

Kenyan conflict, post-colonial media?

A discourse analysis of how western media portrayed the violent aftermath of the Kenyan election in 2007 through a post-colonial perspective

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Abstract

Kenya had a disputed presidential election in late 2007 which erupted into ethnic clashes between supporters of the two candidates. Western media was quick to report back that the sudden violence was due to tribal differences. The goal of my essay was such to explore whether or not a post-colonial discourse could be found in western media. By choosing three international magazines with more analytical news-reporting (Time Magazine, Africa Confidential and The Economist) I could look upon articles through a post-colonial perspective and used tools available through critical discourse theory along with the concept of discrimination. The result was an overall picture that was not influenced by post-colonialism and to very little extent discriminatory in nature. However, in the material used I found four different fields where a post-colonial discourse could be located. These were; when using the word tribe, when Africa became an adventure, when Africa was seen as the bottom and when Africa was portrayed as one. What emerged was how media still upheld colonial views through the use of what language they used in the magazines. They sustained the image of “the Others” and created dichotomies where Africans were wild and savage.

Key words: Kenya, Ethnic violence, Post-colonialism, Critical discourse analysis, Discrimination

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1 Introduction



There is always something new out of Africa, or so the old proverb goes. Then why do I as a media consumer and westerner feel as if western media still describe conflicts in Africa as if the winds of change never blew across the continent during the end of the colonial era in the 1960's? This essay will therefore explore how western media described an erupting conflict in the African context and with what language they choose to depict it in order to verify if my thoughts can be backed up by evidence or not. The conflict or perhaps, the violent protests that I have chosen to use as an example are the Kenyan elections in 2007 just after Christmas.

After the election rumors surfaced concerning the legitimacy of how the voting and counting of foresaid votes had transpired. There was manipulation at one level or other. And so, what I see as a natural part in a democratic society if a scenario like this occurs, people took to the streets to demonstrate their dismay. Elections are always good news material for the media and Kenya being seen as a stable and rather well off part of Africa with a big tourist industry as well as trade links with both the west and the east it was a normal segment to include in the western news. However, what struck me as a news consumer at that time was how the media chose to depict what was going on. Instead of allowing for in-depth explanations and detailed analyzes focus was placed upon the violent nature of the *protests*, rather than explain why they had erupted. This is why Kenya will serve as an interesting empirical case, politics and violence often go together and because they do it is important not to fall back into old colonial ways to describe events easily.

Then why should that matter? Is it not interesting for the readers/viewers to learn that people are fighting each other, even killing each other? The answer to that is yes it should be part of what is reported as news around the world but at the same time, if a presidential election had gone array in the west, and violent protests would come as a consequence, had the media not focused on what went wrong rather than dismiss the whole thing as nothing but tribal indifferences? Now what I wonder, is that what western media did in the case with Kenya?

In many ways media can be seen to be an integral part in how we understand and interpret the world and often media is in one way or another something which shapes many of our beliefs, thoughts and insights. Therefore it is important to be able to view it critically and explore whether or not the images presented in front of us are in any way helping us to advance our tolerance and understanding of each other or the other way around – it helps to hold up outdated views of old. I therefore claim that media sources should be analyzed to see whether the contemporary image of Africa is in any way linked to the colonial past.

Henceforth my interest lies not so much in what the media described but with what language, what words and metaphors they chose to depict the events after the elections. To achieve this I will focus upon three weekly magazines and with the use of discourse analyses I will examine if post-colonialism along with the aspect of discrimination can be seen in western media. My goal is at no point to generalize but rather to add to the research that deals with post-colonial discourse and hopefully see if it is still relevant in today's world and keep the wind going the right direction.

1.1 Main question and purpose

The overall purpose of this essay is to explore empirically how post-colonial discourse can be seen or not in three magazines describing an African conflict. I will do this through a post-colonial perspective and my interpretation will largely be based upon the discourse that follows with post-colonialism in relation to Africa. I will not attempt to create an overall picture of how western media describes conflicts in Africa rather I want my contribution to be seen as a contribution of information on how media behaves and works.

So did the media contribute in enhancing the colonial image and as a consequence did it create a discriminating ethos? By looking at magazines where I assume a more refined understanding and pre-existent knowledge of post-colonial discourse can be found I will check if they still fall into traps of colonial imagery. My main question with its related sub-question formulates as follows:

- How did the western media describe the conflict in Kenya and by using critical discourse analysis could the language used in the articles be seen in any way as contributing to the colonial image of the African?
- If so, could this be explained through a post-colonial perspective?

