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AFRICAN WOMEN AS NEWS: A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY

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A thesis submitted to
the University of Gloucestershire
in accordance with the requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities

February 2005

Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the news construction of Africa, particularly African women in British and Nigerian newspapers. Informed by feminist epistemology as well as postcolonial theoretical perspectives, it explores the constitutive dynamics of race and gender as identities, which both depict and define African women.

African women have historically been excluded from defining how they should talk and be talked about in cultural forms. This thesis uses the news as a negotiating space for certain African women [Nigerians] to participate in defining what it is to be an African woman. In doing this, the thesis serves a political end of giving 'voice' to African women as well as creates a form of dialogue between Western (British) women and African (Nigerian) women. This dialogue is crucial in feminism because the tensions, diversities and differences inherent in feminist debates have made meaningful conversations between women difficult. This study thus steps across cultures by offering a space for a cross-cultural dialogue on news constructs of African women's femininity.

The thesis employs both quantitative and qualitative methods, which combine an analysis of texts and group discussions. In this study, I have conducted a symptomatic analysis of British and Nigerian newspapers during 2002, drawing on cultural studies tradition of textual analysis. Reflexive dimensions are an integral part of the whole research process. As a black African Nigerian woman in Britain, I embody some of the tensions and contradictions that characterise feminist cultural debates. This situation positions me squarely as the bridge between two cultures – as the pipe though which the words of one is carried to the other. This role is reflected in the thesis as my reflexive thoughts about the tensions and contradictions spread spasmodically throughout the thesis.

By speaking and negotiating across cultures, this thesis provides an avenue for smoothening the tense relations existing between Western and African feminists and thus creates an opportunity for the possibilities of commonalities as well as an ethical relation with 'the other'.

Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of this thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed.............................. Date...............

Dedication

To my daughters Onyii and Nkem: may they refuse to be silenced

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the School of Art, Media and Design, University of Gloucestershire for funding my studies in the UK. My gratitude also goes to Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria for granting me study leave. My Head of Department Chinyere Okunna has been a pillar of support and inspiration. I thank her for her love.

My sincere thanks go to my supervisors, Ros Jennings and Karen Ross for the nurture, the challenge, the encouragement and the unflinching belief in me. Special thanks are due to Ros Jennings for the patient and sensitive manner with which she guided me as I took some faltering steps in a culturally different environment.

To many people who have supported me through this period, I owe a lot of gratitude. Special thanks to Kris Mason O'Connor, Emefiena Ezeani and Francis Smith, who read some drafts of this work and offered useful advice and constructive criticisms. Thanks extra to Emefiana and Milverton Wallace who continuously encouraged me when I have been frustrated not knowing how to move on. I thank you all for your love and understanding.

My gratitude also is due to my friends and relations in Canada, America, South Africa, Germany, UK, and Nigeria, who understood the loneliness I felt, so separated from my family and kept me company from across the miles. A special 'thank you' to Emeka Udeajah for Christmas 2002 and 2003. Thank you Helen and Martin Uzuegbunam for every support you provided. To my brother-in-law, Frank, every line of this thesis is a testimony of your generosity. I cannot thank you enough. My sister, Helen has supported me so much with prayers, which have sustained me all through this research. Thank you so much for your love and care. I thank my brothers, Ifeka, Chudi, Emeka and Mab whose belief in my 'academic prowess' has always been a source of challenge to me.

I thank my family at St Gregory's Catholic Church for supporting me in so many unimaginable ways. Thanks to my anonymous benefactor whose generosity enabled me to travel home to see my children and added in a great way to my strength to carry on in Britain. Thanks to you Una and Bridget, for Fatima 2002, and to Clive for every hour I gained for my studies as you helped me in the Old Priory.

I would like to offer my deep gratitude to my friends in Cheltenham who literally took me under their wings and who have in so many ways lessened my homesickness. Thank you very much Pat and Francis Smith for making me a part of your family and for every love and care which you have provided. It is not an exaggeration when I call you my guardian angels. My gratitude to Anne Harris for her indefatigable energy for friendship and for her generosity of heart and to Lucy Otton for all the laughter [and cries too!] we have shared. I specially thank Judith and Joanna Bull whose house has provided such warmth and love that helped to bring out the best in me. I thank you both for making your house a home for me.

I would like to thank my children, Kaycee, Obi, Nkem, Edu, Ify and Onyii for bearing my absence stoically. We have laughed, cried, joked, and quarrelled over the phone as I desperately tried to play mother from Britain. I thank you for keeping out of deep waters, and thus lessen the guilt I felt for being away from you for so long. I thank Rose, John and Ozioma for taking charge of the house and taking care of yourselves and every one else. My gratitude to my mother-in-law who encouraged me to take up this challenge, promising she was going to look after the children. Dalu, nnem. Special thanks to all those people who in anyway tried to fill in the gap my absence created in my family. I thank especially Tina and Obi Nwankwo, Oby and Okwy Oguejiofor, Ogo and Joe Ezeanya, Amilo and Enoch Nzewi for all the help you rendered which lightened the burden of my absence.

I am in a very special way indebted to my husband Mike, for allowing me to follow my dreams and for taking care of our children all these years and doing a good job of it! I thank you for your support, understanding, patience and love.

Finally, I would like to thank the women who participated in the group discussions, who for ethical reasons will remain unnamed. Thanks are also due to the Research Unit team for always being ready to offer some help. To the other research students with whom I have shared my frustrations and confusions, I thank you for sharing yours with me also and thus making it easier for me to bear mine.

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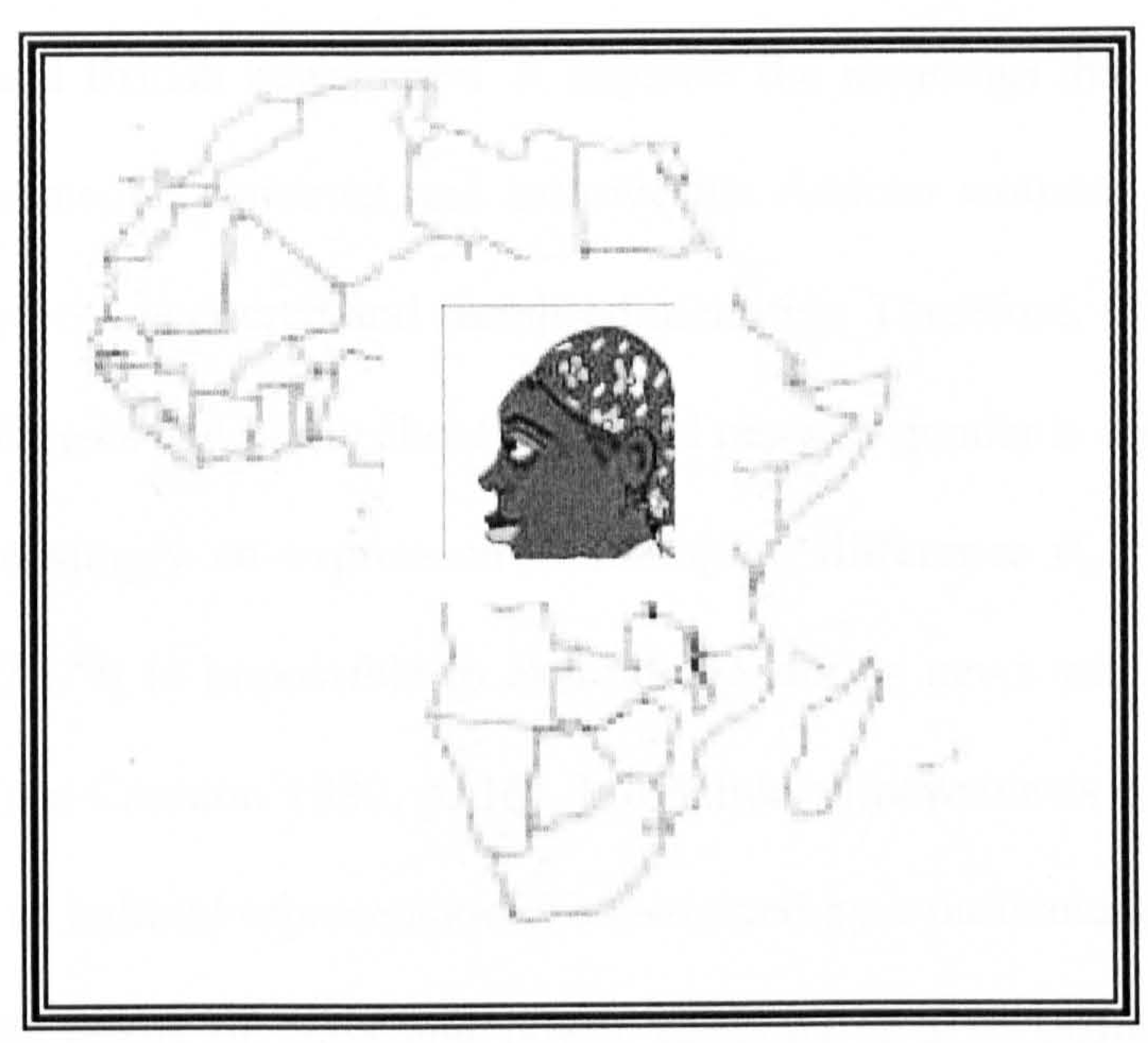
On a reflexive note 1: Back to the years...

As a child growing up at home, I had watched with perplexity the preference given to my male siblings; the part of the chicken that I was not supposed to eat, the style of riding a bicycle (then called the 'monkey' style) that I was not supposed to use, the way I was not supposed to talk, the manner in which I was not supposed to sit: because I was a girl. I got frustrated with the shouts from my mother and elder sisters: 'Don't do this', 'Don't behave that way', 'Don't you know you are a girl!' I wanted my freedom. I wanted to be free to express myself and not be encumbered by my 'girlness'. In my mind, 'girl' became synonymous with being tethered. As I watched my brothers get pampered, spoilt and left to do their own bidding, I felt trapped. I felt trapped by my sex.

Home to me is Nigeria, a long way from Britain where I have come to do my research. I grew up at a time when Nigeria was recovering from the (fresh) scars of colonial domination, the legacies of which were still noticeable in the hegemonic power the colonisers exerted over our schools and churches. I still remember being taught, "bah bah black sheep have you any wool...", "As white as snow", "as black as the devil", etc, notwithstanding that sheep in Nigeria do not have wool and it is too hot to snow! The church also saturated us in its own ideology of good and bad; white and black; God and the devil. In my young impressionable mind, white was synonymous with 'goodness, angels and God'. Were not our picture books and biblical stories full of them? Full of white angels: 'white' symbolized purity. 'Black' represents the evil one; the devil with his long tails and horns. Our picture books were always full of these images! I grew up hating my skin. I wanted to be like God. I wanted to be like the angels. I wanted to be white. Throughout my childhood, I felt trapped by two things: my sex and my colour.



❖ Introduction

Setting the context

This thesis focuses on the representation of Africa, especially African women within Nigerian and British newspapers. It explores the meanings that both cultures, through their news media, construct and inscribe the African women. An African woman is marked by both gendered and racialised identities. Therefore, this study is partly about gender and news and partly about 'race' and news. If gender is seen as a social *construct* rather than simply an expression of biological difference (Lorber and Farrell, 1991; Lips, 1997), "it is impossible to examine gender as news without placing it in some context" (see Creedon 1989, p. 16). In relation to news/news genres, gender and race are forms of cultural representations constructed by a particular journalist positioned in a particular nexus of class and power relations at a particular point in history. By entering into discourses of race and gender, one also enters into the domain of power and the politics of domination. This thesis thus explores the gendered and racialised inscriptions on the body of the African woman in news discourses as constructed within relations governed by patriarchy and racial dominance.

I need to interrogate the problematics of 'Africa women' in the context in which it appears in the title of this thesis. In this title, there seems to be an assumption of a homogenized and unproblematic African woman – a far cry from the truth. This thesis does not assume that all African women are the same, nor that Africa is monolithic or that what applies in or to one African country also applies to the entire continent.

Within the context of westernised discourse, however, Africa is often thought of as one country rather than a continent with differentiated customs and practices (Glasgow Media Group, 2002). This tendency is discussed in the thesis as one of the factors that makes the stereotyping of Africa in western news discourses inevitable. According to Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) many Africans, when they think of Africa, think only of Black Africa or even their own ethnic groups. They therefore generalize from the characteristics of their own ethnic groups to describe the whole of the continent. I recognise that as I use the term 'African women', it could conjure up different things for different people. To some it could conjure up colour – as some people think of Africa as being synonymous with blackness. This probably leaves out African women who are white as in South Africa or Zimbabwe. How does one differentiate women who are easily recognised as black (Euro-American colour notions), but are not Africans, from those who are black *and* Africans? What about those who claim to have African roots but reside in the global diaspora? Being an African woman transcends the taxonomy of colour and location. When some people think of African women, they automatically locate them to what is routinely called 'sub-Saharan Africa'. As Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) rightly questions, "in view of the history of Africa and cross-cultural links across the Sahara, their reality of cultures and acculturations in Africa, and in view of countries like Chad and North Mali which have an expanse into the Sahara, what does sub-Saharan mean?" (p. 215). The term sub-Saharan itself seems political. To some people, the term 'African women' recall the image of illiterate peasants, overburdened by work and children and desperately striving to survive in a hostile, hunger- and disease-ridden environment. All those middle-class, enterprising and healthy African women are rendered invisible in this view. The point is that there is rarely a rounded picture of African women available – instead they are made 'real' via

essentialised and stereotyped representations. I, too, am conscious of also homogenizing all the diverse experiences of African women by using this term in the thesis. However, I use this term conscious of its limitation and with an acknowledgement that although I have smoothed out their subtle differences, I still recognise and value their complexities.

So, what do I mean when I use the term? One way to understand its use in this study is to think first of continental Africa rather than diasporic Africans. By this, I mean Africans who reside in the African continent or are easily traceable to the African continent. As used in the news discourse in Britain, the country in Africa or Africa itself must have been mentioned in the news. Within Nigerian news discourse, African women (other then Nigerians) are vividly absent in the news. This could possibly be linked to Nigerian newspapers' reliance on foreign news agencies for the reports of foreign news (Egwu, 2001), which often implies working within a "narrow definition and formulation of information and news" as defined by the foreign (mostly Anglo-American) news agencies (Chambers 2000a, p. 114). This is easily seen in Nigerian newspapers by the absence of bylines, or in some cases, where attribution directly to the news agencies from where the stories are drawn. In British newspapers, African women, though noticeably absent in news stories, are often captured in photos as 'evidence' and as symbols of disasters of all kinds (see chapters six and seven). In this thesis, I focus on Nigerian press representations of Nigerian women, and in dialoguing with Nigerian as well as British women; I create a link between the prevalent images and construction of African women's femininity in both cultures. As this dialogic aspect of the thesis is based on a small number of discussion groups, purposively drawn from Nigeria and Britain, the findings cannot be widely generalized. However, the ideas

generated by these groups provide a rich and deep source of data and the methodology chosen provides an interesting model on which further studies could be based.

Positioning myself in the research

Those of us who work in areas close to our own experiences can probably expect our own beliefs about the world to shape our work (Du Bois, 1983). As a child, I had felt great injustice at the different ways in which my brothers and I were treated. I was barely nine years old when in a composition class, we were asked to write about "Myself" and I voiced what I have now come to realise was a cry of protest. In the composition, I listed all the things I was capable of doing, but ended with "I wish I could fly…". My teacher appeared to be scandalised, going into a lengthy explanation of the mechanism of flying and how humans could not fly. In my subconscious mind, I must have equated being able to fly with freedom, the freedom to be allowed to do my bidding and not be encumbered by my sex. So from an early age, I have felt strongly about gender injustice and have wanted to do something about it. This desire has intensified as I grew up and continued to witness situations, which seem to define the boundaries for women and men, always skewed in favour of the male. This research has thus been motivated by my fierce belief in the wrongs of inequality. Crucially, the researcher is a person, and the person and her personhood cannot be left out of the research process (Birch, 1998).

Being in Britain to do this research has situated me in a slightly different plane. Often I have reflected on the routes which this research would have taken if conducted in

Nigeria. While I would still have emphasised gender issues, I have wondered whether race would have featured in quite the same way. In Nigeria, it would be rare to consider my race or colour whereas in Britain, it is an identity that could not be ignored. Yet, my reflexive note 1 shows how religious books stamped on my young impressionable mind the notion of superiority of colour and race. Then I was ignorant of how social institutions such as the church, education, family and media (defined by Althusser (1972) as Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs)) are major contributors to the propagation of ideologies within society. Being in Britain for this research saw me living out the relationship between women (patriarchy), race (colonialism, racism) and media (hegemony).

As I travelled through various feminist theories, what stood out was the discordant voices that characterise these different theories. Sometimes I read one theory with enthusiasm believing it had the answers I sought (Skeggs ed., 1995) only to get disappointed when I read critiques of that same theory. As I read one theory and then one counter theory after another, my disappointment mounted. In my mind, I knew what I was looking for, but never found the words to express it. This continued until I realised that I am the key to what I was looking for. I am my own research instrument as I embody the tensions of the gender-race dichotomy that have featured in the feminist debates (see Chapter One). My presence in the UK has provided me with the opportunity to reflect on the double dimension of the African woman – gender and race and how each has played a part in the construction of her image in the news. More so to ease the tense relations between Western and African feminisms, I create a news space for cross-cultural dialogue about news construction of African women's femininity. In this attempt to 'read' within a complex matrix of context, theory and representation, one

thing stands out clear: I am my own research instrument as I strive to interpret 'meaning in action'.

Crucial in this thesis, therefore, is self-reflexivity (Chapter Five explains its use in this thesis). Progressively, reflexive methods have become acceptable within feminist research as a means to lessen the power dimension between the researcher and the researched, to increase transparency in the research process and for the researcher to take responsibility for her views (Etherington, 2004). Within this thesis, I have assumed the insider-outsider position (Chapter Five explains how I am so situated) that according to Collins (1991) has a number of benefits. These are greater 'objectivity' through being able to see patterns that insiders are too close to see. Further, the status affords the privilege to challenge the knowledge claims of insiders, to acknowledge discrepancies between the insider accounts and 'insider – outsider' researcher's experience and be able to identify the anomalies. This has proved very beneficial especially in my attempts to cross cultures; I spread my reflexive thoughts intermittently across the thesis. These thoughts sometimes come in the form of stories, mine (autobiography) and other people's; sometimes they come in the form of the impact of the research process on me; they come as I give readers a glimpse into 'other' cultures not their own. When we use our own stories, or those of others, for research, we give testimony to what we have witnessed, and that testimony creates a voice (Frank 1995, cited in Etherington 2004, p. 9). These voices are woven into the whole thesis in many forms. At times I leave them to flow with the thesis while at other points, when I feel they are too loud and might interrupt the flow of the thesis, I put them as boxed texts. In other cases too, when my aim is to emphasise them as my personal reflexive voice, I use a different typeface. Other voices which I wish to mention which may come

out strongly in this thesis, are those of British and Nigerian women whom I had engaged in a dialogue. Their voices invite the readers into the cross-cultural interpretations of news constructs of African women's femininity.

Feminist – am I that name?

