containing and occupying the logical position of the pure 'unfettered eye' and from which the unacknowledged classifications and value-positing weakness in African character is harangued. Spurr derides that misrecognition of the active operation of the Heideggerian concept of 'enframing' – the process by which the mind transforms the world into an object. The weakness of African character, postulated by Xan Smile in the *Atlantic Monthly* (September 1982) that there are the 'marginally progressed', those 'marking time' and those that 'have actually gone backward', is what as Smile claims is the fault of African's themselves – 'the overwhelming reason for Africa's grim failure is that the continent is very badly governed by Africans' (Spurr 1993:70). Spurr's condemnation of Smile's postulation, oblivious to his own misrecognition, which allows him to carry forth his interpretation as objective truth, is very welcome.

*In Exile*¹⁵, the situation comedy about an African Dictator from the fictional Kingdom of Kumeria is another fitting example. Comedy or comedy writers also find material in these themes as the basis of humour. As suggested above, comedies are another category of programmes that reveal a penchant for concentrating on the negative and in the specific example negative stereotypes about 'Africa'.

There are just two episodes of the Channel 4's Situation Comedy serial *In Exile*, about an 'African Dictator', which falls within the sample, yet the question of the predominance with the negativity is answered by the orchestration of the theme of the comedy around the derided dictator.

In *In Exile* - 'African Dictator', we encounter a corrupt and wicked individual who has siphoned away all the riches of his country and is insensitive to any hardships that the majority of the poor people in his country experience. He believes he is entitled to rule for life as president and to enjoy all the worship and adulation from his people. He is at present in exile in the United Kingdom and is being offered asylum and protection by the Government of the United Kingdom. He has had to flee his rule and country after a *coup d'etat* by one of his closest allies. He harbours the deluded belief that he is loved and revered at home and he will be able to go back and continue his rule.

¹⁵ Channel 4 *In Exile*, 9th March 1998 [22.55-23.25hrs]. Series1 of 3 episodes.

My classification of this programme as negative, although a comedy, is because of its concentration on several negative traits of dictators, their delusory characteristics and the accounts of torture, bribery and corruption and hardship among others, which inevitably feature in the story. The themes of bribery and corruption, hunger and poverty, dictatorial regimes and *coup d'états*, death and destruction, are all listed in the qualities and acts of this African Dictator. And even though there are exaggerated gestures and statements to generate laughter, the main corroboration that this remains a severely negative representation – a representation which generates reproach and perceives the 'predicament' (the fall from grace) of the 'wicked' and 'treacherous' man as his just deserts and his antics as stupid and funny – there is no good in him and the only positive note to his situation is that his people in Africa are safe from him.

Whilst comedy explores the odd to generate laughter, it is no surprise that the genre of comedy falls in with news and documentaries as programmes most bereft with negative associations with the continent. Again the strangeness and unusualness and the non-identification with the Other creates a more acceptable context for generalised comic derision.

The ease of recognition of an 'African Dictator' in a comedy serial even though his country of origin is a fictional one (Kumeria), is one that cannot be said about other continents. Perhaps, the only exceptions to this can be

found in the early 20th century fascination with the 'Latin American Dictator'. Until the recent insurgence of the Saddam Hussein and the adage of the 'Iraqi dictator' with his 'weapons of mass destruction', 'Africa' has maintained prominence in themes of dictatorship along registers of this kind. The other historically identified dictators in other parts of the world do not solicit such an overarching and concentrated stereotype. Even though Chilean General Pinochet was identified and discussed in the media as a Chilean dictator, there was very little attribution of comedic elements to his presence in the United Kingdom. A comedy generalising about THE Spanish Dictator or THE Italian Dictator or THE German Dictator or even THE Serbian Dictator does not easily form a comic/laughable scenario. Yet we have plentiful historical examples of European dictatorships – General Francisco Franco, Benito Mussolini, Adolf Hitler, Slobodan Milosevic, all spring to mind.

6.4.3 Wars. Conflicts. Genocides – Active But Dangerous; Self Destroying¹⁶

The active but dangerous theme is a pervasive one and poignantly visible in several engagements with the continent of Africa. A remarkable example can be found in BBC News 24's late night coverage of 'African football'. The programme's title, *Live and Dangerous* seems easier applied to football

¹⁶ These relate to television discourses that, in focussing on the specific themes, press forward the element of danger and evil through the representations of themes of death destruction and unpredictability.

from Africa than football from Australia or Asia. Thus the framing of danger is transferred from the knowledge of wild animals and the harsh landscapes to the activities of humans and in this case to sports in Africa.

In another example, a BBC headline story about an explosion which killed several people, read:

Horror In Nigeria !¹⁷.

Fright is the first feeling invoked in the viewer concerning Nigeria. The choice of 'Horror in Nigeria' draws attention to the story but inevitably sensationalises it. The headline aims to draw attention to the news programme. The feeling relayed in the tone of the presenters, the footage and the choice of language is one that identifies the incidents as 'horrific', 'evil', 'dangerous' and 'fearful'. Being on a primetime news programme, very little time was allocated to this particular news item. The story only focussed on the horrific deaths of over 200 people and the explosions of which not too much was known. All that the audience see is the violent deaths of many people in the Nigeria. The reporter's use of keywords such as 'fireball', 'killed', 'ruptured', 'caught fire', 'exploded', 'grim', 'task', 'severe', 'sabotages', 'disrepair', 'deaths', 'bursts', 'throng', 'no facilities', 'crude', 'mass graves' all paint a grim picture of the incident in Nigeria.

¹⁷ BBC1 – 9'Oclock News, Monday 19th October 1998.

The quality of footage accompanying this particular story is very poor. No 'horrific' pictures were actually shown. The film footage accompanying the report showed a few Nigerian men carrying objects (shaped like corpses wrapped in white shrouds) between them and walking away from the scene. We are made to be frightened of Nigeria but not sympathetic to the incident occurring there.

The following news item featured on BBC's BBC news 24 later on in the month presents a story that envisages the African as destructive instead of embracing development. The news anchor begins:

In the last month Nigeria's oil rich Niger Delta has been in mayhem, armed youths have taken control of oil installations jointly owned by foreign oil companies and the Nigerian government, putting a stop to a quarter of the country's daily oil production. The youths are demanding more investment in their undeveloped communities and have declared a people's war on the oil companies and the government. Our correspondent, Hilary Andersen in Akassa deep in the Niger Delta where the youths there are drawing on powers they believe they get from an ancient cult called 'Egbesu' to fight their war against the oil companies.¹⁸

Immediately the message of destruction is introduced. The youth are 'armed' thus dangerous and violent, creating 'mayhem'. They are said to be '...putting a stop to the country's daily production of oil' thus hindering productivity. The irony insinuated is the demand for 'more investment in their underdeveloped communities, but the attention drawn to an 'ancient

¹⁸ BBC News 24 on BBC1 – October 1998 lasting 3mins 33secs.

cult called "Egbesu" is to belittle the struggle and to position it against the perspectives of the news retrievers as non-serious and just irrationally destructive. Reporter Hilary Andersson's account is not very different from the lead above. She recounts that:

Commentary – Hilary Andersson	Footage
A journey into one of the most blessed parts of Africa, the home of Nigeria's vast oil wealth. The Lush Niger Delta should be a paradise but instead its vast riches are its curse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shot begins with a non-detailed map of Nigeria. - Camera zooms in from outline of Nigeria to the drawing of the Niger Delta and then pinpoints the position of Akassa. - Distant shot of Sunset across large expanse of water. - Wide and distant shots panning across, taking in activity and canoeing on the lake.
Jokay Monday, an unemployed local relies on these rice fields to feed himself and his family, but this year the crop is been ruined. Four oil spills have come ashore and seeped into the soil in recent months meaning that in this village Akassa, there is no rice to harvest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Close shot of ground at feet of Jokay Monday. - Camera zooms out to reveal subject in full walking through field. - More shots of sparsely cropped rice field.
Like most of his friends Jokay is Fed up and he's found his own solution by joining an ancient <u>cult</u> called 'Egbesu'. He paints on a mask of fear and <u>lures the spirits</u> who will help him fight the enemy. Cult members are locked in a deadly war with the oil companies and have been attacking their installations with remarkable success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More medium shots with wide lens showing the interior of a house. - Close-up shots of Jokay Monday rubbing white powdered substance into his face. - Camera pans across room zooming in unto items.
If you cross the path of an Egbesu march you are in trouble. Women who do this I was warned get buried up their neck in mud. The <u>cult feeds on the power of Taboo</u> . All its rites including this one <u>are supposed</u> to be secret. These men armed with Primitive weapons, but in many areas with automatic guns, have started a very effective peasants revolution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change shot to reveal a circle formed by men in long shorts and bare-chested. - Camera zooms to show painted faces and amulets on legs. - Shots of other men dressed mostly in long shorts and bare chests with painted faces shouting chants and singing.

