SOCIAL DARWINIST IDEOLOGY, RACISM AND CONFICT IN SELECTED

HOLLYWOOD FILMS ABOUT AFRICA

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DECLARATION

Student number: R131126F

I declare that the **SOCIAL DARWINIST IDEOLOGY, RACISM AND CONFICT IN SELECTED HOLLYWOOD FILMS ABOUT AFRICA** is my work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature.../...../......./2016............... (student)

Signature.../......./......./2016............. (supervisor)

DEDICATION

For your love and endless support, I will forever be grateful. Thank you for always being there for me mom and dad.

This work is dedicated to my mom and dad Miriam and Justice Mkahlela

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First and foremost I would like to thank God who has taken me this far and has made the course of this honours degree programme a success. I express my sincere appreciation to the Lord for the wisdom and knowledge he has awarded me with and for strengthening me during my period of this project.

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on the Social Darwinist ideology, racism and conflict in selected Hollywood films about Africa looking at the case study of *Tears of the Sun*, *Hotel Rwanda* and *Blood Diamond*. The aim of the study was to interrogate the interaction of Social Darwinist ideology, race and conflict in selected Hollywood films about Africa with sub-objectives of establishing perceptions, determining conflict interpretations, assessing racial perspectives, identifying filmic techniques used and evaluating the effects of the techniques by Hollywood films.

To carry out the study the researcher used the Reception theory to do a qualitative study which proved to be very useful because a detailed picture was built up about why people act in certain ways and their feelings about these actions. However, people are rigid and this made it difficult to assess, demonstrate and maintain the study. The theory was useful in that a viewer's identity helps them to decode film text according to their identity. Results revealed that Hollywood filmmakers falsely depict African conflict and make it look like it is silly and unnecessary and Africans as either blood thirst savages or helpless wide-eyed children who cannot tell their own stories of solve their own conflict. In doing this wrong information about African conflict is passed and blacks are portrayed as an inferior race to the whites and here the Social Darwinist Ideology is imposed. The filmic techniques used were music, facial expressions, proxemics, dialogue, juxtaposition, camera angles, casting, symbolism and body language.

Main recommendations are that African filmmakers should reproduce these films and offer an African perspective. All films that contain racist words should be banned. African filmmakers should also produce films where African conflict is solved amicably. Western filmmakers should present whites and blacks equally in their films. Areas for further study are class stratification   and   gender   and   conflict.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Hollywood film industry has had a history of particularly negative depictions of Africans and its portrayal to Africa is largely misguided. Their movies and literature place Africa at a one-dimensional stereotype based on their preconceived notions. These notions are mostly negative, primordial, biased and unbalanced. Although some nations in Africa are experiencing instability, hunger and other existential problems, Hollywood's portrayal is not the true total picture (Tiffin, 2005). Africans are stereotyped as lazy, stupid, foolish, cowardly, submissive, irresponsible, childish, violent, sub-human, animal-like, and are rampant in today's society. These degrading stereotypes are reinforced and enhanced by the negative portrayal of blacks in the media. In addition, Africans are purposely portrayed in films with negative stereotypes that reinforced white supremacy over blacks. Africa may not be technologically advanced, yet some areas of its existence; family sociology and communal decency, are first rate superior and highly sophisticated (Ukadike, 2006). It is worthy of note here that the problem of Hollywood representation of Africa in films is not really that of the legitimacy of the representation, but the discourse behind it.

Films such as the Tarzan series and The African Queen have either portrayed Africans as child-like primitive savages or airbrushed them out of history (Okome, 2003). The film Black Hawk Down, made with the assistance of the Pentagon, portrayed, in heroic terms, US peacekeepers in Somalia who took part in a botched 1993 mission to capture Somali warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed. Somalis are depicted as marauding hordes of bloodthirsty savages bent on killing Americans. No effort is made to show their suffering in a civil war in which 300,000 people died. The use of Somali women and children as "human shields" by US

soldiers is scarcely commented on, let alone condemned. The killing by the Americans of 1,000 Somalis is treated as "collateral damage" (Shohat & Stam, 2004)

Other movies, such as 2005's The Constant Gardener, though seeking to expose the greed and corrupt exploitation of western corporations, have no strong African voices. The classic Hollywood trope of Africans being children in need of help by benevolent western saviours is ubiquitous. Most of the African characters in both movies are either corrupt, passive, incompetent or heartless (Ajayi, 2006). Hotel Rwanda (2004) covered the genocide that killed 800,000 mostly Tutsi citizens in 1994. Rather than focusing mainly on the barbarity of domestic actors in typical Hollywood fashion, this film exposes the broader structural issues and cynicism of powerful western governments. The hero is also unusually an African (Ukadike, 2006). Ndahiro and Rutazibwa (2006) acknowledge the inevitable dramatic license needed in the reconstruction of historical films but maintain that the makers of Hotel Rwanda are guilty of misrepresenting the genocide and promoting genocide negationism by creating a false hero out of someone who aligns himself openly with the genocidaires.

One film that reverts to the worst stereotypes of Hollywood was the 2009 science-fiction movie, District 9, directed by South African-born Canadian, Neill Blomkamp. The film is full of negative stereotypes that suggest a deeply prejudiced mind of Africa. Nigerians are depicted throughout the movie as involved in drug and arms trafficking, business scams, car theft, prostitution and cannibalism. This feeds into widespread stereotypes in SA often levelled not just against immigrants from Nigeria, but also from Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The fact that most crimes are committed by South Africans is lost in such distorted analyses. Such stereotypes help to fuel, rather than calm, the environment for incidents such as the brutal killing of 62 African immigrants in Johannesburg in 2008 (Tololyan, 2010). In the film Tears of the Sun the US military come out as the good guys while Nigerian troops are all

turned into villains, entrenching the "Dark Continent" theme. The roles that blacks have in films produced today are sometimes reminiscent of those degrading "darkie" roles. Therefore the proposed study will reveal Hollywood's abstracted meaning embedded in Social Darwin ideologies, racial perspectives and conflicts (civil unrest) in portrayal of Africa and Africans from selected films.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Film is an influential medium that can shape the construction of personal and national identity. Entertaining, fictional genres can also carry serious ideological messages as audience can identify with portrayal issues surrounding screened phenomena. Films offer frameworks through which one can access the political and cultural realities of the world. Of paramount importance is the way films portray African and her inhabitants. Western films such as Tears of the Sun, Breakout, Blood Diamond, and Hotel Rwanda have been biased and exaggerated African stories. While Hollywood has certainly matured regarding its view of the African continent since 1988, it is still a rare sight to find a realistic portrayal of the continent from European and American filmmakers. Over the years, there has been misrepresentations in portrayal of Africa and her inhabitants by west films. It becomes vital to ascertain whether 21st century films still carry the stereotypes and prejudices of 20th century films

1.3 RESEARCH AIM

To interrogate the interaction of Social Darwinism ideology, race and conflict in selected Hollywood films about Africa.

1.3.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

- ❖ To establish perceptions of Hollywood films on Africa

- ❖ To determine how Hollywood films interpret African conflicts.

- ❖ To assess racial perspectives depicted by Hollywood films on Africa.

- ❖ To identify the filmic techniques used.

- ❖ To evaluate the effects of the techniques.

1.3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ❖ What are the perceptions of Hollywood films on Africa?

- ❖ How do Hollywood films interpret African Conflicts?

- ❖ What racial perspectives are depicted by Hollywood films on Africa?

- ❖ What techniques are used?

- ❖ What is the effect of the techniques?

1.4 JUSTIFICATION/ SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Establishing misconceptions and misinterpretations portrayed by Euro-American films about Africa will provide useful insights that will challenge Euro-American film makers to objectively research more on African events. Thus they will be compelled to fairly depict a true African image. Furthermore academics will become aware in the way they view Euro-Western films understanding that no film is just made for the sake of entertainment only but has a hidden ideology within it that usually catches people unconsciously, thus leaving little or no room for lying or deceiving audiences.

The findings of this research will help African film makers to demystify the myth wrapping Africa's image and rediscover lost or submerged identities and undermined African ideologies by Western films. This will stimulate African filmmakers to realize that they need

to produce films telling their own African story which the Africans can relate with and the foreigners gain a better understanding having it come from the horse's mouth. In addition the study will be an eye opener for Africans on how Western films portray Africans, hence this will inspire other Africans to have an understanding on how the West view Africa.

Through reading a wide range of literature, the research will increase the researcher's level of knowledge and understand in the film industry. The research will also equip the researcher with research skills and experience which she will use in future for problem solving. The study also will be used by other researchers as a baseline for their studies.

1.5 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Audiences: can be groups or individuals targeted by and often built by media industries. Audience can be active (constantly filtering or resisting content) or passive (complying and vulnerable)

Conflict: a disagreement or clash between ideas through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns. It becomes a struggle for power which ignites a warfare between opposing forces, especially a prolonged and bitter but sporadic struggle

Ideology: is a collection of beliefs held by an individual, group or society. It can be described as a set of conscious and unconscious ideas which make up one's beliefs, goals, expectations, and motivations. It is followed by people, governments, or other groups that is considered the correct way by the majority of the population.

Perceptions: are one's way of regarding, understanding, or interpreting something or assumptions about others' expectations of certain behaviours that one will or will not perform which are influenced by beliefs.

Racism: is the generalization, institutionalization, and assignment of values to real and imaginary differences between people in order to justify a state of privilege, aggression and/or violence. Racism is the result of a complex interplay of individual attitudes, social values and institutional practices. It has its roots in the belief that some people are superior because they belong to a particular race, ethnic or national group.

Social Darwin ideology: is an application of the theory of natural selection to social, political and economic issues. It follows the mantra of 'the strong survive', including human issues. This theory was used to promote the idea that the white European race was superior to others, and therefore, destined to rule over them.

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

No media product is put together without some idea of that audience that is going to see, read or hear it; hence, the concept of audience is at the heart of all media study. Reception theory provides a means of understanding media texts by understanding how these texts are read by audiences. An important concept of reception theory is that the media text such as individual movie or television programme has no inherent meaning in and of itself. Instead, meaning is created as the viewer watches and processes the film (Fiske, 1987). Reception theory argues that contextual factors, more than textual ones, influence the way the spectator views the film or television programme. Contextual factors include elements of the viewer's identity as well as circumstances of exhibition, the spectator's preconceived notions concerning the film or television program's genre and production, and even broad social, historical, and political issues (Hall, 1993). Thus the reception theory places the viewer in context, taking into account all of the various factors that might influence how she or he will read and create meaning from the text.

The cultural theorist Stuart Hall has been one of the main proponents of reception theory, having developed it for media and communication studies from the literary and history-oriented approaches. His approach, called the encoding/decoding model of communication, is a form of textual analysis that focuses on the scope of "negotiation" and "opposition" by the audience. Hall developed a theory of encoding and decoding, Hall's Theory, which focuses on the communication processes at play in texts that are in televisual form (Fiske, 1987).

Stuart Hall's "Encoding-Decoding" model of communication essentially states that meaning is encoded by the sender and decoded by the receiver and that these encoded meanings may be decoded to mean something else. Thus senders encode meaning in their messages according to their ideals and views and the messages are decoded by the receivers according to their own ideals and views, which may lead to miscommunication or to the receiver understanding something very different from what the sender intended (Hall, 1993).