This thesis is a feminist sociological inquiry. It is common to hear feminism dismissed as a foreign ideology, imported to ruin nice African woman. Equally common is the claim that Africa has no need for feminism as strong women have thrived in the continent from time immemorial. Throughout the continent therefore, lackadaisical attitudes have followed feminism either as bastion of nationalism, or in most cases as a ruse for some form of cultural hegemony. A journalist in Harare was once quoted as saying, "women, women, will they ever stop moaning. There is no need trying to convince us that women are oppressed. There are better issues to focus on" (Aidoo 1998, p. 47). One Nigerian author and a "masculinist" described feminism as "a movement of bored matriarchists, frustrated tomboys and natural termagants; each of these types has its reasons for being discontented in the matriarchist paradise that is a woman's traditional world" (Chinweizu 1990, p. 118). Such statements express clearly that anti-feminist attitudes are common in Africa and Nigeria. With my continued interest in feminist studies, I have often been mockingly called either "women empowerment" or "gender woman", by both friends and foes alike. In the Nigerian academy, feminism is hardly mentioned. Many women tend to hide under names like gender sensitive, women's liberation, women's empowerment, women's emancipation, and women's regeneration. Yet, often they are mockingly asked, "liberation from whom? From what?" No one appears to take them seriously. The disdain for issues

concerning women is often reflected in the lack of resources and grants for such research. Out of over 40 universities that offer media studies in Nigeria, only three of them have gender studies as part of their curriculum. In one of the universities, where Gender and Media is offered as a course at Masters' level, the head of department recounted her experience with a male professor who was invited as an examiner. The professor told her bluntly, "I know that it is someone like you who would introduce this nonsense in the curriculum". My own personal experience also paints a gloomy picture. While seeking a grant to undertake further study, I thought I had written a brilliant essay on the course I intended to pursue. Eventually I realised that the contested place had been given to someone else. I asked the male professor who was in charge why I was not qualified and he said, dismissively, "go and find some women's group to sponsor you for that". In a few words, he had dismissed my work because it bordered on gender studies. One of the problems I have had to address was, how will I cope with such apparent antagonism when I go back home. Will I be able to deal with the hostility that I am bound to encounter in the Nigerian academy? Yet all around me as I lived in Nigeria, I could see the gross inequality between women and men, the silencing of the women yet Nigerian society demands that I also remain mute. I have always wanted to discuss women problems, to 'do something about it'. What, I had no idea. The challenges are both enormous and grandiose. While I was exploring feminist theories and theorists, I read that one of the purposes of feminism is to understand women's oppression in order to end it. The position of a feminist researcher therefore is one in which she is part of discovering and understanding and also responsible for *attempting* to create change (see Kelly *et al.*, 1994). I was struck by the word 'attempting' – which implies making an effort as against the complacency and stoicism of some African women I have come to know. The attempt might not yield much, but it would raise

some consciousness. We cannot just fold our arms and do nothing. I do know that women are oppressed. I have seen it all around me. I also advocate a change in the situation. I felt that feminism is a calling, a vocation. It demands courage and fights for a positive change in the society. And I thought, "If doing feminist research would provide the avenue to break out and voice my pent up emotions, if it means giving African women the opportunity to speak, if it involves calling attention to these inequalities and asking for a positive change, then I am a feminist". Here I am ready for my call....

How I arranged this thesis

I have divided this thesis into three parts. Part One, which has three chapters (1 – 3), sets the scene. In Chapter One, I review feminist thinking on gendered social relations, exploring the discordant voices within feminisms. This chapter foreshadows the possibilities of commonality of women who, irrespective of acknowledged differences, are dominantly constructed as embodied beings that share similar inscriptions across various cultures. Chapter Two contextualises this in relation to African women by exploring the politics of gender in Nigerian society. Using the Nigerian scene, it suggests that African women battle with the reality of a gendered existence to a greater extent than is commonly acknowledged by African feminists. In Chapter Three – titled 'Beyond gender, race and representation', I explore race as also a crucial identity of African women. This chapter provides a link between colonial and slave discourses and contemporary media stereotypes suggesting how these form a regime of racial representations.

One way to counteract regimes of racial representation is, as Spivak suggests, embracing across impossible differences and distances (Landry and MacLean, 1996) and attempting to have an ethical relationship with the 'other' (Spivak, 1988). In attempting to reach across culture, this thesis uses the space of news media as a negotiating arena. Part Two therefore discusses the context of news production, arguing that news is a construction and configured within ideology. This is the major concern of Chapter Four which uses two case studies (one from Nigeria and the other from Britain) to show how news is shaped by ideological proclivities. Chapter Five discusses the methods employed in conducting this research. This chapter is a personal account of my research decisions and explores the impact which research processes have had on me.

Part Three has three chapters (6 – 8) and reflects the major arguments of this thesis. It establishes Africanness in the British news as it discusses in Chapter Six how Africa comes out in the news in Britain. On possible implication of Africa's representation in the British press is that it is inevitably linked to how African *women* are portrayed. Exploring how Africa is portrayed in therefore a prerequisite to how its women are seen. In Chapter Seven therefore, I focus on the representation of African women in the British press, comparing it with how Nigerian women feature in the Nigerian press. However, the analysis of the representation of African women in the Nigerian press functions as a control sample, providing the other side of the African women which is not available in the British press, rather than simply serving as the other half of a cross-cultural analysis. In Chapter Eight, Nigerian and British women reach out to each other in dialogue by each defining their own views on the ways in which African women's femininity is presented in the news. This chapter provides a negotiating space for African (Nigerian) women to participate in defining what it means *to be* an African

woman. The outcome of this dialogue is important as it opens up possibilities of African feminists revisiting in a less polemic manner, some aspects of African cultures and re-discover their place in them, just as Weststream feminists get a more in-depth knowledge of the 'other' culture. This increases the possibilities of an ethical relation with 'the other'.

Thus, my overall aim in this thesis is to explore the dominant pattern of representation of black African women in selected Nigerian and British newspapers and to conduct a cross-cultural analysis by means of 'reading', entering into dialogue and reflecting across British and Nigerian cultures to provide a richer understanding of the representation of black African women's femininity. In addition, I chart the journey of a black African feminist researcher in the British academy.

I have included quite a number of photographs in this work – pictures being an integral part of news stories. In most places where I used photos, emphasis is on the news photos themselves, the cutlines and the headlines as they are read simultaneously to create meaning. In most cases, the news stories are not legible for the eyes. But this is generally not problematic because in such situations my emphasis is not on them. When I do concentrate on the news stories and they lack visibility, I have included the full stories in the appendices and I point to this in the thesis. In Chapter Eight, the small photo clippings included are simply to jog the memory about news photos that have been encountered in the previous chapters of the thesis. Nigeria and Britain both have a newspaper called *The Guardian*. When I write [N] after *The Guardian*, it shows I refer to the Nigerian newspaper; when I write [UK] I refer to the UK's.

PART ONE

MAPPING BOUNDARIES (1)

❖ Chapter One

Exploring feminist thought on gendered social relations

Introduction

Feminist perspectives on gendered social relations have followed different paths. Each perspective seems as intractable as the dynamism of the difference that propels it. Differences in cultures have in a significant way necessitated the increasing diversities in feminist thoughts (Nnaemeka ed., 1998). Therefore, in this chapter I have categorised feminisms to reflect feminist perspectives that are influenced by the culture of the West and of Africa, and have called them "Weststream" and "African" feminisms respectively. As I show in the discussion, this categorisation does not represent "neat" categories, as neither Weststream nor African feminism signify a homogenous theory. Rather, diversity and difference are evident within each category.

A revolving issue within these perspectives is the gendered existence of women. Each of the perspectives seems to agree that all women suffer one form of oppression or the other, but they differ on what that oppression is. Within each perspective, the oppressive forces have a different hierarchical relationship. For example, while issues of gender seem to dominate in Weststream feminist thought, for many Africans, especially those in the diaspora, thinking about gender issues is a luxury they can do without (Hudson-Weems, 1994). They argue that the liberation of a whole race from racial oppression is more pressing than any issue that seems to demand an antagonistic relation with African men who, like them, are trapped within structures of racial domination.

In this chapter, I explore the dialectics of gender-or-race feminist approaches to women's oppression as they relate to the African woman especially one positioned as I am between two 'worlds'.

Shaping the debates: an African philosophy of difference

> "Na oke obi, udi mmadu ichona di naya"
> *You can find all manner of people within a great compound*[1]

In Igboland, it is usual to see a great compound as one in which all kinds of people exist – the good, the bad, the ugly and the beautiful. Heterogeneity, rather than homogeneity in this culture thus signifies greatness. This philosophy preaches not just tolerance, but acceptance of difference and a "live and let's live" approach to life. That is why it is popular to say in this culture, "egbe belu, ugo belu": "let the kite perch, and let the eagle perch…" Following a similar principle, the Yorubas say, "the sky is too wide for the birds to fly without colliding with one another." Most importantly, this philosophy emphasises the necessity of harnessing diversity for the ultimate good of the family and the wisdom of never underestimating another's ability to contribute.

Indeed, in examining the feminist debates, I agree with Obioma Nnaemeka that, even before diversity and multiculturalism became popular in academic and popular culture, feminist practice had envisaged diversity but failed to articulate it satisfactorily (Arndt 2002, p. 10). A primary reason for this failure, I would suggest, was the inability to see the diversity in feminism as a form of greatness, (as an asset that could be harnessed for the good of the 'family'/sisterhood rather than be used as a divisive tool). Emphasis on

[1] Used in this sense to refer to an enclosed space usually with more than one building where different family members who share an ancestral lineage live.

differences rather than similarities has proved the Achilles heel of feminism. Feminism has thus never been regarded as a united body of thoughts (Bryson, 1999) and is often considered a troublesome term (Beasley, 1999). Often what is produced is a cacophony of voices that make meaningful conversations difficult. One of the greatest challenges facing contemporary feminism, therefore, is how to "build a politics that acknowledges, respects and accommodates differences" (van Zoonen 1994, p. 3). Rosemary Tong (1989) puts it most succinctly: "We need to have a home in which everyone has a room of her own, but one in which the walls are thin enough to permit a discussion" (p. 7). Unfortunately, erecting such a thin wall, which words can infiltrate, has proved a herculean task within feminist debates due to the inability of feminisms to utilise difference creatively (Lorde, 1984). I shall now explore some of the dominant ways of thinking about feminism, locating the discourses on the terrain that in African world-view, there are many roads to the same goal.

Engaging with terms: naming feminisms

One dominant way people have named feminisms is in binary opposites (white/black[2], western/non-western[3], first/third world[4], mainstream/deviants[5], etc). Thinking of feminism in binary opposites not only suggests dichotomies but also creates hierarchies of meanings. It could portend ethnic or racial divide, suggest class or economic distinction, assign more power to one while excluding the other, or reinforce basic categories of oppression. To categorise feminism therefore is problematic and as Anderson and Collins (1995) suggest, "people should be aware of the limitation and

[2] It is important to note that neither of these groups now represents a homogenous racial entity, as the terms seem to suggest. What makes a person a black feminist may not necessarily be colour (see Russo, 1991).
[3] Mohanty (1991a) challenges the implicit assumption in the use of the terms in her writing 'Under the western eyes.'
[4] Emphasising the clumsiness in using this a category for feminism Obioma Nnaemeka asks: 'Second World, where are you?', Arndt (2002, p. 11).
[5] See Bryson (1999, p. 32).

significance of language and try to be more inclusive about diverse group experiences" (p. xix).

To some scholars (Sofola, 1998; Hudson-Weems, 1998), different worldviews, cultural imperatives and priorities have necessitated the different paths along which different feminisms have ventured. In line with this view, in this work I categorise feminisms into Weststream and African feminisms referring to feminisms shaped by worldviews, cultures and priorities of the West and Africa respectively. These terms are not in binary opposition and therefore do not create hierarchy of meanings. They also offer the convenience of discussing cultures that are in conversation later in this work.

Weststream feminist views on gendered social relations

There exists a body of feminist thought emanating from the West, which is deeply rooted in its culture and inextricably tied with its political and historical milieu. Such feminist thought I would describe as "Weststream feminism". With this description, black feminism, radical feminism, liberal feminist, lesbian feminism, post-modern feminism, socialist feminism and so on, can all belong to this category. Encapsulating these groups of feminisms into a unitary term, Weststream, does not ignore their heterogeneous expressions. These heterogeneous expressions are outlined in the ensuing discussions.

An initial concern of Weststream feminism was a proposal of universal sisterhood and a shared oppression of all women. Challenging sexism and sexist oppression seemed the crucial and sole agenda. Various theories were put forward which tried to explain the subordination of women. One such theory argued that women's exclusion from full participation in the work force was at the heart of women's oppression. Championed by

liberal-minded women, this view equated liberation with gaining economic status and money power. To this group, therefore, working for pay would liberate women (Tong, 1989). This feminist view draws strongly from the liberal philosophy of the 18th and 19th centuries. Its relationship to feminist thought was not "'political' but rather a sensible, moderate and reasonable claim for formal sexual equality" (Whelehan 1995, p. 27). Liberal feminist perspectives have, however, been criticised for having an ideology that supports the status quo, since its concern is not to challenge the existing structures but to seek women's equality with men in terms of civil and economic rights. Critics argue that this suggests that individual women can, through sheer effort, advance to the ranks of the powerful class known as "men" (Tong 1989, p. 22). They also argue that the liberal approach to feminist issues represented the values, interests and concerns of white, middle-class women (Evans 1994, p. 7). This is because for the majority of working class and black women, working for pay neither liberated them from sexist oppression nor allowed them to gain any measure of economic independence (hooks, 1982).

Another explanation of women's oppression was based on Marxist philosophy. Marxists argue that an oppressive class system is entrenched through the capitalist structures in the society. Marxist feminism has argued for women's emancipation as part of a broader struggle against capitalism. The interests of women are therefore considered the same as those of the working class. For the proponents of this view, the plight of women is thus "analysed in terms of their relationship to the economic system, the roots of their oppression being capitalism, and their lack of control over the means of production" (Bishop 1978 cited in Clairmont 1986, p. 16). The focus is on the capitalist exploitation of women, especially through unpaid housework and low paid employment outside the home. Marxist feminism argues that women's work in the

home goes uncompensated and unrecognised, as women receive no remuneration for it. This perspective has thus advocated increased participation (in better paid jobs) in the labour force as the most important part of women's emancipation. A Marxist approach would, for example, argue that an increase of women in media industries would necessarily change media output to favour gender balance. However, this position, research has shown, is both simplistic and naïve. As Liesbet van Zoonen (1988, 1994) argues, media output is not simply an individual issue because media workers have to contend with pressures from colleagues and organisational needs, as well as the social, economic and legal trappings of society. Often an increase of minorities within the media may not improve the representational pattern of those minorities, nor is it able to overturn a conservative culture. Sometimes, the socialisation process that goes on in the media industries is too strong to be challenged (van Zoonen, 1988, 1989; Cottle, 1999). Data provided through interviews, personal statements and anecdotes outlined in a recent work (see Chambers *et al.*, 2004) suggest a lack of consensus among women journalists on the impact of their gender on their practice of journalism. Chambers *et al.* have noted that "this lack of consensus among women journalists thereby challenges the assumption that a 'critical mass' of women in news industry will transform the work place" (2004, p. 107).

While Marxist feminism is recognised for its concentration on capitalism as an oppressive force for women, it is criticised in particular for its neglect of women themselves and a consideration of women as sexed biological bodies, as possible forms of oppression. The 'radical' approach to feminism fills this gap but has tended to valorise women's biology and ignore economics. The radical perspective, however, provides the distinctive character of second wave feminism (Clairmont 1986, p. 18). It sees women as one social group oppressed by men as another social group. At the root

of this oppression is patriarchy (Rowland and Klein 1996, p. 11), variously described as an ideology that arose out of men's power to exchange women between kinship groups, as a symbolic male principle, and as the power of the father (Rowbotham, 1982). Rowland and Klein (1996) write that patriarchy, involves "a system of structures and institutions created by men in order to recreate male power and female subordination" (p. 14). These structures and institutions perpetuate the ideology of the "naturally" inferior position of women, to ensure that male hegemony is sustained. Radical perspectives to feminism tend to see all men as enemies and oppressors and all women as oppressed. The radical feminist slogan "the personal is political" has, however, provided insight to those doing feminist research, because it gives prominence to those hitherto neglected areas of women's lives involving the shared experience of abuse of power (see Radway, 1987; Hermes, 1995). It is also influential in this thesis as it has been useful in making sense of women's personal experiences with the news.

Radical feminism, however, has been criticised for its over-emphasis on female sexuality (see Nnaemaka, 1998) and for its making "men the enemy" and all women victims (Bryson, 1999). Patriarchy, especially, came under severe criticism by socialist feminists who argued that patriarchy implies a universal and historical form of oppression based on biology and thus obscures the need to recognise not only biological differences, but also the multiplicity of ways in which society defines gender (Rowbotham 1982, p. 74). Despite the criticisms of radical feminism, I consider 'patriarchy' extremely useful in this research as there seems to be a clear pattern in some media research which suggests that women "throughout the world are vulnerable because of their sex, and male domination is therefore a basic structure in all societies" (Bryson 1999, p. 30). In 1979, Gallagher after a comprehensive UNESCO-sponsored research on portrayal of women in the media found that:

Aspects of the mass media's relationship to women – in terms of both portrayal and employment – could be seen to transcend cultural and class boundaries. Although differences do exist, it is the similarities which are ultimately striking, suggesting a universality of certain dimensions of women's concerns and of the women and media relationship" (Gallagher 1979, p. 7).

In 2000, more than two decades later, the results from the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) also suggest that women's portrayal in the media, globally, is characterised more by similarities than differences despite the cultural differences between women (Spears *et al.*, 2002)(the results from the GMMP is discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven). Research such as this suggests the possibility of a shared oppression and a certain degree of commonality that could exist in the daily experiences of women.

Socialist feminists, as mentioned above, seem dissatisfied with the undifferentiated universality of patriarchy and women's oppression, as they take class divisions seriously, rather than claiming, as radical feminists tend to do, that all women form part of an oppressed underclass (Whelehan 1995, p. 63). They also seem dissatisfied with the Marxist feminist gender-blind approach as they seem convinced that patriarchy is at least as basic a structure as capitalism. Socialist feminism is largely considered a dual theory, which attempts to combine the positive attributes of radical and Marxist feminism while disengaging from their weaknesses and omissions. The result is that in defining the source of women's oppression, it is often confronted with a series of contradictions. For example, feminist and gender questions sit oddly with the class-based nature of Marxism because to question gender would imply that women are set apart as a class of their own. This could be "perceived by Marxists as introducing divisive and diversionary debates to a political framework which depended on unity within class regardless of gender" (Whelehan 1995, p. 63). Socialist feminism is,

however, acknowledged for its political resonance, as it perceives western society as containing more than one system of domination (Whelehan 1995, p. 64). It is also claimed that though difficult to accomplish, socialist feminism has the potential of resolving the existing differences among the many currents of feminisms (Tong 1989, p. 193).

The varied 'voices' within Weststream feminist perspectives so far discussed, point to diverse women with different priorities and needs. Some women, who felt that their needs were excluded from some of the 'mainstream' perspectives so far discussed, have reacted by calling attention to the exclusionary nature of these perspectives. For example, issues of sexuality and race were noticeably absent from the earlier perspectives of Weststream feminism. Though radical feminists discussed sexual politics, lesbian feminists explored it further and in more detail, arguing that heterosexuality is an institution of male domination, not a free expression of personal preference (see Leeds Revolutionary Feminist Group, 1982). Most of their projects focus on criticising and challenging conventional and traditional value systems and positions, which they perceive as intrinsically oppressive to women. Motherhood, marriage, compulsory heterosexuality and reproduction have been their primary sites of attack, and in these areas have they been most criticised (Rowland and Klein, 1996).