<p>Nigeria is one of the world's major oil producing countries normally producing two million barrels of oil a day now it's losing a quarter of its daily production because of growing unrest. Armed youths in the Niger Delta have taken over entire flow-stations. The people's uprising has crippled the backbone of Nigeria's economy. The people of Akassa are not just angry at the oil companies but at the government which has neglected it entirely, whilst sucking the oil wealth out of its land. There had been no electricity here for five years, no running water, nature is reclaiming its own as the town moves backwards in time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repeated close-up shots of eyes and painted faces as dancers appear to dance into the camera. - Medium shot centred on two men dancing with machetes - Zoom out to reveal a circle of dancers and singers around the two dancers. - Another shot against a light source creating silhouettes of dancers and the movements of their limbs. - Shots of some buildings and panning shots to electricity poles and back. - Zoom out
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Andersson's perspectives immediately resonate with the earlier arguments on the discourses of nature and culture of romanticising the geographical site but finding it hellish with the presence of humans. Inadvertently, Andersen recognises 'blessed parts of Africa' and the riches that make it fit to be labelled in her point of view as paradise. The focus on Jokay and the 'Egbesu' rituals frames Andersson's account of the destructions of foreign owned oil pipelines and government facilities through the theme of 'Dangerous Africa'. The masks of fear, 'the luring of spirits', 'the fighting of enemies', 'the "cult" of "Egbesu"', the warnings to women, being buried alive, 'power of taboos' and primitive weapons are all enforcers of the message of a dangerous locality. The descriptions of primitive weaponry, the violent tactics of the youth according to Andersson, suggests a reversal of development in the already 'underdeveloped communities' a move back in time as 'nature reclaims its own'. Even the language and the description

of the rites and religion of Jokay, occupies a primitive and cult sphere according to Andersson. In spite of some indications of political will by the people in her report, this is dominated by the attributions of self destruction, and she finds the inhabitants do not share her sense of importance as she says 'no one has bothered to repair' the roof of the 'only school serving a population of 30,000'.

Commentary – Hilary Andersson	Footage
<p>This is supposed to be part of the only school serving a population of 30,000 people but the roof has long since collapsed and no one has bothered to repair it. Nigeria's government doesn't provide even the most basic infrastructure to the people of the Niger Delta even though this is meant to be the richest part of the country.</p> <p>The inhabitants of the Niger Delta are no longer prepared to accept that life is so precarious but everyday is such a struggle after decades of neglect they are demanding a share of Nigeria's wealth with such force that the whole nation will suffer if they are ignored</p> <p>Hilary Andersson, BBC News Akassa.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cut to correspondent on screen with medium and close-up shots against a background of remains of collapsed building with overgrown weeds. Camera zooms out gradually - Cut to end correspondent on screen. - Voice over narration continues - Distant, long and medium shots of large flames, fire burning from refinery excess funnels. - Wide and distant shots of oil refinery with shell employee in foreground supervising the burning furnace. - Change shots – zoom in to close-up shots of refinery's flow stations. - Long range shots of oil and, reservoirs. - Wide shot of few unstable-looking buildings, and of remains of a collapsed building. - Correspondent in shot, foregrounding buildings. - Sign off sequence – Full body, medium range shot of Hilary Andersson standing amongst rubble of building. - Interspersed with shots of canoes, women and children paddling towards the shore.

These stories occurring in Africa need to be seen, but the absence of other more positive stories and the selective contextualisation, forces the story into a representation that diminishes any meaningfulness of the

insurrection (if that is what it is) and simplifies the actions along discourses of primitivity and random violence. As discussed above in news perspectives, values and ideologies, the on-site journalist and the camera crew, aid in the framing of a particular angle of the story. There are many angles that could be represented, but often the negative angles, the trivialisation of the intentions and actions of the individual locals covered and the elevation of the primitive connections, firmly endorses the viewpoint of Africa as active, but dangerous.

That, and the repeated occurrence of *War in Sudan*, *War in Sierra Leone*, *The Rwandan Genocide*, *War in Congo*, continues to enlarge the image of a notorious, untameable, unsolvable and dangerous 'Africa'. Experts and commentators leave out any suggestions of normality in life in any of the fifty plus countries making up the continent. They do not acknowledge progress but reflect on the wars, conflicts or coup d'etats that have occurred at different times and places as though occurring together. The wars in Liberia or in Congo, or even the Zimbabwe land disputes have little relation to one another, yet are taken as evident of the collapse of the entire continent.

Perhaps the ultimate 'African' pathology is 'genocide' yet, ethnically based mass murder has also occurred on the continent of Europe, notably, conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. The proximity of the concept of genocide

or the ease with which the television discourses access the discursive formation that identifies genocide with 'Africa' (or 'African genocide') following the Rwandan incidents, buttresses my argument that some negative descriptive labels are more readily 'African' than others. The 'European genocide' is a formation that would be hard to carry forth in news commentary – the problems in former Yugoslavia not being considered an element of European characteristics, but very specific to the location and background.

The ultimate narrative of 'dangerous Africa' as incomprehensible and politically chaotic can be found in my sample in a BBC documentary on Somalia in the series *Timewatch* ¹⁹

The programme introduction was as follows:

It started as a peace-keeping mission but it turned into a fatal battle. Time watch now on BBC2 paints a vivid picture of American Firefight. And you might find some of this distressing.

They were formed before the American war of independence to fight for Britain in the French and Indian war. US Army rangers stormed Normandy beaches on D'Day and have been involved in every major American conflict before and since.

Setting the tone in an introduction that captures the valour and strength of the undefeated Marines, a presentation of eminent, tactical battle soldiers is achieved. What later follows is a juxtaposition of the orderly and valiant soldiers with fighters who are ruthless and dangerous and are the undoing

¹⁹ BBC2 *Timewatch* – Somalia Tuesday 3rd November [21.00-21.50hrs]

of the Marines. The suggestion is that the well-honoured American Marine force came against an unusual if not strange situation, which resulted in the killing of some of its soldiers. Africa is not only problematic here, it is abnormal. This is the only (propagandist) way to explain the defeat the American forces suffered.

Commentary – Narrator Andrew Sachs	Footage
<p>Today's professional soldiers are unlikely to fight major wars...what happened to the rangers in Africa in 1993 may prove to have been one of history's turning points. In 1993 the United States deployed the rangers to Somalia on the east coast of Africa. Here to support the United Nations their peacekeeping mission ended in the fiercest fire-fight since Vietnam. When the shooting was over, eighteen Americans were dead and the body of one soldier was dragged through the streets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medium range shots of mainly uniformed American marines, speaking to camera. Others discuss CIA and intelligence programmes to capture Aideed - Other close to medium and portrait shots of government officials giving opinions to camera - Female Somali community leader - Red cross workers, and, helicopters flying, - Shots of teenagers, handling and shooting heavy machine guns, - Non-uniformed people carrying rifles. - Sound of Shooting accompanying images of fierce street fighting. - Images of Mohammed Aideed. - Local uniformed military personnel in Jeeps,
<p>This is the story of how policy making changed at the highest level after these young service men were forced to fight and die on the streets of an African city'. 'Somalia' s capital Mogadishu was then probably the most dangerous city in the world. There are fourteen armed factions each led by its own warlord.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medium range shots of famine victims and emaciated and weak looking people. - Large numbers of people sitting in large groups in shot of camera.