With the Encoding/decoding model the meaning made by the audience is affected by various other factors including socio/economic frameworks and past experiences, but also involving the context in which the media message is consumed. Hall (1993), pointed out three different positions audiences (receivers) take in order to decode the meanings within cultural texts, particularly televisual discourses. They are the dominant-hegemonic position, the negotiated position and the oppositional position. The audience member assumes the dominant hegemonic position when they recognise and agree with the full-preferred meaning offered by the media text. The dominant-hegemonic position is when the viewer, or audience member, is located within the dominant point of view (Hall, 1993). Within this position, there is little misunderstanding and miscommunication, as both sender and receiver are working under the same rule set, assumptions and cultural biases. It is this position that will allow the transmission of ideas to be understood the best, despite certain frictions that may occur due to issues of class structure and power, specifically between the elites who are able to dictate the

rule set and the non-elites who must adopt the elite's rules as dominant. Thus Euro-Western films encode a meaning of their biased and exaggerated ideologies about Africa and her inhabitants through movies which is decoded by audience which they receive well despite the meaning being distorted.

1.7 METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a systematic way to solve a problem; it is a science of studying how research is to be carried out (Taylor, 2009) and provide the procedures by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining and predicting phenomena (Given, 2009). In simple terms, methodology is giving a clear cut idea on what methods or process the researcher is going to use in his/her research to achieve the research objectives. This section will present the research methodology which will be applied in the research study. The research methodology section informs the reader on how the researcher is going to solve the research problem or to answer the research question.

A qualitative research is going to be used to collect desk top data. Strauss and Corbin (2004) points out that qualitative methods can be used to better understand any phenomenon about which little is yet known. They can also be used to gain new perspectives on things about which much is already known, or to gain more in-depth information that may be difficult to convey quantitatively. Qualitative research has an interpretive character, aimed at discovering the meaning events have for the individuals who experience them and the interpretations of those meanings by the researcher (Kothari, 2011). A descriptive content analysis research method (survey) will be used. In human research, a descriptive content analysis study provides information about the naturally occurring behavior, attitudes or other characteristics of a particular group (Trochim, 2005). A descriptive content analysis design is appropriate for

the study because it analyses and describes issues of race, conflicts and ideology which are wrongly depicted by Hollywood films towards African.

1.7.1 Strengths of qualitative research

- Issues and subjects covered can be evaluated in depth and in detail

- A detailed picture can be built up about why people act in certain ways and their feelings about these actions.

- With this type of research, the researcher has a clear vision on what to expect. They collect data in a genuine effort of plugging data to a bigger picture.

1.7.2 Weaknesses of qualitative research

- The quantity of data makes interpretation and analysis time consuming

- Rigidity is more difficult to assess, demonstrate and maintain.

1.7.3 Why use content analysis

- Content analysis is a readily understood, inexpensive research method. It is unobtrusive, and it does not require contact with people

- Establishing reality is easy and straightforward. Of the research methods, content analysis scores highest with regard to ease of replication.

- One can learn much about a media production's policies, target audience, politics and financial support

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Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Literature review is an account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars or researchers (Holloway, 2004). Literature review is guided by objectives and problem statement of a particular subject of discussion. It helps to establish strengths and weaknesses of the topic through views of different scholars .It also helps when one is seeking information and criticizing it. Literature review is used as foundation and support for a new insight that one wants to contribute (Kothari, 2011).

2.1.1 Hollywood films perceptions on Africa

Perceptions have led to Hollywood films misinterpreting a reflection of Africa. According to Wole Soyinka, in order to study the politics of misrepresentation of Africa in Hollywood films, one has to understand the socio-historical context of the arrival of the moving image in Africa. The Lumiere brothers invented Cinema in an era when the western world was consolidating its colonial expansion (Braudy and Cohen, 2004). Thus, Cinema emerged in the context of a lasting Eurocentric philosophical discourse that viewed non-whites especially Africans and their lands, as animals and empty spaces to be conquered. Shohat and Stam (2004) points out that since the beginning of Cinema coincided with the height of European imperialism, European Cinema portrayed the colonized (Africa) in an unflattering light. However this study shall look at films that were produced during a time when racial equality had been stimulated and focuses on whether it was implemented in the films or not.

Hollywood's engagement with Africa has changed shape and style over the years but the "Dark Continent " master text that informed colonial novels still pervades contemporary

Euro- American films about Africa. They tackle serious themes about contemporary Africa and in some cases even make metatextual reading of western stereotypes about Africa. Even more interesting is the film category of "Based on a True Story" that tries to invoke historical validity mixed with humanitarian sentiments to tell Africa's story from a more journalistic perspective (Doctum 2013). Hyden White explains that historical facts in themselves cannot constitute a story, but provide "story *elements*" at best. For it to become a "story" it has to be *made* by "the suppression or subordination of certain… [elements] and the highlighting of others, by characterization, motific repetition, variation of tone, and point of view… (White, 1985, p. 84). Although White may be right, there are other elements that a film should not omit so as to relate to the true story. The study shall examine the filmic techniques and how they reflect on the "Based on a true story" category.

African writing and publishing has been systematised to be an extension of Western or European thinking and imagination about the continent and its people. An African writer is not encouraged to come up with a new variation or interpretation of what happens in Africa. Over-simplistic as it may seem, the kind of so-called writing that is encouraged, approved and promoted by mainstream publishing houses that represents foreign interests in this country are: Firstly, your perspective must uphold and promote the West as this great centre of democracy. Secondly, this writing must feed the stereotypes and prejudices people in this great democracy hold about Africa. Thirdly, African writing must be filled with self-hate where the chief characters are people who serve the interests of the West. Thus the storyline and characterisation and plot must see the characters saying: it is very good to be puppets of the West. Thus, to a great extent, the so-called African writing and literature that we are fed tells the African story through a colonial perspective (Memela, 2014). In any case, independent African media was always at a dis-advantage, and still is. It lacked the resources

to gather and disseminate to a global audience the correct information about Africa (Rwagatare, 2016). However this study shall look at how African stories are being told not by Africans being influenced by the Western but how the Western themselves are telling the African story.

It is worthy of note that the problem of Hollywood representation of Africa in films is not really that of the legitimacy of the representation, but the discourse behind it. Every time a Hollywood director shoots a film about Africa that features a Western protagonist, I shake my head -- because Africans, real people though we may be, are used as props in the West's fantasy of itself. And not only do such depictions tend to ignore the West's prominent role in creating many of the unfortunate situations on the continent, they also ignore the incredible work Africans have done and continue to do to fix those problems (Iweala, 2007). The continent and people represented are in fact imagined and invented. Furthermore, early images of Africa on screen were not only those of misrepresentation or appropriation of African identity, but early films shot and shown in Africa were part of the colonial endeavor, contributing to the implementation and solidification of colonial policies in general (Liu, 2007). Eurocentric motivated films about Africa are concentrate on fabrication of Western explorers and their literary associates, whose exotic tales of savage Africans and the burden carried by Europe in her civilization mission became subject of such films (Ajayi, 2006). This study however focuses on the 21st century, a time when all the African countries had gained independence and there was no need to use films as a tool for colonization.

2.1.2 Interpretation of African conflicts by Hollywood films

Although African conflicts involve the activities of seasoned peacemakers using the best of personal skills and recently developed knowledge about ways of managing and resolving

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conflicts, international efforts at conflict management have not been particularly effective or efficient in overcoming the disasters that have brought them to the African continent (Zartman, 2000:3). Simplistically framing the conflict along the lines of "good guys/bad guys" does not help the cause of human rights, but refuels anger, reinforces polarizing dichotomies, and makes conflict-resolution difficult (Ashuntantang, 2012). In Black Hawk Dawn, Somalis are depicted as marauding hordes of bloodthirsty savages bent on killing Americans. No effort is made to show their suffering in a civil war in which 300,000 people died. The use of Somali women and children as "human shields" by US soldiers is scarcely commented on, let alone condemned. The killing by the Americans of 1,000 Somalis is treated as "collateral damage". Despite the mythical delusions of this movie, the ruthless Aideed proved himself to be a great military tactician. Realising he could not defeat the US militarily, he sought political victory by forcing its soldiers into a costly urban guerrilla war and used his better knowledge of the terrain and US ignorance of the local culture to inflict casualties on the peacekeepers, forcing their withdrawal (Adebajo, 2013).Cohen (1995) argues that 'the sources and consequences of Africa's internal conflicts have their roots in colonialism, the subsequent processes of de-colonisation and state formation, and the ensuing crisis of nation building'. This study focuses on the filmic techniques used to interpret African conflict in Hollywood films about Africa.

2.1.3 Racial perspectives expressed by Hollywood films towards Africa

Racist attitudes and beliefs are misconceptions about people based on perceived racial lines and are often founded on the fear of difference, including differences in customs, values, religion, physical appearance and ways of living and viewing the world. This includes negative attitudes towards the use of different languages, 'foreign' accents or the use of non-standard variations of a dominant community language. Racist attitudes may be manifested in

a number of ways including common expressions of racial prejudice towards and stereotyped assumptions about other cultures as well as more extreme forms of prejudice. These beliefs are reinforced by prevailing social attitudes towards people who are seen as different and are often a reflection of the values which underpin social relations and institutional practices (Stam, et al., 2000). The study looks at how the racial differences are portrayed in Hollywood films about Africa.

The racialization of groups is in a number of different ways. Primarily among these mechanisms, is the identification of racial background when these are simply not warranted. Take for instance, the statement "The suspect was a black male....." Or, "the suspect is an African man." Alternatively, if the racial identity is absent, the cultural background tends to be mentioned, as for example, "The body of the baby found in the ravine revealed her to be of African origin." This association of cultural identity with a crime indicates that the cultural heritage is to blame for the way in which the person acted (VanDijk and Teun, 2006). However, the study looks at the filmic techniques used to justify why these racial identifications are used for a certain race which is pinned to certain behaviours.

There is a belief that there are fundamental, essential differences between black and white people persists and is difficult to dispel, resulting in the ascription of particular psychological, physical and intellectual characteristics to different 'races'. To further complicate the issue, the matrix of perceptions associated with these notions make it virtually impossible to separate the connotations of the word 'race' from its denotative meaning. These meanings are tangled together and locked into a value laden system of binary oppositions. In this system, black is a potent signifier of evil, of dirt, of that which is alien: whereas white signifies

goodness, purity and that which is familiar, the norm (Ukadike, 2006). The study looks at the filmic techniques used to differentiate the two races so as to impose the Darwinism ideology upon the audience.

The problem so often glossed over or ignored is that these so called 'negative' images depict Third World suffering in a manner which casually jettisons the historical, political and economic context that has produced such suffering. The problem with images depicting starving African children is not so much the existence of an image but rather the absence of an adequate explanation of why the child is starving. This absence opens the door to all manner of mythical interpretations emanating from the flux of ideologies forming our individual 'common sense' view of the world. Consequently, racist and ethnocentric 'explanations' are inevitable amongst an audience with pre-existing assumptions about Black people and about the superiority of white, Western cultures (Liu, 2007). This lack of an adequate explanation resonates with an audience's preconceived notions about other people and other countries, and culminates in the reinforcement of racism at all levels of society. This is particularly so when the society itself has a history of racism. However, this study looks at why black people may need help from the white people as depicted in the Hollywood films about Africa, as the films explain events leading to the black people's desperation for help.

It would be unjustified to claim that it was simply because 'black' had an extensive set of negative connotations that Africans have been thought of as inferior: however, it is probable that the binarism of the signifiers 'black' and 'white' was sufficiently entrenched to facilitate a mode of thinking which justified an economically driven black enslavement, on moral grounds. The African's skin colour became the defining characteristic, and 'black', from

operating at a connotative level shifted to a denotative plane: to be black was to be evil, to be

hypersexual, to be morally debased, and to be inferior.