As can be seen, racial issues or priorities were absent in the early rhetoric of Weststream feminism. Feminism could, quite rightly, be accused of ignoring the experiences of black women. Black women demanded that their experiences be added to feminist analyses, not as an optional extra, but on an equal basis. While some denounced the women's liberation movement as white women's foolishness, others reacted in a now familiar pattern by starting black feminist groups. hooks (1982)

however argues that by creating segregated feminist groups, black women both endorsed and perpetuated the very "racism" they were supposedly attacking. They accepted the terms imposed on them by the dominant white feminist community, and structured their groups on a racist platform, identical to that of the white-dominated groups they were reacting against. This no doubt further led to a greater polarization within feminisms. Instead of bonding on the basis of a shared understanding of woman's varied collective and individual plight in society, feminists have acted as if the distance separating their experiences from one another could not be bridged by knowledge and understanding. For example, black women, hooks (1982) argues, in attacking white women's attempt to present them as an 'other', acted as if they *were* an 'other'. While hooks' claim may be true, it is equally a truism that over time, mainstream feminism has managed to 'exclude' lesbians, working class women and black women while proclaiming to support the liberation of all women everywhere. Perhaps in its "enthusiasm/eagerness to establish itself as a true *engagement*, feminist practice evoked a diversity that is couched in biology – sisterhood; thinking that the evocation of bloodline and lineage would insulate it from the dissonance and possible turmoil that difference can engender" (Obioma Nnaemaka in Arndt 2002, p. 10, original emphasis). As has been seen, this was not to be, as the diverse histories, experiences and desires of women blew the lid off the container of universal sisterhood. The dominant argument seems to be that 'we' are not all sisters, as there are some women who are more 'sister' than others.

Even for black feminism, which emerged as a response to the perceived exclusion by Weststream (white) feminism, there is difficulty in articulating a commonality. This difficulty is evident in the alienation of some black feminists within *their own* feminism. Audre Lorde as a black lesbian feminist feels her sexual identity interferes

with her liaison with other black feminists, as many of them take a homophobic view of her sexuality (Lorde, 1994). It would seem that racial identity, though a form of bonding[6] does not transcend differences. To some black women, especially those who insist on culture separatism in feminism, black feminism is seen in both theory and practice as having embraced the hegemony of Western cultures (Hudson-Weems, 1994). Criticizing Alice Walker's 'womanism', for having too close a kinship with white Weststream feminism and African feminism as naturally suggesting "an alignment with feminism, a concept that has been alien to the plight of Africana women from its inception" (Hudson-Weems 1994, p. 18-19), Hudson-Weems suggests the term 'Africana[7] womanism', as a term to describe Africana women's struggle. She thus eschews the term 'feminism'. Naming as an act of resistance in feminism not only sustains its dynamism but also expands its horizons. The assumption of unity of all black women is thus engendered by differences in the 'community' of black women. Explaining her choice of Africana womanism, Hudson-Weems writes:

> Neither an outgrowth nor addendum to feminism, *Africana Womanism* is not Black feminism, African feminism, or Alice Walker's womanism ... *Africana Womanism* is an ideology created and designed for all women of African descent. It is grounded in African culture, and therefore, it necessarily focuses on the unique experiences, struggles, needs and desires of Africana women.... Africana Womanism and its agenda are unique and separate from both White feminism and Black feminism, and moreover to the extent of naming in particular, Africana Womanism differs from African feminism (1994, p. 24).

By thinking of her concept as "designed for all women of African descent", Hudson-Weems however negates the differences between the situation of diasporic Africans and

[6] How can I forget the search for a black face, which I had continued to engage in, in the time I have been in the white populated area of Cheltenham? And when such a face was seen, isn't it remarkable that though we had never met, that often we had waved and smiled at each other as though we were long lost friends, the pulling force being that we shared the same colour of skin.
[7] Hudson-Weems (1994, p. 17) describes Africanans as continental Africans and Africans in diaspora.

Africans in the continent. She lists eighteen distinct and diverse characteristics of the Africana Womanist, which she constantly compares with white feminists. She is:

> (a) Self-namer and (b) a self-definer, (c) family-centred, (d) genuine in sisterhood, (e) strong, (f) in concert with men in struggle, (g) whole, (h) authentic (i) a flexible role-player, (j) respected, (k) recognized, (l) spiritual, (m) male compatible, (n) respectful of elders, (o) adaptable, (p) ambitious, (q) mothering and (r) nurturing (p. 72 – 73).

Though the 'superiority' of the characteristics listed above may be arguable, they however sustain the diversity and differences among women and the problems that these differences may engender.

A core assumption of Weststream feminism so far discussed is of *women* as an essentialist category. Arguments popularised by postmodernism have profoundly challenged this core assumption. Postmodernist thinkers question the very category 'woman' insisting that 'woman' can no more be allowed to stand for all women than 'man' be allowed to stand for all members of the human species (Soper 1997, p. 289). This collectivity, Soper (1997) further argues, is futile and illegitimate in the face of concrete differences between women (for example in their nationality, race, class, age, occupation, sexuality, parenthood status, health, etc.). Butler (1997) argues:

> If one 'is' a woman, that is surely not all one is, the term fails to be exhaustive, not because a pre-gendered 'person' transcends the specific paraphernalia of its gender, but because gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts, and because gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities (p. 278).

Postmodernism while apparently celebrating differences, also offers women more negotiating space in which to oscillate between sexual identities – for those who wish to do so. It does, however, leave some problems. For women in the West, the impact of

postmodernism has disrupted absolute certainties about definition of feminism (Evans, 1994). If the attack on the category 'woman' is sustained and 'woman' possibly effaced, feminism (a movement that seeks to liberate women), could turn out to be a mirage as it presumes the existence of the very thing that does not exist. As my people say, if the child, to whom a babysitter tends, dies, then there will be no further need for the babysitter. No doubt, many feminists refuse to accept this position and waves continue to ripple within the feminism family. The postmodernist take on feminism has been criticised for its contradictory nature and for failing to identify or contest relations of domination or subordination (Thompson 1996, p. 325). It has therefore been described as "elusive and obscure, ungrounded and apolitical" (Waters 1996, p. 282) and runs the risk of "moving feminism away from its roots in politics and making feminism safer for academy and not safe for women" (Waters 1996, p. 282). The truism in this statement rests in the reality that while postmodernism challenges the essentialist notion of women, it is unfortunately true that many societies are still essentialist in their thoughts and actions and women are still being dominantly constructed via embodied biological definitions. As Evans (1994) writes:

> 'Crude materialism' has often been attacked by feminists who wanted to distance themselves from simple-minded theories. Unfortunately, materialism- crude and frequently cruel – is precisely the condition in which many women live...(p. 5).

Such crude materialism is evident when, as still obtains in societies where patriarchy is endemic, the girl child is silenced and made to conform to the societal definition of a 'girl'. Sometimes, as is the case in some families in Nigeria, she is 'forced' into an occupation that is 'best suited' for a woman to enhance her chances for marriage (Asoegwu, 2003).

Is it not interesting how 'voice' is often associated with rebellion? Perhaps that explains why many feminists often seek a break from patriarchy by asking to be heard (see Kaplan, 1997). Feminists too give voice to women by making them subjects of research. This thesis, which has African women at its centre, attempts to make a particular intervention into feminist theory because the African woman has often been unable to rise above the status of 'object' in research (Mohanty, 1991b; Mama, 1995).

I was always regarded as a rebel in my family. I still remember my father telling me that I was the only child of his who argued with him: there were eight of us. When I applied to read Law at university (a fact I hid from my father until it came to paying the fees), this was the ultimate act of insubordination in my father's eyes. Did I not know that women lawyers hardly ever get husbands? Even if they do, they argue too much and get divorced by their husbands? And on he went. Eventually he 'bundled' me off to a teacher training college, to be trained in the right job for a woman: teaching. I have no doubt that he loved me very much but was constrained by the society, which sets different standards for both women and men*. No doubt, he did what he thought best for me within his understanding of the narrowly defined role of a woman. He did not want to be saddled with an unmarried daughter with the stigma attached to it.

******My three elder brothers were then in the university studying engineering, Medicine and Geology. They were channelled into the right courses for men. My elder sister was in a school of Nursing.*

In media and communication research in particular, Rhodes (1989) has noted the increasing absence of studies on black women in general. This thesis, therefore, adds to

the body of knowledge on black African woman as well as creating a forum for feminisms to reach out to each other in cross-cultural understanding.

Ethnocentrism: an impediment to cross-cultural relationship

One of the problems produced by differences and diversities in feminism is ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism occurs when feminists speak within the limitations of their own cultural perspectives. Western women have often had to answer charges of ethnocentrism and patronising attitudes towards non-western cultures (see Kishwar, 1994; Kolawole, 1997; Okome, 1999). This has continued to be a source of conflict within feminism/s and has heightened the difficulty of engaging in cross-cultural conversations. Hudson-Weems (1994) could also be charged with ethnocentrism in her discussion of the characteristics of the Africana womanist as described above. For example, she infers that Weststream white feminists do not care about the family. This is arguable as what may have changed is not white feminists' commitment to family but a definition of what family could imply for them. Most people rooted in African culture still hold to the traditional definition of family, which implies the heterosexual family group of mother, father and children, while this position seems to have shifted somewhat in the West where same-sex unions are more (but not always and everywhere) acceptable as legitimate family structures. Commitment, sacrifice and devotion are part of the existence of such families as well. Also, in proposing her theory for the Africana woman, Hudson–Weems (1994) focuses on racial issues and considers a concern for gender issues as a luxury (p. 28). Her argument stems from the historical experiences of African American people who have been "subjected to economic exploitation, racial oppression and genocide in relation to the dominant White group"

(p. 7). In claiming to speak for all black African women in their reactions against perceived racism, African Euro-American women (like Hudson-Weems) attract criticisms, similar to those to which white Weststream feminism has been subjected: ignorance and arrogance. They are accused of not seeing beyond their own theory and hence ignoring or marginalizing the specific problems of many African women (Arndt, 2002). African women, it is feared, have been silenced both as knowing subjects and namers, and have been described as objects both in white feminist discourse and black feminist discourse. Nnaemeka succinctly expresses this problem:

> For African women, feminist arrogance and imperialism is not just about race; it is about a mindset that emanates from specific location and to which different races (black, white, brown, etc) lay claim. Feminist arrogance is about the "First World" / Third World" dichotomy; it is about the "West and the Rest of Us" (Arndt 2002, p.11)

African women thus insist on a feminism that relates to their own reality. While not ignoring the impact of racism in their lives, many of them insist that there are other priorities (other then race), which are of concern to many African women. In the next section, I discuss African feminism.

African feminist views on gendered social relations

The ideologies of African feminism add further to the diversity and dynamism in feminist thoughts. Insisting on differences between Western and African worldviews, cultures and priorities, many African women have insisted on their feminisms beating a path different from that of the West.

Engaging also in the politics of naming, African feminists have suggested names for feminism. They insist on the importance of being able to name and define their struggle and thus resist the description of the African person as "that person that does not have a "self", who gets represented and spoken for by others" (Ogundipe-Leslie 1994, p. 2). In place of feminism, Acholonu (1995) suggests *Motherism*[8], Ogundipe-Leslie (1994), *Stiwanism*[9], and Nnaemeka (1998), *negofeminism*[10]. The basic concern of each of these African ways of naming feminism is how to use different aspects of African cultures, historical experiences and current position in the world to make sense of feminist engagement. One particular factor that has influenced the rhetoric of African feminism is Africa's relationship with the West. African feminists claim that both African women and men are oppressed by capitalism, colonialism and neo-colonialism. They argue that the resultant poverty in the African continent is a burden shared by both African women and men (Hudson-Weems, 1994; Acholonu, 1995). Therefore, African women see African men more as partners in oppression than being the oppressors themselves, in contrast to how men are seen by Weststream feminists. Some African feminists insist that in indigenous African societies, women are not in hierarchical relation with men (Acholonu, 1995). Rather, what obtains is complementarity of roles evidenced by the dual-sex political system obtaining in many African societies (Amadiume, 1997). In dual systems, each sex manages their own affairs and women's interests are represented at all levels. This is in contrast to the European single-sex system where "political status

[8] According to Acholonu, Motherism denotes "motherhood, nature and nurture" as well as a global concern for social transformation. It however fails to address gender hierarchies as she insists that in traditional African societies, women were in no way disadvantaged in respect of men.
[9] STIWA is an acronym for Social Transformation Including Women in Africa. Stiwanism is a compromise term, to "deflect energies from constantly having to respond to charges of imitating western feminism" (p. 229). From her treatise, Ogundipe-Leslie has no problem with feminism as unlike most African feminists, she agrees on the dominance of men in African societies and recognises the need to address gender hierarchies. What may have affected her views is that unlike many of the Africa feminists, she has lived and worked in continental Africa for most of her life and could appreciate the endemic patriarchal ideologies in many African societies.
[10] This term was coined in 1995. Nnaemeka explains that to her negofeminism stands for the "feminism of negotiation" as well as "no ego feminism", the former a reflection of the Igbo philosophy of live and let's live; the latter a caution against the ego trip that engenders feminist arrogance, imperialism and power struggle.

roles are predominantly the preserve of men, and women can achieve distinction and recognition only by taking on the roles of men in public life and performing them well" (Okonji 1976, cited in Amadiume 1997, p. 110). Some African feminists argue that such European structures have found their way into many African societies via colonisation resulting in the disempowerment of African women in areas where they had hitherto exercised enormous power (Acholonu, 1995; Oyewumi, 1997). There are some African scholars, however, who believe that while it is true that colonialism did have a negative impact on African women, it could not be held solely responsible for the unequal position of many African women in relation to African men today. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) notes that superstructural forms derived from the pre-colonial past weigh down African women. She argues that "in most African societies, whether patrilineal or matrilineal, gender hierarchy, male supremacy or sex asymmetry was known and taken for granted" (p. 34). This is a view she shares with Aidoo (1998, p. 47) who suggests that even in matrilineal societies, women were still subordinate to men, and men ruled by proxy. Imam's (1992) research in Kano, Northern Nigeria, which investigated the congruence between women's subjectivities on gender relations and the gender ideologies of the mass media shows that though cultural imperialism exists, it cannot be held responsible for all reactionary tendencies in media ideology. As she argues, "gender ideologies embodied in social practices and structures in contemporary capitalist-dominated Nigeria, also existed in pre-colonial social formations in Hausa land" (Imam 1992, p. 85). These dissenting voices are, however, in the minority as most literature shows the idealisation of pre-colonial Africa and the concomitant romanticisation of the African woman as predominant themes within the discourses of African feminism (Acholonu, 1995; Oyewumi, 1997; Okome, 1999). It would seem therefore that according to some of these discourses, the African woman

does not need to be liberated, as she has been free for many thousand of years (Senghor cited in Stratton 1994, p. 54). Feminism thus could only be regarded as "a revolt in paradise" (Chinweizu 1990, p. 122). This view is arguable, as I suggest in a later section, which examines traditional modes of African communication, since there is considerable evidence to the contrary – African societies are far from being a paradise, at least in terms of gender relations (see Ezeigbo, 1996).

African feminists tend to idealise the African woman and posit her as "transcendental symbol" (Nfah-Abbenyi 1997, p. 5) (cf the characteristics of the Africana woman as enumerated above cited in Hudson-Weems, 1994). She is the great carer and nurturer, nurturing her children in particular and humankind in general as she "sacrifices herself in her duty to mankind"(sic) (Hudson-Weems 1994, p. 73). She is the seed of "mother continent" who must align her womanhood and feminist consciousness with the African ideal of womanhood, with Africa's matriarchal metaphysics – a living symbol of the Earth mother (Acholonu, 1995, p. 108). She accepts her natural role of motherhood and fecundity, as that is the basis for the survival of her race through the ages (Steady, 1987; Hudson-Weems, 1994; Acholonu, 1995). In European societies, according to Amadiume (1997, p. 114), marriage and motherhood was a means of enslavement of women, but in the Africa, it was a woman's means of empowerment. The African woman so positioned is placed within an illusion of grandiosity which possibly prevents her from putting her real power in the society into proper perspective. This may be what Mazrui (1991)[11] signposts when he writes, "in real life, motherhood leaves the African women at the center but not necessarily in power" (p. 2). Stratton (1994, p. 55) has also wondered whether the mother Africa trope that fills much of African literature does not mask the subordination of women in the socio-political systems of Africa states from

[11] Cited in Nigerian women in development [online]. Available from: www.onlinenigeria.com/links/adv.asp?blurb=95 [Accessed 8th February 2005].

which African women do indeed need to be liberated. Similar scepticism expressed by Macdonald (1995) about the position of women in the West could also be applied to African women. Macdonald suggests the possibility that:

> Women, the guardian of 'personal life' become a kind of dumping ground for all the society wants off its back but must be perceived to cherish: a function rather like a zoo, or nature reserve, whereby a culture can proudly proclaim its inclusion of precisely what it has excluded (Williamson cited in Macdonald 1995, p. 48).

I would suggest that African feminists while eulogising motherhood and fecundity should keep their antennae tuned to the possibility that such a stance could have some negative effects on African women. This negativity has already been noted in research. Nfah-Abbenyi (1997) notes that African literature stresses the supremacy of motherhood and the fertile mother, inadvertently reaffirming women's subordinate roles, in that "African women are virtually silent observers who simply fulfilled their destiny without questioning it or the structures that sanctioned the roles they were made to assume" (p. 5). In a recent content analysis of Nigerian news magazines, Chude (2003) expresses a similar concern. She notes that "most women who appeared were presented and addressed as wives and mothers thus depicting their domestic roles, while those who were cast in independent roles were branded 'iron ladies' implying they were unnatural"(p. 48–9). The rhetoric of African feminism apparently increases the possibility of confirming women to stereotypical roles, stripping them of voice and naturalising the 'differences' between women and men.

Yet different perspectives and attitudes to life have continued to make African feminists hold to the views they do, distancing themselves from some of the issues raised by Weststream feminists as necessary for women's emancipation. For example, Weststream feminist perspective has suggested entering the workforce as an important

part of women's liberation process. African feminists, however, argue that for many African women, "work is a responsibility and an obligation which has been drummed into us from infancy. We never have to fight for the right to work" (Aidoo 1998, p. 46).[12] Sexuality, which has been part of the concern of Weststream feminism, has been considered irrelevant for the African woman. Aina (1998, p. 72) notes that speaking for the rights of lesbian sisters could be necessary in the West where freedom to express one's sexuality is permissible, but would be quite inappropriate for African feminists who operate within the framework of African tradition, which abhors lesbianism and homosexuality. Insisting on this difference in worldviews between the West and Africa, Aina further suggests that what might be viewed in the West as "wife battery, child-abuse, bigamy, etc., is sometimes accepted by (African) women as that enduring part of marriage which should be settled out of court" (p. 80). Sometimes African feminists acknowledge in one breath that African women are victimized and in the next breath emphasize their strength in coping with oppression. They ignore the reality that, as hooks (1982) asserts, being "strong in the face of oppression is not the same as overcoming oppression, that endurance is not to be confused with transformation" (p. 6). There are doubts on how realistic or even relevant are the views of many African feminists to African women who daily battle to raise their heads from marginalisation in their societies. As Kolawole (1997) notes:

> To argue that African women do not need liberation is to present a false picture of them, an illusion that emerges from over romanticism. All over the continent, there are areas of women's marginalisation that call for rendering of social order, and African women have peculiar needs in this area (p. 11).

[12] One of the things feminisms seem to have achieved for western women is for them to join the over burden of African women. It is paradoxical that many western women in pursuing careers as a form of liberation are saddled with additional burden of domestic work. This has led to the 'super women' myth.

Though some African feminists have argued to the contrary (Aina, 1998), African feminism could perhaps be considered reactionary – "reacting against the condescending attitude of some feminists and misdirected emphasis of others" (Kolawole 1997, p. 11)[13], but this could hardly be considered 'standpoint' feminism in the sense used by Christine Sylvester (2001). Sylvester's description of African feminism as "seeking alternative truth as a reaction to western discourse on feminism" reduces African feminist discourses to a mere power tussle, which is engaged in to compete with Weststream feminism. There is no doubt that the issue of power is crucial in various feminist engagements, but African feminism cannot be merely reduced to an issue of power between competing perspectives on theories of feminism.