The programme suggest that America stepped across the line of peacekeeping by making Aideed a criminal and a wanted man, and was not a neutral force but taking sides with the factions. There is admittedly a criticism in this programme, not of Aideed per se but of American foreign policy, but the death of the valiant American soldiers as portrayed in the footage and the build-up to the story gives a perception that the orderliness and professionalism of American soldiers was brought to destruction by 'anarchists' of Somalia leading to the death of 'fine' American soldiers. In many respects there is a building of a strong profile for an African country, its cities are acknowledged and its resistance insinuated and a recognition of how it wrecked an American Army, but there is also a negative build-up of how 'these young service men were forced to die on the streets of an African city'. Andrew Sachs commentary sets the tone with 'Somalia's capital Mogadishu was then probably the most dangerous city in the world'. Herein lies the representation of the 'volatility of Africa' against the orderly and 'good intentioned' American missionaries of order and service. Thus Andrew Sachs' closing statement carries a pessimistic projection for Somalia 'or anywhere else in Africa'

Somalia itself is still in a state of Anarchy. Aideed is dead, killed by a stray bullet. The United Nations has all but given up on this collapsed state, and foreign intervention here or anywhere else in Africa seems unlikely. That seventeen-hour battle in the streets of Mogadishu, may mark the end of what President Bush called the "New World Order". [my emphasis]

Again, one has to look at modern British television material to find the gendering of the themes of war and problematic Africa. The representations of Africa as problematic, diverges to reveal the active but dangerous tropes set in the masculine. This is seen in the representation of wars and the presentation of images of predominantly men in with guns and in the stern perusal of these sites. The feminisation of Africa, when seen in the orbit of the 'problematic' appears through passivity and helplessness and ill health. The television news coverage of famine victims predominantly present women and children as the helpless victims of the famine. The elicitation of empathy in news programmes is often performed with images of women the mother child duo. The case of Darfur in July 2004 is a case in point. Africa lies broken and torn, victim of rape and plunder and unable to feed its young. The images of the malnourished child, clinging to the emaciated breasts of the mother, gravely and readily identifies Africa for us. Again the Darfur incidents are underlined by the masculinities of the perpetrators, the rapists, the soldiers, the plunderers and the rebels – gun-totting men and young boys fit this image of the violent, unpredictable and stubborn Africa.

6.4.4 Salvation and Order from Abroad – The Discourse of Outside Agency

A further scope to the three threads of problematic and negative representations discussed above involves the geography of agency. In this respect the collated themes of passive victims of suffering, active but violent

and destructive and ill governance culminate in a further theme around salvation. As the 'Scar on our conscience' argument used to commence this chapter shows, there is a further discourse, which involves the representation of a failed Africa and the availability of THE known solution outside the continent to remedy and improve it. This aspect of the representations is reflected through different discourses but sums up the attitude of the West's relation to Africa, resonating with the older rhetoric of the colonial in a post-colonial era. Embedded in all this rhetoric are ideologies that perceive Africa as flawed and problematic measured from the hegemonic perspectives of the observers. The rhetoric on 'problematic Africa' also follows, through the commentaries from news anchors, correspondents and the array of Western experts, with easy solutions and recommendations. Embedded in these are expressions of desires and wishes, 'if only Africa would behave like us by taking our advice'.

(i) Global Missionaries

Coverage of President Bill Clinton's visit to selected countries in March 1998 and other country visits by Pope John Paul II to Nigeria in March 1998, Queen Elizabeth II to Ghana and South Africa in November 1999, George W. Bush in July 2002 and Tony Blair in 2002 were hailed by the Western news media as 'World Leaders' whose visits although to particular countries in the continent of Africa were described as tours of Africa. Thus a pattern is immediately evident which seems to emphasise a problem-ridden

Africa for which the visits of these global missionaries is eagerly expected by the media to bring 'salvation'. News commentary surrounding the coverage of these 'tours' focus very little on the locals or any efforts on their part. Instead, the discussions and expert commentaries prevail which catalogue the widespread problems of the continent and, with the profile of the visitor, anticipations and expectations on the probable influential good their visits would have in changing the 'fate of Africa'.

The visits to countries in Africa by 'World leaders' were expected to have their significance in marking the end of Africa's problems and also providing a chance for Africa to take heed from these visitors and to reform. This idea resembles the early rhetoric of missionary activities in Africa and the hopes of conversion from the 'wrong' to the 'right'. The polemic that sees the western missionary in Africa at the turn of the last century is reawakened in contemporary mass media discourses that elevate the roles of the World figure or 'global' envoy. An argument can be made that the advent of the 'World Figure', a status accorded to the musicians Bono of U2 and Bob Geldof, to Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, to Queen Elizabeth II and Pope John Paul II, as well as to Prime Minister Tony Blair, in their missions, marks the arrival of global missionaries bringing 'salvation to Africa'²⁰. The discourse of the *Western missionary* evokes the

²⁰ Discussions on the influence from world leaders, presidents of 'Super Powers' and global figures, capitalist and corporate personalities or institutions like Shell Oil PLC are on the whole, positively

theme that *salvation comes from outside*. The criticism of African politics from a comparison with western models is often informed by the same themes. The generic condemnation of African governments, and the measurement of degrees of success with which some countries are accredited, marks a typical generalisation.

In an attempt to explore the role of Equatorial Guinea in the authorization of a United Nations resolution on a war in Iraq, the news media found Equatorial Guinea an interesting news item and a couple of reports including *experts* discussions gained some airtime on the news slots of BBC1 and *Newsnight* and on Channel 4 news in 2003. The nature of coverage during this short agenda exposure, took the form of an *intervention discourse*. The country was cast as mainly African and thus incapable of providing a significant decision on a 'larger global' issue. Also the representation of Equatorial Guinea was configured against its new found oil reserves and the prospect of significant wealth to be made, but also against a damning report about the nature of poverty, the temptations of wealth and then the fear that, as in all African countries, the discovery of oil could only lead to corruption. Nigeria is used comparatively to suggest that Equatorial Guinea's 'new-found wealth' will need to be sourced and marketed by foreign companies, which will 'line the pockets' of global multi-

hailed in discourses and ideologies that continue to position Africa deep in a mire of negatives and problems.

billion oil firms, and will 'breed more corruption in the African leaders'. Thus the *intervention discourse* finds credence in suggestions that hanker to the immediate post independence rhetoric, which could not see the ability of countries like the Equatorial Guinea, survive without management (colonisation) from the West.

Again contemporary discourses such as these ones that emphasise an independence of countries of the West but insinuate a lack of self-help or independence of countries in Africa, especially Sub-Saharan Africa, work at cementing the dependency discourse. Discourses of Aid and Development used in the media in general promulgate that dichotomy which relegates countries 'requiring' Aid and Development as sub-standard and unequal to the countries not requiring these.

(ii) Discourses of Development and Civilisation

The discourses of outside intervention can be compared with modern global discourses of 'Aid' and 'Development'. Both these formations resonate with older discourses of primitiveness and civilisation. They provide means of measuring, relegating and condemning the Other.

The World Bank, International Monetary Fund and donor nations routinely set conditions that recipients must meet to receive Aid. Recipients must be tamed and conformed. Aside from the political economy of these processes,

powerful processes of representations are involved. The resultant representation of countries in Africa is one that sees them as 'beggars' in need of handouts, guidance, example and possibly direct intervention from the West, but who must needs conform, obey and practice unreservedly the prescriptions from the giver to be worthy of that assistance. That philosophy is evidenced, for example, in a documentary about the work of the World Bank in Africa in a programme that gives ascription to Uganda for following the IMF prescriptions. The documentary calls Uganda the 'Pearl of Africa'²¹.