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Chapter 3
TEARS OF THE SUN

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the result of an analysis of the film *Tears of the Sun.* Along with the findings, the chapter also discusses to answer the Research Questions in chapter one. The chapter makes an in-depth analysis of the film, paying special emphasis on the Social Darwin Ideology evinced in the film and how Hollywood depicts African conflicts by focusing on some filmic techniques and themes used in the film. The filmic techniques such as dialogue, which will especially look at the choice of words, camera angles and choice of music will support the themes within this film. By exploring the themes in the film and the filmic techniques the analysis shows how these are used as a tool to infest the ideology into the audience.

3.1 Synopsis

Tears of the Sun was produced in 2003, and directed by Antoine Fuqua. The film tell a story of a United State Navy SEAL team on a mission to rescue a U.S citizen Dr. Lena Kendricks (Monica Bellucci) from a civil war in Nigeria, where she has setup a clinic. The team is led by Lt. A.K Waters (Bruce Willis) who is under strict order by his commander to rescue the doctor before the war breaks out. The West African country of Nigeria is expected to burst into war at any time and all the U.S citizens in the area are to be escorted to safety. The other two citizens refuse to go and Dr Kendricks refuses to go unless she can take some of the refugees with her. Determined to accomplish his mission, Lt A.K Waters deludes the doctor and agrees to take the refugees with them only to leave them halfway through the escape. However, overtaken by his conscience and an obvious attraction the weeping doctor, he

decides to go back for the refugees and they race against time to get them to a border town for safety

3.2 Content Analysis

In order to find out the Social Darwin ideology and African conflict depiction by Hollywood found in the film *Tears of the Sun*, the writer analyses the themes in the film and the film techniques used to support each theme. According to Merriam Webster, a theme is the main subject that is being discussed or described in a piece of writing, a movie, etc. A theme can also be defined as a subject or topic of discourse or of artistic representation. The writer attempts to analyse four themes in *Tears of the Sun* to find out the perceptions of Hollywood films on Africa and how Hollywood films interpret African conflict. The themes found in this film are Violence, White saviours, Sacrifice and Loyalty.

3.2.1 Violence

Africa has for years been portrayed as in Bosah Eboh's words 'a crocodile-infested dark continent where the jungle life has perpetually eluded civilisation', by the Western media. The view that Hollywood has on Africa as a vast forest mostly led them to use the unfavourable setting of *Tears of the Sun* in a Hawaiian jungle. However, a jungle is a jungle and a jungle resembles Africa so geographical ethics do not matter when it comes to Africa. More so, Africans are portrayed as barbaric and violent creatures who have no remorse. This is evident in *Tears of the Sun* on many occasions from the beginning to the end of the film.

When the film begins shots of people being killed point blank including children are shown. A lot of violence is portrayed by using a mixture of footages from Sorious Samura's documentary and Cry Free town on the Sierra Leone civil war. Using these footages makes

the violence to appear exaggeratedly intense. This type of imagery feeds on the stereotype that Africa is a continent of exoticism and primal violence. The news reporter goes on to say:

The once peaceful country of Nigeria…

However, the audience do not get to see the peaceful Nigeria that he is talking about. There is a use of past tense signifying that during the white rule, Africa was peaceful. This was a deliberate act by the director knowing fully well that the subconscious works better with visual feeds and his intension is for the audience to see a violent Nigeria so as to believe it and not to see the peaceful Nigeria lest they become objective.

As Lt. A.K Waters tries to convince Dr Kendricks to stop being stubborn and cooperate he utters the words:

This jungle is filling up with rebel troops and
they will kill anything they see, including
privileged white doctors

First of all, this statement says a lot about the rebel troops, portraying them as bloodthirsty savages, bloody-minded tyrants and animal like people who do not care about anything or anyone. They will kill anything in their way and they derive pleasure from the face of death and blood staining the earth. That is exactly the picture that Hollywood paints about Africa. The jungle setting also implies that it is a dangerous place to be which is supposed to instil fear in the doctor and the audience. African people are wild and barbaric and prey upon each other like animals, like beasts, inflicting conflict upon themselves and turning against each other but too much of savages to solve their own conflict. The use of characterization painted a perfect picture of the Western description of Africans. The rebel troops were very scary looking people who rarely smiled. They are like beasts of the forest. Therefore they need the intervention of a more civilised personnel. Using a machete to slaughter the priest and the

slayer's facial expression in emotionless and with no remorse at all only strengthened the Lt's statement. Burning the missionary down and killing every man, woman and child proved him right for the troops did not leave anything or anyone alive. To make this image seem more horrific, the director had the image taken from above so the audience could see how much damage was done and be convinced of the level of cruelty that the rebel troops had.

Secondly, the statement poses as a social Darwin ideology agent by expressing that the rebel troops will even kill a white person. In a way, anything else can be killed except for a white person under normal circumstances. Killing a white person is such an abomination and these troops are thought to be very dangerous because they will kill white people too. As if to support this statement, when the priest is be-headed, the jungle responds with white doves flying away. A symbol that peace has been shattered. A white man stands for peace and his life has just been taken so there is no more peace, hence the white doves flying away. Other scholars argue that the white doves resembled the precious life of a superior being, a white person's life. A superior race, the white race, hence the white doves. To strengthen the ideology just in case someone did not see what happened, the director makes an emphasis on the point by having one of the Navy SEALs ask in total amazement:

What was that?

More violence is witnessed as they get to a village where some of the rebel troops are torturing and killing civilians. A pile of dead bodies is seen as rebels line people up to shoot them. There is fear and astonishment on the face of Dr Kendricks to show how horrifying the sight was. Scenes of women being raped are shown to emphasise on the length the machete swinging savages would go. Sad music is heard in the background which makes the audience

feel the intensity of grief in that scene. One of the Navy SEALs shoots a rebel and as he takes a look at the rebel he is shocked.

<center>*Its only a kid*</center>

The rebels are so heartless and so focused on their cleansing mission that they even recruit children to become soldiers. Eurocentric motivated films about Africa are concentrate on fabrication of Western explorers and their literary associates, whose exotic tales of savage Africans and the burden carried by Europe in her civilization mission became subject of such films (Ajayi, 2006). This notion is true in this film when the most horrific sight is shown of a woman who has had her breasts cut off and is bleeding to death. That was a plausible negative portrayal of Africans as violent and merciless savages. The director decided to convince the audience that what they are seeing is real by using one of the female refugees who says:

> *This is what they do, they cut*
> *off nursing mothers' breasts to*
> *stop them from feeding their babies,*
> *this is what they do*

Her facial expression is that of disgust and the repetition of the words '*This is what they do'*, is used as an emphasis tool to make the audience believe what kind of people these savages are. The kind of people who can kill a child and mother in the most painful and heartless way.

As Western audiences watch this film under the theme of violence, they are convinced that Africa is a dangerous place to be and Africans are not civilised human beings. To a Western viewer the film confirms that Africans are killing machines and remorseless creatures who need to be tamed. However to an African audience the violence in this film may seem a bit exaggerated and the relations between Africans is amiss. Africans are known to be the closest

racial group to each other and everyone is everyone else's relative. The level of hatred between Africans in the film is wrongly depicted.

3.2.2 White Saviours

By creating its own conflict, Africa also seems to enter into civil wars that clearly divide its people into ruthless savages and helpless innocents. However, that is not something to worry about because there is always a white man/woman ready to come to the aid of these wide-eyed, child-like poor natives. These are the type of films Hollywood is producing and the type of films that they believe will lure more audiences. Although it is clear that the audience they seek to lure are the white people. If a movie features white people rescuing the people of colour from their plight, odds are high an Oscar will follow (Sirota, 2012).

In *Tears of the Sun,* Dr Kendricks, 'a white doctor', is the heroine who because of her love for 'her people' makes sure that they get to safety. Dr Kendkicks will not leave without the indigenous personnel and claims to be responsible for them. She firmly makes this clear to Lt Waters when she says:

> *Then we have a problem, I will*
> *not leave without the indigenous*
> *personnel…. I will not leave without*
> *my people*

It may seem like the good doctor is very kind-hearted and only wants to help, but in reality she is the one who has put these people in more danger than they already are. She uses a deviant tone and proxemics to the Lt is intimidatingly close to show that she does not fear the Lt and that she is serious about what she is saying. An element of feminist ideology is shown here but is over ridden by the social Darwinism Ideology since the person who stood up to the respected and terrifying Lt is a white female. Although the film's intension is to make her

the heroine who helps save the lives of several people from their own people, it is clear that her clinic which is at a missionary only made things worse. These civil war is about religious cleansing and wiping out all Christians. Obviously the troops would very much be interested in destroying this place. So the so called 'heroine' is to blame for putting the people in danger. However, she succeeds in convincing Lt Waters to take some of the refugees with them to the Cameroon border post. Heroine stunt number one complete. During the first half of the film, pitiful images of injured refugees are shown and close-up shots are used to emphasise on how pitiful and helpless the refugees look. When asked why such horrific imagery, Fuqua says he was inspired to make the film and put it out there to get the 'Trustees of Africa' to try to get involved (Dokotum, 2012). 'Maybe by putting it out there… I might be able to save Africa if people get involved and try to help' (Faqua, 2003). It is the white man who thinks he can save Africa and it is the ideology that these Hollywood films are putting across.

As the Navy SEALs lead the people through the jungle in the film, Dr Kendricks becomes the voice of the voiceless. Speaking up for the people when she thinks that they needed rest. Surprisingly, all the refugees, including some fit young men, even the President's son's body guard look exhausted, but the doctor still does not look a notch tired. She is invincible, she is white, and she is their saviour. There is an entire movement based on an ideological strain in the West that the continent is in need of 'saviours' (Clark, 2015). When asked how she ended up in Africa, Dr Kendricks says:

I came here with my husband
we wanted to help…

The mes-en-scene at this this moment is of a dark jungle to reinforce the Dark Continent ideology.   It seems in Hollywood films, the whites come to Africa because they want to help.

Africa is in need of help because Africans are not capable of helping themselves, in-fact if left alone, they might even fight each other to extinction. Dr Kendricks is clearly a heroine as grateful Africans thank her for what she has done for them and tell her that they love her. What about what the President's son's body guard did for Lt Waters when he was about to be shot, who is going to thank him for that? The glare that Lt Water gives him is not clear if it's that of gratitude or shock. However the purpose of the film is for the whites to be the saviours and not the people of colour.

As if one saviour was not enough for one movie, the director brings in Lt Waters to be the ultimate saviour of the innocent, helpless Africans. Disobeying orders, the Lt risks his life and that of his men just to rescue the refugees and get them to safety. A cliché American story that is told over and over again in Hollywood films about African conflict. In *Tears of the Sun*, Willlis embodies America and enters a Third World war zone to save the Africans from themselves. The white saviour is portrayed as messianic and often learns something about himself or herself in the process. In a scene, one of the Navy SEALs asks Lt Waters what he is doing and he replies

I dont know yet

He says this with a serious and thoughtful facial expression which entails that although he does not have a plan yet, he knows he has to help these people somehow. In these films it is the responsibility of white people to save Africa, what is commonly known as 'The Whiteman's burden'. This kind of discourse is sustained by what Boggs and Pollard call 'messianic nationalism' (Boggs & Pollard, 2007). In the film, Dr Kendricks, Lt Waters and his men bring salvation. They are the saviours and it absolutely has nothing to do with God as Lt Waters clearly stated saying:

God has already left Africa

This is to say that the white man is so superior that even when God is not present, he can save the day. The 'real' African refugee characters in the movie are ideologically constructed to invoke pity at every level (Dokotum, 2012).

