Same Story, Different Narratives: A Postcolonial Reading of Literary Texts and Corresponding Film Adaptations

Robert Wesonga

Department of Linguistics, Literature and Communication
University of Kabianga

Abstract

The cinematic narrative and the story of its literary antecedent have nourished upon each other since the beginnings of cinema in the late 19th Century. As a result of this adaptation of film from literature, it is understandable that the film medium and the literary one should present stories using different systems of signs and symbols. This situation however, has not meant that the text and its offspring film are diametrically opposed, either with regard to meaning, or technique. As such, the two have been proven to have an intertextual relationship. This paper is a reading on intertextuality that endeavours to discuss the significant ways in which the adapted film and the antecedent literary text divert and converge in respect of meaning as each media strives to express meaning using the system of signs and techniques within its province. In essence, the paper seeks to answer the question: How does the adapted film; and the source literary text deliver the same story, or a different story, either similarly or differently? At the centre of this inquiry is an analysis of the cinematic and literary presentation of the question of colonial-ism in Africa. The paper delves into this matter in respect of three films, *Out of Africa* (1986), *The Ghost and the Darkness* (1996) and *Things Fall Apart* (1987) and their respective literary antecedents.

Key Words: *Adaptation, Film(s), Intertextuality, Literary Text(s)*

Introduction

To start with, the paper sets out to examine how antecedent literary texts and their cinematic offsprings combine to answer the question as to whether it was the spirit of adventure or the quest for political and economic dominance that brought Europeans to Africa. In addition, this paper is interested in discussing the European-African perception of each other as "the other" and how the two races reinforce this concept of otherness in the perception of the opposite race and in attitudes towards each other. Further, in respect of the injustice of colonialism, it behooves this paper of the study to show how Europe supported the colonial enterprise and how both media (film and text) either similarly or differently treats colonialism. This paper also interrogates how resistance to colonial subjugation of Africa as espoused in the literary texts is similar to, or differs in perspective from the cinematic presentation of the same idea. Finally, this paper contends that in the works under study, colonialism and racism are inextricably intertwined (Young, 1996). It is therefore critical that the treatment of race and racism in the two media is investigated.

2.0 The Adventure-Imperialism Paradox

According to historians, one of the reasons that motivated Europeans to make their entry into Africa was the spirit of adventure. Used to the rhythm of life in their homelands (as that argument had it), Europeans were desirous of the experience to be savoured in the adventure of visiting Africa. These same people would later end up being missionaries, settlers and then eventually colonial imperialists preoccupied with transferring to Europe maximum benefits from the vast resources of Africa in the form of minerals, raw materials, and of course free labour. This adventure argument is unjustifiable considering the resources that the European powers deployed into Africa before and during colonialism. According to an online publication: 'The Age of Exploration; 1492 – 1650', various reasons motivated European entry into Africa and the rest of the colonized world. Thirst for adventure and myth is given as one of those motivations. The document states:

> Love of adventure, curiosity and a fascination with the possibility of locating peoples and places popularized in the mythology of the time were also factors. Some searched for Prester John, a legendary Christian king believed to rule somewhere in Africa. Others were fascinated by fables of exotic peoples – some with tails, others with no heads but with faces emerging from their chests (p.1).

Another online publication: Colonialism and the African Experience supports this view:

> The first reason has to do with the need to gather scientific knowledge about the unknown. Africa, then referred to as the "Dark Continent," provided just the right kind of challenge. It held a lot of mystery for European explorers, who traveled and observed and recorded what they

saw. Many of the early explorers of Africa were geographers and scientists who were beckoned by the mysteries and exotic qualities of this new land. Expeditions of people like Samuel Baker, Joseph Thompson, Richard Burton, John Speke, and others in the nineteenth century, conducted in the name of science and knowledge, served to attract Europeans to Africa. They "discovered" rivers, lakes, and mountains. They studied the African people and wrote about them (p. 101).

However, arguing by the films, **Out of Africa** and **The Ghost and the Darkness**, one needs only look at the resources that went into the construction of the railway from Mombasa to Uganda, and the challenges that had to be surmounted in the process, to dispel any notions that Europeans were so adventurous as to be desirous enough to invest heavily in Africa in the spirit of adventure and exploration.   Quite obviously, the quest for economic and political domination of Africa by way of colonizing the continent overshadows all other intents. 'The Age of Exploration; 1492 – 1650' lays clear the strength of the economic motivation:

> Long before the sixteenth century the Crusades had introduced European people to the goods and luxuries of the East. Some goods, such as spices, became necessities, but they were becoming increasingly costly. They had to be transported over long and sometimes dangerous overland routes, and several middlemen … What Europeans needed was a new, less costly route to Asia. Before the route was actually traversed, however, a New World was opened for conquest. This led to intense economic and political rivalry among European powers to see who could first secure the prizes it offered and who could hold the others away (p. 1).