2 Material and selection

When deciding upon material for this essay I wanted to look at media that was not meant to be printed in the daily press but rather pieces that had been given thought and that were meant to be read by an audience different from the daily media reporting. In my assumptions, which they are, I imagine that the readership and the editorial staff are more interested in both reading and producing something that has been given more thought than a snippet of information based upon being available as fast as possible. The reason for these thoughts are quite scientific, did these papers still show signs of post-colonial discourse despite them being written by educated reporters for a worldwide likewise educated public? I did not choose material out of political coherence nor did I favor a specific country, instead I picked three magazines which I deemed interesting because they were all based in the west, they are international, read widely and they wrote about the conflict. The articles have been picked by taking those articles that were printed in each magazine each week that dealt with the matter of the fact and during a time period from January 1st 2008 ‘til February 29th. Below follows a short presentation of each of the magazines and why they are used for this survey.

- The Economist. A London based highly regarded weekly magazine containing both in-depth analyses of current political and economical events as well as basic reporting of news from around the world. It contains a section each week with focus on the Middle East and Africa and it is there that I have located my articles. The reason for choosing this as a source is because I presume it is a paper read and most definitively written and edited by an educated mass that at some level will be aware of the implications language can have and the issues of post-colonialism. I therefore want to see if this is the case.
- Time Magazine. A CNN backed weekly magazine with a populist approach to world events, both cultural as political. A much lighter form of analysis compared to The Economist and the reason for my choosing it is simple – it is a highly popular media read by a large audience who still wants a bit more in-depth knowledge than they get from their daily newspaper but who are still not eager to read a too advanced paper. Here I assume that the writers and editors are well aware as well about colonial past and its wrongdoings but with an audience who might not be as aware of how the media can continue to shape the image of those wrongdoings and are therefore not as critical.
- African Confidential. A fortnightly magazine that specializes in analyzing and reporting about African Affairs from Africa. The reason for choosing a magazine like this is that I assume that it will be very much aware of how they use their language to portray news from the continent and therefore I assume it can be used as a model from which I can compare the other two magazines.

By using these three different types of written media my sample will be of a broader character but still not completely different, and perhaps show differing results than if I had used more similar sources. With these sources I will be able to easily convert my question into practice by making textual analyses of all read texts. By seeing how the media described the events I can determine after interpreting the nature of the language used to what extent they contribute, or not, to the colonial image of Africa and its inhabitants.

3 Historical background

As one of the longest populated countries in human history, scientists have discovered human remains dating back 3.5 million years, Kenya is a land built on migration and immigration (National Geographic). Kenya gained independence in 1963 along with a large number of other African countries during the 1960's under what became known as the 'wind of change' after a famous speech by British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan about the decolonization of Africa. The country has a diverse religious make-up and its population adheres to a large number of different ethnicities. Historically the country has suffered from violent elections before, both in 1992 and 1997. Like many African countries the state has been highly centralized with strong presidential powers and weak institutions. Corruption has been rife throughout all levels of government and that along with cronyism has been a contributing factor to why political protests and violence have erupted. That along with poverty, massive population growth and widening socio-economic rifts the political sphere has largely been concerned with blaming each other for these matters. The 2002 elections were won on an anti-corruption platform.

In 2007 Mwai Kibaki won the presidential election with his National Rainbow Coalition party over opposition leader Raila Odinga who led the Orange Democratic Movement. Reports of vote-rigging unleashed massive protests where 1500 people died under two months time which led to UN interfering with talks and an arrangement was made where Odinga shares power with Kibaki as the Prime minister respectively president. (CIA Factbook: Kenya April 2010).

A main form of income for Kenya is tourism and it is one of the most popular safari destinations in Africa. The capital Nairobi also works as the financial hub for East-Africa and despite high numbers of extreme poverty the city has evolved into a buzzing and in parts modern big city. The country-side is fertile and big tracts of land are cultivated and exports such as coffee, tea and cocoa make up a large part of how Kenya has been able to evolve economically. However it also means that cattle-herding and small-scale farming is threatened making it more viable for poor people on the country-side to migrate into cities creating large slum areas (National Geographic).

4 Theoretical framework and methodology

When analyzing and interpreting happenings and events that are based in Africa but seen through westernized media, post-colonialism enables a framework that will help explain certain power structures and why some types of language is used. In the context of the magazines it could be argued that these should by default be free of colonial images and as such post-colonial theory will enable me as the author to see if it is so. This is why I as the author of this essay will use post-colonialism as a main theory and with it I will explore the colonial discourse to highlight how power and language are interconnected with the legacy of colonialism. I will also present critical discourse analysis and then use it when interpreting the textual material found in the articles. Therefore the reasons for choosing post-colonialism are as follows in the quote by Abrahamsen, “Colonialism, as conventionally defined in terms of formal settlement and control of other people’s land and goods, is in the main over, but many of its structures and relations of power are still in place”.(Abrahamsen in Manzo:2009:263)

I will present my theory and method here starting with post-colonialism, followed by the invention of Africa and Critical Discourse Analysis.