At the end of the film a refugee says to Lt Waters with tears in her eyes:

> *I'm sorry about your men*
> *I will never forget you*
> *God will never forget you*
> *Thank you.*

As she says these words she is crying as if to say without these people, they would have not made it. As she speaks, all the other black people stand behind and this image clarifies that she is speaking on behalf of all the black people. That is how much Africans are grateful to have such saviours. Without the white people no one knows what would have happened. White saviours are shown in films because Hollywood believes that they are their cash cow. They will go to lengths to create an African conflict that does not exist just so a white person can come and save the Africans caught up in the chaos. This trend, which keeps Hollywood's cast majority white with a few splashes of colour, generates white saviours often to either give white audiences a reference point they are comfortable with, or to soothe white guilt when addressing a touchy subject (Clark, 2015).

To the Western audience, white people are superior to the blacks and they are responsible of saving the blacks. They view Africa as a place that is full of helpless people who need white savours, a place with a people who cannot speak of fight for themselves. A place with poor infrastructure as most of the setting is in the jungle. Some African viewers when they watch this film also feel inferior to the white people. However, in African cultures men are expected

to be the protectors of the women and children and seeing how the African male refugees were degraded to be mere scared and helpless children is unreal. This depiction would most likely anger the African audience.

3.2.3 Sacrifice

'Saving' Africa is all the rage among celebrities. Hollywood is releasing a string of African morality tales (Zachary, 2006). The film *Tears of the Sun* depicts the selflessness of most white people and the helplessness of the black victims. All white characters in the film sacrifice their lives to save the lives of the people of colour. Whites are compassionate and will sacrifice their own lives to save the lives of the innocent refugees. Every activity and every decision made by any white character in the film is that of sacrifice.

Firstly the priest and the two nuns who the Navy SEALs have come to rescue if they wish to be rescued decide to risk their lives and stay behind with the injured refugee knowing the risks. The facial expressions of the refugees to this decision is that of fear which emphasises the kind of danger they were in and how risky this decision was. The injured also showed relief to this decision knowing that they had some superior beings who were willing to stay behind with them. The priest and the nuns have taken responsibility for the refugees and will not abandon them. The film depicts the generosity and selflessness of the white people who although they have a chance to escape decide to sacrifice their lives for the helpless Nigerians. Although they are privileged and superior, they are humble enough to care for the injured. The priest who tries to beg the rebels to spare the sick people's lives is then be-headed showing how his life was taken for the lives of others. More like Jesus in a way, dying for the sins of others. In this case, dying in a war that is not his. However, there is no volunteer from the refugees who decides to stay behind and help. All are most delighted to be

rescued and do not seem to think of their own people who are staying behind. This depicts the blacks as self-centred and uncaring.

Dr Kendricks is seen as a self-sacrificing doctor who fully aware of the risks is determined to stay with the refugees or take them with her. She doesn't seem to care what the Lt has to say, all she wants is for 'her people' to be safe. This is shown by the proxemics between her and the Lt which is so close that she has to look up at him when talking to him showing that she does not fear him. Dr Kendricks knows that a war is coming and she also knows that she could die but she does not seem to care. She wants to rescue the refugees even though they could slow them down. Although it means putting her life on the line, she has to save these people. Every time a Hollywood director shoots a film about Africa that features a Western protagonist, I shake my head -- because Africans, real people though we may be, are used as props in the West's fantasy of itself. And not only do such depictions tend to ignore the West's prominent role in creating many of the unfortunate situations on the continent, they also ignore the incredible work Africans have done and continue to do to fix those problems (Iweala, 2007). The film shows evidence that Africans are used as props. No African is one of the main characters although it's a film about Africa. It seems the white characters know more about what is going on in the country than the citizens of the country who are just quiet and helpless throughout the film. I hope people will realize Africa doesn't want to be saved (Iweala, 2007).

American exceptionalism has much to answer for. It has not only fuelled countless wars in its name, it has perpetuated the lie that the world could not survive without America – which is to say 'white America' – as the one indispensable nation, standing forth as a beacon of democracy and freedom, heroically defending civilization from the monsters that lurk beyond

(Wight, 2016). The film *Tears of the Sun* shows Lt Waters' sacrifice to attack rebels and bring the people to the Cameroon border. After seeing how the missionary had been burnt down, the Lt decides to disobey orders, putting his job on the line and tells the pilot to turn around. Keeping in mind that Lt Waters embodies America, it is clear that the only way that the refugees have a chance of survival is if him and his men save them.

Lt Waters' physical appearance shows that he is strong and his facial expressions show that he is a serious man who is focused on completing his mission. He hardly talks and seems only to say the important things which is evident in the dialogue. However out of his kind heart and well-known capability leads the refugees through the jungle which was used as a setting by the director to show how dangerous the journey was, to safety. Although his commander refuses to send them another helicopter, the Lt is determined to take the refugees on foot, increasing his chances of being killed by the rebel troops. It is a huge sacrifice since this war was not even theirs and his mission was not to save the refugees. When their commander calls telling them to leave the president's son because he is probably the reason they are being followed Lt Waters replies:

> *Does that mean that he is*
> *not human sir?...Sir you know*
> *as well as I do what's gonna happen*
> *to him if I leave him out here.*

The first question in the dialogue is a rhetoric one and is supposed to make the audience relate to the Lt's determination to save this man. After they find out that they are more at risk with the President's son, the Lt decides once again to sacrifice being attacked by the rebel troops than to leave him behind. He has taken it upon himself to save everyone he is with just like America has taken it upon itself to save the world. There is no African, myself included,

who does not appreciate the help of the wider world, but we do question whether aid is genuine or given in the spirit of affirming one's cultural superiority (Iweala, 2007). His sacrifice is too big a risk, knowing that he has less than ten men and the rebels are more than three hundred. However, a typical Western story always ends with the Western excelling. Their sacrifice always pays off and at the end of the day they are thanked for their kind deeds. Lt Waters even goes on to say to his commander:

> *But I can't on a good conscience*
> *do that without escorting these*
> *people to safety*

The white people are led by their good conscience. Without the white people to help out, the refugees would surely die. The Social Darwin Ideology comes into play at this point. These refugees are of an inferior race and therefore the Lt's conscience is telling him that they need him. He is prepared to do whatever it takes to save them. Consequently, racist and ethnocentric 'explanations' are inevitable amongst an audience with pre-existing assumptions about Black people and about the superiority of white, Western cultures (Liu, 2007).

This theme in the film would make the Western audience feel as if white people are God sent and very kind to the point that they will sacrifice their own lives to save black people. So to them they become superior and a better race than blacks. However the African audience feel they do not want to be saved. They want America to stay out of their conflict and want to solve it themselves.

3.2.4 Loyalty

Tears of the Sun shows the loyalty of Lt Waters and his team to rescue the refugees from the ethnic conflict. More importantly, most of Lt Waters' men were loyal to him and did not argue with him when he decided to disobey orders and rescue the refugees. Loyalty is

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regarded as one of the most important traits that one should have and the film portrays loyalty within the white westerns. However although there was loyalty among the team, the film portrays one black Navy SEAL who was not happy with what was going on at first and would question Lt Waters. The black Navy SEAL seemed unhappy with trying to save the refugees. On several occasions he shows a feeling of disgust and contempt towards the people of his own race. At one point he goes up to the Lt and asks with an expression of disapproval:

What are you doing?

Your mission?

The second question is a rhetoric one and is meant to remind the audience that this was not part of the mission. Hollywood is painting a picture that black people have no love or loyalty for each other. Instead of trying by all means to try and save people of his kind, he is disgusted by the thought. This poses a comparison effect where the white man would do just about anything to save his kind and the opposite is true for the black man. At the end of the day the humanitarian award goes to the superior white man. Later in the film when the black Navy SEAL as seen just about enough, decides he is going to help in saving the refugees. The director is saying that it takes a lot for a black man to want to help or for a black man to be moved to want to do good even if it's for someone or something close to him. As if he has only realised it, the black man says:

These are my people too

At this point is when he starts showing loyalty to his own kind. Whole entertainment scenes were sometimes filmed with black figures who could be easily spliced out and left as disembodied singing voices, simply to conform to the varying regional sensibilities of white movie goers (Clark, 2013).

Dr Kendricks also shows traits of loyalty to the refugees by not leaving them but doing everything in her power to take them to safety. Her efforts are shown by her kind gestures towards the refugees and authoritative tone towards the Lt. Her sweaty body and costume with the top button unbuttoned shows how hard working she is. She is devastated when they leave the refugees behind and fly off and she even cries. She obviously feels that they will think that she has broken her promise to take them to safety, that she is not loyal. Her loyalty is also seen when she keeps the President's son's secret from the Lt. This is evident when Lt Waters asks her with total astonishment:

> *You knew about this, you*
> *knew all the time and you*
> *didn't tell me.*

To which she replies:

> *I didn't trust you at the time*

Although the doctor knew how risky it was to be with the President's son and not to tell the Lt, she was loyal to him and kept his secret so that he could be rescued with the others. Her loyalty is also seen when a man who betrayed them is shot and she tries to save him because she says he is her friend. The director shows us what it takes to be superior and loyalty is one of the traits that one has to poses. The film shows us that these traits are found in the white people and that is why they are a superior race.

More so, the priest and the nuns show their loyalty firstly to their faith. Although knowing that there is an ethnic cleansing and that Christians are being killed still keep their missionary going. Secondly, they show their loyalty to the refugees by staying behind with the injured so that they can take care of them.

When white audiences see this, they then feel good about themselves because their superiority is justified by the traits that they poses. Which is mostly the aim of Hollywood films, to satisfy the white audience. However to African audiences, this may feel like the whites take advantage of a situation to appear loyal and good hearted.

3.3 Conclusion

Hollywood has not been able to resist the cult of celebrity white heroes and heroines who act as modern-day white missionaries speaking for, and seeking to "save", the helpless and ignorant natives from themselves (Adebajo, 2013). *Tears of the Sun* seeks to prove and further impose the Social Darwin Ideology in more ways than one. It divides the Africans into two groups of victims and savages. While it seems like just an ordinary story for entertainment purpose, the movie through its narrative structure and imagery bastardized continent of Africa for to affirm the cultural superiority, economical and political hegemony of the West. With strong symbolism (such as white doves flying away from the village after the white priest was beheaded), hackneyed expressions (such as "God already left Africa", "That's what they do"), metaphors and archetype imagery of "savages", "jungle", and "beasts" in which people with the "hearts of darkness" were killing themselves for no reason, it dehumanized and misrepresented 120 millions of Nigerians and people of Africa as whole (Ojo, 2003). Although the film has more black characters than white, the blacks only act as a back drop and are not really the main characters. A film about African with the Western as the main characters seems quite unrealistic. However this is the only way that the Socail Darwin ideology can be brought out in a film.

Moreover, Hollywood tends to create conflict in Africa that does not exist at all. If someone decides they have an idea for a film with unrealistic conflict they decide to make the setting Africa because no one really knows about Africa. Nigeria is more than "Fulanis and Igbos." There are over 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria. But just like the so-called white historians and experts on African affairs, who have never stepped their feet on African soils, the writer and producers of *Tears of the Sun* seemed to have just gathered information about "AFRICA" (which is a small village in the minds of many a man in the Western world) and ritually framed it within the familiar Western dominant cognitive model of "usual African tribal killing "and "barbarism" (Ojo, 2003). All African conflict that is portrayed by Hollywood results in a terrifying civil war that ends up killing thousands of innocents. There is no conflict that is settled amicably like the conflicts we see in Hollywood films about America. The flaws in representation are twofold, though connected. The first relates to authenticity. In movies set in Africa, there is often a sharp disconnect between what is portrayed on the screen and reality (Lambert, 2008). At least at the end the white men triumphed and the blacks are grateful to their saviours.