The film **The Ghost and the Darkness** presents these varying objectives of the early European visitors to Africa more elaborately than the source text, *The Man-eaters of Tsavo and Other African Adventures* (1907). To begin with, while there may be a few (like Col. Patterson as depicted in **The Ghost and the Darkness**) who are drawn to Africa because of their genuine affection for the continent, the principal reason for the arrival of Europeans must read colonialism. The adventurous Europeans, represented by Patterson, inadvertently find themselves as helpless pawns in the advanced and extensive scheme of exploiting the land and its people. This conclusion is informed more by the film than by the antecedent text. While in the text it is merely mentioned by the narrator (James Patterson) that he loved coming to Africa, in the film, through characterization and mise-en-scene (which extends beyond the characters to include characterization of the beautiful Africa), this allure of Africa that draws Europeans to the continent is presented in several ways. As the film opens with credits running, the viewer is invited to see the golden glow of the African savanna, bathed in sunlight. This sight should serve to justify Patterson's desire to experience the adventure of living and working in Africa.

On this very question of European intent in Africa, the text *Out of Africa* seems to add weight to the adventure myth advanced in the film **The Ghost and the Darkness**. Blixen's portrayal of Denys at this point in the text also correlates with that in the adapted film, **Out of Africa**. Blixen (1937) presents two important characters in the text (her friends in real life) as adventure settlers in Kenya who were not particularly keen on the whole enterprise of colonialism. Of Berkeley and Denys, Blixen (1937) writes:

> It was a curious thing about Denys and Berkeley – who were so deeply regretted by their friends in England when they emigrated, and so much beloved and admired in the colony - that they should be, all the same, be outcasts. It was not a society that had thrown them out, and not any place in the whole world either, but time had done it, they did not belong to their century (p. 184).

This description justifies why Denys of the film is so adamantly opposed to WWI being fought in Africa, and to the eventual declaration of Kenya a British colony. As such he warns his friend Berkeley who wants them to get on with the fight and go back to their lives that the war may end, but life will not go on as usual. The post World War I situation in Kenya justifies his fears.

Cultural Darwinism is a concept that refers to the belief by some societies that their cultures are evolved and have been refined over time so that now they must be taken as superior to others (Young, 1996). One of the reasons given for colonization of Africa can be summed up in a phrase: "The Call" (Young, *ibid*). Some Europeans considered the African continent dark and its people primitive and savage. They therefore considered their coming to Africa as a call to come and civilize the Africans. In the film, **The Ghost and the Darkness**, Sir Robert Beaumont, the man who hires Patterson appears to be one such person when we encounter him in his office in London. In his patronizing voice – typical of racist imperialists, he declares at 02:40:

> We are building the most expensive and daring railroad in history for the glorious purpose of **Saving Africa from the Africans**, and of course, to end slavery. (Emphasis mine)

Before proceeding with this argument, it is important to distinguish the literary portrayal from the filmic presentation of the European agenda in Africa. While the literary original remains silent on the European desire to conquer Africa politically and economically, the film is categorical in its imaging of it. Beaumont, a character missing in the literary original is introduced in the cinematic narrative to further illustrate that economic and political imperatives drove Europe to meddle into Africa.

From Beaumont's statement above, it emerges that the principal reason that brought Europeans to Africa is the economic benefits that would accrue from the colonial experience. Although Robert Beaumont starts his directive to

Patterson by a lofty assertion that there is "the glorious purpose of saving Africa from the Africans", it is quite unambiguous here that he (Robert Beaumont) represents the school of thought of Europeans who were honest about their coming to Africa. Theirs is an intent hidden in the open deception of responding to a call of saving the continent from the savagery of its people (Young, 1996). To all European powers that entered Africa following the Berlin Conference of between 1884 and 1885, Africa was a "prize" up for scramble.

Consequently, in respect of the scramble for Africa, the most signficant part of his statement is the expression of fear that the Britons could be outdone by their fierce rivals if the railway project does not succeed. This explains why the Germans and the French are termed by Beaumont as competitors in the enterprise of scrambling for the continent and not allies in the pretentious and elevated call of civilizing the continent. In his declaration, he includes the suggestion of "the call" (saving Africa from Africans, and ending slavery) simply as a cover-up. The railway and the bridge themselves are the very symbols of the British desire to conquer the East African interior and facilitate colonial hegemony. The manner in which the European powers gave mixed signals about the reason for their coming to Africa is clearly shown in the film, a feature missing in the source literary text.

Indeed, Robert Beaumont represents those who did not come to Africa because of the allure of the people, the wildlife and the weather. This type of Europeans was driven by an imperialist agenda and to them what mattered was the building of the British Empire in East Africa. Once, Beaumont remarks "I hate Africa", and later on, when Patterson is disturbed about the forty workers killed by the lions, Beaumont retorts that he does not care about the forty dead; all he wants is to see the completion of the bridge on schedule so that he can be knighted. Unlike Patterson, he is the epitome of a true imperialist who did not fall in love with the idea of Africa but with what it could give to Europe in respect of economic prosperity. This argument is made evident by the fact that some Europeans are critical of the assertion in their countries that Europe's involvement in Africa from the 19th C was to benefit Africans. Such characters consider the reason being given for the 'civilization' of Africa by the European powers as a deception. Dr. Hawthorn, a medic stationed at Tsavo at Patterson's time, sees through this lie behind the real reason of building the Kenya-Uganda Railway. About the railway, he dismisses Patterson at 13:01 saying, "This is a sham! Who needs it? It is ridiculous. It is only being built to protect the ivory trade. And make rich men richer!"