4.1 Post-colonialism

Post-colonialism is a theory which deals with both legacy and contemporary thought. It draws its foundations from the old British Empire and the former colonial powers who during the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th century ruled large parts of the world. During their rule a system of hierarchies and opposing poles were constructed to uphold the economical superiority of the colonizers. Colonialism as a concept is an historical form of imperialism (McLeod 2000:8). However, history always leaves traces and as all uneven relationships the ruler sets the agenda meaning that what once was still is in many aspects in the former colonies in terms of structural differences created during the colonial period.

Colonialism was not only responsible for creating an uneven economic relationship; it also created and upheld projections of identity. The Europeans saw themselves as central, they were the subjects, and bearers of evolution and process whereas “the Others” were seen as outsiders and in no sense part of the cultural, economical and technological advancement that took part with the beginning of the Enlightenment (Eriksson, Baaz, Thörn 2002:29).

The post-colonial thinker V.Y. Mudimbe whom, being born in Zaire under colonial rule and then becoming a professor in several fields in the linguistic canon, argues also that the identity of Africa was socially constructed during the colonial period (Eriksson, Baaz, Thörn 2002:20). So not only the identity of the colonized people but the collective identity of Africa was created by someone else. Post-colonialism along with post-structuralism, which deals with power and knowledge, shows how a dichotomy was created where “the Others” meant lesser and the Europeans meant better. This of course creates a mindset which is difficult to escape since that is how humans think; they organize things in binary oppositions and define them from what they are not. Black is not white, and a savage is not civilized etc.

However, this is not something that I believe can be deemed acceptable in our contemporary world, therefore using post-colonialism with an emphasis on post marking that its focus is on modern times and that it can change from what it was before, then I see it as a highly suitable theory for this essay. That is because within those dichotomies lies hidden power structures. Those structures may not be able to disappear but they must be destabilized in accordance to post-structural theory (Eriksson, Baaz, Thörn 2002:18). This makes this essay important because it can contribute to destabilizing such structures if they are found to be in place.

Such structures can be seen in for example how traditional culture and thought are seen as trivial compared to the modernity imposed by the colonizing culture. When the colonizer propagates their values, their churches, their traditions etc “the Other” is emphasized even further. This creates what Mudimbe discusses in his book ‘The Invention of Africa’ an ambiguity of cultural identity. In addition to identity being morphed he argues that this imposed modernity has instead caused the opposite, namely destitute, economical hardships and the breakdown of traditional family ties. (Mudimbe 1988:5)

4.2 The Invention of Africa

The main title of the book by V.Y. Mudimbe serves well as a title to introduce the discourse of the created stereotype of the African. Just like the Other is defined through the image of the European the European has projected their image of the African by what they believe they are not themselves. Savage, both noble and wild but still savage in its nature is a picture often and vividly used to describe the African.

Historically, the discourse of Africa has not been concentrated on the African or Africa; rather focus has been laid upon the justification of the exploitation by the colonizers and suppressors. The savages were seen as pagans and therefore in accordance with the church it was justified to civilize and force the Africans into labor (Mudimbe 1988:20).

These projections serve to both categorize and rank in accordance to the Eurocentric point of view. When that is done discriminating structures are created which in turn creates new structures within both the projector and the projected

part. As Franz Fanon, influential post-colonial thinker born in Martinique and who worked as a psychiatrist during the Algerian war of independence writes when he comes to the conclusion that he himself is one of the Others, he is black and the dichotomy of which he represents is sin, “There are two solutions to this conflict. Either I demand of the other to not care about the color of my skin, or on the other hand I want them to care about it.” (Eriksson, Baaz, Thörn 2002:15)¹

The consequences of such dilemmas for a persons’ mind are arguably severe. Therefore it is important to identify stereotypes and the structures which uphold them so as to expose them. Stuart Hall, another highly influential post-colonial thinker, often seen as the forerunner of British cultural studies, gives some thoughts about discursive strategies when creating ‘Others’ – he argues for instance that stereotyping is at work when people are idealized, work as ‘the projection of fantasizes of desire and degradation’, are seen as ‘the failure to recognize and respect difference’ and when European categories and norms are imposed upon them (Hall 1993:307-308).