African feminists confront certain significant factors that have continued to shape both their relationship with the 'West' and the way they have been perceived globally. For example, African women's encounter with colonialism and slavery, and the associated effects on the African continent continue to have relevance for them. Referring to African historical experiences in relation to the West, Steady (1981) notes, "for the black woman the enemy ... is history" (p. 35).

On a Reflexive note 2: reflecting my position in this debate

At the inception of this research, I had focused my thoughts on the hierarchical relations between women and men – relations so evident in my daily life while in Nigeria. I have started this research primarily to engage with the injustice of women's subordinate existence. I have often thought that my research would have focused solely on gendered relationships if I had conducted it in Nigeria. My engagement with

[13] Okome (1999, p. 3) calls this "reformist western feminist evangelisation", whereby "western feminists acting like superiors who hand down valuable knowledge define the relevant issues for African women, how these issues ought to be promoted and pursued and what the end result would be". I do not however share her defence in the essay of female genital mutilation, which she insists in calling female circumcision or female genital surgery.

literature on feminist perspectives on social relations has made me see how naïve and simplistic this view is. An African woman is a woman, but that is not all she is. She is also a black African. Each of these identities carries a whole baggage of connotations, which she battles with in her existence. Being in Britain has brought home to me these multiple identities of an African woman. As I went through the arguments of Weststream and African feminism polarised along gender or racial *lines*, I felt I was being pulled by two forces, each so strong that I felt I was being torn apart. In various ways, I could identify with both perspectives as I embody the tensions in the debates, being positioned between Nigerian and British cultures. While in Nigeria, I have thought of myself primarily as a woman (though sometimes as an Igbo woman). For the greater majority of people in Nigeria whom I have encountered, being a woman defined both my status and my social relationships. I lived in Nigeria for 35 years without any 'physical' contamination with the West. My views about gender relations in Nigerian society stem from personal experiences and in many cases, too, where I have had to be witness to incidents that seem to define the boundaries for men and women; brothers and sisters; husbands and wives; fathers and mothers. Talking about my experiences, will, I know, expose me to the charges, made by some African scholars in describing views contrary to theirs on African cultures, of making "obnoxious claims about individual experiences and experiences of the rural women in the villages" (Acholonu1995, p. 87). However, having lived in Nigeria most of my life and for most part with women who are not in such privileged positions as many theorists of African feminism, the evidence of my own eyes is too compelling to ignore. I find this evidence coming up to challenge some views of African feminists on the irrelevance of feminism to African woman's cause; when they defend cultural practices that are damaging to women or when they see gender issues as irrelevant to Africa woman's oppressive history. In Nigeria, I have seen women beaten almost to the point of death by their husbands who still have been obliged by their culture to go on bended knees and beg to be taken back. The constant cry of one particular woman in the dead of the night as

she received beatings from her husband will continue to haunt me. I have watched as my cousin's head bled from wounds inflicted on her by a blunt razor as her hair was scraped off upon the death of her husband. I have witnessed a three-month-old baby brought into hospital with septicaemia of the vagina because, to lessen her libido, her parents had her circumcised by a 'local' doctor. On reading Okome's (1999) argument on female genital mutilation in Africa,[14] I wrote in my research diary: "*She (Okome) did not see her (the baby) or hear her cries. She did not perceive the foul odour emitting from the genitals of a 3-month-old baby. That night I could hardly sleep for her cries of pain, which tore through my heart ...* " (Research Diary 8/10/2002).

As I read some of the literature denying women's oppression and romanticising the African past, I feel emotions flickering through me: from anger through doubt to utter disbelief. These were often directed at some of these theories proposed by educated, wealthy and widely travelled Africans (like me!) who stay in their safe haven and dish out theories, sometimes to protect their pride/ego, earn promotion and even enrich themselves. Does the ordinary Nigerian woman who battles daily with subsistence living have any say in this? I am wont to agree with Aina (1998) about the elitist nature of African feminism, as more effort needs to be made to get in touch with grassroots women and be in touch with the reality of their existence. In exploring the feminists' debates, I have tried to be objective, dispassionate and to eschew any personal forms of nationalism, parochialism, fear and being tradition-bound (Afkhami 1996, p. 526). In other words, I have tried to prevent my own racial and national identity from affecting my views and analysis. Perhaps if this research were conducted in any other place but the West, this would have been easily done. Sometimes, though, I feel my racial identity and experiences resurface. In Britain, as I journeyed through my research, it

[14] Okome has challenged the power of western women to name female circumcision FGM. She has insisted that it signifies a patronising attitude as African women could decide on what is right for them and western women's attitude could be considered an interference on a woman's right to choose what to do with her body

was clear to me that my racial identity is the most easily recognisable of all my identities. It is interesting how simple things like a friendly bus driver asking me "how long have you been in this country?" or "where do you come from?" could remind me of how different I am. Many of my white friends often do not fail to introduce me as being from Africa. Each time, I have insisted on my Nigerian identity. Each of these experiences, small though they seem, have often reminded me how it is difficult to integrate into British identity, when my skin shouts the difference. I have come to realise, especially through my interactions with other 'black African sisters', how this difference is sometimes translated into forms of exclusion and has continuously defined social relations in Britain. To ignore the racial identity of an African woman therefore is to lose touch with reality. It is therefore hard to put gender and race in hierarchical relation to each other or to deny one, while championing the other. My experiences as a black African woman in Britain make such a position irrelevant to the reality of my reality.

Telling it as it is: viewing African woman through bifocal lens[15]

There is the necessity, to separate the gender domination and exploitation inherent in African culture from the double exploitation (hooks, 1982)[16] of African women caused by slavery, colonisation, imperialism, apartheid, etc. This would result in conflicting assessment of the status of the African woman (Aina, 1998). One way to appreciate this

[15] What I have appropriated is the vision of an eyeglass lens that has one section that corrects distant vision and another that corrects near vision. When such lens beam on African women, they are neither too distant that they are lost sight of, nor are they too close that they become blurred. What I suggest therefore is that is important to look at African women properly as they are in their own environment and outside. Using their position in one to judge the other may produce doubtful picture.

[16] hooks and many black feminists refer to gender and racial oppression. Some academics however insist that class oppression be added to the experiences of the African woman. Thus, they suggest the African woman has a tripartite burden – race, class and gender (see Hudson-Weems, 1994). Spelman (2001) warns against what she calls 'additive analysis of sexism and racism ' which implies seeing racism as mere addition on sexism and thus failing to explore the differences between the contexts in which black women and white women experience sexism.

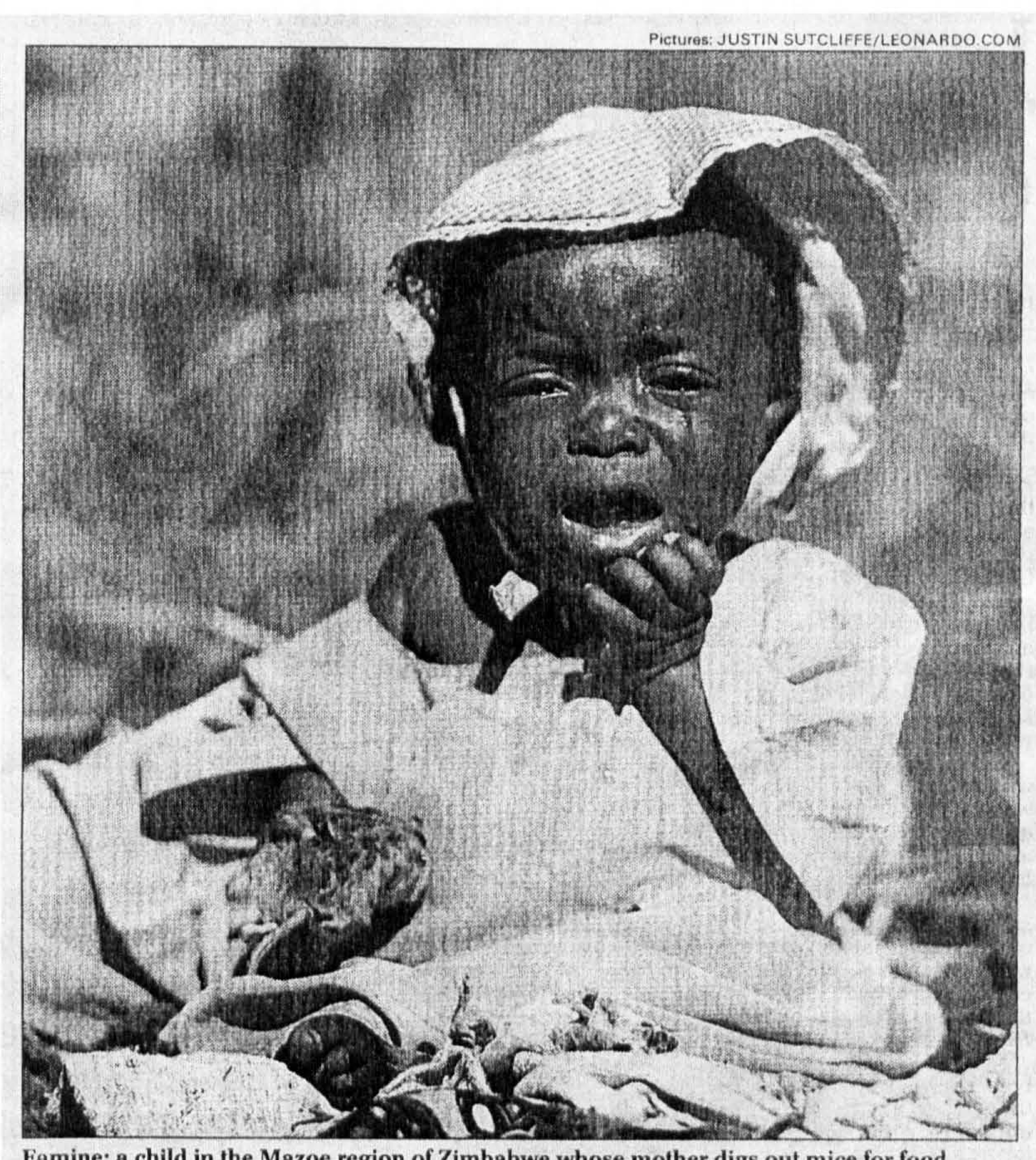
contradiction in the position of the African woman is to follow Aidoo's (1998) suggestion and adopt a bifocal mode of looking at her. Within her environment, it may be revealed that in relation to men, she is just as badly off as women anywhere, but viewed from the outside, especially from the West, the scene changes. The badges of her oppressive history become magnified. In looking at the postcolonial representations of African women in the British media, this thesis also engages with the trajectories of regimes of racial representations. Aidoo makes a relevant point when she bemoans:

> For years, some of us have been struggling to get the world to look at the African woman properly. Hoping that with some honesty it would be seen in actual fact, vis-à-vis the rest of the world, the position of the African woman has not only not been that bad but in some African countries ... she had been far better off than the others – and this would include the self-congratulatory West (Aidoo 1998, p. 47-8).

By "properly", Aidoo is perhaps asking that the tick of hierarchical racial relationships be removed from the Western lenses as they beam on African woman. She argues that the outcome of this may be quite startling as the African woman's position may then be seen *not* to be as bad as is often depicted by Western photojournalism: "breeding too many children she cannot take care of, she is hungry and so are her children....she is half-naked; her drooped and withered breasts are well exposed; there are flies buzzing around the faces of her children; and she has a permanent begging bowl in her hands" (Aidoo 1998, p. 39) (see figs 1 & 2).

While I question Western postcolonial representation of African woman in this thesis, I also seek a relationship between representation of African women in the Nigerian press and the gender ideologies in African societies. There is a possibility that African women contend with gendered and patriarchal societies more than many African feminists may admit. In the following section, I examine some African traditional

modes of communication as a possible link to the trajectories of gendered representation in African societies.



Famine: a child in the Mazoe region of Zimbabwe whose mother digs out mice for food

Fig 1 *The Daily Telegraph* 20 February 2003, p. 4

World News

Food crisis hits Harare as bread runs out

First American is murdered while media blames shortages on white farmers, reports **Peta Thornycroft**

Fig 2 A mother prepares family meal at a camp near Harare for 'internally displaced people', many of whom were left homeless after evictions of white farmers. *The Daily Telegraph* 2 July 2002, p. 10.

The place of women in African traditional communication systems

In this section, I examine the place of the African woman in traditional African means of communication. I suggest that the pattern of representation of African women in Nigerian newspapers (a modern mass medium) is possibly a continuum of the pattern of representation prevalent in traditional means of communication. By an African communication system, I mean modes of communication prevalent during pre-colonial times, before the existence of modern mass communication. Many are still in use today especially in areas where the modern communication is partial or non-existent, while some have passed through some form of transition in line with modernity (Ebeze, 2002). Frank Ugboajah has called these traditional communication systems, "oramedia" describing them thus:

> The products of the interplay between a traditional community's customs and conflicts, harmony and strife, cultural convergencies and divergencies, culture-specific tangibles and intangibles, interpersonal relations, symbols and codes and oral traditions which include mythology, oral literature (poetry, story-telling, proverbs), masquerades, witchcraft, rites, rituals, music, dance, drama, costumes and similar abstractions and artefacts which encompass a people's factual, symbolic and cosmological existence from birth to death and even beyond death (Ugboajah 1985, cited in Ebeze 2002, p. 28).

Ugboajah's definition suggests traditional African communication as all-encompassing, transcending the corporeal to involve even astral existence. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss all the communication systems. I will however use a few examples to explore the possibility that African modes of communication are gendered.

A major argument in favour of gender-neutral African societies as proposed by some African feminists, has been that though there seems to be division of labour along gender lines, such division is based on complementarities of the sexual division of work rather than its hierarchical nature (Surdarkasa, 1987). Surdarkasa (1987, p. 35) cites the

growing of different crops by women and men in Igboland and the production of different types of cloth on different looms by the Yoruba female and male weavers. She argues that this division of labour along sexual lines is to promote reciprocity of effort. In citing such examples, what is often overlooked is the possibility that such apparently well-meaning division of labour may harbour hegemonic structures, which sustain patriarchal dominance. I will use Surdarkasa's example of the growing of different crops by female and male in Igboland as a case in point. The Igbo society ascribes more value to the yams grown by men than the cassava grown by women. Indeed yam is regarded as "the king of the crops". Nwapa in her *Cassava Song* extols the virtues of the cassava, which she feels is not celebrated and sung about like the yam. She explains:

> Cassava is a staple food in Igboland. The cassava tuber is accessible to both the rich and the poor in many parts of Nigeria and Africa. Cassava is planted by women, unlike yam, the "King of all Crops", that is planted by men. Every year in Igboland, the New Yam Festival is observed. New yam is not eaten until this festival is performed. But is there a festival for Cassava? No. In "cassava song", the many uses of cassava are enumerated to show that she deserves to be celebrated and sung like the yam.... Cassava is enthroned above yam and coco yam – above other foodstuff. Cassava is woman. Yam is man (Nwapa 1998, p. 94).

What Nwapa tries to do in her heroic poem is a subversive and daring undertaking by dethroning the Igbo icon of masculinity – the yam. So we may ask: is yam accorded such recognition because it is planted by men or planted by men because it is so recognised in the society? Whichever way we intend to look at it, the gendered nature of the whole 'division of labour' stares us in the face.

Some African scholars also argue that fluidity of gender in many African societies suggests that biological gender is not necessarily the same as social gender. For

example, certain groups of women can assume the social position of men, a sign that a person's sex does not necessarily define her/him. Frequently cited is the institution of 'woman to woman' marriage where women can, as 'female husbands', take on the role of the husband, and the institution of male daughters whereby a woman is allowed (in most cases in the absence of a son), to 'stay behind' in her father's compound and take on the rights and privileges of a son. Amadiume (1987, p. 32) recounts the story of Nwajiuba, the first woman to be instituted as a male daughter in Nnobi, Eastern Nigeria:

> Nwajiuba's father was Ojukwu Isi Ana, priest of the Land spirit, who occupied the 'first son' position in the whole of Nnobi. He, therefore, held a very important office, which was more ritual than political. Although Ojukwu was a very wealthy man, as he was also a *dibia* and a successful farmer who cultivated the very large type of farm, he was poor in people as he had no sons, and his only brother died without an issue. According to Nwajiuba, because of this absence of close relatives, when her father became ill, he decided to recall her from her marital home and allow her to remain in his house as a male. She would then have the status of a son and be able to inherit her father's property. This practice was known as nhayikwa or nhanye, a kind of replacement, in Nnobi custom (Amadiume 1987, p. 32).

What is left unsaid in the above is that Nwajiuba, to remain in her father's compound would 'open her door'[17] to men to bear the much coveted sons to take over the father's place. The argument of male daughters as a mark of a gender-neutral society is therefore contradictory as the process helps to entrench patriarchy and male hegemony. What we could ask is why would a daughter be turned into a male to be able to inherit the father's property? (In any case, presumably if the daughter then produces a son, he would then inherit and not her). In spite of Ojukwu's wealth, he was considered "poor in people, as he had no sons". This is symptomatic of a society that continuously prefers

[17] Used in the figurative sense to mean giving sexual access to men.

males to females. A similar argument could be put forward in the case of the woman-to-woman marriage also argued by Amadiume. Again, she writes:

> As men increased their labour force, wealth and prestige through the accumulation of wives, so also did women through the institution of 'female husbands'. When a man paid money to acquire a woman, she is called his wife. When a woman paid money to acquire another women, this is referred to as buying a slave, *igba ohu*, but the woman who was bought had the status and customary rights of a wife, with respect to the woman who bought her, who was referred to as her husband, and the 'female husband' had the same rights as a man over his wife (Amadiume 1987, p. 47).

She then goes on to translate *ohu* (slave) in the context of the woman-to-woman marriage as wife. She tells of the use Nwabata Aku, a prominent Nnobi woman, made of her 24 wives. They traded for her. Some of her wives were said to be involved in hairdressing too, and would hand over the money received to Nwabata (p. 47). What Nwabata must have engaged in must have been a form of slavery, a corrupted version of woman-to-woman marriage (see Amadiume 1997, p. 97) and capitalist at its core. Woman to woman marriage in Africa is not simply done to acquire wealth. In most cases, it is for procreation. Protus Kemdirim calls this "symbolic marriage" and cites one instance in which such a marriage is contracted:

> A widow too old to bear children or who has no male children or whose only male child is a celibate priest may marry another woman who bears children through any man of her choice in the name of the widow's deceased husband (Kemdirim 1998, p. 455).

It is significant too that the female husband usually contracts such marriage from a husband's home and the children bear the husband's name. Woman to woman marriage in Africa should not be confused with same sex marriages as contracted in the West. In Africa, though the female husband might have a say about which man gets sexual access to her 'wife', she maintains an asexual relationship with her.

While it may be true that gender in African societies is highly socially constructed, what has been left unexplained is why in most African societies, it is an enhancement for women if they assume the masculine role and not vice versa. For a man, assuming a feminine role becomes a source of ridicule, as Acholonu suggests:

> A man may find himself crossing through the arch towards feminine identity through his actions, words and deeds. Such a man according to Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* would be called agbala, or Akalogholi according to Nkem Nwankwo's Danda. A woman, on the other hand, would also be in the position to cross over to the masculine dimension of the society through her deed, achievements and personal comportment (1995, p. 21).

Acholonu's intention is to argue the fluidity of gender – the possibility that men could also assume feminine identity. However, her argument contradicts her intention, as it suggests that assuming the feminine becomes a form of ridicule for the man as he is termed agbala (which is a derogatory name for an effeminate man or a man who has not taken any traditional titles) or an akalogholi (also called efulefu, which means a worthless person).