The discourses of 'development' and 'Aid' ring with reminders of the old rhetoric of civilization and christianisation which in much of British writing and analysis of the early years of colonisation in Africa, gave credence to the expansion and creation of the British Empire. The rhetoric of civilization, and of the problematic character of Africa, still grounds distinctively post-colonial forms of hegemony. As we have seen in the case of the nature and culture opposition and in the case of victims and perpetrators, development discourses have their own gendered character.

Ania Loomba (1998) discusses the analogy that finds both femininity and Africa as defying understanding and signifying a lack. That construct suggests that the male-female polarities developed in attitude and ideology

²¹ Channel 4 *The Bank, The President and the Pearl of Africa*, Tuesday 17th November 1998 [00.00-01.00hrs]. The entire programme is a year-long documentation of the world bank's operations and how Uganda has been made to transform to a commendable African country by following the advice from the World Bank and IMF.

also gain some similitude to the Othering of Africa from the Western front. As rationalisation and deductive conduct is credited to the Masculine/West, in the same way the racial Othering which innately positions Africa and Black as emotional and Caucasian or White as rational, draws that distinction. Is there not a link, thus, that there is in that philosophy a rendition of Africa as feminine? Loomba (1998) postulates that patriarchal societies cause women to watch themselves being watched – to turn themselves into objects from the very act of being gazed on by men. Silent and watchable (Berger, 1972:47). In many respects that objectified position is occupied by Africa and other countries, which if the philosophy of a patriarchal world is to be accepted, position some nations as brutal, powerful, ordered and controlling (imperial and neo-imperial) with a right of access, while others are perceived to be quiet, silent, seen and admired but not heard, voiceless and always in need of ordering and organisation from the master.

It is also worth noting how pervasive the discourses of development are which we find in television representations of Africa to be saved from outside. They are strongly carried in the English language. There has been a lot of criticism in English and various critical epistemologies about the particular use of expressions to account for the interpretation and communicating about the Other. Earlier criticisms of this kind was to attack the use of expressions such as 'heathen', 'primitive', etc.. Even

'anthropology' has been derided as a racist term for its approaches and focuses (Diop, 1989). In the use of terms which separate the Other from the Self, such as ethnic/white, tribes/people, tribal/cultural, traditional/classical, cult/group, witchdoctor/holyman, herdsmen/farmers, huts/houses, homesteads/communities, bush/countryside etc., there is an inflexibility which sets these descriptives as African and also imbues these terms with an Africaness – a rurality and a rustic pastoral quality. Africa's communities, issues and practices are positioned at one spectrum of an evolutionary chain, where they are perceived as less developed than the centre. Along those lines of argument, expressions such as 'Africa has a concentration of raw talent just waiting to be discovered'²² is an expression that can be understood in the wider context of evolutionary and gender arguments that are made.

6.4.5 A South African Story – An Apparent Exception?

The distinct identity of South Africa and its exemption from the discourses discussed above was suggested in Chapter 5 on Homogeneity. Representations of South Africa, is a topic that is complex in itself and deserves a separate study. In the context of this study, South Africa is a possible source of positive images coming from Africa. The end of a long history of Apartheid, foregrounds people's expectations of such positive representations. Nelson Mandela's world profile is one such positive and

²² Channel 5 *Live and Dangerous*. S. African Football 16th March 1998.

appreciated figure. He evokes images of the resilient, forgiving and noble statesman, whose identity originates in South Africa but is universally appreciated. There are two ways in which Mandela's positive potential for Africa are contained. The first is by representing him as specifically a South African figure representing a society, which is in itself quite exceptional in Africa. The second representation moves him to the stage of the world statesman, vacating his 'Africaness' for a universal good. Mandela rests on the pedestal of a living legend, such that the global campaigns for his release and his freedom signified the end of a reviled system and the triumph of the human spirit. For many commentators mention of Mandela is in his capacity as a statesman of global appeal, with few things to criticise. Discourses classify him as a 'secular saint' a 'superhero' etc. In, Channel 4's *Mandela – Beneath the Halo*,²³ Peter Hitchens tries to 'decanonize' him, to take away his image as a 'secular saint' or 'super hero' by 'unearthing' his 'failings' in relation to South Africa. To achieve this, Hitchens positions Mandela back in Africa, in South Africa, and with the ANC and reminds us about violence, inequality and images of poverty among Black South Africans. The discourses in that programme are in a way an admission of Mandela's positive image, even if the object of the programme, was to present a negative perspective of him by presenting South Africa as a failed country, post-apartheid. That recent attack on his character has not been widely commended.

²³ Channel 4 *Mandela – Beneath the Halo*. Monday 10th May 2004,. Presented by Peter Hitchens

Actually, there was only one extended South African item in my sample. Channel 4's *Dispatches*²⁴ programme, was a chiefly negative story.

Commentary – Continuity announcer	Footage
Tonight <i>Dispatches</i> investigates the Alarming increase in child rape in the new South Africa.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate signature piece of channel liners - Opening sequence with music
Narrator	Footage
There is a new war in South Africa, A war waged by men against children. The country's violent past has returned to plague the next generation. Thousands of children are coming forward to tell their painful stories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medium and close range shots arranged with subtlety. - Wide angled shots showing eerie and filmed with very low lighting. - Shots including subtle and eerie shots. Barely visible figures with subtlety and arrangements of eerie shots, of figures in dark night, silhouettes; wet streets at night. - Zoom and close-ups of wheels of the vehicles driving past. - Solemn music backdrops children's voices in close whispers talking as victims and recounting their experiences.

Interesting points of note in the programme include the subtitling of languages spoken by the respondents other than English. The television footage also excludes any apparent questions directed at the children and interviewees, eliciting the responses on camera. No glimpse of the film crew and no indication of the documentary's investigative team or their interaction and organisation of the narrative. Only the omnipresent

²⁴ Channel 4 *Dispatches* 'Apartheid's Children' – 30th April 1998 [21.00-21.45hrs]

commenting voice threads the meanings and tells the overlying story of all the incidents that make up the documentary. The film footage also show victim therapy sessions where children are being helped to recover from the incidents. It includes interviews and long medium range shots of hospitals (corridors only), and police stations (interview rooms only) and distant scenic shots of black townships.

In this particular edition, as is typical of Channel 4's *Dispatches*, the programme investigates a social issue. South Africa is positively referred to as 'The New South Africa', an intimation of renewal and an attempt at separating from the old Apartheid and troubled days, but the hankering after the historical contextualization means the titling of the programme as 'Apartheid's Children' brings back association with the haunting reminders of the old evils of the country.

The programme then works as coverage of a negative story, exploring purely the seriousness and severities of child sex abuse. The discourses in the narrative centre on the themes of pain, violence, distrust, war, rape, alarm and general evil. The discourse also works towards directing anger and derision at the perpetrators of these evil deeds, the rebels against 'good' and 'sanity'. Inevitably the picture we see is again of an evil location where even

children are unsafe²⁵. The helpless children of South Africa are victims of very terrible things occurring in their own homeland. The story in no way relates to any other child abuse cases worldwide.

To construct this 'investigative' account of the problematic South Africa, the camera follows victim therapy sessions, interviews, hospitals (only the hospital corridors in footage), police stations (only interview rooms filmed) and distant scenic shot of townships. Some of the key words and phrases which help locate the story's very negative leaning include – Police, *child rape, violence, painful, epidemic of rape, hit South Africa, violent crime*. Emphasis are drawn to the appalling nature and particularly poor manageability of the situation with references such as 'increased dramatically', 'staff poorly trained', 'many police officers are corrupt', 'alarming increase', 'poor', 'sodomised', 'incest'.