In this idealization nature is frequently looked at, it is seen as tranquil and wild at the same time and transposing its qualities to the people who live in it. This is connected to the projection of the savage who just like nature can be noble and vicious. And when they are seen to be noble they adhere to western characteristics implying that they share the same criteria for being noble as the West (Hall 1993:311). This creates a mindset where it is not possible for an African to be noble without being westernized.

Along with this comes the image of desire and fantasy. As Fanon wrote earlier that he was the symbol of sin then so were the Europeans prude and chastised. Historical descriptions made by westerners of the ‘Rest’ of the world is filled with sexual innocence where naked or half-naked people are depicted. The way in which they are often seen is that of the submissive, the female, the conquerors and colonizers used predominately gender based language, for example when talking about ‘penetrating the continents dark forests etc’ (Hall 1993:302).

In the same way “the Others” are seen as violent, their closeness to nature means that there is a lack of culture which inhibits them from controlling their rage in the same way as they do not control their sexuality.

4.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis sees language, in its written and spoken form, as a ‘social practice’ according to Fairclough who can be seen as the front figure of this school of thought (Bergström, Boréus 2008:308). The reason for choosing critical discourse analysis as a tool for this essay is because as its name implies, it is critical and it does not see language as being the only social practice that shapes

¹ My own translation from Swedish to English.

society but only a part of it. According to Fairclough discourses have three dimensions; textual, practical and social (Bergström, Boréus 2008:322). The textual analysis will be important for this essay and to some extent so will the social part of it be because it takes into account the connection with the wider picture, meaning that a connection can be made with the theoretical framework of post-colonialism. This means that an explanation can be given to why certain metaphors and descriptions are used in the articles which will serve as my main material. Different to other discursive schools such as that of Laclou- and Mouffe's critical discourse analysis is that it is not only constitutional but also constitutionally influenced, meaning that discourses are not the only thing that shapes society as mentioned before. This implies that all theory and discourse is a consequence of the society in which it originates, which Fairclough argues (Bergström, Boréus 2008:322).

Since this research will be qualitative focus will not be so much on singled out words rather the textual and grammatical interpretations made by me with the tools of critical discourse analysis will help highlight the underlying structures which underpins and creates the image of the African.

4.4 Methodological tools

The reason for me as the author of this essay to put both theory and methodology in the same chapter is because of the interrelated nature of post-colonialism and discourse analysis. As much as critical discourse analysis is about seeing more than just the textual there needs to be a linguistic element to the actual analysis for it to work. That will be presented here along with a new element to the analysis, namely discrimination.

The reason for using discrimination in the analysis is because I believe that it goes hand in hand with the elements of post-colonialism, it deals with underlying structures which separates and creates images by defining others and often to their disadvantage. Therefore I will see if discrimination is at place in the articles by firstly looking at them through Mary Sykes definition of discrimination. She uses three points to identify discrimination in a discourse; two or more parties are treated differently, the different treatment is to the disadvantage of one of the parties and that the motif to the odd treatment is connected to race or ethnicity (Bergström, Boréus 2008:287).

Along with the element of discrimination I will look closer at the use of words and textual structure. When looking at syntax I will make use of the idea that language itself is made up of different models of thought which then describe events differently in accordance to which model it belongs (Bergström, Boréus 2008:281).

Since this essay will explore the events after the Kenyan election such models where a certain perspective is used to look at the events through will be more than

suitable to work with in my analysis. Transitivity is the term used to show how syntax determines what perspective an event shall be described through (Bergström, Boréus 2008:281). It is made up of three parts; processes, participants and circumstances. With this a text can be looked at and broken down – a process such as fighting can be done by participants such as young men and the circumstances can be during a political protest. But if the three blocks are changed into other words, a transformation, then it can suddenly mean something different or encompass new subtler messages and meanings (Bergström, Boréus 2008:283-284). ‘Fighting young men at a rally’ can become ‘strugglers for justice at political demonstration’, two definitions with different associations and imagery. This clearly involves a lot of close reading and some type of deeper understanding of what is being read to be able to come to good conclusions of what is deemed as good descriptive media and bad descriptive media but nonetheless I deem it a good tool to use.

Metaphors are also something that requires a close reading of the material in order to single them out and interpret to what extent they mean something else. They are not always used by the authors or read by the readers in such a way that they fully understand what they might imply or mean but they can still highlight interesting parts of the bigger structural picture in which it is used (Bergström, Boréus 2008:297). Therefore when looking at a discourse through a post-colonial perspective it can be very useful to look at metaphors because they might not be used with the full understanding of what they really stand for.