Even long before colonialism, the interaction between Africans and Europeans privileged the latter to the detriment of the former. The cultural, economic and political hierarchy of these races was well established starting with the time of slavery (Nunn, 2008). First it was slave trade and later on – among other injustices, Europe subjected Africans to the brutality of a war they knew nothing about or had nothing to do with. In the film *Out of Africa,* the

impact of WWI is more elaborately displayed than it is described in the source text by the same name. We see what impact the instability that a 'European' war, called a world war, has on the natives and the African continent. The ripples of the war reach Kenya and Delamare is seen organizing fellow Europeans in Kariokor, in pre-colonial Kenya. The role of the Maasai and the Somali is discussed. It is clear that the natives will be needed to fight on the side of Britain even though there are fears about the danger of arming the Maasai. Delamare delegates responsibilities to his contemporaries to mobilize the ethnic groups they are in good terms with to fight on their side in the world war. Berkeley is charged with the task of drafting the Somali into the war. Koller (2008) notes:

> The impact of the First World War on the colonies was profound and many-sided. A conflict that began in the Balkans turned into a general European war in July and August 1914, and then took on extra-European dimensions, particularly as some of the belligerent states ranked as the most important colonial powers globally (p. 111).

It is evident in the film but not in the text, however, that not all Europeans at the time supported the war. One such man was Denys. He thinks the war is a useless venture and discourages his friend Berkeley from taking part. At 38:47 Denys tells off Berkeley who exudes confidence and zeal about the role he is going to play in the war:

> What is it about? Have you any idea? ... Not really. Now why do you wanna get into it? It is got nothing to do with us, Berkeley. They have made agreements we know nothing about. Victoria and the Kaiser were relatives for God's sake. They divided Africa between themselves; do you know where there is a border? Because she had two mountains and he had none, so she gave him Kilimanjaro. It is a silly argument between two spoilt countries.

In this statement, the injustice occasioned by the infamous scramble and partition of Africa, and the consequent colonialism, is evident. Some of the settlers did not want the war because it would interfere with their agricultural activities. This view explains why – in the adapted film – they cause a row at the commencement of the war, asking Delamare just how long the war would take because they are wary of the impact of the war on their faming activities. For Denys, colonialism and domination of Africa is itself a mistake he does not approve of. We see it clearly in the disposition he assumes when the rest of the white community is celebrating Britain's victory in WWI.

Conclusively, the film **Out of Africa** is a clearer expose` of the WWI and its impact to the colonized world that the literary original. While in the text the war is mentioned just as if it were an incident and is merely given passing description, in the film a lot more time is afforded to this subject as we see the war being planned, going on, and eventually witness it culminate into the establishment of the British colonial empire in Kenya and East Africa.

The tale of the colonist's entry into Nigeria as depicted in *Things Fall Apart* (both film and text) was no less tragic. Because of the immense cultural divide, specifically language and religious differences, the Whiteman's coming is characterised by cultural disintegration, death and destruction. This emphasizes the fact that the colonial experience was as bad in any part of Africa as it was to the communities of the Lower Niger. The people of Abame experience the wrath of the Whiteman when they kill a white man whom they find mysterious and do not understand what he says. This act inspires great fear in Obierika who sees this as a harbinger of the worst that the people of Lower Niger, including Umuofia, were yet to experience. In the expression of his worst fears, Obierika draws the viewer's attention to the fact that colonialism is just another version of slavery which European powers intent to subject the African to. This is clear in the dialogue about the calamitous wiping out of the village of Abame found in Part 35 of ***Things Fall Apart*** TV series. In this section of the film, Uchendu and Obierika blame the people of Abame for their own destruction not because the whiteman was right, but because they did not take time to understand the intent and violence of the colonizer. In that scene of the film, Obierika says:

> Yes, they have paid for their foolishness, but I am greatly afraid. You have heard that the Whiteman, who made those powerful guns, and made those strong trains, and took away slaves across the seas. But we never thought those stories were true.

Thus, it becomes clear that the Whiteman's coming to Africa was not an error of judgement on their part – it was a well orchestrated agenda to exploit the continent and its people in almost a similar fashion as slavery had been used to impoverish Africa and develop Europe. Similarly, as seen in *Out of Africa* and *The Ghost and the Darkness*, Europe was not on an adventure spree, but on an economically motivated agenda to tap into the vast resources of Africa. By way of Things Fall Apart, the filmmaker emphasizes as Achebe had done before him that the claim of responding to "The Call" to save Africa from the Africans was indeed fraudulent. This is seen in how the filmmaker pairs images of preaching the gospel by white men with the destruction of the people and village of Abame.