6.5 Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to locate and assess the discursive formations within programmes on 'Africa' that contribute to the formation and grounding of a negative and problematic Africa. I set out to draw attention to aspects of the representation of Africa that are predominantly negative and which construct Africa as deeply problematic. The realisation is that

²⁵ The story of Tenneh Cole, a war orphan from Sierra Leone who had a bullet dislodged from her brain and returned to hardship and fighting reported on BBC1 9 o'clock news 8th March 1998 was with similar empathy.

although Africa features minimally on British television and is limited to the genres of news and nature programmes, there is a frequent discursive engagement and allusion to themes and ideas that are principally negative. I have made arguments in this chapter beginning with news theories, and extended the discussions to television news. The preponderance of news to be negative with a severe lack of cultural, social, economic and political framing and backgrounds makes it difficult to see an Africa that is not limited to the dominant themes of famine, wars and conflicts, disease and ill health, ill governance and dangerous threats. Thus I have included an extensive and sequential discussion of the prominent thematic associations found within these discourses on Africa. I have located and identified these dominant negative constructs along particular representational themes. One such theme of the problematic Africa is that Africa is presented as passive and victim. The discourses of suffering and helplessness around this kind of representation further mark the distinction of 'Africa' from the West and from majority of news. The discourses surrounding victimhood and passivity also work at ordering the power-relations of receiver and giver, powerful and powerless. Another dominant negative theme rests with the idea of 'Africa' as politically chaotic. This I have also located within the analysis of discourses of misrule and disorder, which find a regular association in the themes of dictatorships and bad governance. The other form of problematic representation of 'Africa' is seen when Africans are presented as active, yet dangerous. The dangerousness and self-destructive

discourses are formed in the repeated reports of wars and violence. An Africa that is peaceful and calm makes little news. As a result of the limited coverage of Africa on British television, and the particularly explosive content of these negative stories, Africa I have argued, is as abnormal as it is incomprehensible when it is seen on British television. I have discussed also a further representation of Africa as problematic, which works through the focus on external forms of order, ideology and reform for 'Africa'. This latter discursive formation garners logic from the other negative representations of Africa in underscoring a need for solutions for the problematised Africa. Discourses of Development and Aid are particularly contingent on a 'salvation from abroad' philosophy. As the programmes on Africa frequently appropriate images and issues from particular incidents (extracting their particular circumstances), and representing them as widespread African problems, there is the framing of all parts of Africa within the negative themes, where Africa becomes a signifier for wars, famine, diseases, dictatorships and many more. In continually framing 'Africa' as homogenous and then particularly narrowing it to these problematic themes, Africa is further grounded with a simplified scope, translated into a simplified failure.

There may be some element of truth in some of these news and nature programmes, but far from being a homogenous and singularly analysable site, the revisited argument here is that, Africa is as diverse and largely

positive as any other continent. The earlier chapter on homogeneity shows that frequent elimination of the geographic, political and cultural indices in commentary on Africa and the widening of stories to frequently include other communities, albeit geographically or socio-culturally removed from one another, also exacerbates the negativisation and problematization of the entire continent. Furthermore, 'Africa' has over time become the embodiment of a range of negative characteristics of the human condition. Mention of the referent 'Africa' has gained a place amongst the themes and discussions of poverty, conflict, famine and disease. It is a kind of signification that is finding root in usages, contexts and language, creating a conceptualised Africa that is irretrievably problematic.

Conclusion: 'Africa', What is in a Name?

Medieval legends told of a strange creature that roamed the shores of Africa...

...Giraffe's roam on the African Plains...

From 'The Giraffe' *Wildlife on 2*. BBC
Opening sequence narrated by David Attenborough¹

The most straightforward finding of this study is the fact that Africa features very little on British television. News genres are the dominant sources of discourses on Africa on British television, yet they present events in a decontextualised way. News about Africa erupts and disappears, with limited in-depth exploration or historical context. Nature programmes also feature heavily on the television schedules, but limit the focus onto landscape, nature and animals. Travel programmes provide an interesting insight into the touristic gaze and the ordering of the local through the leisure needs of travellers, including the need for the exotic spectacle and the mystical locale. There are also other programmes such as comedies, magazine and factual entertainment programmes in which 'Africa'

¹ BBC2 *Wildlife on 2* Narrated by Richard Attenborough - 18th January 2001. This excerpt used earlier in the thesis characteristically locates Africa in the discourse of colonialism. It contains some of the different focuses of discourses on Africa argued in this thesis – from the carving of the homogenous 'Africa', a focus on nature and the ordering and orchestration of a selective narrative directed at a preferred reader.

occasionally figures. The most important absence of in-depth documentaries is noticeable and especially on the free-on-air channels the decline of serious in-depth coverage, is particularly well documented. In all these ways, Africa can be seen to be under-represented on British television.

One of the important key findings of the study is the homogenisation of Africa in programmes and the discourses occurring on television. The geopolitical designation Africa, today remains a patchwork of fifty-five sovereign and independent countries with an approximate 800million human inhabitants made up of unimaginable multicultural, polyethnic, polyreligious, multi-political and mega economic groups. Yet in British television representations, Africa is represented as a singular unified space, in which any one locale or theme can stand in for the rest. In practice this is an imaginary geography. It limits Africa to Sub-Saharan Africa, even excluding the North and occasionally excluding South Africa or treating it as an exception on economic and political grounds. The analysis in Chapter 5 has shown precisely how this homogenisation works, by treating parts of Africa as representative of the whole, by adopting particular aspects of Africa as interchangeable with other parts and issues, by adopting deeply familiarised stereotypes of Africa and by emphasising particular features as epitomising all of Africa. Collapsing the boundaries between countries, regions and climatic zones within Africa in these representations, further encourages that image of the singular mythical site. Gradually, a mystical

and essential quality is accorded Africa and all of Africa is reduced to this essence. This is expressed through a singular image, concept or a particular piece of music, irrespective of its particular origins. I have shown how the televisual gaze, as directed by the producers of programmes, operates to produce these outcomes. The overall effect of these forms of homogenisation is the production of Africa as Other. I have argued that no other continent is treated in this way: Europe for instance is characterised by its diverse identities and complex boundaries.

Another key finding is that nature programmes construct a very particular Africa. This particular mode of construction sees Africa devoid of humans. The nature discourses construct a captivating and exciting landscape that focuses on wildlife, flora and fauna. A pervading rural habitat recurs in the encounters with Africa, often through big budget and dramatic productions. Nature in Africa also replaces cultural facets, as the wild animals are frequently positioned as big actors and imbued with cultural qualities of kingship, armies, motherhood among others. The replacement of culture by nature keeps the gaze in Africa on the subject of animals but also makes Africa animalistic. Africa is predominantly wild and rustic. At the same time animal life is imbued with human significance, often acting as a metaphor for human existence, which is equally wild and savage. Furthermore, the wild open spaces of Africa (one big savannah/jungle) underlines the effects of homogenisation identified earlier. Nature programmes carry forward the

more positive images of Africa but at the expense of the subordination of the humans. I have particularly argued that the romanticisation of Africa and the exclusion of humans and culture encourage a drive towards colonisation and occupation.

The exclusion of culture also grounds the positioning of power on the side of the gazer. The open, uninhabited, uncultured and therefore uncluttered space in 'Africa', grants an opportunity for the inscription of ideas and purposes. Furthermore, the rural becomes symbolic of nature and indicative of the untamed and the wild. The craving for an untouched encounter with nature is sold to the audiences. The natural 'heart of Africa', the jungles and deserts with all its animals, become the unbalanced epitome for the audiences. The naturalizing of Africa, and the resulting play around nature and culture is perhaps the most prominent and certainly popular theme in all the discourses that construct Africa on British television.