What is also significant is the emphasis on individualism (rather than collectivism), which characterises the flexible gender system. Women who have carved some niche for themselves (e.g. through wealth as suggested by Acholonu) are invited into the privileged circle of 'manhood'. This seems like "female tokenism" which Adrienne Rich suggests is "a false power which masculine society offers to a few women who "think like men" on condition that they use it to maintain things as they are" (Rich 1979, cited in Landry and MacLean 1996, p. 34).

Another important form of African communication worthy of interrogation is proverbs. In a report which Dr R. O. Soetan[18] sent to the African institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), Dakar, Senegal, she suggests how proverbs effectively create cultural hegemony which, while sustaining male dominance, reinforces women's inferiority and subjugation. This is not surprising as proverbs often show the raison d'etre or rationale for people's attitude, in this case towards women. Proverbs are used to introduce ideas and practices, as well as inculcate morality and reinforce cultural beliefs and attitudes (Henrich, 1996). Chinua Achebe in his book *Things Fall Apart* describes proverbs as the palm oil with which words are eaten. Proverbs are "often authored by men (males) to foster their hegemonic masculinity" (Gbotokuma, 2001). Some of these proverbs and sayings are listed below:

- Nwoke obula na-agba egwu nwanyi na-aku, onye ahu na-anwu mgbe Chi ya akpoghi ya. (Igbo proverb, Eastern Nigeria): *The man who dances to the music (flute) played by a woman generally goes to the spirit world prematurely.* (Men should not take advice from women).
- Ile ti obinrin ti nse toto arere ni hu nibe (Yoruba, Western Nigeria): *A home where a woman can speak freely will have the foul smelling arere tree growing in the house* (*arere* tree normally grows in the wild because of the foul odour) (denying women the right to communication).
- Odu-okuta cha-nuku igbe le (Igala, Middle Belt, Nigeria): *A woman's place is in the kitchen* (domestication of women).
- Bale ile itan eye ni ije; iyale ile ehin ni ije (Yoruba): *The man of the house eats the chicken thigh or drumstick; the woman of the house eats the back part of the chicken.* (Men are expected to take the better part of life).
- Obinrin to bimo fun ni ko ni ko ma pa ni: (Yoruba) *The fact that a woman bears your children is no guarantee that she will not kill you.* (Branding all women potential husband killers to justify the dehumanising widowhood rites. Any woman whose husband dies becomes suspect).
- Kaka ko san fun iya aje, ofi gbogbo omo re bi obinrin (Yoruba): *Instead of improving her reputation, the witch woman continues to give birth to female children.* (Showing preference for male children. Perhaps the woman is branded a witch because she

[18] Consultant at the Centre for Gender and Social Policy studies, Obafemi University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

couldn't provide the much coveted sons and producing sons would have redeemed her image of being a witch).

- Idan obinrin akete asewo (Yoruba): *A woman's clitoris is the hat of prostitution* (Supporting genital mutilation, said to help keep the women in check as it deadens the sexual libido and makes them avoid immorality and marital infidelity).[19]

Contrary to what some African feminists and scholars argue, nobody needs to seek out or 'create' patriarchy in African societies since it is endemic in many societies, through some of their maxims, songs, folklores and proverbs. Male hegemony was not instituted by colonization; it has always been there. The dominance of male power and the greater privileging of the male over the female already existed. What colonialism did was to consolidate in a more systematic way, the gender-biased practices that existed in the pre-colonial times, which accentuated male powers.

The Masquerade is another form of oramedia relevant to this discussion. The masquerade is believed to be a spirit, said to mask the presence of dead ancestors. It takes corporeal existence to entertain, terrorise, arbitrate, etc. as the occasion demands. It is therefore a highly revered and feared cult from which women are often excluded. Obododimma Oha suggests reasons for women's exclusion:

> Igbo tradition of masquerading also reflects the politics of gender. Women are normally not initiated into the mmanwu cult mainly because they are incapable of keeping secrets. Furthermore, the mmanwu as a sacred institution is seen as something that womanhood defiles, especially when the woman menstruates. Only women who have reached menopause may be initiated into the cult, especially if such women live in environments where the cult house (ekwuru) is located. In this case, it is feared that if they are not initiated, their presence may endanger the secrecy and sacredness of the cult (Oha, 2001).

[19] For more on African proverbs see Schipper, M. (1991) Source of all evil African proverbs and sayings on women. London, Allison and Busby.

Oha gives two significant reasons why women are rarely initiated into this revered cult: the first is the belief in the society that women are incapable of keeping secrets. In this case, the *mmanwu* becomes much more than a mere tradition of division of gender roles, it becomes both semiotic and mimetic: a form of representation. Thus while it confers honour, dignity and trustworthiness to the members, the exclusion of women from the cult continues to reinforce women's character as frivolous, untrustworthy and incapable of keeping secrets. The second reason Oha gives is connected to the female body. The *mmanwu* as a sacred institution is seen as something womanhood defiles especially when the woman menstruates. In this case, a woman's biology has defined her destiny, creating doubts to some of the claims of African feminists. Aidoo sums up:

> On the whole, African traditional societies seemed to have been at odds with themselves as to exactly what to do with women. For although some of them appeared to doubt gender and biology as basis for judging women, in the end, they all use gender and biology to judge women's capabilities (Aidoo 1998, p. 47).

Towards a cross-cultural sisterhood

The rhetoric of Weststream and African feminisms, with which I have engaged so far, suggests a difficulty in creating the thin wall through which to hold conversations previously mooted (Tong, 1989). Each feminist perspective holds on to ways of making feminist engagement relevant to a particular culture, its priorities and orientations. Women have configured these perspectives as they "relate to their own lives and immediate surroundings" (Nnaemeka 1998, p. 7).

Women, it would seem, are so different that they cannot reach out in unison. Yet, despite the differences between women, they all face a common task of living in a world that is constructed in an essentialist way. If 'woman' is to be deconstructed and

gender oscillation permissible, how does one deal with the fact that majority of people act as if there is still that essential category, woman? Spelman (2001) cautions against somatophobia in feminism arguing the necessity for thinking women as embodied, because the particular cultural meanings assigned to that embodiment can be interrogated. That women universally share forms of oppression determined by their biology is a potential bond for all women and research has been able to demonstrate commonalities among women (Gallagher, 1979; GMMP, 2000). For example, while analysing newspapers in Britain and Nigeria, I noticed a similar pattern (to that found in the GMMP 2000 study) of news media's propensity to trivialise issues of concern to women, the sensationalising of stories where a woman is the central focus and the use of photographs of women to represent a nation in turmoil. In one particular news story, Theresa May (the chairperson of the Conservative Party), makes a speech but the coverage reduces her to her leopard skin shoes (see fig 3).

Theresa May: We are the 'nasty party' **Duncan Smith:** It isn't respectable to vote for us

A stiletto in the Tories' heart

Fig 3 *The Daily Telegraph* 8 October 2003, p. 11

In Nigeria, a counterpart (of Theresa May) could be Kema Chikwe, a former Minister for Aviation. She had a very sensitive and highly significant post but was rarely shown (during the period of research) in that capacity: she mostly made the news when she went to a public function, usually unrelated to her position as a government minister. These two simple examples are indicators of the possibility that women across the globe may have more in common than 'academic feminists' tend to agree in terms of the ways in which they are portrayed by the (predominantly male) news media.

A news article I read from the Internet forcibly brought home this biological determinism of the fate of women. The article reads: "Chinese babies found in Suitcases". I will reproduce part of the story below:

> Chinese authorities have found 28 baby girls packed into nylon suitcases on a bus in southern China. The girls were apparently being smuggled for sale, though the authorities did not know where they had come from or where they were headed....In parts of rural China, boys are favoured over girls with more value placed on males that can carry on the family name, work on fields and farms and care for parents.[20]

I do believe that there are concrete and universal dimensions of most women's lives, the recognition of which could serve to pull women together in forms of a political solidarity. This is what Mariama Ba emphasises when she states:

> There is everywhere ... in the world a woman's cry being uttered. The cry may be different, but there is still a certain unity ... The cry that they utter, their cry will not be exactly as ours – we have not all got the same problems – but there is a fundamental unity in all our sufferings and in our desire for liberation and in our desire to cut off the chains which date from antiquity (Ba cited in Arndt 2002, p. 67).

[20] Available from: www.odili.net/news/source/2003/mar/23/9.html [Accessed 26th March 2003].

This focus on similarity rather than difference should be the primary concern of feminists. Obioma Nnaemeka's thought on the multiplicity of perspectives in feminism is very instructive here. She asks that we focus

> less on transcending of difference and more on the challenges of living successfully with contradictions, less on the obliteration of difference (an impossible task!) and more on allowing difference to be and in its *being* create the power that energizes *becoming* (Nnaemeka 1998, p. 3).

By giving prominence to a shared commonality, it is possible to argue that Weststream and African feminism are simply different ways of killing a rat (killing a rat in this case referring to the liberation of women). Bell and Klein may be right when they argue

> Despite the differences in personal background, geography, class, history and culture, she is vulnerable because she is a woman. Stubbornly, defiantly, we hold on to that truth. There is such a thing as woman (Bell and Klein 1996, p. xix).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored diverse feminist perspectives on gendered social relations, positioning feminism/s within a cultural framework, since culture, as a way of life of a group, carries the unique history of a group. I have categorised feminism into Weststream and African feminisms, to reflect the body of feminist thoughts that emanates from the West and from Africa respectively. This has offered a useful way of interrogating African feminism's relationship to Weststream feminism especially as it pertains to the contentious anti-African posture of Weststream feminism. Of primary focus in this chapter has been the issue of gender in African societies and the insistence on a focus on racialised forms of oppression, rather than gender-related oppression, by African feminists. I have examined some of the arguments, which deny patriarchy in Africa and in citing traditional African modes of communication, suggested that

patriarchy and sexism seem to be issues that are more persistent in African societies than some African scholars and feminists care to admit. The position of the chapter, however, is that rather than seeing the denial of sexism as being perpetrated deliberately to deceive, it should be seen as the result of challenging the (perceived) patronising attitudes of Western feminists in relation to African women, especially their cultures. The result is a romanticising of some aspects of African cultures even when there may be evidence that suggests the contrary. For a cross-cultural sisterhood to emerge, then, I suggest that we need not only to dialogue but to listen to each other. It is only when this occurs that the shared commonality of women's experiences may become evident and difference becomes merely the tool to achieve the same goal. The focus of feminism/s should thus be the common oppression of women and not the ranking of oppression by gender or race. In any case, the multiple identity of the African woman makes such a debate irrelevant. Rather, a bifocal mode of looking at African woman needs to be adopted. Within her environment, sexism could be a source of deprivation while from outside her environment (especially the West) her racial identity may be magnified. The use of a bifocal lens is imperative in a work such as this, which investigates the representation of African women in the Nigerian (African women's own environment) and British (the West) press. The next chapter brings nearer to 'home' the issues of gender in an African society by exploring the politics of gender in Nigeria.

❖ Chapter Two

The politics of gender in postcolonial Nigerian society

Introduction

Chapter One raised a crucial question which is, what is the relevance of feminism to African women? Given the picture painted by many African feminists of Africa as the cradle of great matriarchs, is gender oppression to be considered 'foreign' in African societies? In Chapter One, I examined some forms of 'oramedia', which suggest that the claims of many African feminists may possibly be a romanticisation of Africa. I take this issue further in this chapter to explore how gender is played out in Nigerian society. I start with a brief background of Nigeria, examining Nigeria as a colonial creation and the legacies of a postcolonial state. One significant legacy is the different cultures, languages and ethnicities that make up the artificial construction called Nigeria, and how these translate into forms of differences. One outstanding effect of these differences is spasmodic ethnic and religious conflicts, which have trailed Nigeria in its postcolonial period. Yet, despite these differences, in relation to women, there seem to be an agreement that men hold sway and women are marginalized. In this chapter, I show the forms which women's marginalisation takes in Nigeria and how Nigerian women have risen up to face these challenges. This chapter suggests that gender issues are of primary importance to the 'survival' of Nigerian women.

A brief profile of Nigeria

Nigeria is a twentieth-century British creation. The stories of how Nigeria came into being have been told and retold in various historical and literary texts (Ikpe, 1996;

Ojiakor and Unachukwu ed, 1997; Okafor and Emeka, 1998). I do not intend to retell these stories, but suffice it to say that in 1914 when Lord Lugard, the then colonial administrator amalgamated the Northern and Southern protectorates for the administrative convenience of the British, he brought together nations/ethnic groups of diverse and different cultures, religions, and languages. Before the amalgamation, these groups co-existed but were independent of each other. They traded amongst themselves in sustenance of their feudal or agricultural modes of production (Nnonyelu 1997, p. 149). With the amalgamation, Nigeria, (the name suggested by Flora Shaw who later became Mrs Lugard), thus became a country replete with diverse cultures, ethnicities, languages and religions. This genesis continues to have implications and consequences for Nigeria as a contemporary postcolonial nation-state.

To understand the contemporary Nigeria society a little better, it is important to consider the two dominant external influences on the country: the Western and the Arab. While European missionaries in the nineteenth century were bringing Christianity to the peoples of Southern Nigeria, Islam had already been introduced along the caravan routes of Northern Nigeria. Between 1804 and 1808, a jihad (holy war) was waged within what became known as the Sokoto caliphate leading to the Islamification of Northern Nigeria. The Muslim faith was spread not only in the North but also in the adjacent regions (areas that came to be known as the middle belt). Thus, while the South was being initiated into Western systems and values of education, the North was being immersed in forms of Arabic education. This provides some explanations for the unevenness in the degree of social change and modernization among the various groups and areas of Nigeria. This unevenness exacerbated an already tense society. Ethnic and religious differences further compounded the inevitable differences existing in societies, which became incorporated into the artificially constructed state, Nigeria.

The single act of the 1914 amalgamation brought together a group of independent ethnic groups under one political umbrella and foisted a legacy of multicultural and multi-ethnic identities on Nigeria. At present within the country, there are approximately 250 ethnic groups (see Ikpe, 1996; Agbaje and Adebanwi, 2001) each with its own culture and language, each seeking its own identity. The result is that today, a typical Nigerian thinks of her/himself first as a member of an ethnic group before that of the nation. It is important to note that when the North later fell under British control through the latter's military might, the British made little attempt to convert the people there to Christianity, as had been the case in the South at the beginning of their rule. Instead, they used the existing centralized system of administration, headed by the Emirs to their own advantage and through a strategy of 'divide and rule', created a situation where little attention was paid to the different indigenous cultures and identities that combined to form the state itself (Ojiakor 1997, p. 71).

It is not surprising that since decolonisation, postcolonial Nigeria has continued to have its own share of ethnic and religious rivalries. Ekwo (2001, p. 4) gives an overview of some of the conflicts and clashes that have characterised the nation in recent times. For instance, in June 1999, 300 lives were reported lost in the renewed ethnic crisis in Warri. In July 1999, the Yoruba–Hausa clash began in Shagamu, Ogun State. Following the killing of mainly Hausa people in the clash, there was a reprisal killing of Yorubas in Kano (July 24, 1999). Following the introduction of sharia law in the predominantly Muslim states of the country, a major crisis engulfed Kaduna state on February 21, 2000: Muslims and Christians clashed, leading to a huge loss of life on both sides. In the East, namely Aba, Owerri and Uyo, there was a bloodbath in Hausa settlements, which were seen as revenge for the killing of their 'kinsmen' in the North.

In February 2002, there was an ethnic clash between Hausa and Yoruba. The list is endless. The Nigerian press reports of the Yoruba/Hausa February 2002 ethnic clash is set up in a later chapter to illustrate a possible bias of Nigerian press in the reporting of such issues (see also Omenugha, 2004). Between April and May 2004, Christians and Muslims in Plateau and Kano States were involved in religious and ethnic conflicts which led to loss of life and property, a situation that led to the Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo declaring a State of Emergency in Plateau State. It is clear that the underlying factor in all these rivalries and conflicts is that difference is a problem. As Nnonyelu (1997) notes, "every aspect of our national life has been infested by the virus of ethnicity" (p. 152).

There are indeed myriad problems and differences that characterise postcolonial Nigeria which are rooted in its multicultural and multiethnic make-up. Nigeria struggles with how to deal with its colonial legacy. Successive governments have sought an agenda of homogeneity, typically reflected in these commonly used Nigerian slogans: "The task to keep Nigeria one is a task for all of us" and "One nation, one destiny". These slogans indicate awareness that differences exist within and among Nigerians and acknowledge the struggle to stay united in spite of these differences. Two influential nationalists, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, the first President of Nigeria and Sir Amadu Bello, an eminent leader of the Northern peoples and the first premier of the region, made suggestions about how Nigerians should tackle their differences. While Azikiwe preached that ethnic groups should 'forget their differences' so as to forge a common centre, Bello insisted that these ethnicities should be understood rather than attempting to transcend them (Agbaje and Adebanwi, 2001). Experience seems to show that Nigerians have neither understood their differences nor forgotten them. Nigeria has passed through numerous phases in its search for national identity. The gruesome

Nigerian – Biafran war, which lasted for almost three years (1967 – 1970), is a memory many want to erase. The successive coups and military rule are all harsh experiences for a nation in search of its nationhood. The current nascent democracy with all its teething problems is an attempt by Nigeria to find a unified way forward. Nigeria may have embraced multiculturalism as a state policy as a way to deal with the differences, yet the problem of difference persists. The Nigerian Constitution states that no one should be discriminated against on account of sex, ethnicity, or religion and the principle of Nigeria's federal character was introduced into the statute book where a conscious attempt was made by the federal government not to exclude any ethnic group in the allocation of resources and appointments to various jobs. Putting this into practice, though, has been beset with many problems (Nnonyelu 1997, p. 153) and Oha (1999) gives a fair summary when he says that "multiculturalism is ambivalent: it is encouraged in policy and discouraged in practice" (p. 1).

Some of the difficulties Nigeria experiences in its search for national identity is not surprising if we consider Koundoura's (1998, p. 74) articulation of the necessary criteria for a national identity. Quoting Mill she asserts: "identity of race and descent, community of language and community of religion... geographical limits and the strongest of all, identity of political antecedents". Stratton and Ang (1998) identify a nation as referring to the experience of the people within a state as unified by a common language, culture and tradition. Bangura (2000) however, interrogates these criteria in relation to their use in ethnicity. His views are very relevant here:

> Ethnic identities, like those of a nation, are assumed to have objective and subjective characteristics. The objective characteristics include language, religion, race, territory and culture. But each of these is subject to interpretation by the subjective preferences of groups. For instance, although language is the most common factor that has been used to distinguish an ethnic group, not all groups which share a

> common language feel they belong to the same ethnic group. Also, different groups may form one ethnic group through the medium of a foreign language when confronted with a dominant group that seeks to impose its language on the rest of the population....(Bangura cited in Badru 2000, p. 257 – 258).

What Bangura describes above is very true of Nigeria. Though sharing the same territory, Nigerians seem not to agree on a common language, but rather prefer to use English as the official language (Deuber, 2000). The reason for this is that the struggle for ethnic supremacy is very much alive in Nigerian society and possibly creates difficulty in articulating a common language. The fact that only the languages of the three dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria, (the Igbo from the East, the Hausa from the North and the Yoruba from the West) are adopted in the country as the languages of the National Assembly and as the languages taught in schools, is irksome to the many other ethnic groups. No doubt, minority groups see this as an indication of cultural assimilation, language being a signifier of cultural identity (Hall, 1997a). Every ethnic group, therefore, struggles to find avenues for equality as they try to claim their own share of the national cake. English thus becomes a compromise language – the official language of the country. Rather than using any of the indigenous Nigerian languages as a national language, many would prefer the adoption of Nigerian Pidgin English [NPE] as Deuber's (2000) study shows. English language therefore is the preferred language and used by the press in Nigeria. By 1996, of the 115 newspapers (weeklies, dailies and magazines) in Nigeria only nine are published in indigenous languages (see Ogbodu 1996, p. 81). This situation has hardly changed to the present day.