The foregoing is a clear illustration of how the literary original and the adapted film agree and correspond with each other in their respective treatment of this issue. By point of fact, the cinematic dialogue that proceeds above is a replica of the literary dialogue in Achebe's text. However, the film is literally graphic in its presentation as images of a Whiteman preaching are paired with the images of the Whiteman's indiscriminate shooting of the people of Abame at a market to present the viewer with the crude irony of Europe having come to civilize Africa.

Race and Colonial Hegemony: Racial Undertones in *The Ghost...* and *Out of Africa*

Cohen (1988) argues that race is an ideological construct (and not a scientific one) based on differences between sets of inherited properties upon which judgments of domination and subordination in society are made. He further dismisses the import of such differences:

> Although the division of people into race categories often based on valorization of the primacy of phenotypical features – the visual signifiers of difference – it is generally accepted that the biological definitions of race which date back to at least the eighteenth century are spurious (Cohen, 1988, p. 38).

At the core of the motivations that brought Europeans to Africa, either for purposes of slave trade, missionary activity or colonialism, is the saddening incident of racism. Having already alluded to the concept of Cultural Darwinism earlier in this study, it should be prudent to only slightly clarify that a significant part of the European society believed that their culture was far more superior to the African culture, and felt that it behooved them to come and civilize the 'dark' continent (Young, 1996). To the European mind, the African culture, history and mind was as dark as the complexion of the person.

Besides, Young (*ibid*) discusses what relates to the conception 'Cultural Darwinism' and castigates racial attitudes and their role in the oppression of the colonized world. In her 1996 work, *Fear of the Dark: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Cinema,* she furthers her assertion saying that key among the institutions involved was the Eugenics movement. The members of this organization, including Marie Stopes, H.G. Wells and George Bernard Shaw took it upon themselves to advance the science of selective breeding to ensure the health of the "race". Obviously, that should read the white race. According to Young (*ibid*), the proponents of the Eugenics were influenced by the ideas of Charles Darwin on evolution, with indeed the Eugenics movement being begun in the nineteenth century by Darwin's cousin Sir Francis Galton.

Young (1996) proceeds with her condemnation of Europeans who thought that they had full knowledge about Africa and Africans, which she actually thinks was mostly an accumulation of stereotypes and misrepresentations constructed by myths, ancient traveller narratives and later, in literature, popular fiction, anthropology, photography and cinema. On the real motivation behind colonialism, and how it was justified by the 'morality' of civilizing Africa, Young (*ibid*) avers:

> On an economic level, it has been suggested that the imperial expansion that started from roughly 1875 and carried on until World War I, was due, at least in part, to capitalist overproduction coupled with an under-consumption in the home market which led to the

search of markets overseas. For the African colonial subject, coloni-
alism meant that the organization of whole populations was desta-
bilized ... Ideologically, nineteenth century British colonialism was
justified as a moral duty, a benevolent effort to spread Christianity
and civilization across the continents of Africa, Asia and America
(Young, 1996, p. 56).

The two films, **The Ghost and the Darkness** and **Out of Africa**, and their respec-
tive literary antecedents are embedded with such racial attitudes. These sugges-
tions of racial superiority of one over the other are however more graphically
represented in the films than in the source texts. Whereas the texts only de-
scribe and catalogue them, only in a few instances with realistic dialogue, the
films allow us to see the characters and racial attitudes in their actions, thoughts
and speech. It is important to note that the two films are adapted from literary
originals written by European writers. In point of fact therefore, both film and
text are products of European artists – as the films are produced and directed by
European filmmakers. **Things Fall Apart** finds itself outside this bracket because
it is a film produced by an African filmmaker, and adapted from a literary ante-
cedent by an African writer. While **Things Fall Apart** is a purveyor of the post-
colonial discourse that is revisionist, the other two are laden with colonial dis-
course that seeks to undermine the standing of Africans in comparison to other
races.

When Col. Patterson first arrives in Tsavo, he is introduced to his native
aide, Samuel. It becomes apparent that Samuel is racist in his thinking and
speech towards non-Europeans, including fellow natives. It should be pointed
out here that the filmmakers choice of Samuel as the narrator and the medium
of some of the racial stereotypes is meant to give an impression to the mind of
the audience that even Africans themselves believe in the 'darkness' of their
people and continent, and that it is futile for anyone to expect a lot of positive
things from Africans and their continent. At least in this particular instance, the
film assumes a more racist leaning than its literary antecedent. What is more,
just before we see Samuel, the filmmaker uses Sterling to impress upon the
viewer that Samuel is the trusted one, and therefore what he says is supposed to
pass as the fact. Samuel is consequently used to give some very grim assessment
of Africans and Africa to a man who left London upbeat about the adventure of
working in a continent he loves.

Carried together with this prejudiced analysis of Africa, is an attack on the
Arabs and Indians as well. Also, Samuel is seen at his patronizing best, unneces-
sarily and endlessly barking orders to the workers who are already doing their
job anyway. While Patterson is in very high spirits having finally set foot at his
station, Samuel confronts him with quite unwelcome news, at 11:45:

Samuel: The truth is, the workers don't like each other at all. **Ob-
            viously,** (*emphasis mine*) the Africans hate the Indians,

but the Indians also hate other Indians. The Hindus be-
lieve cows are sacred, while the Muslims eat the cows.