Chapter 4

HOTEL RWANDA

4.0 Introduction

In this the chapter the writer analyses the film *Hotel Rwanda* and attempts to showcase the presence of the Darwinism theory, racism and conflict as portrayed by the Hollywood filmmakers. The writer looks at the film techniques used to help with these portrayals. Furthermore the writer extracts themes within the film which will further help to understand how the above mentioned portrayals were used. The film techniques that the writer will look at are, music and the effect it has on the audience, camera angles to emphasise a point, dialogue and props to convince the audience and reinforce Western ideologies.

4.1 Synopsis

Hotel Rwanda was produced in 2005 and directed by Terry George. The film is based on true genocide events that happened in Rwanda in 1994. There was a conflict between two ethnical groups, the Tutsi and the Hutu over land ownership. When the Rwandan President who was a Hutu, was shot down from a plane, the Hutu blamed the Tutsi. The Hutu who were the majority also blamed the Tutsi of taking their land and treating them like slaves. So the Hutu decided to take upon themselves to wipe out the whole Tutsi tribe by killing every Tutsi in Rwanda. The story follows one man, Paul Rusesabagina (Don Cheadle), a manager at a Belgian owned four star hotel, who helped over 1,200 Tutsi and Hutu refugees. Initially Paul was just worried about his family but when he comes home to find his neighbours and friends taking refuge in his house, he decides to help them. The next morning he takes them to Des Mille Collines hotel where he worked and bribes the commander of the Hutu army not to kill his Tutsi friends. The UN peacemakers protected the hotel so many other Tutsis decided to

take refuge in it. The peacemakers left after the violence worsened leaving behind just a few men. Foreign governments sent troops to evade foreigners whom where in the country. The Rwandans were left alone with no outside help. Paul tells the refugees to call their loved ones in other countries so they could demand their governments to help. It works and some refugees are taken to the airport by UN trucks, on the way they are stopped by the Hutu militia who attempt to kill the refugees. The UN decide to take the refugees back to the hotel. Colonel Oliver (UN) announces that he has a plan to get the refugees to safety. The refugee load into trucks provided by the UN. On the way they see millions of homeless Tutsis trying to escape the terror. The trucks finally reach the refugee camp and Paul Rusesabagina, his family and all of the members of the hotel were lead to safety.

4.2 Content Analysis

The themes that the writer analyses in the film *Hotel Rwanda* are, Africans cannot tell their own stories, Africans cannot solve their own conflicts, and The 'Based on a true story' discourse. These themes will help bring out the Social Darwin ideology, conflict and racism as portrayed in the film. The researcher will also outline the filmic techniques used in the film and the effects they have on the audience.

4.2.1 Africans cannot tell their own stories

Africans have been portrayed in many Hollywood films to be unable to tell their own stories. *Hotel Rwanda* is no exception. Many a times there are Western journalists present in these films, capturing the horrific events happening in Africa and these journalists are mostly whites. In *Hotel Rwanda* a British Journalist has come to capture what is happening in Rwanda so that he will be able to tell the world Rwanda's story. Cameras and microphones are used to show how serious these journalists are about telling the African story. There are no local journalists shown and it seems the locals actually rely on the West to tell their story.

In one scene, Jack, the journalist askes his superior to go and shoot what is going on outside the hotel and is denied permission. He then says to his superior:

David, the shit is going down outside

these walls, we gotta cover it

Using a swear word which is dirty reveals that what is being referred to is hideous and outrageous. Jack seems to be determined to cover the violence that's happening. His facial expression is that of hunger to get this story and his restless movement shows the audience that he is losing his patience. He has made it his responsibility to tell the African story and he will go to any lengths to do it. If he doesn't, the events of this horrible genocide will be lost forever. No African can write that story, or at least not from an African perspective. African writing and publishing has been systematised to be an extension of Western or European thinking and imagination about the continent and its people. An African writer is not encouraged to come up with a new variation or interpretation of what happens in Africa (Memela, 2014). Jack then takes terrifying footage of the Hutu militia with machetes, killing the Tutsis in broad daylight. The use of machetes is supposed to show the audience how dire the situation in Rwanda is. The footage is taken to be evidence to the world of how brutal Africans are to one another, thereby portraying African conflict as brutal and barbaric. The film technique used to impose these portrayals was that of props, that is the machetes which symbolise brutality. The head journalist immediately calls the broadcasting channels in his country to put the footage on the evening news. Since these journalists do not know the history of Rwanda, their story might be distorted as opposed to an African telling the story. However, Memela (2014) argues that Africans do write stories but he says "Firstly, your perspective must uphold and promote the West as this great centre of democracy. Secondly, this writing must feed the stereotypes and prejudices people in this great democracy hold about Africa. Thirdly, African writing must be filled with self-hate where the chief characters

are people who serve the interests of the West. Thus the storyline and characterisation and plot must see the characters saying: it is very good to be puppets of the West." Looking at Memela's three observations about African writers it cannot be said the writer is an 'African writer' but a Western using the African to the story through the Western eye.

When Paul sees the footage, he believes that it is their way to get help from the western countries. He says to the journalist:

> *I am glad that you have shot this*
> *footage, and that the world will see*
> *It is the only way we have a chance that*
> *people will intervene.*

This statement proves that if the white journalist had not taken that footage as an effort to tell the world what is happening then they might not get any help. Africans rely on other people to tell their stories for them. This is exactly the message that the director is trying to convey through the characterization of white journalists.

The director is also another example of a western telling the African story. "Terry George, the director of Hotel Rwanda, stated that he made the film as 'a message for peace'. He believed that even though Western media reported what was taking place in Rwanda between April and July of 1994, many people were not really aware of the brutality and scale of events or even if they were, could not imagine exactly what this meant in human terms. He also felt that it was important to point out the lack of support from the West for the Rwandans going through this crisis" (Abbott, 2006). Terry George felt he had to help Africa, and by telling their story for them, then he would get the world to intervene and try to bring peace in Africa. This brings out the Darwinism ideology in the director because he thinks he can help the blacks since he is more human than they are. The Africans cannot help themselves because

they do not know how to tell their own stories and seek for help if need be. According to Bossik (2005), Terry George says,

> *I flew to Belgium and met Paul and learned*
> *of his life: how he became a hotelier, how he*
> *rose through the ranks of employees in the*
> *various Sabena hotels he worked in, and how*
> *he ended up at the Hotel Mille Collines in Kigali…*
> *This was a story that had to be told…*

Senator Romeo Dallaire, the Canadian general who led the overwhelmed UN peacekeepers during the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, made a promise the night he left Kigali. "I promised never to let the Rwandan Genocide die because I knew the Rwandans didn't have much power internationally and certainly didn't have the resources. I felt it was my duty having witnessed it, and having stayed to witness it, that I had to talk about it and keep it going," Dallaire told Huffington Post Canada (Ostroff, 2011). The whites make it their mission to tell a story that is not theirs. They are more interested in the African stories than they are in their own. There are a lot of Western people who have written books, articles, films about the Rwandan Genocide but all Paul Rusesabagina did was to give word of mouth to the westerners so that they can tell the story.

This gives the Western viewer the feeling of superiority which is obviously the point. The Social Darwin ideology is infused into their minds and as they watch this film they feel good about their fellow Westerners' efforts to let the world know about this horrendous situation. It also makes them think that Africa is so backward that she does not even have the resources to document events. However African viewers have a different feeling. Firstly anger is directed towards Paul Rusesabagina for failing to come up with the film himself and for relying on the

West to do it, who then exaggerated and omitted certain events. Secondly an African viewer would feel insulted for not having a black journalist covering the story.

4.2.2 Africans cannot solve their own conflicts

African conflict is most considered by the rest of the world as unreasonable and stupid. It doesn't make sense and results in people dying for no actual good reason. In *Hotel Rwanda,* the conflict that was between the Hutus and the Tutsis seems to the outsiders within Rwanda rather silly. Having facial features and appearance as the factors that determined the ethnic group that one belongs in sounded hilarious, especially to the British journalist, Jack. In this scene Jack asks a man at the bar what the difference is between Hutus and Tutsis. The man explains that it is all according to the Belgian colonists who made the division by measuring people's noses. Those with thinner noses and lighter skin were the Tutsis and the darker ones were the Hutu. This division by the Belgians that is explained brings out the Social Darwin ideology where it was up to the whites to make a division among the blacks and moreover using the most ridiculous way to do it, and yet the blacks complied even in the post-colonial era. That unbelievably ridiculous division has brought conflict among Africans. According to Cohen (1995) 'the sources and consequences of Africa's internal conflicts have their roots in colonialism, the subsequent processes of de-colonisation and state formation, and the ensuing crisis of nation building'. Jack asks two ladies by the bar if they were Hutu or Tutsi and one responds that she is Tutsi and the other is Hutu. In total astonishment Jack says:

They could be twins

This shows how absurd and laughable the division is. The director uses close up shots of the girls to show how much they looked alike despite the verbally constructed ethnical division. He also uses an over the shoulder shot from Jack's side so that the audience could look at the

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girls from Jack's angle and perspective. This was done for the purpose of the audience to agree with Jack and also share his confusion about the Hutu and Tutsi division that the blacks are so eager to follow blindly. In *Hotel Rwanda*, the Tutsis are represented as victims and the Hutus as savages. Simplistically framing the conflict along the lines of "good guys/bad guys" does not help the cause of human rights, but refuels anger, reinforces polarizing dichotomies, and makes conflict-resolution difficult (Ashuntantang, 2012). The conflict and division was so nonsensical that a child even noticed it. This is revealed when Madam Archer tells Paul that a child cried out as she was being killed that she promised not to be Tutsi anymore. The statement shows that even a child could see that if the division makes people fight then why should it be there at all. However, a film review from the Carnegie council argues that 'The history of the peoples of Rwanda and its neighbouring countries is complex and disputed, so inevitably this movie contains some simplifications. For instance, a conversation between a journalist and a Rwandan at the hotel bar gives the impression that there were no social distinctions between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda before Belgian colonial rule. The reality was not so simple. Prior to Belgian colonial rule, it seems that were distinctions between Hutu and Tutsi, but they were primarily economic rather than racial. The Tutsis were the aristocracy and the Hutu were the common people. It was not impossible to change status, and "become" a powerful Tutsi (which means "rich in cattle") or an ordinary Hutu.

Africans are not capable of solving their own conflicts and always wait for someone to intervene according to Hollywood films. This is evidenced in *Hotel Rwanda* on several occasions. Firstly when Paul says to the journalist if people see the footage they would come and intervene. At this moment his facial expression is so hopeful and innocent like that of a child waiting for his dad to carry him. This shows that Africans are used to being saved all the time. It is mostly seen when after Paul was excited that help had come upon seeing the UN trucks and bus coming, Colonel approached him and delivered some bad news says:

You are dirt, we think you are dirt Paul…

The West, the super powers, everything you

believe in Paul, they think you are dumb and

worthless…

You are black, you not even a nigger

You are African.

The repetition of the word 'dirt' emphasises how the West despise Africans. The West know that Africans cannot solve their own conflict and this time they would not be bothered to even come and help, because Africans are worthless. A racist aspect also comes out here where the West think that Africans are dumb and worthless. They even fall under the niggers in terms of social stratification. A social Darwinist ideology aspect is also revealed when the colonel mentions the West among the super powers. The literature on African conflicts appears to view the conflicts mainly in general terms as intra-national or inter-ethnic. This view holds good to some extent, but it is far from being the general trend (Achernkeng, 2013).