4.5 Analytical categories

In order to create an easy overview of how the analysis will be laid out I will present in order the different sub-categories that will be included in aforementioned analysis. The categories are based both upon the post-colonial discourse which I presented before and on categories which I myself have formed after reading the material at hand. What is important to understand with these categories however is that they are at no point reflecting anything fixed, they are to be understood as floating and overlapping with each other and there are many categories which I could have included but I have chosen not to, for such reasons as time, space and relevance. However, I deem the four categories that I have devised as suitable for the material I use and for the purpose of this analysis because they represent four main themes which all help in upholding a colonial image of Africa. They are therefore created both upfront with the ideas and thoughts of post-colonialism and after having read the magazines so as to make sure that there is some chance to discuss what I hope to find. They are as follows;

- **Tribalism**

In many parts of Africa tribal allegiance is a major part of people's identity, as is ethnicity and nationality. In Kenya there are 42 different ethnic groups; most are based on a tribal structure which in itself is often floating and somewhat diffuse. However, what I will look at in this category is whether or not the articles make use of the phenomena of tribal allegiance as an excuse for violence and acts of rage. The risk is that the word tribe or tribal becomes even more associated with what can be seen as wild and savage connotations. To clarify; is tribalism used as an excuse for the riots? And if so, how does that uphold colonial views of savagery etc?

- **Adventure and Africa**

In post-colonial theory "the rest" is often depicted as exotic and adventurous and thus false stereotypes are created when reporters continue to describe events as if they have entered a mysterious and dangerous place of which they do not fully understand. It is then easy for them to use vivid imagery to describe their own presence at the location and remove focus from what is actually going on. This inevitably leads to an upholding of colonial views and thoughts where Africa is seen as nothing more but a wild place which requires no true analysis or understanding because it can all be related back to its "wild" nature. What is interesting in this part is how the articles' reporters use metaphors and with what focus they describe the events – are they being factual and analytical or playing on old stereotypes of Africans with crude weapons and wild unpredictable violence?

- **Africa at the bottom**

When speaking of Africa it is often seen as the worst of the worst; economically, in terms of human rights and in regards of democracy. When always being referred to as bad and unable to make things right colonial images are not only upheld but strengthened. They make it okay for Europe and the west to condemn, look down upon and argue that they have a right to decide what should be done and why they are more suitable to make that decision. Here a dichotomy is created where Africa is automatically seen as bad and the west as good. Even when describing evolution and progress it is more often the case that it is seen as somewhat remarkable and as unusual. Because it is compared through the eyes of the west it is unequal and can be discriminatory when slow progress or the state of how things are, is being blamed upon ethnicity or race.

- **Africa as one**

This is something of which even I as the author of this essay am responsible for – namely viewing the continent of Africa as one. Now what differ me from the common view is that I am fully aware of the diversity of Africa and I only use the term in the same way as I would refer to Europe or America, it is a category which helps me point to a geographic location and a set of countries who share some type of identity just as I as a European share that identity with someone from Greece for example.

However, when “Africa” is used throughout as a category that enables stereotyping it adheres to the colonial image of Africa as a playing ground for other nations to cut up and divide. When neglecting the complexity of nations and ethnicity and merely referring to “Africa as one” colonial imagery is to its full extent upheld. The aim of this category in the analysis is to see just how the articles describe Africa.

5 Post-colonialism and media

I have no aspirations with this essay to divulge exactly how post-colonialism is at work in media-reporting about Africa, nor is it my goal to explain explicitly how media described the conflict that arose in Kenya. Rather, this is an attempt to highlight how three magazines based in the west described events in Kenya and the aftermath of the disputed elections. Then, those magazines can function as reminders that a colonial discourse is not entirely removed from our contemporary worldview since they can still be found in some media. The issue at hand is this however, the articles were chosen subjectively and what I find might not be found if looking at other articles or types of media. They are my interpretations as well and overall, the colonial discourse which I was aiming to find did not exist to the extent of which I assumed it would. That does not mean that I did not find a colonial discourse but it was with the exception of one magazine, carefully reported throughout and with no easy characterization or stereotyping.

Here follows in four parts with a final conclusive chapter what I deemed interesting for this essay. The four parts are based on the analytical categories presented before and all three magazines are included in all categories and appear in order of relevancy and interesting findings.

5.1 Tribalism

What unites the three magazines and their articles is the use of the word tribal in one way or another. It is commonly used throughout the articles in order to explain for the readers why some people support a specific leading character or not and why people are at odds with each other. What differs them is that The Economist and Africa Confidential uses the term sparsely (however it is present in one form or other in almost all articles) and Africa Confidential hardly uses it all, instead they refer to proper names of the groups that people have an allegiance to. Time Magazine repeatedly refers to these groups as Tribes.