Patterson: I have worked with both Muslims and Hindus, perhaps I
               can help.

Samuel: You can certainly try. It won't work. Nothing works here,
               Tsavo, is the worst place in the world (emphasis
               mine).

It is unfortunate for Africa and the African viewer of this film to see that
the filmmaker chooses an African man to be the bearer of such prejudiced as-
sessment of his continent as being "the worst place in the world". This would on-
ly serve to reinforce such biases in people of other races who would treat such
information as coming from a credible source. Fanon (1967), in *Black Skin,
White Masks* explains this phenomenon:

> The black man has two dimensions. One with his fellows, the other with
> the white man. A Negro behaves differently with a white man and with an-
> other Negro. That this self-division is a direct result of colonialist subjuga-
> tion is beyond question (p. 17).

Besides this presumed superiority of the whites to the Africans, is a veiled
attack on other cultures and religions. To the European mind, it was necessary
for Sterling to be hired and brought to Tsavo to convert the natives, Muslims
and Hindus to a more superior religion. The role of religion in preparing ground
for colonialism is also seen here. Young (1996) notes:

> The need to impose a moral and physical order on colonial subjects was
> seen as the duty of the Christian, civilized nations. Various scientific ex-
> planations regarding the inferiority of the black people formed the ra-
> tionale for carrying out this mission (p. 50).

Secondly, if Tsavo should in this case be taken to have been chosen as a
microcosm of Africa, then it is an Africa viewed as a place where nothing will ev-
er work unless there is intervention from Europeans. That Patterson succeeds in
laying the bridge against this grim prophesy by Samuel does not help the Afri-
can case very much. Patterson's success can be used as justification by racist im-
perialists and their apologists about why they had to heed to "the call" to come
to Africa and make things work even when Africans themselves believed that
"nothing works" or would work in their continent.

The Ghost and the Darkness conscientiously presents the African
man as thoroughly polygamous and devoid of affection for his wives. This con-
sideration of polygamy being non-European still exists. A case in point is Fed-
erico (2014) who in a study opines that polygamy is spreading in Europe due to
the immigration crisis. Hence, Europe more readily blames the migrants –

mostly Africans and Muslims – for polygamy. In respect of the issue of marriage, Samuel is depicted as the very antithesis of Col. Patterson. He is the archetype of the European conception of the African man, cold and detached in relation to his spouse(s). About his wives, Samuel confesses, "I don't like any of mine." It can indeed be argued that the filmmaker introduces in the film a character who is not in the literary antecedent in the first place to advance these racial contradictions and make manifest the European interpretation of Africans with the purpose of feeding fat the 'white' fascination with the African. On the other hand, the viewer interacts with the image of Patterson in overt display of affection towards his wife when he comes right from Robert Beaumont's office, to the railway farewell in London, and finally through their correspondence of letters.

This film – advancing on this function by literary texts – invests a lot in showing the master-servant relations that existed between whites and native Africans from early on in the 19th century. This relationship (characterized by white hegemony) existed from the first encounter between the two races when the first settlers started coming, through the colonial period. Even history has accurately documented that blacks were the porters, cooks, foot soldiers and subservient security guards (that is, on the rare cases they could be trusted to guard the whites). Burawoy (1974) traces the entrenchment of class stratification between Europe to the colonial era.

In the film *Out of Africa*, natives, adult Africans at that, are called boys and are screened in a ridiculous fashion as they run in childish excitement to meet Karen on her first arrival at the Ngong farm. Bror parades all the farm families in the cold of Ngong hills to inform them that Karen will be their female boss and that they should welcome her. Ngugi (1981) accuses Karen Blixen of glorifying the convoluted justice of the settlers that was used to oppress the African. This, Ngugi (*ibid*), does by alluding to the Kitosch incident in the Karen's memoir *Out of Africa* (1937). Kitosch is a native character who dies after being brutalized by a white settler who also locks him up to die. In the case proceedings that follow, the white settler actually ridiculously defends himself arguing that Kitosch dies because he wished to die. At this point, it is important to note that this particular episode is left out of the film. This goes in line with an argument already launched to the effect that the film tones down the racism in the literary original, hence it becomes a more sympathetic presentation of Europeans and their attitudes against Africans and their condition. Ngugi (*ibid*) is irked because, at the very least, it would be expected of Karen to condemn the unjust killing of Kitosch. This side of the postcolonial criticism with regard to Karen's text, it can be argued, begins critical discourse that most likely influenced the making of the film that eventually expunged the racist overtones prevalent   in   Blixen's   text.
Another postcolonial critic who attacks Karen Blixen's presentation of the African is Carolyn Martin Shaw. Shaw (1997) in her work *Colonial Inscriptions: Race, Sex, and Class in Kenya,* argues that Blixen in her memoir seems to rein-

force the perception that Africans can evoke both admiration and distaste from Europeans because of their failure to alienate themselves from primitive aspects of their environment.