Western viewers agree with Jack about how silly the division between the Hutus and Tutsis is and how that division is bringing about so much conflict. They may also agree with the colonel's words that Africa is worthless and dirty and it would be a waste to use their resources in trying to help them. The Western viewer are to feel that Africans are like puppets who would blindly follow to the most ridiculous decisions as long as they are made by a white person. After seeing how ridiculous this division is, an African viewer would be angry at the whites for imposing such rules. It makes the Africans look back at the colonial era and realise they were being manipulated. However, it brings some thought into the African's mind about why Africans are still following some colonial systems.

4.2.3 The 'Based on a true story' discourse

Most Hollywood films about Africa are said to be based on a true story. This is a strategy for the film to get more sales as people want to see what is happening in Africa and to get awards for being humanitarian. *Hotel Rwanda* is without a doubt one such film which claims to accurately reconstruct the genocide in Rwanda. Yes, there was a genocide in Rwanda in 1994, no one denies that, but with the way it is depicted in the film, can we then truly say it is based on a true story when some of the events in the film are false? Dokotum (2012) asks "is *Hotel Rwanda* based on a true story? Even if we were to say, yes, what exactly does it mean for it to be "based" on a "true story"?' Thomas Leitch argues that it *does not mean* "the film is an accurate record of historical events" since the claim is "always strategic or generic rather than historical or existential" (Leitch 2009, p. 282 cited Dokotum 2013). The events in Hotel Rwanda are not all accurate as is seen that some scenes were only constructed to spice up the film but they did not really happen in real life. An example is the scene where Paul and his wife are having a romantic dinner at the roof top and their view of stars is disturbed by gunshots. Here Paul tells his wife that if things get worse she must jump from the rooftop with the kids. However, the director used the setting to produce this conversation so that the audience could picture the conversation better. He also used juxtapose of stars which are beautiful and peaceful and gunshot which are terrifying and deadly to show how horrific and serious the genocide was. Originally this conversation did not happen on the roof top as it is clear that this was an intentional filmic technic.

The film also follows the story of Paul and his family which means we see this film from Paul's point of view and what he remembers, what he wishes to exaggerate and what he wishes to distort. To make the story true, the director should have taken many survivors' view point not just one man's. There have been controversies about this and many people are

angered by the film. There is an inherent danger in repackaging recent history for Hollywood because distortion can creep into the accepted version of events, and fiction readily becomes established fact (Melvern, 2011). Many people who do not know what actually happened in Rwanda will tend to believe what they see in the film. This will instantly make the Hutus monsters and the Tutsis innocents and more importantly Paul the only hero in viewers' minds. Whichever way you look at it, the film *Hotel Rwanda* is to a large degree removed from the reality of what happened at de Mille Collines (Dokotum, 2013). Hyden White explains that historical facts in themselves cannot constitute a story, but provide "story *elements*" at best. For it to become a "story" it has to be *made* by "the suppression or subordination of certain… [elements] and the highlighting of others, by characterization, motific repetition, variation of tone, and point of view… (White, 1985, p. 84 cited in Dokotum 2013). It is not only survivor testimony that could call Rusesabagina's version of events into question – although this may be damning enough, for he is accused of extorting money from hotel guests for rooms and for food. The cheques he accepted for rent were cashed in Gitarama, where the interim government had established its premises (Melvern, 2011). The problem with distorting events is that there are always witnesses who will testify differently. "Rusesabagina is no Schindler," columnist Job Jabiro wrote in Rwanda's New Times daily in February. "Publicity hound, genocide revisionist, promoter of ethnic hate speech ... shamelessly banking on the genocide and endangering the survivors." (World news, 2007).

Many events in the film directed by Terry George and starring Don Cheadle were based on Rusesabagina's memoirs, yet survivors of the Hotel des Mille Collines have disputed Rusesabagina's version of events. Pasa Mwenenganucye was a receptionist, portrayed in the film as Gregoire, a hedonistic worker who occupies the presidential suite and sips champagne as killings escalate. "The movie is Hollywood fiction. If it's (supposed to be) a true story,

then it's a basket of lies," he told Reuters. Mwenenganucye, furious at the way he was portrayed, accused Rusesabagina of kicking out refugees who failed to pay their bills, a charge Rusesabagina denies (World news, 2007). "I think the only value of 'Hotel Rwanda' is the fact that it keeps the Rwandan genocide alive, but as far as content, it's Hollywood," Dallaire said. "When people use the term Hollywood in a pejorative way, (it's because) they produce junk like that."(Ostroff, 2011). However, not all the blame can be put on Rusesabagina because there are some events that he told that Hollywood did not show for it would not go with the Hollywood happy ending ideology. The real Rusesabaginas were transported by the Rwandan Patriotic Front, not by the UN. Kabuga, Rusesabagina wrote, "was no camp in the conventional sense. It was a looting zone … I, too, was among those who had to forage for food." It is true, as the film shows, that the Rusesabaginas were reunited with their two infant nieces in Kabuga, but they were not so well-looked-after as they appear to be in the film. "Both of the children were covered in dirt and appeared to be starving and barely alive," Rusesabagina wrote. "They had been living for months on ground-up chicken feed." Kabuga was run like a prison, he wrote: "Weeping filled the air." (Tunzelmann, 2014). Some scholars argue and believe the film if a revelation of the horror that is in Africa and how the rest of the world turns away from it all. When audiences see *Hotel Rwanda*, they will learn that the world turned its back on the people of Rwanda. They will also learn that Paul Rusesabagina, an ordinary man, risked his own life to save many of his fellow Rwandan citizens (Bossik, 2005). . Though fictionalized, *Hotel Rwanda* is based on a true and graphically disturbing story. As a Hollywood film, it reaches millions of people who will arguably view the film as their historical source of record on this genocide (Ashuntantang, 2012). If a film is fictionalized then it seizes to be a true story. However controversial these claims might be, the "true story" tag of *Hotel Rwanda* is highly

problematic for genocide memory at large although Rusesabagina has gone on to amass great wealth and endless accolades from the west as the Schindler of Africa.

This film leans more to the fantasy side rather than a true story and an African viewer would be a bit sceptical and slow to believe it. To them, the kind of violence is overly exaggerated and the fact that Paul always stumbles into the most terrifying situations during the genocide. The level of racism in the film is disheartening to the African audience. However the Western audience easily believe this film because of some stereotypes about Africa being a violent place and how Africans are not afraid to kill that have circulated for a long time. The most obvious reason this film is believable to a Western audience is that the West as usual saved the day.

4.3 Conclusion

Hollywood is known for producing quality films but now also for producing lies about African and many a times they having an African helping them in their quest. It is sad to see how Africa and Africans are portrayed in the film *Hotel Rwanda*, a film that is labelled 'based on a true story' when a lot of the content is nonsense. By having other people tell our stories, imposing Darwinism ideologies, emphasising on racism and portraying African conflicts in the wrong way degrades Africa in the worst way. Terry George was able to do this in *Hotel Rwanda* by using impressive film techniques to reach out better to the viewers and make believe.

Chapter 5

BLOOD DIAMOND

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter the writer analysis the film *Blood Diamond.* The writer tries to analyse the themes in the film and find out the relationship between Hollywood and how it portrays African conflict, racism and the Social Darwin ideology. The writer looks at such film techniques as, characterization, dialogue, and camera shots to support the themes in the film *Blood Diamond.*

5.1 Synopsis

Blood Diamond is set in 1999 in Sierra Leone where a fierce civil war has killed thousands of innocent civilians and driven more than a million people out of their homes and villages and into refugee camps. Solomon Vandy (Djimon Hounsou) who is fisherman in a village in Sierra Leone, has a wife, two daughters, and a son, Dia (Kagiso Kuypers). He is very proud of his son, who is 12 and a good student who wants to become a doctor. However one day heavily armed rebels who are against Sierra Leone's government and fighting their troops roll into town and slaughter men, women, and children in cold blood. Solomon's family manages to escape but Dia is taken away soon after to be trained as a child soldier with the rebels.

However Solomon is captured and forced to work in a camp mining diamonds. The diamonds mined are used to get money for arms for the rebels. One day as he is mining, the fisherman discovers a large pink diamond and buries it before he is caught by Captain Poison (David Harewood). This amoral rebel solider is also in charge of turning the young boys into vicious killers. He appoints Dia as captain of the boys after he makes him shoot a man. The boys are

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given nicknames like "Baby Killer," "Born Trouble," "See Me No More." He justifies his actions by saying, "You think I am a devil, but that's only because I have lived in hell. I want out."

Danny Archer (Leonardo DiCaprio) is another African who wants out, he is a Rhodesian smugger and ex-mercenary who discovers about the pink diamond in prison. He believes this diamond is the key to his own exit from Africa. He convinces Solomon that if he givews him the diamond, he will help him find his family. He also helps Solomon to get out of prison. These two very different Africans face a formidable challenge in getting around during the civil war.

Maddy Bowen (Jennifer Connelly), is an American journalist and adrenalin junkie who wants to cover a story about "conflict stones" or "blood diamonds". It's been estimated that 15% of the world's diamond market consists of conflict stones. She wants to expose the corrupt corporate malfeasance behind the traffic in diamonds and he thinks that she can achieve this with Archer's help. He also needs her to help him get to where the pink diamond was buried by using her connections.

Archer and Maddy are attracted to each other but have very different perspectives. She is an idealist who is focused on exposing corruption; she wants to let the world know that the diamond rings they buy are costing many lives and is convinced that with this knowledge people will not buy these rings. Archer on the other hand is a cynic who believes that people use each other and aiming for number one is the way to go; besides, in Africa, the way of life is killing each other. On his journey to locate the diamond with Solomon, Archer's eyes are opened to some enduring values that transcend his own self-interest.

5.2 Content Analysis

The themes that the writer analyses in the film *Blood Diamond* are, Africa is a dark continent,

White protectors and dominance, and People have different values. These themes will help

bring out the Social Darwin ideology, conflict and racism as portrayed in the film. The writer

also outlines the filmic techniques used in the film and the effects they have on the audience.

5.2.1 Africa is a dark continent

Critics have often praised the film *Blood Diamond* for exposing the corrupt Western world

for taking conflict stones and selling them so they can attain wealth while Africa suffers.

However, the film is not all roses as it still, like many other Hollywood films about Africa,

paints the wrong picture about Africa and portrays it as a dark continent. The bad messages

are not about the diamonds but about the people of Africa. In scene after scene, the African

population serves as backdrop for the main story about love and ambition involving two

white protagonists, a young reporter (Jennifer Connelly) and a tough, ruthless diamond

smuggler and former mercenary (Leonardo DiCaprio). The director of *Blood Diamond,*

Edward Zwick, uses dialogue to emphasise on the point that Africa is a dark continent, which

is quite a different technique from other directors who use a mixture of dialogue and

establishing shots.

Firstly the main character Danny Archer resents the continent and makes several statement

about how much he wants to get out of it. He declares that Africa is not worth living because

it is ever at war and is nothing but a dark continent. A place where people kill each other as a

way of living. Archer makes this clear to Maddy when he says:

> *People here kill each other as*
>
> *a way of life, its always been like*
>
> *that*

There is nowhere in the world where people kill as a way of life. Africa, although having its flaws just like any other continent also lives in peace and harmony. This statement is supported by images of children being bitten with long sticks, women and children being shot and killed. But the RUF had terror on its side. Composed almost entirely of illiterate and drugged teenagers, the rebels respected no boundaries in conducting the war. Mass rape, torture, random executions, looting, and cannibalism were among their strategic resources. But their signature war crime was amputation (Campbell, 2002). The rebels were heartless, rejoicing in the death of people. This is shown by their celebration where they would drink and sing after a successful day of killing. That is the Dark Continent, the continent where death and killing is like a hobby. A continent where killing is a way of life. This is evidenced by the props which were mostly guns that the rebels would always have.