A third set of themes mainly appears in news programmes and involve Africa as a problematic place. These representations are predominantly negative. Africa within the news programmes is largely limited to the prominence of stories on famines, wars and conflicts, diseases and ill health, bad governance and dangerous threats. Within the problematic theme, 'Africa' is arranged along the particular themes, suggesting passivity and victimhood, volatility and destruction and dangerous threats, and

disorder and misrule. The prevailing theme of Africa's misrule, gives rise to a development of the relevance of outside ordering and organisation. The theme of outside agency, or the 'salvation from abroad discourse' effectively amounts to a discourse of intervention. There is a close parallel between these discourses and discourses of development and Aid, where African countries must conform to conditions set by international agencies in order to gain credence.

The Specific Work of Television

British knowledge about Africa today is amassed from many different sources: a diverse range of information sources that include elements from the school curricula, especially history and geography lessons, museum displays, immigrants and their cultures and from the mass media among others. Much more obvious feeders into that gamut of knowledge are the print and electronic mass media, such as the newspapers, popular radio and television programmes and advertisement, scientific and fictional writing, the cinema, museums, charity and missionary workers, to name a few. The mass media are especially and also actively looked up to, as the source of information on many subjects, including 'Africa'. Collectively all this information and knowledge from the various sources frame the contexts with which people approach and interpret new material and information about 'Africa'.

Television makes very specific contributions to the set of knowledges about Africa. Broadcast television is a universally available medium, much less exclusive than many other forms. For example, television provides access to messages which children also access, an opportunity to include representations accessed in formative years. The multi-faceted character of television also enables the analysis of the particular kind of message, including the combined sound, and image to be achieved. The array of print media available suggests that these are much more selectively accessed by different readers and thus differently authored. In order to explore the specific role of television, I looked closely at the forms characterising the presentation of African themes, concentrating on the role of narrator, character and addressee. The results of these analyses are very striking. The key role of commentator is always occupied by White British men and women, key characters even in Africa itself are often white, and black African characters are consistently either invisible or are relegated to a secondary role. Similarly, the implied audiences of these messages are British people, who are assumed to have very little knowledge of the African continent. In this way, television functions to reproduce the everyday commonsense of British people. It does not challenge them to rethink their myths.

A Matter of Myths and Legends

I have made references to Barthes *Mythologies* earlier on in this thesis, yet there is a dimension in all of the debates, on the representations of Africa on TV discussed in this thesis, that find a relational route back to the question of myth.

A mention of 'Africa' to most people in the West conjures up images very dark and primitive. An immediate mental link is drawn to thick jungles, vast sandy deserts, wild flora and fauna, animals and very rustic surroundings, primitive peoples persistently fighting and killing one another. Presumably the imaginary ideals and excesses held about 'Africa' encourage an exaggerated response to contexts surrounding the subject. Although the mental associations contain elements of subjects that can be found within the geopolitical designation 'Africa', the marginalisation to some exclusive themes enlarges the real strengths of these subjects and themes thus developing myths in the process. Myths develop that suggest particular beliefs about Africa. The Myths are simultaneously fed by stereotypes, themes that dominate the news, documentary and cinema agenda and general misunderstandings of cultural and societal differences that arise from direct cross-cultural comparisons. The Mythical Africa is one that can be said to have resonances with the curious tales about the continent of Africa many years before sailors of the Western world made actual contact with the interior. The myths were carried into historical, scientific and

fictional writing. It was easier to convince readers or capture their interest with stories that were endowed with adventure, danger, the unusual and the wonderful, from the hitherto unknown parts of the world. That wealth of imagination and assumption provided the raw material for some writers, such as Daniel Defoe's 1719 Classic narrative, *Robinson Crusoe*. That earlier fascination with the strange and mystical story finds semblance in modern curiosities and speculations about deep-sea life, space and life-forms on other planets (fodder for stories about abductions, martians and aliens). The literature, fictional and scientific has been proliferating enormously from the gaps in knowledge about the existence or non-existence of living beings in space. In many ways 'Africa' is a similar site of the imagination.

On the whole, this study reveals the television constructions of Africa that are mythological. As Barthes discussion of Myth goes, there is in effect a 'real' or actual continent of Africa known to many and experienced as existing, but the images about Africa in the Western media as argued in studies in the USA (Hawk, 1992 and Hagos, 2000) all underline the particular arguments in this thesis corresponding to British television, that there is yet another whole layer of meanings, significations which Barthes calls myths. Africa inhabits the field of the myth and the mythological. Its employment has gradually gained diverse uses, buttressed by its homogenisation, to stand more generally for the thematic fields of the

problematic (if dealing with people), the silent and subjugated, the domain of nature.

For many people without an immediate experience of Africa, the imaginary Africa can remain strong, tempered only by the information they receive from the media and other sources. The imaginary Africa is one that fits in, not with innovation, technology and modernity, but is envisaged as the opposite of these. The findings of this study underline the dominant characteristics in the discoursed Africa.

Historical Sediments

I have suggested from time to time throughout this thesis, certain historical continuities from earlier representations of Africa to those found in today's television output.

Very early in the textual representations of Africa, there existed a persistent dichotomy, which divided Sub-Saharan Africans into noble savages and bestial savages. As can be found in earlier writings, from exploratory accounts to fictional adventure stories, there existed an interest in distinguishing, classifying and labelling the Africans encountered against the Western perceived distinctions of nobility through to primitivity. They were generally all considered savages and the attempt at creating the good-

better-best savages seems very ironic. The distinction is less difficult to locate. The 'noble savage' seemed to include some indigenous rulers while occasionally including some whole people. The bestial savage' was often a larger category, which seemed to include some rulers and all Africans except some singled out for their loyalty as servants to Europeans, or transformed through re-culturation and those others who fought as soldiers for the empire. (Whether noble or bestial they remained savages irrespective of their achievements or transformation). 'Savagery', today only connotes negativity, whereas in the past it indicated more technically a stage of development, preceding 'barbarism' and civilisation.

In addition to presenting these split character types, there was the tendency of many writers to ignore indigenous African peoples altogether. The picture often painted, as stereotypical then as it is now, was of a continent with breathtaking landscapes, magnificent flora and fauna and graceful and amazing creatures, but no people. The slave trade, slavery and the empire was to later garner its logic from the strength of the racist ideologies that these early representations consisted. It is easier to accept colonisation of lands empty of people or with humans but with fewer or lesser qualities, or to understand capture and trading in slaves as they possessed *no* 'culture'², 'language' or 'society'. The assessment of Africans was based on their

² The various arguments trailing the concept of culture (and as also outlined in Chapter 1), show how by negating Africans of the quality of possessing 'culture' in such early discourses, was in effect a way of dehumanising them.

suitability for purposes or the hegemony of missionaries, white settlers, traders or explorers. Conrad's description of the transformed Negroes and their new roles, and how they did work their responsibilities dutifully and loyally, mirrors the capturing, taming and training of animals in the wild for domestic use. (See Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*). The references to these savages grew to honorific representations during the height of the colonization, gradually degenerating into pejorative representations towards their dependent struggles in the decolonisation era. All in all, the 'fixed gulf' between Europe and Africa even though they were proximate was a deep one. There was not a recognised cultural difference between the people of these two areas, because the culture of the Black African was ignored as non-existent or non-important. The salient difference was more genetic; propounded in scientific and anthropological arguments to establish the difference. The rational, mature and well-disciplined Englishman had his foil in the irrational, uncivilised, unintelligible and childlike black African (Hammond and Jablow, 1970). The relationship between the English writer on 'Africa' and his/her subject, Hammond and Jablow contend, was often obverse. The early literature on Africa was permeated with contrasts, 'two poles in a single system of values' (1970:183). Whilst character, behaviour, social norm and practices were assessed, Africa always remained at the negative end of the delineation. Hammond and Jablow's work, in more ways than one, reveal the similarity

in modes of representation in early writing on Africa, and contemporary media portrayal of the continent and its people.