Quoted in Brantly (2013), Shaw writes as follows:

> Blixen's romanticism never removed Europeans from their pinnacle. She delights in nature, and her belief that Africans had not quite severed the umbilical cord with nature results in both admiration and disdain for them. This is paternalism (maternalism), and it is racist (Brantly, 2013, p. 36).

Brantly (2013) disagrees with Ngugi (*ibid*) and Shaw (*ibid*) arguing that Karen Blixen's anticolonial stance in *Out of Africa* is always misread because of longstanding class and race implications. Being a white settler and from the aristocratic class, Karen Blixen has for long been prejudged to have been a supporter of the colonial ideal, and indeed, a perpetrator of injustice against the downtrodden – in this case the colonized natives. She cites an illustration of one of Blixen's letters in which Karen, according to her friend Gustav, is reported to have been really upset by the death of Kitosch to the extent of asking that Gustav assists her to get court case papers without the knowledge of the British authorities, because colonial authorities considered her to be pro-native. According to Brantly (*ibid*), Karen even refuses to expunge the Kitosch episode from her book upon the demand of her British publisher who felt that this episode would paint the settlers and by extension the whole colonial enterprise in bad light. She defends Karen for demonstrating subtlety in her condemnation of unjust colonial practices without sounding overly propagandist.

Quoting Blixen in her an undated manuscript, Brantly (2013) writes:

> It was my deepest hope that my race, by handing down a just verdict in the case, would make up for the shame that a single individual—who certainly might have been upset—had brought upon us. But it did not happen that way, and the verdict itself, but particularly the testimony of the two doctors, which to me was so obviously meant to save his skin, was not only a source of sorrow, but filled me with a feeling of deep disgrace [...] I do not understand how the description of these shocking details could fail to give the reader an impression of my indignation over them. [...] After the book came out, I got a letter from one of the two doctors who had given testimony at the trial. He wrote that my story had gotten him to think more deeply than before about his own conduct in the case (p. 32-33).

Is it then possible that this double-sided postcolonial discourse arguing for or against Karen Blixen's fairness to the African in *Out of Africa* (1937) influences the nature of the adapted film? After a comparative analysis of the literary original vis-à-vis the adapted film, this study can answer this question in the affirmative. In several instances, what can be read as Karen's overt prejudice

against Africans in the text is replaced by an overemphasis on Karen's goodwill for the Africans in the adapted film. In the film, Karen is seen to have a trustworthy relationship with her servants – especially Farah and Kamante, characters she even allows to have access to her private rooms. She also starts a school for the black children on her farm, going to great lengths to convince Kinyanjui and indeed other whites who are against the idea of natives being exposed to western formal education.

The Karen Blixen of the literary antecedent, *Out of Africa*, consistently draws analogies between native Africans and animals. These animal metaphors smirk of prejudice and may suggest that to her mind, at least subconsciously, Africans of her time operated at the same level as animals. Also, these descriptions reveal deep-seated mistrust and suspicion for the Africans – suspicions which Europeans held. In one of the descriptions, she writes:

> What I learned from the game of the country was useful to me in my dealings with the native people ... and yet it was difficult to tell, for the natives were great at the art of mimicry (Blixen, 1937, p. 24 – 26).

In respect of suspicion, Blixen also writes:

> If we pressed or pursued them (natives), to get an explanation of their behavior out of them, they receded as long as they possibly could, and then they used grotesque humourous fantasy to lead us on the wrong track. Even small children in this situation had all the quality of old poker players, who do not mind if you overvalue or undervalue their hand, so long as you do not know its real nature (Blixen, 1937, p. 26).

The presentation of the subaltern race in literature and popular culture by way of animal metaphor is not new. Jones (2002) writes about the treatment of "the other" like subhuman in during the days of slavery in the American history. Jones (*ibid*) quotes one Vilo Harle in clarifying this point, "The point is there are some others who are excluded from among us and are actually perceived in less human terms, below human beings, dangerous animals that can and must be killed" (Jones, 2002, p. 1085).

The prejudices expressed in Blixen's text reach a point where the reader cannot help but conclude that she wrote this story specifically for a Caucasian audience with whom she shared prejudices about other people. In the absence of Africans to be discriminated upon, Blixen seems to find the next victim to face the brunt of her racist evaluation. Upon the visit of an Asian Chief Priest, Karen is requested by Farah and other Mohammedans to present a gift on their behalf to the priest about this incident, Blixen writes:

> But would the priest, I asked, believe it to be a present from me? Of this I could extract no explanation from Choleim Hussein; there are times when

coloured people cannot make themselves clear to save their lives. (Blixen, 1937, p. 152)

It is therefore surprisingly ironical that a writer who sounds this racist would herself later describe her friend in the text, Berkeley, as one who "had no principles, but a surprising stock of prejudices, as you would expect in a cat. (Blixen, 1937, p. 186). This makes Karen Blixen an ambivalent character who sways like a pendulum from one side of the inter-race perception continuum to the other as may be convenient to her.