Now, this can be looked at with transitivity and then we notice as readers that the word tribe, the participants, is replaced by the word ethnicity in the articles by Africa Confidential and in The Economist the word tribe is used more in a way to describe political allegiance than some sort of old feudal caste system. In Time Magazine, however, tribe is used to a much larger context and almost throughout all articles, when talking about the Kikuyu for instance an often used suffix is that of “Kikuyu tribe”. In one article for example by Alex Perry for Time

Magazine sentences like “hacked to death several people from rival tribes...” “Clashes between tribes...” “The wave of tribal killings...” “[T]he violence is about tribal score-settling...” (Time Magazine 080102) leaves the reader quit overwhelmed by the usage of the word. This has implications because when looking at it through a critical discourse perspective we then realize that here is a discourse being shaped and upheld right in front of us. The problem which arises is that the word Tribe becomes associated with violence and savagery. This then goes very much in line with the colonial image of the African that I presented in chapter 4.2 - as a wild and uncivilized character who fights in groups named tribes.

Something that can also be seen as disheartening when it comes to the use of the word tribe is how it to a certain extent also discriminates. If using Mary Sykes definition which I presented before then we see that two or more parties are being treated differently – the supporters to the different political parties are singled out and becomes “the Others” because they are violent and uncontrollable, the opposite to the readers. Second, this is to the disadvantage for them, because they are being portrayed in a negative manner in some articles, namely in Time Magazine ones. When wording such as “the vortex of the tribal violence that has swept Kenya” (Time Magazine 040108) is being used it is easy to believe that the entire population of the country is fighting each other. And all of this is tied together with the fact that they belong to an ethnic group. Kikuyu’s and Luo’s are seen as followers of violence and sudden, sporadic atrocities, which can clearly be argued is not the case when reading other articles. Instead the violence is gang-based and more related to poverty and local power struggles than ethnicity. This, therefore, can be seen to be discriminating against Kenyans because they are portrayed stereotypically in media.

It is, however, hard to find any direct evidence of how a post-colonial discourse should be present in the read articles, most of the time it is positive to see that articles speak of “warriors” and “raiders” instead of “tribesmen” or “Kikuyu’s”. The first mentioned wording can be found in Africa Confidential (Africa Confidential 180108) and is according to me much more suitable and correct to use instead. Other examples of explanations of the conflict that does not follow a post-colonial discourse can be found in The Economist (260108) where they speak of “politically motivated killings”.

5.2 Africa and adventure

When a reporter from Time Magazine congratulates himself for swapping his Kikuyu driver for a driver who is with the Luo for when he shall travel into the countryside (Time Magazine 040108) one ponders just what type of investigative

reporting we are about to follow. Here we have a western reporter and an African driver, participants in a process where the circumstances are that of chaos and political disarray. Connotations can easily be made to how native guides took white explorers into the wilderness. This can arguably be said to uphold a colonial perspective. When the continuation of the article is rife with “bows and arrows” stereotypical imagery of primitive Africans emerge once again. It is exotic and wild but dangerous at the same time. Other articles from the same magazine speak of Kenya as a “place of maize farms and mud huts where the air is so light and pure” (Time Magazine 100108) projecting it as a form of paradise whilst still in the next sentence describe it speaking of mobs of people armed with crude hand weapons.

Africa Confidential even reports in one article that some journalists have produced price-lists of how much militias want paid for certain acts of violence (Africa Confidential 180108). The paper itself is unsure of how legit the lists are but what is interesting is how some papers publish lists like these, implying that Africa is still a wild place where governments mean little and money can buy you anything.

The thought of Africa as an adventure is not as visible in the written material as I suspected, instead I have found good examples of how not to imply such fantasies whilst writing about the conflict. For instance when Africa Confidential writes about the participants they write of “crudely organized bands of unemployed youth ready to kill” funded by “motley crews of armchair fanatics” (Africa Confidential 010208) giving a more nuanced picture of what is going on and not – like that of Time Magazine – describing a road trip through roadblocks and men with bows and arrows.

Although, imagery like that produced in one leader from The Economist makes me question how they thought, they write of “the dead rotting in the maize fields or pulled apart in the wilds by hyenas” (The Economist 260108). These are mere metaphors for describing the uncertainty of just how many have been killed but it also leads one to think of a wild Africa where nature meets man and things are more connected to each other in a circle of life. Such imagery is descendent from the colonial views of Africa and even though it is used fleetingly in said leader it is still worth mentioning in my view to highlight that such a discourse can still be found.