Very interestingly, parallels exist or can be drawn between the preoccupation of early fiction and factual writing on Africa and contemporary television programming on the subject. Hammond and Jablow have pinpointed ethnocentrism among others as one of the pre-empted of the manner of commenting on Africa. That discovery is as true today as it was when they sampled literary texts for that earlier study (Hammond and Jablow, 1970). The discourses in over five hundred sampled texts they looked at, at the time, have elements present in today's television discourses on Africa. Ethnocentricity could be present in various degrees of severity. The severer it appears the more negative it proves. 'An ethnocentric point of view admits only one valid way of life. Cultures that differ from one's own, are perceived as negations of that single set of values, rather than as expressions of other different systems (Hammond and Jablow, 1970:15). Herein lies the ease of constructing Africa and things African as negations and strangely 'Other' to a known and familiar perception of things. It is very easy in media representations for the image being communicated to turn up negative and completely strange even to the ones being talked about (e.g. Africans). Consequently the strength and size of the society on the global scene and or the speed of assimilation of Western cultures it is perceived to carry out, the lesser the ethnocentric

approach it appears to receive. Knowledge and power play the strongest marker for communicative voice and access. Thus globally there are sharp inequalities in racial, geographical, political and cultural recognition.

European mercantile exploration and later colonisation of Africa in the late 19th and early 20th century saw a rise in the use and mention of 'Africa'. Africa entered the political and economic interests of Europe and then became engaged with as a big topical subject at one point in time. Even before Western sailors penetrated the continent and later during the slave trade, the continent was perceived and discussed with a collective reference. Besides referring to the geographic continent, the name 'Africa' stood for a large number of connotative meanings; indicating geographical, anthropological and racial signifiers among others. For Britain, the mission of imperial expansion and colonisation dealt with only parts of Africa, but there was often the general reference to 'Africa'. 'Africa' exuded thoughts of a big mission, a reference that sounded grander in size and easier to relate to in simple identification, than any attempts to specify and explain pockets of communities on the continent with whom the British traded, or who were annexed under British rule. We might compare this with Tony Blair's invocation of Africa as the place of human need. The missions of empire and the discourses that ensued encouraged many assumptions and suppositions about the continent and the African peoples. Some of these generalisations

and collective discoursing still can be traced in contemporary discourses about Africa.

Narratives of travel, for instance, appeared from the beginning of British contacts and have continued to the most recent present (Hammond and Jablow, 1970:17). As we have seen, such a genre has also been adapted for television in more ways than one. There are travel promotionals on British television today which act as a guide to interesting holidays for the British viewer. Of course this involves placing the presenter in the location and presenting this, the interesting prospects and parts of this Other land. There is also the travel genre echoing the narrative core of the textual travel writing and its documentary form following the footsteps of a traveller. In 1996-99 Michael Palin's world travel adventures have reverberated such travel writing characteristics, except that television's image-led approach shifts the majority of the descriptive and illustrative commentary to the shown television footage.

In this thesis I have mainly deployed postcolonialism as a critical method, not as an indication of forms of identity or historical period. From this review of historical continuities, however, it is hard to resist the conclusion that this thesis looks not at 'postcolonial television' but at a form of neo-colonialism (for the distinction see Loomba, 1998; Hall, 1996b).

Finally

The argument so far is to point to the complexity of symptoms and causes behind the representations of Africa on British television as we see it. These representations, traverse deeper than mere attitudes or failures. They are present as a result of several factors that include historical, social, cultural, linguistic, political and ideological influences. All these factors exist in the extensive inter-relations in meaning-generation and interaction within the inter-textual environments of the British mass media, but are also within the wider psychic and cultural environment of British cultural formations. Television representations as argued in this thesis, magnify the particular aspects of representations to majority audiences. The image led features of television, as well as the aims of entertainment create and allow an echoing of particular themes about Africa.

Chabal argues, that 'to us in the West, Africa is that part of the world which remains most deeply endowed with the two central facets of the "other": that is the mysterious and the exotic'. He argues that the mysterious quality is not simply a case of not understanding the reality of the Other very well, but that the Other's reality is simply not amenable to our understanding (Chabal, 1996:45). The Other is exotic as it 'fulfils in us that most enduring need to find in some (suitably distant) "other" that quality of inexplicability which is both frightening in its apparent irrationality and reassuring in that

it highlights our own rationality' (199:45). In his opinion, these considerations, however general or trivial, have more influence on Western understanding of Africa than is readily admitted. Chabal makes the crucial argument, that 'explorers, missionaries, colonial officials, settlers, economists, experts and political scientists have all at some point looked at Africa from the perspective of the evolution of their own societies' (1996:45). Thus the discursive frame of developmental discourse continues to be issued from an epistemological framework that sees the trajectory of contemporary Africa as 'backward' in comparison to the West. The consequences of this is to be found, not only in textual material, but in audio visual output of the mass media, reflecting innate ideas about the condition of Africans. This premise then becomes, less obviously, the discursive practice and ideology, which continues to expect 'good' from Africa, based on an understanding of Africa as far behind on an evolutionary ladder, unable to catch up with the point of reference – the evolved state of the West.

Chabal argues, that the West desires in Africa, a democratisation, a state which it can identify in itself, leading African governments to begin to set these in motion as a way of speaking the master's language. This is also a case in point with the granting of Aid, as arguments are made that there is a desire to highlight the congeniality of the generous donor rather than the requirement for which the Aid is solicited. The images of famine victims and

the advertisement for Aid can also be argued as constructing for the donor the opportunity to enter and locate themselves within the domain of the kind missionary, helping the disadvantaged.

There is an increasing conformity to the comfortable notions of Africa that the Western mind desires, and as Chabal argues, it includes the factors of conforming to language, conforming to requirements for Aid and suppressing distinct identities in the form of ethnic differences among others. The early historical assessment of Africa's ethnicity has been accepted as an invention (Chabal, 1996:46), and the scientific classifications, which sought to locate a homogenous race (Seligman, 1966), today carry virtually no authority.

By applying interpretive indices using historical causalities to Africa, Africa continues to remain problematic – even though, as we saw in the case of *Dictatorship*, applying those indices to other continents might produce similar results. 'In social and cultural terms, the Africans were deemed to be near the bottom of the evolutionary scale.' They were also placed 'in economic development terms, just a shade above hunting and gathering societies but well below feudal ones' (Chabal, 1996:48).

Thus on the geopolitical Africa I identified at the start of the study, is imposed conceptualised versions of Africa, that construct Africa, not as a

place or continent, but a coagulation of different social, mythical, religious, political and cultural imaginings and knowledges.

The designation of the specialist study of Africa or African Studies is a worthwhile effort by proponents to encourage the dissemination of information and critical thinking on Africa to wider audiences. It reflects the interest and thirst for knowledge of things African, but marks the gaping hole of knowledge on the continent of Africa and the varied and salubrious traditions, cultures, politics, economics and many others existing within and which could be interesting and valuable to the wider world. Yet these categorisations and specification of Africa as object of study may promote on balance, narrowed versions of Africa's position in the wider field of knowledge. That narrowing and specificity has occurred persistently, as Said famously argued with *Orientalism*. In effect the Orient was by and large a domain of discursive strains, knowledge and reference, which was not geographically concrete and diverse.

Increasingly Africa appears to be drawing towards that configuration. The danger is as the specificities of African diversities are recognised, their general or universal import is refused. The ideal prospect is to retrieve Africa from further spiral into demotion by encouraging an inclusion of African issues vertically in all disciplines and engagements. For example, the end of subordination, for various African philosophies, cultural forms or

religions, is when these are discussed on a par with, and inclusively with other more vocal philosophical streams as coeval rather than in a development hierarchy.

This suggestion is admittedly a tall order in the contemporary state of affairs, but beginning to identify inputs from within Africa and granting cognisance to their equivalence and comparativeness, I believe, is the first clutch at that long climb.