One of the consequences of using the language of English in the Nigerian press is not just that it makes it an elitist medium[1] but also that it affords journalists well-versed in the language, the opportunity to use it as ideological tool without the readers necessarily being any aware of such a strategy. This is because the interpretation given to any text in English will depend on how familiar the idioms, nuances, symbols and metaphorical structures of the language are to the readers. Moreover, it is probable that exposure to the print media is hardly ever understood as a conscious process (Hermes, 1995), a situation that does not encourage a serious and self-conscious interrogation of texts. Nigerian women's access to the print media is also hampered by any number of factors such as illiteracy, poverty and time constraints (Hodges, 2001). Esan's (1993) ethnographic study of Nigerian women's television viewing habits shows that even with television, they have little control over what is being watched. Being hampered by many factors, it would hardly seem surprising if Nigerian women's contact with the media is done in a haphazard manner, a situation which affords them little opportunity for meaningful engagement with the texts. This possibility makes the sustenance of patriarchal ideologies within the media more likely as women are less likely to recognise them to provide sustainable challenge to them. English language, as argued by some scholars is inherently sexist (Beasley, 1999) and operates in binary opposites, in a way not applicable to many Nigerian languages (Oyewumi, 1997; Yieke, 2001; Yusuf, 2002). Therefore, it is possible that this difference between English language and Nigerian languages could translate into more gendered language as there is a possibility that many Nigerian journalists may not be aware of the binary nature of

[1] By 1995, only 57 percent of adult Nigerians are literate, men 67.3% while women 47.3%. The number of women able to read and write has risen from 23 percent in 1980. Source: Africa recovery, United Nations vol. 13 No 1 (June 1999) Available from: http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/subjindx/131nigr4.htm [Accessed 12th December 2004].

English language and often communicate sexism in their writings, possibly without necessarily meaning to do so.

To return to the discussion of Nigeria in relation to nationhood, Badru (2000) further interrogates the concept of race, arguing its insignificance in most African countries where the racial system that gave rise to such a classification (that is, trying to justify differential treatment on the grounds of so-called ethnic or racial background based on skin colour) does not exist. I agree that the use of 'race' is a misnomer in the Nigerian context, but people in Nigeria *do* behave as if there are 'racial differences' among the ethnic groups. Often, *cultural* differences are presented as distinguishable physical traits for members of some ethnic groups. These serve as catalysts for ethnic discrimination and are underscored in ethnic politics. Some of these include some facial marks, but also include ways of greetings, accents, and dress codes. Such things set members of ethnic groups apart from one another and become distinguishable marks of identification. Many Nigerians exploit such differences, especially in the distribution of resources.

Equally crucial is the tendency for ethnic groups to think of themselves as both 'nations' and 'races'. I will cite a news report in *The Guardian* [N] newspaper in a headline titled: *Yoruba leaders meet in Ibadan to draft constitution.* Part of the news reads: "as the clamour for the nation's polity to reflect a true federalism, the Yoruba nation yesterday announced plans to present its own constitution".[2] Throughout the news story, reference is made to the Yoruba as a 'race' and a 'nation'. The Yorubas are not alone in such thoughts. Other ethnic groups see themselves in similar light. Edwin Madunagu captures the scenario thus:

[2] The Guardian [N] 7 February 2002, p. 5

> "Nations" and "nationalities" have entrenched themselves in our political lexicon. While some [ethnic groups] are ethnic nationalities, others are ethnic nationalities constellations. Ethnic groups like the Igbos, the Yorubas, the Hausa-Fulanis and the Efiks constitute nationalities, each of which can stand alone, while (other groups) constitute constellations of ethnic nationalities which should be grouped together (*The Guardian* [N] 7 February 2002, p. 57).

What I have presented above is a picture of a nation riddled with diverse differences in culture, language, ethnicities and religions, and citizens who play on these in their quest for ethnic supremacy. This manipulation of difference is like a virus deep in the nation's unity and the media too seem to have become infected. Scholars have accused the Nigerian press of working within a 'cult of ethnicity' which clouds their judgement (see Ekwo, 2001; Galadima and Enighe, 2001).

As may have been obvious, there are a number of cultural and ethnic differences in Nigerian society but in spite of these differences, there is still one voice on issues relating to women when the country is otherwise a multi-vocal text. There are of course variations and relativity among the different ethnic groups on the issue of gender, but it seems that the bottom line is: men in Nigeria hold sway over the women (see Imam, 1992; Okunna, 2002). No wonder a Nigerian female writer once described Nigeria as 'a male-oriented, macho sexist nation'[3]. So how does Nigerian society see their women? In the next section, I will explore the politics of gender in Nigerian society, which seems to suggest that women assume a peripheral space in Nigeria.

The Politics of Gender

A dominant argument of some African scholars is that colonialism foisted a previously unknown gendered structure on African societies (Oyewumi, 1997). Such arguments

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[3] Salihu, L. (1999) Not Yet a Woman President in Post Express online] Available from: http://www.postexpresswired.co [Accessed 2nd March 2002]

were explored in detail in Chapter One. While acknowledging the potential of African feminists to re-theorize the position of African women in pre-colonial societies more accurately, it is also equally important to recognise that a less polemic picture of the experiences of the African woman should also be available in relation to issues of gender relations. For example, Nigeria certainly has some local traditions and cultures that are not beneficial to women and which also indicate the cultural subordination of women. Some of these include traditional practices such as female genital mutilation[4] (FGM), the society's preference for male children, early marriages, wife battering (and other forms of domestic violence against women), inheritance of wives by the brothers of deceased and other derogatory and harmful widowhood practices (Nwankwo 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2002). None of these practices were instituted by colonialism. If gender operates in a set of binary but hierarchical relations, then I would suggest that colonialism instituted neither gendered societies nor patriarchal dominance in African societies. The period of colonization and the formal establishment of colonial rule did however institute more systematic and regulated, gender-biased traits than existed before colonization.

Oyewumi (1997, p. 124) argues that the international nation-state system as we know it today is a tribute to the expansion of European traditions of governance and economic organization. She also argues that its export to Africa aided the exclusion of women from the newly created colonial public sphere. In Britain, access to power was gender-based and politics was largely a job for men. It follows therefore that colonization, which is fundamentally a politico-economic process, simply replicated this relationship in Nigeria. There is no doubt, therefore, that African women then entered the

[4] Despite some African femininsts' [e.g. Okome (1999)] argument against the use of this term I stick with it, for I consider the term quite appropriate.

postcolonial period at an immense disadvantage, their position further worsened by the global political and economic conditions which are unfavourable to developing nations. But undoubtedly too, African men are more favoured than African women within these global conditions as they arrogate to themselves the authority of articulating their nations' culture and politics.

Mama's (1997) argument is extremely relevant here. She asks that if it was colonialism that brutalised, degraded and domesticated African women, then to what extent have the nationalist movements challenged the misogynistic and sexually contradictory legacies of the white masters? She speculates on whether African women have actually experienced greater liberation since the demise of colonial regimes, or whether the nationalists have merely continued the trajectories of contempt and disempowerment. She asserts that many of the nationalists who inherited power from the colonial masters were overtly conservative when it came to matters of sexual politics. For instance, for all his revolutionary vision, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana was unable to conceptualise a role for women beyond reproduction and nurturing. He referred to women as, "mothers of the nation, the beauty that graced the homes and the gentleness that soothes men's temper" (Tsikata 1989 cited in Mama, 1997, p. 55). The Nigerian nationalist leader Tafewa Balewa opposed women being given the vote in the Northern part of Nigeria despite the enfranchisement of the women in the South and it was as late as 1976 that northern women were given the vote. In 1992, a governor from Eastern Nigeria visited an Emir in the North. At the Emir's palace, all the women in the Governor's convoy were stopped outside and were denied entry into the palace of the Emir for the simple reason that they were female (Asoegwu 2003, p. 29). The University of Nigeria, the first premier university in the country still has as its motto: "to restore the dignity of man". No one has thought it reasonable to change the motto to reflect the changing

times. Nwabara lists some of the abuses of women's basic fundamental human rights in Nigeria:

> All over the country women are regarded as the 'property of men, first their father's and then their husband's. For things that an individual male can get on his own merit, a woman has to obtain her father's/husband's permission. For example to get a passport or visa; to obtain a bank loan; to get a scholarship; to exercise rights over her own issue. A woman cannot be operated upon without her husband's consent, a woman cannot practice family planning without her husband's consent, if a Nigerian male marries a non Nigerian female, she automatically becomes a national but if a Nigerian woman marries a non Nigerian man, they have to fight for their rights to residence. In many areas of the country, a woman's right of movement is restricted (1989, p. 7).

The situation has hardly changed fifteen years later and women continue to be refused as guarantors for police bail (as the police prefer to deal with men). The list appears endless. Cultural assumptions about gender are clearly translated into state policies to the continuing detriment of women.

What might be considered as the 'complacencies' of 'western' feminism are often challenged when charges of imperialism are brought to the fore. In particular, African feminists argue that both women and men in developing countries are victims of imperialism and capitalism. I would support this, as I believe that in African societies, problems of nutrition, illiteracy, health care delivery systems, skills training, and so on, are central concerns for both women and men. However, patriarchy does pose particular problems for women in an African society such as Nigeria. In order to explore this, it is important to examine whether one sex is preferred to the other in the sharing of the scarce resources within society. In some cultures in Nigeria, (for example the Igbos in Eastern Nigeria), it used to be considered unacceptable for women and children to eat eggs. The argument then was that it would give them an unquenchable quest [hunger]

for the material things (see Achebe 1958, p. 54). Even now in some cultures in Nigeria, women are not allowed to eat the part of the chicken called the gizzard: it is reserved for men. We may also ask ourselves, where there are limited funds to send children to school, does the male child or the female child get the preference? Asoegwu (2003) lists what he considers the "sins against women" in Nigeria, citing poor educational opportunities as one of them. He says some families prefer to provide formal education for boys, leaving the girls to wallow in ignorance and poverty. He suggests that a possible reason for this is that "our patrimonial system of marriage gives them the thinking that training women is a mere waste because they must eventually leave for their husbands home" (Asoegwu 2003, p. 19). This suggests a society that gives room for no other occupation for women except marriage and childbearing. This *marriage-mania* designated by Nigerian society for their women often puts considerable pressure on girls (see Okunna, 2002) as well as working to further dehumanise women in general. Lai Olurode captures this succinctly:

> In the household decision-making, men predominate leaving women as mere recipients of such decisions. Single women are more discriminated against once they are of marriageable age. Thus, the Kano state government at sometime in 1985 rounded up single girls who 'refused' to marry. These single girls are regarded as the cause of famine, lack of rainfall, crimes and other calamities. Landlords generally discriminate against single girls. A single lady once commented: "Do you know I had to tell my landlord that I was engaged before he agreed to rent out my flat?" Renting out your flat to single girls is taken as renting out to harlots who associate with criminals. Single men are not similarly treated. Once a woman marries, she ceases to be an active member of her family of orientation. She is not fully accepted in her new home as far as decision-making is concerned. She is at greater disadvantage as a divorcee. A divorced woman is rarely welcomed back in her place of birth (1990, p. 11).

Shelly Ortner provides three indicators which could constitute evidence that a particular culture considers women inferior. The culture explicitly devalues women, according them, their roles, their tasks, their products, and their social milieux less privilege than is accorded men and male correlates. The culture may have symbolic devices, such as the attribution of defilement, which may be interpreted as implicitly making a statement of inferior valuation. It could have structural arrangements, which exclude women from participation in, or contact with areas of social, economic or cultural life in which the powerful in society are felt to function (1982, p. 487). Ortner argues that any of these factors would be sufficient to emphasise female inferiority in a given culture. All three indicators are present in Nigerian traditional culture and have been carried on into the postcolonial era.

Meeting the challenge of gender politics

The cultural absence and exclusion of women has finally begun to be noted by women themselves. Increasingly, Nigerian women have started to realise that they are defined negatively in relation to the culture in which they have been born. Some of them have suffered martyrdom in order to challenge the cultural practices that undermine women. I remember a colleague of mine who refused to shave her hair on the death of her husband. To the kindred, it is sacrilegious for a widow not to scrape off her hair. She was thereafter accused of having a hand in her husband's death. Fortunately, she had the support of her children who stood by her and she eventually triumphed. However, how many Nigerian women could display such strength and risk societal disapproval where for the majority of women, cultural meanings of womanhood imply docility and obedience while manhood is translated as power and obeisance?

Some NGOs and women's groups have started to react to the perceived exclusion of and discrimination against women in Nigerian postcolonial culture. For the majority of these groups, improving the situation of Nigerian women is a prime target. For many of them also, the marginalisation of women in all facets of life is traceable to cultural practices of gender relations within Nigerian society which many unenlightened women have accepted as the norm (Chukukere 1998, p. 144).

Thus, campaign groups in Nigeria have a huge task to carry out 'enlightenment campaigns' among Nigerian women, to educate them about their rights and what constitutes a violation of such rights. Some of these women groups are: *Women in Nigeria* (WIN), *Civil Resource and Documentation Center* (CIRDDOC), Nigeria; *Women's Rights Watch Nigeria, Women Farmers Advancement Network, Nigeria* (WOFAN), *Women's Consortium of Nigeria* (WOCON). This list is not exhaustive, but the groups mentioned all insist that there is the need for a fundamental transformation of gender relations in Nigerian society. To be able to work toward this, they use a multi- media approach to campaign, educate, lobby, and to question the representation of Nigerian women within Nigerian society. The first objective of WIN, for example, is "to promote the study of the conditions of women in Nigeria with the aim of combating discriminatory and sexist practices in the family, in the workplace and in the wider society" (Imam *et al.* 1989, p. 2). To this end, WIN organises conferences every year around different themes to promote the study of women and disseminate this information (Imam *et al.*, 1989).

CIRDDOC offers free legal services to women who are victims of oppression and who cannot otherwise afford it. It also engages in publications aimed at educating and informing the public on many of the key issues affecting Nigerian women. These

include rights to customary right of inheritance, reproductive health rights, female genital mutilation and so on (see Nwankwo, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2002).

Some of these women's groups have sponsored the production and airing of musical 'advertisements' (jingles) in English and indigenous languages to promote images of women with a special focus on successful women in traditionally male-dominated professions. Such a strategy is designed to counteract the dominant portrayal in the media that women are only good at home and hearth. Many too have sponsored campaign messages against gender violence. In the celebrated cases of Safiya Hussein and Amina Lawal, women accused of adultery by the Sharia courts in the northern part of Nigeria and sentenced to death by stoning, many women's groups helped to bring the issue to the knowledge of the international community and provoked a global debate.

WOFAN, which initially started by helping women farmers in rural areas on issues of health and agricultural technology, now works with over 250 women's groups in five states. Since 2000, one group has been producing a weekly 30–minute radio programme broadcast by a local radio station. WOFAN provides women with recording equipment and receivers, and each week they address issues which concern them such as HIV/AIDS, water quality, harmful traditional practices (e.g. female genital mutilation) and even politics. In this way, they attempt to project a better-balanced representation of women which reflects their diverse activities and contributions to society.

These efforts seem to be yielding fruits as some of the cultural practices that are inimical to women are gradually being changed. For example, on the issue of widows and female inheritance, three states in Nigeria - Enugu, Edo and Oyo where hitherto, widows were subjected to dehumanising treatments - have passed laws protecting widows from some of the punitive and harmful practices to which they are routinely

subjected. Oyo State even gives widows the right to inherit their husband's properties. In Eastern Nigeria, where daughters cannot inherit property, the landmark case of Mojekwu vs. Mojekwu 1997 NWLR (72) declared such a custom repugnant to natural justice, equity and good conscience (see Nwankwo, 2001a).

Women's groups have also occasionally influenced policy because of the way they bring public attention to issues affecting women. For example, they influenced the removal of school fees for girls in some states in Nigeria and affected the recommendation of the Political Bureau that women should occupy a percentage of legislative offices (Imam 1997, p. 293). These recorded successes, though only the tip of the iceberg, are nonetheless highly significant. They are steps towards a radical transformation of institutional structures and cultural practices in Nigerian society which discriminate against women.

Conclusion

In sum, I have explored the multiethnic and multicultural state of Nigeria – a state 'imposed' on the country by British colonial government. One effect of this colonial legacy is the celebration of 'difference' between Nigerians and among ethnic groups. Though Nigeria seems to celebrate 'difference', there seems to be a unilateral view about gender within the societies. I have explored the gender politics as played out in Nigerian society. Though characterised by multi-cultures and multi-ethnicities, Nigeria's dominant construction of gender suggests an inferior position for women. As more Nigerian women recognise the cultural construction of gender as detrimental to them, they have formed opposing groups to challenge the inferiorisation of Nigerian women within the cultures. I have explored their efforts so far, suggesting the necessity

to address the gendered existence of African women. In the next chapter, I will examine how African women are also positioned within a racialised existence.

❖ Chapter Three

Beyond gender – 'race' and representation

Introduction

I indicated in Chapter One that in addition to a gendered existence, an African woman also contends with a racialised life. Race issues assume a pronounced form in this thesis because the African woman who is the subject of this research is positioned within a postcolonial framework in Britain, a country which is far from being a racially homogeneous nation. In this chapter, I provide a link to the cultural and ideological deposit in British society by previous historical phases. The relationship between Britain and Africa has historically been characterised by dominance. While Britain has been positioned as a powerful empire, Africa has occupied the position of servitude. This chapter explores the representations of black Africans within this historical phase characterised by colonialism and slavery. Using an historical approach, the chapter provides a link between colonial and slave discourses and contemporary media stereotypes. It traces the survival of racial discourses and representations in British media despite formal decolonisation of most African countries.

The concept of 'race'

An understanding of race is important in exploring postcolonial representations. Coopan (2000, p. 19) expresses this importance when he suggests that "race must be placed within post-colonial framework of analysis not once but many times and in

multiple ways". He argues that a postcolonial study is alienated from at least some of the circumstances of its world if it is "unable to theorise the changing forms and local contexts of the category of race, or its insertion within historically distinct processes of racialisation, ethnicization, and class stratification and its articulation to other categories of social and psychic identity". Coopan insists that locating race in postcolonial studies does not make it a "transhistorical universal, a static critical paradigm for how to think about an equally fixed 'identity'". Rather, as in this thesis, it explores "its labile new deployments across the ideological spectrum". In this thesis, I explore how racialised discourses have been sustained and deployed within contemporary media representations of black Africans.

The earliest discourses on race have been based on essentialist notions and dominated by binary opposition. The contrast of the 'Negro' to white people during their first contact provided impetus for racial categories. To the English traveller, the most arresting characteristic of 'Negroes' was their skin colour. 'Blackness' in England was equated with evil and thus English 'men' came to think of black people as evil. Jordan (1982) writes:

> In England perhaps more than in Southern Europe, the concept of blackness was loaded with intense meaning. Long before they found that some men were black, English men found in the idea of blackness a way of expressing some of their most ingrained values. No other colour except white conveyed such emotional impact. As described by the Oxford English Dictionary, the meaning of **black** before the sixteenth century included 'Deeply stained with dirt; soiled, dirty, foul.... Having dark or deadly purposes, malignant; pertaining to or involving death, deadly; baneful, disastrous, sinister .... Foul, iniquitous, atrocious, horrible, wicked.... Indicating disgrace, censure, liability to punishment, etc'. Black was an emotionally partisan colour, the handmaid and symbol of baseness and evil, a sign of danger and repulsion. Embedded in the concept of blackness was its direct opposite – whiteness .... White and black connoted purity and filthiness, virginity and sin, virtue and blackness, beauty and ugliness, beneficence and evil, God and the devil. Whiteness moreover carried

> a special significance for Elizabethan Englishmen: it was, particularly when complemented by red, the colour of perfect human beauty, especially *female* beauty (p. 44).