5.3 Africa at the bottom

Vortex, spiral, wave, cycle, slip out of control. These are all words found repeatedly in the material, and all of them are related and used in context of how Kenya is descending into violence. This type of terminology automatically describes a process as heading for the bottom. If words such as mayhem, chaos, spats of violence, violent clashes etc had been used (which they are to a large extent as well in the material) instead then there had been no case to argue that connotations could be made where Africa, and in this case Kenya, were seen as a bottom country. A dichotomy is therefore created where Kenya is compared to stable western countries where the west becomes good and Kenya becomes bad.

This in turn can be seen as discriminatory. Kenyans are here portrayed in some articles as being unable to solve things without Western and international aid. This also discredits the abilities of the Kenyans, or regional powers, and it turns to their disadvantage when media expects it to be solved by western diplomats. And all of this because they are Africans; according to Mary Sykes definition of discrimination this is a case of it. Now, one reason for why these magazines write about how western governments are treating the situation could be because of the fact that Kenya still relies a lot on foreign aid. This aid comes from countries like the US, UK and the EU. Still, it is positive to see in the material that the case is more often of disappointment at international bodies and foreign governments in not doing enough in order to halt the bloodshed which occurred.

However, a post-colonial discourse can be seen as present at one level according to me, in one article a sentence like “It wasn’t supposed to happen in Kenya” (Time Magazine 100108), creates once again that dichotomy where Kenya is to be seen as a poster-child for Africa, similar to the noble savage. This can of course be disputed but the way I interpret it the process is that of a politically motivated violent chaos, which can happen in most places, the participant is Kenya, and the circumstances are that of Kenya actually being a former colony in what is seen and regarded as the poorest continent in our world. Henceforth, instead of being condescending towards Kenya as a whole by saying that something like this was absolutely unlikely it is better to take the view that The Economist took for example; they wrote instead of how the political elite destroyed the good prospects for the country and how they were in a position to truly become a poster-child for the continent (The Economist 050108), but on their own terms and not according to the west. Because it is when western norms are imposed upon “the Others” that they become the others even more.

Despite what I have written previously the matter of the fact is that in most of the material there are no signs of such a discourse and even if there are subtle signs it seems as if too much would be interpreted into it. When The Economist writes about the “enormous appetite for democracy that exists on a continent that was recently dominated by dictators and “big men” (The Economist 050108) it would become contrived to force a deeper post-colonial meaning into it. Instead I believe it reflects a discourse that media uses strong words and catchy statements in order to entice readers.

5.4 Africa as one

Bono, a popular rock musician from the band U2 has become very associated for his aid to Africa. He also wrote a song called One where he sings, “we are on but we’re not the same.” The same goes for Africa as well. It is one continent but its fabric of countries, nationalities, ethnic groups and religious makeup is not the same. It is indeed very different and multifaceted. The issue which arises when something is bundled together is that stereotypes thrive. In the material that I have used for this essay it is visible in certain articles just how easily Kenya becomes a synonym for Africa and the other way around too. As mentioned before in chapter

4.5 I myself am guilty of this throughout this essay. It is difficult not to, especially since many of the countries do share the same history of colonialism, the same hardships of economical development and the same historical composition of dictators and power-struggle. Nevertheless, it does follow a post-colonial discourse when speaking of Africa as one when it is done in terms of simplifying rather than acknowledging the intricate nature of reality.

In one leader from *The Economist* (050108) Kenya even becomes a metaphor for how the stolen elections symbolize what has happened over and over again on the continent. In it they write of the betrayal of African leaders and their commitment to democracy. There is, however, more evidence of such a post-colonial discourse not being entrenched by the media. In *Africa Confidential* (010208) for example they explain how Kenya functioned like the regional hub, both for economic and financial ends. The stability of Nairobi's businesses helped its neighbors in advancing their economy and therefore when the magazines argue that matters in Kenya will have an impact on the rest of the continent they are to a large extent correct. The issue again as in previous chapter is that interpretations on whether or not it upholds a post-colonial discourse tend to become over-analyzed. Furthermore, in *The Economist* as well (300108) they emphasize that Kenya is Kenya, and not, as many started to fear a genocide, Rwanda. Here they make sure to puncture such a post-colonial myth – African conflicts do not turn into genocides just because different ethnic groups are involved. The one newspaper of which criticism can be diverted is *Time Magazine*. In one article named "The Demons that still haunt Africa" (100108) Africa is portrayed as one throughout and whatever happens in Kenya will have an effect on Africa as a whole. One sentence even reads as follows;

The nation embodies the best and worst of the continent – its vitality and economic potential but also its poverty, corruption and tribalism.