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- Wildlife on One 'Animals in the Wild', 24th March 1998 [20.30-21.00hrs]
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- Breakfast News 'Clinton in South Africa', 26th March 1998 [07.00-07.30hrs]
- 6 O'clock News 'Clinton shown around Robben Island', 27th March 1998 [18.00-18.30hrs]
- News and Sport 'In Africa: Clinton has spoken about Jonesborough shooting', 28th March 1998 [20.40-21.00hrs]
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- 9 O'clock News 'Thousands may die of famine in Sudan', 23rd April 1998 [21.00-21.30hrs]
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- *BBC1 Film* 'Gorillas in the Mist', 29th November 1998 [23.45-01.50hrs]
- *Massive Nature* 'Wildebeest' 29th July 2004 [20.30-21.00hrs]

BBC2

- *Modern Times* 'The Godmothers', 18th March 1998 [21.00-21.50hrs]
- *Newsnight* 'Clinton in Africa & Experts discuss negative images of Africa in the West', 23rd March 1998 [22.30-23.15hrs]
- *Newsnight* 'How American presidents view the rest of the world', 27th March 1998 [22.30-23.15hrs]
- *Animal Zone* 'Big Cat Diary', 5th April 1998, [19.17hrs-20.07hrs]
- *Animal Zone* 'Big Cat Diary', 12th April 1998 [17.05-17.10, 17.45-18.40hrs]

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- *Animal Zone* 'Big Cat Diary', 11th October 1998 [17.15-17.45hrs]
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- *Timewatch* 'Somalia' American Time, 3rd November 1998 [21.00-21.50hrs]
- *Later with Jools Holland*, 13th November 1998 [23.10-00.30hrs]
- *Animal Zone* 'Big Cat Diary', 15th November 1998 [17.30-17.55hrs]
- *Animal Zone* 'Vanishing Pools of the Zambezi', 22nd November 1998 [17.30-17.55hrs]
- *Animal Zone* 'Big Cat Diary', 29th November 1998 [17.25-17.50hrs]
- *Congo* 'The River that Swallows all Rivers', 'Spirits of the Forest', 'Footprints in the Forest', 30th January 2001
- *Wildlife on 2* Sunday 18th January 2001 [16.00-17.00hrs]

ITV

- *News at Ten* 'Civil War in The Sudan', 12th February 2004 [22.00-22.30hrs]
- *Wish You Were Here* 'South Africa train journey', 2nd March 1998 [19.00-19.30hrs]
- *Film Premiere* 'Outbreak', 11th March 1998 [21.00-22.00, 20.40-00.05hrs]
- *Wish You Were Here* 'British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Awards', 16th March 1998 [19.00-19.30hrs]
- *Early Evening News* 'President Clinton in Africa', 23rd March 1998 [17.40-17.55hrs]
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- *Kids on the Kunene*, 29th March 1998 [14.05-14.35hrs] [prog variation on Yorkshire TV]
- *News at Ten* 'Death of Archbishop Huddleston', 20th April 1998 [22.00-22.30hrs]
- *Apartheid Did Not Die*, 21st April 1998 [22.40-23.40hrs]
- *News at Ten* 'The scramble for life as Sudan faces a new famine', 23rd April 1998 [22.00-22.30hrs]
- *News at Ten*, 24th April 1998 [22.00-22.30hrs]

- *News at Ten* 'African Famine: Sudan', 27th April 1998 [22.00-22.30hrs]
- *News at Ten* 'African Famine: Sudan', 28th April 1998 [22.00-22.30hrs]
- *Nairobi: True Terror – On the bombing of the American Embassy*, 9th October 1998 [22.40-23.40hrs]
- *The Mission*, 14th October 1998 [23.10-23.40hrs]
- *News at Ten*, 28th October 1998 [22.00-22.30hrs]
- *News at Ten* 'South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation', 29th October 1998 [22.00-22.30hrs]
- *News at Ten* 'Honey buzzard', 2nd November 1998 [22.00-22.30hrs]
- *News at Ten* 'Cricket – West Indian tour of Africa', 11th November 1998 [22.00-22.30hrs]
- *News at Ten* 'Sudan Story', 19th November 1998 [22.00-22.30hrs]

Channel 4

- *To The Ends of the Earth* 'The black mamba', 2nd March 1998 [20.00-21.00hrs]
- *In Exile*, 9th March 1998, [22.55-23.25hrs] Series 1 of 7 episodes
- *Channel 4 News* 'Clinton in Africa', 'Pope in Nigeria', 23rd March 1998 [19.00-19.55hrs]
- *Channel 4 News* 'Clinton in Africa – Shooting in Arkansas', 25th March 1998 [19.00-19.55hrs]
- *Channel 4 News*, 26th March 1998 [19.00-19.50hrs]
- *Channel 4 News* 'US Council on Foreign Relations views on Clinton's African tour', 27th March 1998 [19.00-19.55hrs]
- *World Football* 'Live and Dangerous', 30th-31st March 1998 [02.05-02.35hrs]
- *Witness* 'Dr. Paisley, I presume', 27th April 1998 [21.00-22.00hrs]
- *Off Limits – Sahara Journey*, 19th April 1998 [17.05-17.20hrs]
- *Dispatches Investigates* 'Apartheid's children', 30th April 1998 [21.00-21.45hrs]
- *Hidden Kingdoms* 'The Walking Birds' 8th October 1998 [13.50-14.55hrs]
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- *Channel 4 News* 'Black on White Violence in South Africa', 27th October 1998 [19.00-19.55hrs]
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- Channel 4 *Mandela: Beneath the Halo*, 10th May 2004 [20.00-21.00hrs]

Channel 5

- *Life at the Edge 'The Tallest Story'*, 14th February 1998 [19.30-20.00hrs]
- *Secret Lives 'Desert Mist'*, 5th March 1998 [19.30-20.00hrs]
- *Call of the Wild 'Legend of the lightning bird'*, 8th March 1998 [20.00-21.00hrs]
- *Against All Odds 'Elephants Under Siege'*, 16th March 1998 [19.30-20.00hrs]
- *Call of the Wild*, 29th March 1998 [20.00-21.00hrs]
- *Call of the Wild 'The family that lives with elephants'*, 29th March 1998 [20.00-21.00hrs]
- *Hairy Hunters 'Cat's Kin'*, 30th March 1998 [19.30-20.00hrs]
- *Life at the Edge 'The Kitsepo Stick Fighters'*, 8th April 1998 [19.30-20.00hrs]
- *Call of the Wild 'The Mysterious Journey'*, 12th April 1998 [20.00-21.00hrs]
- *Life at the Edge 'The Tallest Story'*, 14th April 1998 [19.30-20.00hrs]
- *Channel 5 News 'Clinton (in Africa) on Arkansas shooting'*, 30th April 1998 [12.00-12.30hrs]
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- *Paradise in Peril*, 8th November 1998 [20.00-21.00hrs]
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- *Egypt and Early Civilisation*, 12th November 1998 [19.30-20.00hrs]
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Appendix I

Countries in geopolitical Africa

Algeria	Madagascar
Angola	Malawi
Benin	Mali
Botswana	Mauritania
Burkina Faso	Mauritius
Burundi	Morocco
Cameroon	Mozambique
Cape Verde	Namibia
Central African Rep.	Niger
Chad	Nigeria
Comoros	Reunion
Congo (Brazzaville)	Rwanda
Congo (DRC, Zaire)	Sao Tome & Principe
Cote d'Ivoire	Senegal
Djibouti	Seychelles
Egypt	Sierra Leone
Equatorial Guinea	Somalia
Eritrea	South Africa
Ethiopia	Sudan
Gabon	Swaziland
Gambia	Tanzania
Ghana	Togo
Guinea	Tunisia
Guinea-Bissau	Uganda
Kenya	Western Sahara
Lesotho	Zambia
Liberia	Zimbabwe
Libya	

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