Conclusion

In the course of answering the main question this paper set out to respond to, it emerges that the early European visitors to Africa represented the two motivations (intent to dominate economically and politically (Rodney, 1973) and spirit of adventure) as reflected in both the adapted films and literary texts. From the foregoing discussions in this paper, it is clear that film and text combine to present the main motivation behind European activity in Africa as colonial project. However, literary texts, especially *Out of Africa* (1937) and *Man-Eaters of Tsavo and other East African Adventures* (5341) downplayed the quest to colonize as the main motivation and fronted mainly the desire for adventure, and Europe's response to a 'call' to save Africa. The adapted films therefore have succeeded in dispelling the adventure myth and elevating the principal reason for Europe's coming to Africa as the intent to dominate the continent mainly economically and politically.

Besides, the paper has laid bare the skepticism by some Europeans (as represented in film by European characters) regarding the imperialist claim that the advancement of infrastructure in Africa was meant to benefit the Africans. In line with this, the paper introduces Cultural Darwinism as a characteristic of societies (in this case European) which for many years held, and indeed still hold, the belief that their cultures have undergone evolution and are thus superior to others. It is of specific interest for this section of the study to discuss the filmmakers' role in critiquing, affirming or dispelling prejudice towards African culture (which is portrayed in the literary antecedents) through the filmic presentation of characters and exposition of their views on their own cultures and cultures of other people. Hence, from the cinematic narratives, the truth about Europe's activities in Africa comes from Europe itself. This aspect is missing in the literary antecedents.

As to the question of European-African perception of each other as "the other" and how the two races reinforce this concept of otherness in the perception of the opposite race and in attitudes towards each other, prejudice is brought to relief as a complex phenomenon not just affecting the European and African view of each other, but rather as one that is intra-racial: evident amongst members of the same race. The discrimination of the African by fellow African is evident, (Fanon, 1967) just as prejudice is manifest between Europeans of

different ethnic extractions. Where race holds constant, it is apparent that characters recede into ethnic or tribal extracts to define themselves vis-à-vis others.

References

Abink, J and Van Walraven, K. (2003). *Rethinking Resistance in African History: An Introduction*. In *Rethinking Resistance: Revolt and Violence in African History*.   (pp. 1 – 42). Leiden: Koninklijke Brill.

Achebe, C (1977). "*An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness*" In Massachusetts Review. 18. 1977. Rpt. in *Heart of Darkness, An Authoritative Text, background and Sources Criticism*. 5305. 7rd ed. Ed. Robert Kimbrough, London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1988, pp.251-261

Achebe, C. (1958). *Things Fall Apart*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.

Anyanwu, C. (2010) *"Adapting A Man of the People to Stage: Can Stage Adaptation Successfully Return Igbo Literary Fiction to the Igbo People?"* PhD Diss.   Middlesex University.

Blixen, K. (1937). *Out of Africa*. London: Penguin.

Blixen, K. (1961). *Letters from Africa, º5º0-1931*. Trans. Anne Born (5328). London: Penguin.

Blixen, K. (1961). *Shadows in the Grass*. London: Penguin.

Brantly, S. (2002). *Understanding Isak Dinesen*. South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press.

Brantly, S. (2013). *Karen Blixen's Challenges to Postcolonial Criticism*. In *KULT 11: Made in Denmark*. Department of Culture and Identity: Roskilde University, Vol. 29.

Britain". In P. Cohen and H.S. Baines (eds) Multi-Racist Britain. Basington: Macmillan Education Ltd.

Burawoy, M. (1974). *Race, Class and Colonialism*. In *Social and Economic Studies, Vol. 23. No.4*. pp. 965– 550.

Cartmell, D. & Imelda W. (2007), Eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*.   Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cohen, A. J. (1999). *The Functions of Music in Multimedia: A Cognitive Approach*. In S. W. Yi (Ed) Music, Mind and Science (pp. 97 – 69). Seoul: Seoul National University Press.

Cohen, K (1977). *Eisenstein's Subversive Adaptation*. In Gerald P. & Roger S (eds) *The   Classic American Novel and the Movies*. New York: Frederick Ungar, pp 239-256.

Cohen, P. (1988). *"The Perversions of Inheritance: Studies in the Making of Multi-Racist Britain"*. In P. Cohen and H.S. Baines (eds) Multi-Racist Britain. Basington: Macmillan Education Ltd.

Comfort, N. (2008). *Cultural Darwinism*. In "The European Legacy". Vol 13, Issue 5. Pp 623 – 627.

Donelson, L. (1998). *Out of Isak Dinesen: Karen Blixen's Untold Story.* Iowa City: IA: Coulsong.

Federico, V. (2014). Europe facing polygamy: Italy, France and the UK accept the challenge of immigration. In *The constitutional challenges of immigration,*IACL IX World Congress, Oslo 50-20 June 2014, pp. 1 -14.

Gobineau, A. (1967). *The Inequality of Human Races.* New York: Howard Fertig Inc.