Moreover, Archer is a racist and despises the black people. He refuses to acknowledge that Zimbabwe is now under the black rule and insists on calling it Rhodesia. Even after he is corrected by Maddy, he still calls it Rhodesia. Archer strongly believes that Africa is a dark continent that has even been abandoned by God. This is evident when he says to Maddy:

> *I look around and realise,*
> *God left this place a long time ago*

God said, I am the light. So if God has left Africa then it surely means there is darkness in Africa, therefore making it a Dark Continent. No one wants to live in a place where God does not exist, certainly not Archer who time and time again declares:

> *Do you think if I had a stone like that*
> *I would still be on this continent?*

This rhetoric question implies that Archer is disgusted of being in Africa. It seems Archer despises Africa so much although it is where he grew up. He would grab any chance he gets to escape Africa. Archer is the director's tool in driving the wrong connotations about African conflict. Archer seems to be telling the audience that Africa is a war zone. In another scene, Archer is again seen saying:

> *That diamond is my ticket out of*
> *this God forsaken continent.*

Danny Archer's racist traits are also evinced when he threatens to kill Solomon after he almost got them killed when he shouted his son's name. Archer wakes Solomon up and tells him a story making a resemblance of Solomon to a baboon. He says:

> *I used to have a friend named Maboko.*
> *We used to go hunt bush meat together*
> *with his kids. Baboons, baboons, they*
> *were the hardest to catch, they are cunning,*
> *fast, strong, got a good eyesight,*
> *but we would always find them by the smell*
> *of their shit. And that's how we learnt to track*
> *your black terrorists in Angola, by the smell*
> *of your shit.*

His body language and movement while saying this is very frightening as he is skinning a baboon. In this statement, the director is telling the audience that Africans are similar to baboons. They are like animals. Archer goes ahead to place a baboon's dead body next to Solomon as if to show the audience the resemblance. When Solomon Vandy is constantly harassed by Archer to tell him where the diamond is to be found, he is at once exploiting him (Custom Essay,). The character of Archer is that of a loyal person to the colonel who brought him into the business, but who wants out. His character has been set to be that of a person who grew up in Africa and therefore knows Africa a little more that many white men. This was done so that when he starts painting the wrong picture about Africa, the audience will believe him because he would know better.

Having a white character who grew up in Africa automatically makes the Western audience believe whatever he says about Africa. This will then make the Western viewers think Africans are like animals, baboons in this case. It also makes them hate Africa because of the way the place is described by Archer. African viewers on the other hand feel sorry for Solomon and the way that he is treated by Archer and yet he is trying to help him get the diamond so he can get his family back. The way Archer describes Africa and how he refers to it in the colonial terms angers African viewers.

5.2.2 White Protectors and dominance

Africa needs help and the only people who can do that are the white people because Africans have been time and again described as 'The Whiteman's burden'. Even unscrupulous white guys can transform themselves into white saviours in Africa according to films like *Blood Diamond.* As the film begins, a meeting is held in America and a man presents that:

> *Throughout the history of Africa,*
> *whenever a substance of value is*
> *found, the locals die in great numbers*
> *and misery. Now this is true of ivory.*
> *rubber, gold, it is now true of diamond.*
> *According to a devastating report by a*
> *global witness, these stones are being used*
> *to purchase arms and finance civil war.*
> *We must act to prohibit direct or indirect*
> *import of all robbed diamonds from comfort*
> *zones.*

According to this statement, only the west out of their generosity can stop the chaos that is in Africa. They are the dominant country and the dominant race and therefore can control the whole world, especially Africa. It is up to them to protect Africans from killing themselves. Thus in the film *Blood Diamond,* the characterization of black people is to give room for the

whites to protect them. What is absolutely indefensible, however, is the simplistic portrayal of almost every single black character. Each one is either a mindless killer and pillager or a childlike noble savage and feeble victim (Ransby, 2006). Although there was a disagreement in the meeting, there are many white people who believe that it is their responsibility to save and protect Africa. Some however feel that they are dominant and own the whole world as evidence in a reply to the above stament by another white man who says:

> *May I remind you that the US*
> *is responsible for two thirds of all*
> *diamonds purchases Worldwide and*
> *I don't anticipate that demand diminishing*

This statement shows the dominance of America, especially white America.

We also see Maddy, the journalist as a white protector of the black people. Maddy is involved with the American media, as she is trying to find a story that will break open how Archer is stealing these diamonds through armed involvement in local politics and militias. This is her main motive as loyalist for the African peoples (Custom Essay). Maddy lashes out at Archer in one scene when he insults Africans and says to him:

> *Not all American girls want a*
> *story book wedding just like not*
> *all Africans kill each other as a*
> *way of life.*

Her facial expression is that of anger. Maddy seems to come to the rescue of Africans against Archer's perceptions which is probably what the audience also thought about the Africans. She is protecting the Africans' reputation and dismissing Archer's point of view about an ugly, violent Africa. Maddy's character is that of the voice of the voiceless, where she uses her magazine to tell the story about Africa and how the West is corrupt. According to Custom Essays, "Solomon, on the other hand, is a person acting out of desperation for the survival of

his family, and cannot be seen as a person acting unethically when he steals the blood diamond. He is merely using the diamond as a way to get enough money to free his family, and to find a stable way of life so that they can live in peace. Maddy also supports this idea, as she often is acting through a moral perspective to reveal how Danny exploits the native Africans for personal wealth. She explains her goal of detailing how blood diamonds or "conflict diamonds" come to Europe and the United States at the expense of Africans:

> *The people back home [in America and*
> *in Europe] wouldn't buy a ring if they*
> *knew it cost someone else their hand.*

Solomon also admires Maddy and sees her as his protector. He thanks her for everything she has done for him when she is about to leave for New York. Their proxemics is just close enough to show gratitude and submission. She is the one who helped him find his family. Without her he might never have known where they were. At one point Solomon asks Maddy innocently:

> *So when people read it they will*
> *come and help us, yes?*

He absolutely depends on Maddy and that she will bring help for his country. A Social Darwin ideology imposed on the audience through the characterization of Maddy. Another time where Maddy showed the superiority of the white people is a scene when they had been caught by some African men and Solomon was trying to explain himself to the men so they would not kill them but was failing. Maddy simply stepped forward, took her camera and talked to the men like they were little kids saying to them:

> *Maybe everyone can come together,*
> *nice and close, that's good, yeah*
> *how about one together?*

Her tone was that of baby talk. Grown men were belittled and brought down to the size of little children because the voice of a superior being had spoken. Being soothed by mere photographs depicted Africa as a backward continent that does not know technology. When they get to a place where children are being kept and educated, the kids are fascinated by the white people and run to them asking all sorts of questions.

Solomon also decided to trade the diamond for the protection of his family from the white man. Archer being racist as he is, uses a most hurtful language when trying to convince Solomon that he would help him find his family. His exactly words were:

> *I know people, white people,*
> *without me you are just another*
> *black man in Africa.*

What is wrong with being a mere black man in Africa? The director is telling the audience that to be a black person of significance in Africa one needs a white man beside him. After hearing these words, these spiteful words, Solomon agrees to go with Archer to find the stone. On their journey they get into a fight and Solomon tells Archer that he is not the master to which Archer replies:

> *Right now that's exactly what I am*
> *and you better remember that kefir*

Kefir is the worst racist word one can utter. To add to that, Archer calls Solomon a 'boy', another world that was used on black men during the colonial era. Despite all this horrible language, Solomon is still loyal to Archer as if he was for sure his master. Solomon also seems to admit that white people are superior and more civilised than the black people when he speaks to Archer saying:

> *I know good people who say there*
> *is something wrong with us, inside our*
> *black skin, that we were better off when*

the white man ruled.

Here the director uses Solomon to admit that Africa will never do well without the white man ruling. Africa needs a superior race and cannot survive under their own rule. Africans are cursed and are not capable of living in harmony with each other. They cannot have peace amoung themselves if there is no white man. Dia, Solomon's son also seems to admire the white people when he says to his father:

English boys don't go to school
everyday.

Archer also shows that he does not fear because he belongs to a superior race when he gets to a rebel's base and a captain forbids him from entering. He simply and fearlessly hands over his gun and walks straight past the captain and his men. Another character who portrays the superiority of the white man is the Colonel. However corrupt he may be, both the rebels and the government rely on him because he is white and he can do anything, like he has super powers.

This film surely give the Western audience the confidence that they are dominant to the Africans. They also feel that Africans are uncivilised and feel inferior to the whites. Africans need to be protected. They feel pity for blacks. African audiences feel justice has not been done in this film as they are portrayed as savages or little children who need the whites' help and protection. The level or racism in the film is infuriating to African audiences.

5.2.3 People's different values

The film *Blood Diamond* has three main characters who have entirely different values. According to (Brussat, 2007), in an interview, Zwick has said:

To me this movie is about what is valuable.

To one person it might be a stone; to someone

else, a story in a magazine; to another, it is a child.

The juxtaposition of one man obsessed with finding

a valuable diamond with another man risking his life

to find his son is the beating heart of this film.

Solomon is a man of virtue who out of everything else in the world values his family. When he cannot find his son, Solomon risks his life just so he can be with his son again. His son is all he talks about and he tells Archer that his son is a good boy who is learning English to become a doctor. Solomon would even trade a valuable stone for the life of his son. He is captured by his own son at a rebels' base after trying to rescue him. He even fills the audience with tears when he talks to his son who is about to shoot him:

Dia, what are you doing? You are a

good boy who loves soccer and school…

I know they made you do bad things, but

you are not a bad boy. I am your father who

loves you and you are going back home

with me to be my son again.

Solomon pours out his heart to his son and even cries, showing how much he values him. This shows that there is love among Africans and it is not just about conflict. Africans are just like any other people who love their families and would do anything to protect them. In a practical manner, Solomon is acting morally by seeking his family and doing anything that he can to get them back (Custom Essays, 2007).

Maddy is a journalist who mostly values her magazine and writing stories that will save Africa from a corrupt Western world. For Maddy, it is the story that will make her famous or

respected as a journalist—she is merely an observer compared to Solomon. Maddy cannot possibly understand her own moral voice within Solomon's condition, simply because she has not lived through it as a victim of imperial racism and the military violence involved (Custom Essays). Maddy respects the rule of law, as she is the moral voice in the story trying to bring out a story that would incriminate De Kaap and his associates. Maddy is willing to help Archer as long as he gives her the story that she wants. This story is so important to her that she is devastated when Archer and Solomon leave her behind. She wants to be the voice of the voiceless. She holds the Social Darwin ideology that being a white journalist, she can help out the helpless Africans.

Archer values wealth and this huge stone is worth getting because it is his way out of the 'God forsaken continent'. Archer knows that if he gets this stone he will be very rich and he can go and live a luxurious life abroad. He is willing to go to lengths to find the stone, even if it means entering a war zone. For Danny, it is the real possibility of gaining enough money to pay back Coetzee and leave Sierra Leone (Custom Essays, 2007).