I have quoted a significant section here in order to convey some of the ideas which English*men* had in their minds when they encountered African women and men. The contrast which the African women provided to their 'own' women, both attracted and repelled the white men. African women's sexuality became an issue of inquisition. The Hottentot Venus is particularly noteworthy in this history and I will concentrate on her in a later section as a specific example. Based on this binary opposition, white people came to equate themselves with civilization and black people with savagery. Bodily characteristics too represented an absolute difference between human 'types' or species. The white 'race' came to be associated with culture, refinement, learning and knowledge, a belief in reason, the presence of developed institutions, formal government and law, and a 'civilised restraint' in their emotional, sexual and social life (see Mason, 1995). On the other hand, the black 'race' was equated to whatever was instinctive and primitive, having an open expression of emotion and feeling rather than intellect, a lack of 'civilised refinement' in sexual and social life, a reliance on custom and ritual, and a lack of developed civil institutions, all linked to nature (Hall, 1997b). It was argued that the Negro found happiness only as servant or slave to the white master and her/his characteristics were fixed forever in nature. The theory of polygenesis[1] (many creations), that came up at the time lent credence to the superiority of some 'races'. This was a new kind of scientific racism, which asserted that 'blacks' and 'whites' had been created at different times. Arthur de Gobineau occupies a pivotal place in racist ideologies about blackness and whiteness, with the construction of a

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[1] see Robert Bernasconi (2002) (ed.) American Theories of Polygenesis. Bristol, Thoemmes Press, (esp. p. v- xiii) for an elaboration of this concept.

racial typology, which placed white, yellow and black people in a descending hierarchical order of superiority. These 'races', according to Gobineau, possessed readily identifiable characteristics which were true for each member of that race. Thus, a black person was inherently lacking in intellectual ability: 'his intellect will always move within a narrow circle' and yellow people had a 'general proneness to obesity and little physical energy and inclined to apathy'. White people on the other hand were 'gifted with reflective energy and an extreme love for liberty' (Gobineau cited in Ross 1996, p. 5). Gobineau maintained that all civilisations were dependent on white people for their founding and continuance, such that the conquering of 'inferior races' was both a necessity and a duty for Europeans (Childs and Williams 1997, p. 189). It was this belief that made Africa a continent, which became thought of as "the 'white man's' burden". The biological immutability of race was so deeply rooted that it culminated in the scramble for and partition of Africa. In 1885, at the Congress of Berlin, the great powers of Europe divided Africa between themselves with Britain emerging as the dominant imperial power (Mason 1995, p. 7). It is not surprising therefore that in 1900, Lord Roseberry could conclude: "what is empire but the predominance of race?" (Childs and Williams 1997, p. 189) Throughout the colonial period, race became an indelible mark of negative difference.

The concept of race has since undergone some changes. Goldberg (2002) identifies two traditions around the concept of race from which racial rule prevails. The first is what he calls the "naturalist" which is similar to what I have described above. The second is the "historicist" or "evolutionary'. Explaining this in relation to racial rule, Goldberg (2002) writes:

> Here the claim is not that those not white are inherently inferior but developmentally immature, historically not yet capable of self-

> governance and so requiring the guidance of European colonial benevolence (p. 82).

The 'historicist' tradition of race started to displace the 'naturalist' tradition in the second half of the nineteenth century, but scarcely eclipsed it. Goldberg differentiates the actions shaped by these two traditions of race. Naturalist forms tended to be more viscerally vicious and cruel, historicist ones more paternalistic. By the same token, the naturalist tended to be bald, bold and direct concerning racist presumption and commitment; the historicist ambiguous, ambivalent and indeed, hypocritical. With the naturalist accordingly, the battle line could be more directly drawn, while the historicist tended to politeness, coded significance and tolerance as veils for continued invocation of racial power. Goldberg (2002) further explains:

> The racist predispositions and presumptions of progressivism or historicism are more nuanced and hidden, less assertive, more worried about appearing so. But the dominant effect of this trajectory has been not the dismissal of racist commitment and expression as such, but the replacement – one might say displacement – of naturalism by racial historicism, of one form of racist articulation by another. The perpetuation of racial commitments and racial exclusions has been veiled behind this shift, preserved anew in the vocal dismissal of the bald and extreme in the name of the polite and the subtle, of the presumptively unsustainable in wake of the enlightened. Enlightened racism is camouflaged beneath its liberal historicist enlightenment (p. 93).

Goldberg is not the only critic who basks in cynicism and doubts about the disappearance of the naturalistic and biological determinism of race. Mason (1995) argues that with modern genetic science, which undermines biological immutability, the concept of 'race' as a biological 'fact' gradually disappeared from the natural sciences but continued in the social sciences because of its persistence as a marker of difference in social relations. Even those who were convinced by the evidence that race in the

biological sense did not exist found themselves having to confront the fact that large sections of the population, and indeed whole societies, continued to conduct themselves as though they did (Mason 1995, p. 7). The concept of race thus moved into the domain of social construction. Race, according to Margaret Anderson's definition becomes:

> A social structure, constructed through social interaction and manifested in the institutions of society, interpersonal interactions and the minds and identities of those living in the racially based social orders (Anderson 1996 cited in Bryson 1999, p. 51).

Explanations were sought for the persistent racial segregation among people. E.O. Wilson[2] tried to explain the inherent sectionalism in humans by drawing from the old Darwinist ideology that human societies are shaped by the biological nature of humans. Just as ants create colonies of queens, drones, workers and slaves, Wilson argued that the nature of human beings meant that they created racism, patriotism, wars, religion, and class exploitation. Quoted extensively in Rosenthal (1998), Wilson asserts that human nature

> is the hereditary regularities of mental development that bias cultural evolution in one direction and thus connect the genes to culture. Therefore in all human societies we favour our own family, ethnic and religious group, impose male dominance, create hierarchies of status, rank, and wealth and rules for inheritance, promote the territorial expansion and defence of our society and enter into contractual agreements.[3]

Wilson claims that racism, religious hatred, sexism and war are not inevitable features of capitalism, but universal traits of our genetically evolved human nature. Efforts to fight them therefore go against human nature and are thus exceedingly difficult to challenge. While many people seem to share Wilson's views, others have criticised him

[2] A Harvard professor emeritus of Entomology, the study of insects.
[3] Available from: http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/-cscpo/cowilson.htm [Accessed 8th August 2003].

for his essentialist view of human nature, so for these critics, there is no genetic basis for tribalism, racism, sexism and other features of the present society. This later argument seems to be popularised in the light of prevalent post-modern and poststructuralist views of multiple and fluid identities. Mason's (1995) assertion here becomes valid:

> People have different ethnic identities in different situations. Their salience is affected by such factors as distribution of desired resources and the objectives of the people concerned. Thus, it is possible to be simultaneously English, British, and European stressing these identities more or less strongly in different aspects of daily life. Similarly, the same person might identify as Gujerati, Indian, Hindu, East African, Asian or British depending on the situation, immediate objectives and the responses of the behaviour of others (p. 13).

Mason (1995) while accepting that there is no such thing as race does, however, acknowledge that large numbers of people behave as though there are. He therefore posits that the task before scholars is "how to retain a recognition of the social significance of race as a concept without appearing to legitimize the idea that 'races' represent a real division of the human species" (p. 8).

Perhaps it is in the bid to de-emphasise the hierarchical division inherent in race that the term has become highly contested in modern times. The contestable nature of the word is seen by the way in which it is often enclosed in inverted commas. Multicultural nations like Britain have laws and legislation such as the Race Relations Act of 1976, which give black people the legal right to challenge discrimination based on race. Yet, even with the different interpretations and negotiations which the term race has undergone, it is still capable of evoking a rich matrix of binary values, structures and images referring to purity - pollution, Christianity – heathen, national – alien among others. Even when used with innocent spontaneity, it remains highly problematic to

determine adequately the boundaries of its denotative and connotative meanings (Husband, 1982). It is still capable of evoking a presumption of the existence of racism.

The next section explores the slave period as another important landmark in the history of black Africans that is inevitably linked to their position in the current dispensation as well as the racial discourses, which are intertwined with this period. These racial discourses may have shaped current media discourses on black African people.

The slave period – an unforgotten history

The slave period offers another key landmark in the life of Africans, which formed a particular context of negative representations, which have continued to be discursively circulated ever since. The contact between the European traders and West African kingdoms in the sixteenth century led to the enslavement of black people for three centuries and this history shaped western ideas about race and created images of racial differences. By the nineteenth century when the European exploration and colonisation of the African interior began in earnest, Africa was regarded as "marooned and historically abandoned, a fetish land, inhabited by cannibals, dervishes and witch doctors" (Hall 1997b, p. 239). Such views about Africa were represented in images in advertising, recorded and depicted in maps and drawings, etchings and the new photography, in newspaper illustrations and accounts, diaries, travel writing, learned treatises, official reports and 'boy's own adventure novels' (Hall, 1997b). In all these, the black African exotic was charted and the 'high imperialism' of the West celebrated. During slavery, the representations of racial difference were clustered around certain themes. Prominent among them was the subordinate status and 'innate' laziness of

black people. Black people were considered born to serve and yet too lazy to labour enough for the gains of their master. Another dominant representation was black people's innate 'primitivism', simplicity and lack of culture, which made them incapable of 'civilized' refinements. Lugira (2000) muses on the disbelief shown by Emil Ludwig when a friend told Ludwig that Africans had no need to be convinced of the existence of God, as they were sure of His existence. Ludwig had wondered, "How can the untutored Africans conceive God? How can this be? Deity is a philosophical concept which savages are incapable of framing."[4] Ludwig's utterances mirrored the perception of black Africans as people incapable of profound reasoning.

Black people's cultures were reduced either to nature or to what Hall (1997b, p. 245) calls "naturalizing difference". As Hall explains, the idea behind this naturalization is that if the differences between blacks and whites are culturally rooted, then they are redeemable as culture is not static and can be changed. If based in nature, however, then nothing can be done about it as they become permanent and fixed. Naturalization is, therefore, according to Hall (1997b) a representational strategy designed to 'fix' difference and thus secure it forever. It is an attempt to halt the inevitable 'slide' of meaning, to secure discursive or ideological 'closure'. With naturalization, things are shown as 'natural' and therefore require no comment. Thus, in the days of slavery, it was assumed natural that white men should be waited on by black slaves, and white women rode and the slave men ran after them shading them from the sun with an umbrella. Not only were black people represented in terms of their essential characteristics, they were reduced to their essence. Thus, laziness, infantile curiosity,

[4] Available from: http://www2.bc.edu/lugira/africism.htm [Accessed 8th May 2002].

childishness, servitude, promiscuity[5] belong to the black people as a race. Hall (1997b) calls these representations a "racialized regime of representation" (p. 249). As I will show subsequently, some of these racial representations have persisted up to contemporary times.

For black women, the slave period took a double toll on them as they suffered both sexist and racial forms of oppression (see hooks, 1982; Davis, 1982, 1990; Anthias and Yuval-David, 1989; Goldberg, 2002). Their sex made them vulnerable to rape, forced marriage, imposed breeding and other forms of assaults. Sexism and racism combined to oppress black women in ways very different to black males. While racism was the rock on which slavery was built, sexism determined that the lot of the black female was often harsher and more brutal than that of the male black slave.

The slave experiences of the black women led to a devaluation of black womanhood that permeated the psyche of the western world and has continued to shape the social status of black women even after slavery had ended (see Marshall, 1994). The story of the "Hottentot Venus" below epitomises the humiliation suffered by black African women and contributes to the gross discriminations and misconceptions that have shadowed them ever since.

Black African women and representation: the Hottentot Venus

Here I draw attention to discourses about the black African female that existed in the 19th century. Using the example of the Hottentot Venus, I explore how white men

[5] Walvin (1982) suggests that the importance attached to African sexuality could be because African nakedness loomed large in the early English impression of Africans. This nakedness was to inform some of literary caricature of the African Negroes in the 16th and 17th centuries. High among this caricature was the sexual immorality of Africans and the alleged size of the African penis, which explained his hyper-sexual activities.

defined black women using pejorative and derogatory terms to refer to their bodies, particularly their genitalia. The Hottentot Venus remains one of the key discourses that have historically positioned the black African woman in the European mind. After all, what is known about her demonstrates the ways that Europeans framed her and read her from the viewpoint of a dominant culture. We have never heard her voice/perspective.

The ideology of womanhood prevalent in the Victorian age characterised white women as pure, passionless and de-sexed, while black women were the epitome of immorality, pathology, impurity and sex itself (Mama, 1995). Respectability and sexual self-control were thus set against notions of black female promiscuity. The Hottentot Venus was an embodiment of this construction of impure, immoral, pathologised and promiscuous sexuality associated with the black female (Gilman, 1995), and "remained representative of the essence of the black, especially the black female" (p. 206).

The Hottentot Venus makes manifest the historical and cultural accumulation of ideas of inferiority of black people, especially black women within Western culture. The story of Saarjie Bartmann (Sarah Bartman) named the Hottentot Venus has been retold in films[6], novels[7], art and academic discourses (see Gilman, 1985; Jordan and Weedon, 1995; Mama, 1995; Hammonds, 1997). Each tells how, in the nineteenth century, (around 1810) a South African woman, Sarah Baartman, was lured to Europe by a British ship's doctor, William Dunlop. Her 'attraction' was her physical attributes. She was said to have had very large buttocks and sexual organs, features, which she was persuaded, could earn her a lot of money if they were displayed for the curious public to see (see fig 4 below).

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[6] Zola Maseko's films "The Life and Times of Sarah Baartmann, the Hottentot Venus" (1998) & "The return of Sara Baartmann" (2003) are some examples.
[7] Chase – Riboud, B. (2003) Hottentot Venus: A Novel, New York, Doubleday.

However, she never received any money, but was exhibited like an animal, appearing in freak shows in London, Paris and Ireland. In Paris, she was sold to an animal trainer and paraded at high society balls. She fell into alcoholism and prostitution and was thought to have died in 1815. After her death, she became an object of scientific research for early anthropologists looking for scientific proof of the "baseness" of Africans. Her breasts and buttocks were removed and put on display in the museum until as recently as 1985.[8]

Photographs of her brain were included in the Hayward Gallery Exhibition, Spectacular Bodies at the end of 2000[9].

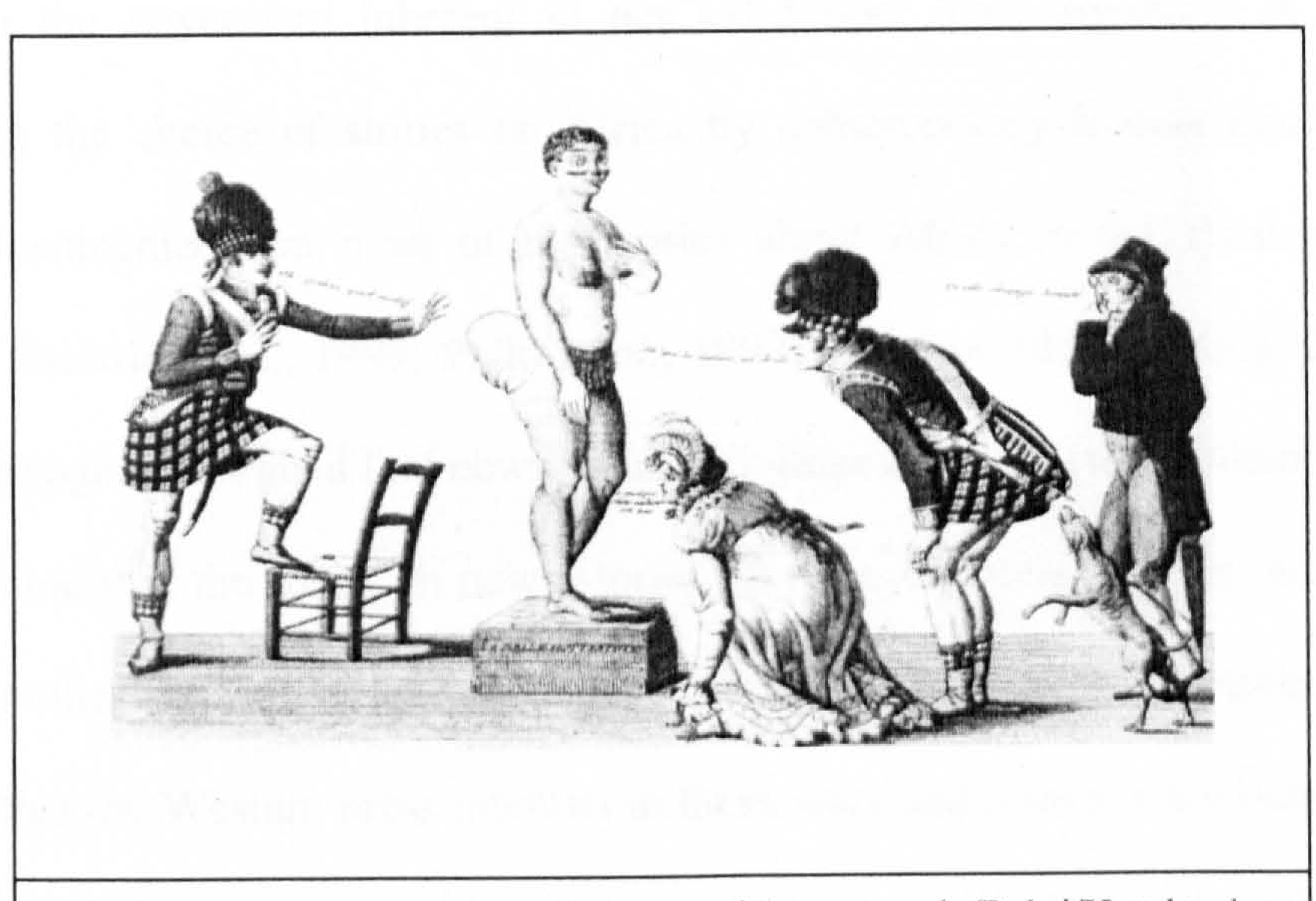

Fig 4 Hottentot Venus http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/Hott.html

In 2002, nearly two hundred years after she left Africa's shores, her remains were finally brought back to South Africa, following negotiation between the two governments of South Africa and France. As her remains were laid to rest in South

[8] Butcher, T (2002) The Hottentot Venus goes home. The Daily Telegraph 25April 2002, p. 18.
[9] Pannick, D. (2002) A fine line between art and making an exhibition of yourself. The Times, 9 April, 2002. [Page not available]

Africa as part of the country's Women's Day celebrations, President Thabo Mbeki, said:

> The story of Sarah Baartman is the story of African people. It is the story of the loss of our ancient freedom. It is the story of our reduction to the state of objects who could be used and discarded by others....[10]

The Hottentot Venus encapsulates the sexism and racism inherent in white perceptions of the black African woman. Her story traces the trajectories of the position of African women within the white supremacist culture, being positioned as objects to be looked at and scrutinised. The obsession with Hottentot's body is a form of fetishism, which is linked to the voyeurism inherent in her exhibition. This argument is relevant in examining the choice of stories on Africa by contemporary British journalists. It is widely documented that most of the stories about Africa in the Western press are negative (Beattie *et al.*, 1999; Philo *et al.*, 1999; Glasgow Media Group, 2002; Uche, 2003). Though it is argued that news values privilege disasters (see Braham, 1982), it is also possible that the focus on news stories of wars, disasters, famine, etc. represents merely another form of voyeurism engaged in by Western media. It might be possible to argue that the Western press interests in these wars and disasters are based in morbid curiosity and for some voyeuristic pleasure, more especially as I will argue later (Chapter Six and Chapter Seven), accusations of voyeurism can be made because African women are often used as 'specimens' in these disasters by the Western media.