Guzick, W. (2008). "*An Outrage to the Gods: The Concept of Hubris in Hippolytus and the Bacchae*". Essay at Harvard University. http://chs119.chs.harvard.edu/EdRes/archive/ essay_contestessay_contest_2008.html

Harvey, G. (2005). *Animism: Respecting the Living World.* London: Hurst & Co. Havard University Press.

http://chs119.chs.harvard.edu/EdRes/archive/essay_contest/ essay_contest_2008.ht ml. Retrieved on September 17, 2014 from High Beam Research: www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-128671353.html the Bacchae". Essay at Harvard University.

Hurd, G. A., Radin, P. B. & HO, A. K. (Producers) and Hopkins, S. (Director). (1996). *The Ghost and the Darkness* [Film]. Los Angeles: Constellation Films.

Hutcheon, L. (2006). *A Theory of Adaptation.* New York: Routledge.

Hutcheon, L. (2007). Revolution of *a Theory of Adaptation*. In Leitch, T. (Ed) *Literature/Film Quarterly no.* 79 pp 694 – 251.

Jakobson, R. (1959). *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation.* Cambridge, Massa chusetts:

Jones, D. M. (2002). "*We Must Be Hunters of Meaning*: Race, Metaphor, and the Models of Steven Winter." In *Brooklyn Law Review,* Volume 01 Issue 8. Pp 1071 – 1095.

Kalra, S. (2013). *Adaptation as Translation: On Fidelity.* Pune: Flame College of Liberal Arts. *Knowledge*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP.

Koller, C. (2008). *The Recruitment of Colonial Troops in Africa and Asia and their Deployment in Europe during the First World War.* In *Immigrants & Minorities,* Vol. 60, Nos. 5/6, March/July 6442, pp. 555-133.

Lugard, F. D. (1922). *Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa.* London: W. Blackwood and Sons.

Major, J. (1997). *Film, Literature, Subjectivity: Introductory Thoughts on the Essential Differences Between a Film And its Written Source.* At www.jeffmajor.com/film/essays/subject/index.html (accessed 5.5.2016).

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

Nunn, N. (2008). *The Long-Term Effects of Africa's Slave Trades.* In *The Quarterly Journal of Economics.* Pp. 573 – 176.

Odipo, D. (2006, May 8th). A Letter to Baroness Blixen: Out of Africa! *The Standard*. Retrieved from http://mg.co.za on 6nd May, 2016.

NAIROBI JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Onyedibia, A. (Producer) & Orere, D. (Director). (1987). *Things Fall Apart*. [Film]. Nigeria: Nigerian Television Authority.

Patterson, J.H. (2013). *The Man-eaters of Tsavo: And Other East African Adventures*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing.

Platt, J. (2014, April 26). *The strange history of the man-eating lions of Tsavo*. Retrieved   from http://www.mnn.com on 26th July, 2016.

Pollack, S. (Producer & Director). (1986). *Out of Africa* [Film]. Los Angeles: Universal Pictures.

Rauma, S. I. (2002). *Power and solidarity: Ending conflicts in Frank Durabont's "The Green Mile"*. Unpublished Proseminar paper. University of Jyväskylä.

Rifkin, B. (1994). *Semiotics of Narration in Film and Prose Fiction: Case Studies of "Scarecrow" and "My Friend Ivan Lapshin"*. New York: Peter Lang.

Rodney, W. (1973). *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* Dar-es-Salaam: Tanzanian Publishing House.

Roger, L. (2004). *Isak Dinesen: Gothic Storyteller*. Greensboro, New York: M. Reynolds. Routledge.

Rovine, V. (2009). *Colonialism's Clothing: Africa, France and the Deployment of Fashion*. In *Design Issues*, Vol. 69, No. 7, pp 88 – 61. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Shaw, C. M. (1997). *Colonial Inscriptions: Race, Sex, and Class in Kenya*. In African Studies Review, Vol. 41. No. 1. (pp. 157-160). London: Cambridge University Press.

Stam, R. (2000). *Beyond Fidelity: the Dialogics of Adaptation*. In "Adaptation", J. Naremore (Ed.).New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Tcheuyap, A. *"African Cinema and the Politics of Adaptation (º)."* Post Script, Inc. 2004.   Retrieved September 17, 2014 from High Beam Research: www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-128671353.html

Thiong'o, N. (1981). *The Detained: a Writer's Prison Diary*. London: Heinemann.

Thurman, J. (1995). *Isak Dinesen: The Life of a Story Teller*. London: Picador.

Ugochukwu, F. (2014). *"Things Fall Apart — Achebe's Legacy, from Book to Screen."* In: Research in African Literature 45(2) pp.168-183, 2014.

Walunywa, J. (2000). *Patriarchy and Masculinity in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart*. In *Egerton Journal for Humanities, social Sciences and Edication*. Vol. 5, No. 2 and 3, 2006, pp. 35 – 62.

Young, L. (1996). *Fear of the Dark: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Cinema*. London: Routledge.