To the Western audience, Archer and Maddy the white characters pretty much saved the lives of Solomon and his son. White people have good hearts and although Archer wasn't so nice at first, he did a noble thing at the end. Although the values of the whites here seem selfish, the end result is of them saving a black man and his family and therefore the viewers feel soothed and good about themselves. This theme contradicts with the Social Darwinist ideology because the black character seems to have better values than the white characters. The African audience relate to Solomon in putting his family first because family in African culture is very important. They also see white people as greedy for putting themselves first in the case of Maddy wanting to be famous and Danny wanting to be wealthy, just like they were greedy when they came to colonise Africa.

5.3 **Conclusion**

The screenplay by Charles Leavitt zeroes in on several important subjects that have not been dealt with in other feature films. The first is the violation of the souls of children like Dia who are taken from their families and put in training camps where they are brainwashed to become merciless killers held in check by drugs, liquor, and the idea of their own power over others (Brussat, 2007). *Blood Diamond* still depicts Africa as an ugly place to be. That those in it want to get out for it is not a place to be. The film has not done any justice to Africa by exposing corrupt Western companies, because it still supports myths and stereotypes about Africa and its people being helpless creatures. It is full of racist perception embodied by Archer. At the conclusion of Edward Zwick's *Blood Diamond,* Ambassador Walker lectures an audience about the complicity of Westerners in the human crises fuelled by conflict diamonds in Sierra Leone. The target audience for Walker's speech is not the actors playing attendees at the staged meeting in Kimberley, South Africa, of course, but rather the spectators watching the film. Before Solomon can speak, the film ends. As if to say, Africa still has no perspective or what he has to say is not worth listening to. Although the Ambassador says not to ignore that world (third world) anymore, Solomon's voice remains ignored.

Chapter 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 SUMMARY

Research Aim

This study looked at the Social Darwinism ideology, racism and conflict in selected Hollywood films about Africa with the case study of *Tears of the Sun, Hotel Rwanda* and *Blood Diamond*. It set out to interrogate the interaction of Social Darwinism ideology, race and conflict in selected Hollywood films about Africa.

Theoretical Framework

To deduce the information, the researcher used the Reception theory which provides a means of understanding media texts by understanding how these texts are read by audiences. An important concept of reception theory is that the media text such as individual movie or television programme has no inherent meaning in and of itself. Thus the reception theory places the viewer in context, taking into account all of the various factors that might influence how she or he will reads and creates meaning from the text.

The development of technology (especially military technology) gave white Europeans a tremendous power superiority over other peoples; power does corrupt and bring arrogance. They came to regard 'race' as an explanation of the disparities. They began to attribute military and technological advantage and superiority to possession of a 'white skin' and 'race' (W. G Mills). The white Europeans also use the technology of film to put across these ideologies to the audience as the previous three chapters suggest. The three films were analysed in this study in search of the West's perceptions of Africa and her people, how the

West interpret African conflict using filmic techniques and the effect these techniques have on the audience.

6.2 FINDINGS

The data analysis and the result of the research findings reveal conclusions which attempt to answer the research questions.

What are the perceptions of Hollywood films of Africa?

According to Wole Soyinka (2009), in order to study the politics of misrepresentation of Africa in Hollywood films, one has to understand the socio-historical context of the arrival of the moving image in Africa. Hollywood has since misrepresented Africa from the colonial era when film was used as propaganda to this very day. As shown in the previous chapters, Hollywood's perceptions, though not as clearly shown as they used to be during the colonial era, are that Africa is a dark continent full of savages and blood thirst tyrants. God says that "I am the light" (Bible), and in *Tears of the Sun* and *Blood Diamond* it is clearly stated that God has left Africa, which means if God is the light and He has left Africa, then Africa is a dark place.

Africans are heartless and uncivilised creatures who need to be tamed according to *Tears of the Sun* and *Hotel Rwanda*. These two films have the most vicious African characters who hardly wear a smile on their faces and their number one agenda is to kill.

Furthermore the setting of these films, for example, *Tears of the Sun* and *Blood Diamond* is mostly in the jungle, showing a lack of civilisation in Africa and a vast land of unoccupied

space. From the latter half of the 19th century onward, the supply of well-intended but clueless westerners in sub-Saharan Africa has been seemingly endless (Lambert, 2008).

If Africans are not Blood thirst savages then they are helpless, wide-eyed, child like looking people who cannot do anything to help themselves or others around them. This is true in *Tears of the Sun and Blood Diamond,* when the locals are hunted down and killed by rebels and all they can do is run or die. They cannot fight for themselves or even attempt for that matter.

What is more disappointing is that in all the films studied, Africans rely on the West to rescue or help them. Africans also rely on the West to tell their stories, according to these films. Including white Westerners as reporters in films such as *Blood Diamond and Hotel Rwanda* gives the notion that Hollywood believes Africans cannot tell their own stories and need the West to do that for them. This proves that the Social Darwinist ideology was used so as to undermine Africans.

 The thought of making these films and saying they are based on a true story, a story being told by a Western director shows that Hollywood believes it is inclined to tell the African story or no one else will.

How do Hollywood films interpret African conflict?

According to Hollywood films, Africa is a place full of violence and blood spill. To them this is the only way Africa knows how to solve its conflict. Hollywood also depicts African conflict as stupid, silly and unnecessary, something that could be easily avoided. This is shown in *Hotel Rwanda'*s ethnic conflict, one that was differentiated by physical features that

were even hard to notice. This difference had millions of people killed during the Tutsi genocide. Likewise in *Tears of the Sun* there was an ethnic cleansing which also led to many being killed.

Hollywood makes it seem like Africans do not have real and progressive conflicts, conflicts that will develop the continent or a particular country but African conflict is meaningless and leads to loss of life.

In *Blood Diamond* the audience are even told that killing is a way of life in Africa.

The flaws in representation are twofold, though connected. The first relates to authenticity. In movies set in Africa, there is often a sharp disconnect between what is portrayed on the screen and reality. The second involves the persistent stereotype of sub-Saharan Africa as a continent of exoticism and primal violence -- a world utterly unlike the West (Lambert, 2008). Many Hollywood films on Africa have a theme of violence. According to Hollywood, violence is the only way that Africa knows how to solve their conflict.

However, this violence does not lead to peace and this is when Africa mostly needs the intervention of the West.

Celluloid misrepresentations might not matter if Western media and popular culture offered nuanced portraits of Africa.

Instead, in most Western examinations of Africa there is a lasting paradigm of pity, suggesting Africans are incapable of managing their affairs and require salvation. Again imposing the Social Darwinist ideology into the audience's minds

Western movies contribute to that faulty perspective by depicting the continent as a monolithic land of difference and violence (Lambert, 2008).

What racial perspectives are depicted by Hollywood films on Africa?

Whites are superior to blacks and whites have been and will always be the heroes in Hollywood films on Africa. This is evident in *Blood Diamond* a black person admits that there is something wrong inside the black peoples' skin and that Africans were better off when the white man ruled. Having these words come out of a black person was a good strategy to make the audience believe these words of regret and confession. There is a belief that there are fundamental, essential differences between black and white people persists and is difficult to dispel, resulting in the ascription of particular psychological, physical and intellectual characteristics to different 'races'…black is a potent signifier of evil, of dirt, of that which is alien: whereas white signifies goodness, purity and that which is familiar, the norm (Ukadike, 2006).

In all three films Africans are saved from themselves by the whites, the superior and more civilised race. This kind of depiction instils the Social Darwinist ideology into the audience's minds.

Although Hollywood says they have moved away from the aspect of racism, *Blood Diamond* clearly sells them out with all the racist words such as 'Kefir' and 'Boy' being used and familiarising a black person with a baboon.

Hollywood also makes it a point that they depict blacks in a negative way of either being savages or helpless so that it is then easy to show how whites are superior.

What techniques are used?

The filmic techniques used in these films to bring out the Social Darwinist ideology, racism and the depiction of African conflict are the use of props. Machetes, guns, and logs were some of the props that were used to show that Africans are violent and ruthless. Other props such as cameras, and microphones were used for the whites to show that the West had more resources than Africans. The use of these props shows that white are superior as the Social Darwinist ideology suggests.

The setting was also used as a technique to show the location of the events. Mostly the jungle was used to show that it is indeed Africa.

African music and soundtrack was also used as a way to show location, or rather as a backup of the setting.

Camera angles such as establishing shots, for instance, in *Hotel Rwanda*, close up shots and wide shots were used to emphasis a point.

There was also the use of juxtapose in *Hotel Rwanda* and *Blood Diamond.*

All the films used dialogue as a filmic technique to put across the messages they intended to encode.

What is the effect of the techniques?

In *Hotel Rwanda,* the camera seldom left Paul making the audience feel that the story is being told through Paul's eyes. So the effect that this has is that the audience feel as if they are being told the story from Paul's perspective. By doing so the director recreates all the emotions of volatility, insecurity and unpredictability of what's about to occur.

The establishing shots used in the films help the audience to know where the events are taking place. Close up shots were especially used on the helpless, injured and frightened Africans to emphasis Africa's need for help from the West and to exaggerate their helplessness. The Social Darwinist ideology is evinced here as an effect of using such filmic techniques. Wide shots were used in violent scenes to distance the audience from the violence hence making them feel that it is a cruel act, one that they do not want to relate to.

The setting is also used to show the place of events. The setting of a jungle that is mostly used is meant to justify that the events happened in Africa even though in *Tears of the Sun,* for instance, the setting was a jungle in Hawaii, the audience just believe that it is Africa.

The music and sound track are supposed to back up the setting and so African music was used. This is also used to remind the audience where the events are taking place. They are also used to evoke emotions in the audience, for instance, in *Hotel Rwanda*, When Paul sees the road blocked by dead bodies, and there is sad music in the background so the audience can feel sad along with Paul.

The audio and sound effects used in *Hotel Rwanda* give the film its potency and pungency, if the film was to be watched without its audio it would still hold its gruesomeness however, it

would lose its emotional arousal! The director decided to make the audio consist of sounds of chaos and violence, he did this so that the feelings of confusion, desperation and danger are privy to the audience.

Juxtapose was also used in *Blood Diamond* when a meeting about African conflict is taking place peacefully in the West and there is violence and killings in Africa. The director tried to bring out the effect of comparison between the two thereby justifying the notion that whites are more civilised than blacks. The same juxtapose is seen many time in *Hotel Rwanda* too.

Dialogue was also used in all of the films to evoke emotions and also to pass encoded messages to the audience.

6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study did not look at people's different educational levels which would make the analysis a little less one sided for the two races studied.
- The study did not look at which gender in the African context embraced conflict, instead the study just looked at Africans as a whole.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings above it is recommended that:

- African filmmakers should reproduce these films and offer an African perspective which is true and one that does not misrepresent Africa and her people. By doing this,

Hollywood is exposed of its negative portray of Africa and will be forced to revisit its research and make amends. Meanwhile this will help African films gain popularity and everyone will want to see the African version of events for these films.

- All films that contain racist words should be banned. This will helped the next generations to make films that are less racist because they will not be familiar with racist terminology.

- African filmmakers should also produces films where African conflict was solves amicably to remove the belief that Africa only solves its conflict through violence.

- In addition to Africans telling their own stories through the production of their own film about their continent, these films should, just like the Hollywood films, consist of Africans journalists because Africa also as equally as good journalists as the West.

6.5 AREAS FOR FUTHER STUDY

- Social Class Stratification – Further study on a more specific level should be done whereby the researcher analyses the study using people from different social classes and education level to evaluate how they view the films differently.

- Gender and Conflict – A study on how females and males deal with conflict differently and which gender imposes and embraces it more should be done.

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