This metaphor for Africa can be directly linked to Mudimbe's notion of the invention of Africa – here is one nation that is both noble – upholding western values and norms of development and capitalism, and then at the same time it is a land where binary positions thrive. It is savage and back to basic survival where rule of law is not followed. Just like nature itself and as a result, its inhabitants adhere to aforementioned values and norms too.

6 Conclusion

Overall, what can be found throughout the material is not what I Imaged I would find when I started this essay – that western media described the conflict through a post-colonial discourse – rather it has been a case of mixed messages. Yes, there have been many visible signs, in all of the material, of post-colonial thoughts and imagery but the main bulk of the material does not show such signs. The importance however of a critical discourse analysis is to bring up to the surface and discuss a discourse in order to neutralize and make people think about it. So even though I did not find what I thought I would encounter I did enlighten certain aspects which can be seen both as discriminatory and colonial and thus upholding and creating a notion of “the Others”. As such, I still deem it as if my findings can make a contribution because it shows that one conflict, which was given a lot of media attention, still contained signs of post-colonial discourse. As such, less covered and analyzed conflicts can probably contain such a discourse as well.

The main tool for showing this has been that of transitivity. When showing how the wording of processes, participants and circumstances can easily be changed to show what connotations follow with the different perspectives I have not only shown how there is a post-colonial discourse but also of how well the magazines themselves have used words in order to describe the conflict through a good perspective.

The definition of discrimination by Mary Sykes has also given results although at times it has been contrived whilst using it and thus it has only been used in some of the analysis.

Metaphors and over-wording have also been used in the analysis to show a post-colonial discourse and because of the nature of metaphors they have been seen by me to be post-colonial and can of course be disputed. What unites these tools used in the analysis is that they all found evidence of how The African got portrayed as stereotypical and in ordinance with the colonial image created by the West.

What I found was that these three magazines had different ways of describing the conflict and even though the goal was not to rigorously compare them to each other I still ended up comparing them. As mentioned in my material selection I perceived that there would be differences between them and that Africa confidential would be less inclined to post-colonial views than Time Magazine and that the Economist would be less populist in its analysis compared to Time Magazine. And according to my interpretation of said material I was correct in both aspects.

My main points of interest that I identified where that tribalism was used extensively throughout as a stereotype, the conflict was seen as an African

adventure, Kenya and Africa as a whole was seen as a binary position to the great West and lastly, Kenya was Africa and Africa was Kenya, all that transpired in Kenya could be reflected into the rest of the continent.

The use of the word tribe to the extent of which it was used and in the manner of which it was used caused it to become associated with the stereotype of The African as wild, savage and mysterious, and thus it helped reinforce a colonial discourse. Several articles opted instead for ethnicity to explain what was going on in the conflict. The risk was that by overusing the word tribe the articles discriminated against the Kenyan population when it clumped it all together to nothing but a Tribal conflict. However, in most cases the articles contained proper nouns for the perpetrators of the violent acts and spoke of warriors, thugs and angry youth instead of 'tribal warfare'.

When looking at the aspect of Africa and adventure it was positively lacking to a large extent throughout the articles, but it was still there to be found in some of them. When a reporter wrote of how he ventured forth through the dangerous jungle with his African drivers and dodged angry men with bows and arrows and repeatedly used it in the article it was hard not to associate his "adventure" with those of the colonial period who wrote about the dangerous Africa and its wild men. And as such, clearly upholding a post-colonial discourse where he traveled into the land of "the Others".

Africa at the bottom displayed how with the use of words that implied a descent to the bottom with no going back the authors of those articles actually contributed to creating a dichotomy where West is at the top and Africa with its inhabitants is at the bottom. This along with Kenya being seen as a poster-child who then failed further enhanced the image of the noble savage who is not able to escape its wild nature and apply western norms to its full. In most cases however, the articles did not comply with this but expressed their dismay at how the country's leaders could allow something like this to happen and thus the general population did not step into the conception of the noble savage.

Finally, Africa was seen as one. And this is something which, as mentioned several times before, even I took part in throughout my analysis. But in some places Kenya functioned as a metaphor for the failure of African states, implying that everything in Africa is the same and nothing like the West. But, there were also many cases showing how Kenya's conflict was not like other conflicts in Africa or the region. The danger with such commentary is that when Africa is seen as one it is compared as a whole to the west, and when Kenya is compared to the west it is a good country well on its way to developing a stable nation, but when it fails, the whole of Africa fails and such simplification cannot be justified.

The winds of change did sweep through the continent and even if my first impression proved to be much smaller in reality than in mind it was still there. And as such, there is always something new out of Africa and it can be read about in the three magazines of which I based this essay on, as long as one keeps a critical mind.

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