The Hottentot Venus seems to have been seen as nothing more than her sexual parts. Essentialist notions have been very influential in fanning the image of black female sexuality which Jordan and Weedon (1995) argue is still very much alive in

[10] Zilwa, O. (2002) Sold as a slave, exhibited as a freak, Sarah finds dignity after 200 years. The Independent, 10 August 2002, p. 12.

contemporary society. Within contemporary British media, interest goes beyond sexuality to the whole demeanour of the black African woman, a demeanour that invites a gaze on 'objects' that are symbolically seen as deviant, grotesque, different, anomalies. As has been seen to be the case, in a world ordered by power imbalance, the white eye projects its 'superiority' onto the objectified black body. In contemporary times when explicit racist behaviours have become unacceptable, this superiority translates into new racism/s.

New Racism/s

Though notions of biological racism seem to have become unpopular in recent times, some people have argued that it is being replaced by a 'new racism' (see Twitchin, 1988; Mason, 1995; van Dijk, 2000). The 'new racism' raises the question on whether the arguments against 'biological differences' are any more than a rhetorical smoke screen behind which lurks older beliefs about race. Van Dijk (2000) writes:

> In many respects, contemporary forms of racism are different from the 'old' racism of slavery, segregation, apartheid, lynchings and systematic discrimination, of white superiority feelings, and of explicit derogation in public discourse and everyday conversation. The *New Racism* wants to be democratic and respectable, and hence first off denies that it is racism.... In the New Racism, minorities are not biologically inferior, but different. They have a different culture, although in many cases there are 'deficiencies'... - 'pathologies' that need to be corrected of course (p. 33-34).

Ideas of 'race' have thus entered into the domain of culture and intertwined intimately with systems of cultural representation. Cottle (2000) suggests that in such circumstances, the essentialist ideas of racial difference become recoded into more

'acceptable' ideas of primordial ethnicity, of deep-seated cultural differences where culture itself becomes largely naturalised as a carrier of collective ancestry, traditions and group/national belonging and destiny. Cottle further argues that regarding cultural diversity in natural terms makes it no less different from using race as a concept which arises through the naturalisation of social differences.

I will illustrate the form new racism takes in contemporary Britain by describing an incident that occurred during my presence in the UK. On New Year's day, (January 1, 2003), two young black women, Leticia Shakespeare and Charlene Ellis were killed in crossfire of bullets from rival gangs. Both lived within the local (black) community in Birmingham. An inquest was set up to look into their deaths. The coroner, Aidan Cotter, at the inquest said:

> It is time for *your community* to *pay back* and *conform* to *our belief*, which is that everyone has a duty to cooperate with the police, to make sure that the murderers are caught and they are not given protection by their friends, or even their family. Everybody has a duty to make sure that Charlene's killers are caught.

I first heard this on the 10 O'clock BBC1 news of 9th January 2003 read by Peter Simpson. I was intrigued by Aidan Cotter's explicit use of what Van Dijk (2000) calls "ingroup designator": *You* are different from *us*. *Your* culture is not *ours*. *Your* values are not *ours*. *You* have to *conform* to *ours*. His speech was couched in the taken-for-granted natural difference between black cultures and white cultures in Britain. Less discerning people in Britain would not have noticed the racist tone of the language since naturalisation renders racism invisible (Hall, 1997b). Van Dijk (2000) warns against this use of apparently democratic language, which in reality harbours deep-seated racism, whereby "minorities are not biologically inferior, but different. They

have a different culture, although in many cases there are 'deficiencies', 'pathologies' that need to be corrected of course" (p. 34). Some non-whites also saw this emphasis on difference as a means of excluding them from a British identity and hence the coroner's speech elicited some angry reactions from the community. The coroner was full of apologies – "I did not mean to add to your grief", he said[11].

The above incident suggests a form of 'new racism', which is hidden in public language and discourse but is especially used in addressing potential immigrants, migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers as well as ethnic minorities 'within' the territorial confines of a nation. They are regarded as cultural 'outsiders' who do not belong to a traditional (mythical) 'way of life' (Van Dijk, 1991; Cottle, 2000). Van Dijk (2000) explains:

> Especially because of their often subtle and symbolic nature, many forms of the 'new' racism are 'discursive': they are expressed and enacted and confirmed by text and talk, such as everyday conversations, board meetings, job interviews, policies, laws, parliamentary debates, political propaganda, textbooks, scholarly articles, movies, TV programmes and news reports in the press, among hundreds of other genres. They appear 'mere' talk, and far removed from the open violence and forceful segregation of 'old' racism. Yet, they may just be as effective to marginalize and exclude minorities. They may hurt even more especially when they seem to be so 'normal', so 'natural' and so 'commonsensical' to those who engage in such discourse and interaction (p. 34).

Because new racism is insidious, Cottle (2000) advises that "we need to deploy sensitive analytical tools if we are to recover exactly how racialized and racist meanings are embedded within, and reproduced through, the discourses, language, narratives and images of media representations" (p. 5).

[11] See Steele, J (2003) "I did not mean to add to your grief" The Daily Telegraph, 11January 2003, p. 8.

This new racism is similar to Goldberg's explanation of 'enlightened racism' (2002, p. 96) and Hall's of 'inferential racism' (Hall 1999a, p. 273). All are camouflaged beneath codes of liberal historicist enlightenment. This is a point that concerns the very meaning of the legacy of colour-blindness which underpins, more or less, contemporary state policy. British national identity still seems to privilege 'whiteness' as a marker for 'belonging' (Braham, 1982; Mason, 1995; Hall, 1997b; Mirza, 1997). Braham (1982) for example emphasises the recognition given to the colour of skin in Britain when he writes:

> Though there has been substantial white immigration, the word 'immigration' has come to be generally employed as a synonym for 'black', thereby excluding the large number of immigrants who are white and including the large number of black people who were born here (Braham 1982, p. 268).

Mirza bemoans that: "To be black and British is to be unnamed in official discourse. The construction of a national British identity is built upon the notion of a racial belonging, upon a hegemonic white ethnicity that never speaks its presence" (Mirza 1997, p. 3). Hall (1997b, p. 230) puts it this way: "most definitions of "Britishness" assume that the person who belongs is 'white'. It is much harder for black people wherever they were born to be accepted as 'British'".

I have had discussions with some white people on the issue of colour and 'enforced' colour blindness in Britain. I get piqued when some tell me that they are not aware of my colour. Yet, I know that my colour shouts out, especially when it is lonesome in the midst of white people. I believe a similar situation would apply if a white person were to be in the midst of predominantly black population. The only difference between the two could be the significance attached to the colour (not necessarily as a matter of

individual attributes and identity but as a source of social identity and power), which involves relations of domination and oppression. Bryson (1999) writes that

> Such relations are often invisible to white people who may be reluctant to recognise racial differences lest they be seen as a form of 'prejudice'.... Such a perspective is however one of privilege, for those who are racially oppressed know that the skin colour is often of profound significance (p. 52).

New racism champions political correctness that still harbours an underlying institutional and deep-seated racism. Twitchin (1988) has signposted the need to look behind the customary assumptions that racism is simply individual prejudice or misguided behaviour whose main expression is through violence, towards examining the more significant concept of institutional racism. This is defined as a form of racism we actually reinforce by our inaction, indifference or collusion. Within media representations, we have to look beyond what is said, to how it is said and what is equally not said. As Marilyn French (1992, p. 157) says: "the real attitudes of a society often lie buried from view, and can be extricated only by close analysis of behaviour, language and images...."

In this thesis, I engage in this analysis within the framework of postcoloniality. In the next section, I discuss postcolonial theory.

Postcolonial theory

Postcolonial theories emanated from the rise of Western empires in the eighteenth through to the twentieth centuries and their scramble to divide the world among

themselves. The strategies of subjugation and resistance engendered by colonialism and the chain reactions have been in motion ever since (Dube, 2002). Since then, it has become a highly contested term even to the form it is to take. Scholars argue that *post-colonialism* is more historically bound while *postcolonialism* refers to disparate forms of representations, reading practices and values (see McLeod, 2000; Cooppan, 2000). There are however, critics who use the term *postcolonialism* (see Boehmer, 1995) and *post-colonialism* (see Ashcroft *et al.*1995) and yet remain keenly aware of both the historical disjunctures implicit within the terms as well as the discursive practices. It is in this way that I use postcolonialism in this work.

Postcolonial theory raises a number of issues that are pertinent to this thesis. Primarily is the "paradoxical in-betweenness" which characterises the postcolonial world (Childs and Williams 1997, p. 7). Childs and Williams use this expression to describe the continuity of the colonial presence despite an apparently postcolonial state. They suggest there is a form of perverseness in taking the label 'post'- for a state, which is not yet fully present, and linking it to something which has not fully disappeared. In a similar way, McLeod (2000) suggests that postcolonialism does not define a radically new historical era, nor does it herald a brave new world where all the ills of the colonial past have been cured. Rather postcolonialism recognises both historical continuity and change. It acknowledges that the material realities and modes of representation common to colonialism are still very much with us today, even if the political map has changed through decolonisation. For example, (Dube, 2002) cites the attempt of Anglo-European nations to order the world culturally, economically and politically from a Eurocentric worldview and their view that this is good for everyone as a form of modern imperialism. Therefore, for those who believe in the historicity of postcolonialism, a lot of questions rage: when is the 'post' in the colonial? Is it to be

equated with the lowering of the empire flag and the hoisting of national flags? What happened to 'neo-colonialism' in all the talk about the colonial and the post? (see McClintock, 1994; Frankenberg and Mani, 1996; Childs and Williams, 1997). The bottom line argument seems to be the difficulty in delineating a 'post' in colonial because though technically colonialism has ended, its sense is still pervasive in society. Childs and Williams (1997, p. 7) write that "colonialism as a powerful vision is still with us even in its brute form ... while slightly accentuated notions of western superiority and right to intervene are founding foundations of much imperialist activity".

To some people (especially from the former colonies) postcolonial is "not only a fiction, but a most pernicious fiction, a cover up of the most dangerous period in our people's lives" (Aidoo cited in Mongia 1996, p. 1). Aidoo as an African looking at the notion of postcolonial seems to reiterate perhaps only in stronger terms what previous critics agree on: the importance of the colonial in discussing the postcolonial. Hesse (2002) makes a similar argument about the slave period in the history of the Africans, which she argues has been forgotten like a bad dream. Reflecting on Stephen Spielberg's 1997 film, *Amistad* which portrays the historical events surrounding an 1839 slave rebellion aboard the ship of the same name, she argues that the social development of Atlantic slavery was distinctively constitutive of "European modernity" and it is therefore prudent to ask whether racial slavery is best forgotten or remembered? Hesse argues that although the film seems to suggest the contrary, there is a relationship between slavery and racism and slavery still has a socially dehumanising legacy which is its historical consequences: "the *racialised trajectories* of continuity and reconfiguration in contemporary social relationships, governance and cultural representations" (p. 158) (emphasis in the original).

So while the West seem to remember slavery only in terms of western efforts to abolish it, Hesse reminds us of the tolls it took on black people, the social and emotional violations and its relationship to the present. Quoting Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Hesse writes: "What matters in life is not what happens to you but what you remember and how you remember it". Hesse further adds a corollary to this: "what and how you remember depends on what has been happening to you in life" (p. 160). Hesse seems to suggest that the persistence of some experiences that remind one of the past makes history unforgettable. As a Nigerian feminist based in Europe for an intellectual pursuit, certain personal experiences have served to remind me of colonial/postcolonial legacies and have continued to shape my thinking since I came to Europe as the story I tell below shows (see Text Box 1 and Text Box 2).

The stories (Text Box 1 and Text Box 2) suggest the consequences of the colonial history on contemporary social relationships. Similar consequences are noticeable within cultural forms whereby traces of imperialism, colonialism and superiority are visible in postcolonial representations. For any move towards decolonisation, Spivak (see Landry and MacLean, 1996) has suggested an embrace must take place across impossible differences and distances. Such an embrace is an act of love and a call to a relationship, which would make the subaltern, the most oppressed and invisible constituency, cease to exist. This call is critical for feminism, as white women have often been accused of colluding with the racial structure to both dominate and oppress black women. Black women have therefore criticised what they have termed the ethnocentric, imperialist, and Eurocentric theories of women oppression whereby white women measure the black female experience against their own (McLeod, 2000; hooks, 2000; Amos and Parmar, 2001).

I had gone with a friend – another African woman to London to do some shopping. We had thought we were going to finish late and had booked the return in a coach for late in the evening. Incidentally, we finished earlier than we thought and came to the coach station to see if we could get into an earlier coach. We joined the queue and in front of us were five white youths who also did not have the tickets for the particular coach. Behind us also were a black woman and a man. We were all kept aside and the driver boarded the passengers who had the tickets. Then he came to those who did not have the ticket. He boarded the five white youths and stopped. There were spaces still in the bus and I told him so. He said, "this is all I am taking, I have passengers in Heathrow". I took him at his words, but the black woman behind us said to us, 'It's because we are black'. I tried to explain to her that it was not necessarily so, that he may genuinely have passengers to carry from Heathrow but she was adamant. The black man supported her. "I have been in London almost all my life and I know that look", she insisted. I didn't notice any look, but apparently, she did. My mind went to Fiske's (2000) description of a group of African American students in his university who had described to him how white students routinely subjected them to a 'what are you doing here' look that abnormalises their presence. "The look was so intense, so immediately power laden, that one woman had to put her forefingers on either side of her eyes and point them at me in an attempt to make me experience how it felt to be on the receiving end of it" (p. 51). The woman with me at the coach station, having lived here for so long may have shared similar cultural codes with the driver that made her understand the look – whatever it was – I didn't. In the end, I didn't know what to believe any more. It made me wonder of the suspicion that exists between black and white people. I have since spoken to many black people who have always talked of a feeling of continuous discrimination which they suffer in Britain, whether it is the city or neighbourhood that is it difficult for them to enter, the job they do not get, the house they do not get, etc. These experiences happen most often in apparently democratic, respectable and subtle manner that it is difficult to pinpoint any discrimination, yet the feeling of being excluded remains very strong.

Text Box 1

I was once acquainted with a 'Black British' student in the university whose experiences which I recount here show how many black girls struggle to be accepted by the dominant culture in Britain. She was about 33 years. At the early stage of our acquaintance, I complimented her on her skin. She told me that was the first time anybody had told her she had a beautiful skin. She came to Britain at the age of two and as she told me all the horrid things that were done to her in school by her fellow children, I could feel tears in her eyes. She was told she was ugly – too dark. She told me how in order to belong; she had to put on a special kind of makeup that would make her paler. She avoided having black friends. She struggled to learn the English accent, and to make a play at being frail and fragile. It took her thirty years to realise that with all her attempts to deny who she was, her so-called friends never considered her as really 'belonging'. At the time we met, she had just realised she had been living a lie and was in the process of discovering whom she really was.

Text Box 2

Suleri (1996) challenges the feminists' focus on black women's experiences, claiming that they are portrayed as entirely those of oppression. She addresses the problems endemic to postcolonial feminist criticism and seeks to dismantle the iconic status of postcolonial feminism. She argues that the coupling of postcolonial and feminism

> almost inevitably leads to the simplicities that underline unthinking celebration of oppression, elevating the racially female voice into a metaphor for 'the good'. Such metaphoricity cannot exactly be called essentialist, but it certainly functions as an impediment to reading that attempts to look beyond obvious questions of good and evil (1996, p. 337).

Citing specifically hooks and Mohanty's works, Suleri critiques postcolonial feminist critics' reliance on the 'banalities of easy dichotomies' (1996, p. 338). Within postcolonial feminism therefore, there have been irreconcilable voices which have

engendered difference. Consequently, there has been engagement with the relationship between the critic and the object of analysis. Spivak has been in the forefront of championing this ethical relationship with the Other. Writing about international feminism and women from the developing world, she calls for an intellectual responsibility and a more interactive relationship between the critic and her research. As she puts it: "the academic feminist must learn to learn from them, to speak to them, to suspect that their access to the political and sexual scene is not merely to be *corrected* by our superior theory and enlightened compassion" (1988, p. 135). Dube (2002) also advises caution when feminists deal with the Other, reminding feminists that "colonising frameworks are still in place, and unless one deliberately chooses to be a decolonising feminist, one is likely to operate within oppressive paradigm and consequently to reproduce them" (p. 104-5).

Within the media, this call seems not to have been heeded, as seen in postcolonial media representations of black African people. In the next section, I examine postcolonial media representations.

Postcolonial Media Representations

One dominant feature of writing regarded as postcolonial is that such work is primarily concerned with challenging some of the existing representations of black people within colonial and slave discourses. For example, Said in *Orientalism* (1995) argues that the representations of Egypt and the Middle East in a variety of writings by Western scholars were based not on first-hand knowledge but rather on commonly held assumptions about the Orient as a mythic place of exoticism, moral laxity, sexual

degeneracy and so forth. Many postcolonial works concern themselves with writing back to the 'centre', and actively engaging in a process of questioning, deconstructing and subverting colonial discourses (see Spivak, 1988; Bhabha, 1996). In many ways, this thesis also questions and challenges postcolonial representations of Africa, especially African women. It highlights the role the news media play in the process of domination, resistance and collaboration and the making of the 'colonial' subject.

Hall (1997b) describes the active efforts made to challenge and contest the racialised regime of representation. For example, the anti slavery movement in the early decades of the nineteenth century challenged such representations, providing an alternative black-white relationship based on a common humanity and not 'difference'. Yet, the images they produced still marked of difference as

> black people are still seen as childish, simple and dependent, though capable of, and on their way to (after paternalist apprenticeship), something more like equality with whites. They are represented as either suppliants for freedom or full of gratitude for being freed – and consequently still shown kneeling to their white benefactors (Hall 1997b, p. 249).

Black people were also presented as deserving of a better life. Therefore, what the discourse of anti-slavery did at best was to supplant one form of stereotypical representation for another: extreme racialization for sentimentalised version of stereotyping (Hall, 1997b).

hooks (1982) writes of the efforts made by black women during the years known as Black Reconstruction, (1867 – 77) in America where attempts were made to change the negative perceptions of black women perpetuated by white people, but such efforts were actively challenged by white people. However, even within a so-called

postcolonial environment, the negative images which black women acquired during slavery and colonial times, seem to have remained. Reinforced by the media, black women are still represented as inferior and evil, mothers who produce children they are incapable of caring for, as sirens and whores (hooks, 1982; Ross, 1996). Writing about postcolonial media representations of black women, hooks (1982) notes,

> The mass media especially television is one way that the negative images of black womanhood continue to be impressed upon our psyche.... She is presented as a sex object, prostitute and whore. Another image may be the overweight nagging maternal figure. The images of the black women that are seen as positive usually are those that depict the black woman as a long suffering, religious, maternal figure, whose most endearing characteristic is the self-sacrificing self-denial for those she loves (p. 65-68).

Another effort made to challenge the negative ways of representing racial 'difference' is through the practice of trans-coding (Hall, 1997b). This implies taking an existing meaning and re-appropriating it for a new meaning. Some typical examples of this are the phrases "black is beautiful", "I'm black and proud" etc., which invariably challenge the notion of blackness as evil. Trans-coding thus tries to construct a positive identification with what had hitherto been negative. However, such a strategy can result not in a challenge to the routine negativity, but merely an increase in the diversity of ways in which 'being black' is represented (Hall 1997b, p. 274).

What appears to be more evident is that while many efforts continue to be made to decolonise the mind, the racialised regime of representation continues to be reinforced through the media (see hooks 1982, 1992; Barry, 1988; Mason, 1995; Ross, 1996). A survey of racial themes and images in American films produced in the 1960s, conducted by Pines (1975) notes the sexual perversion that characterises black representations. For example, many of the films analysed featured scenes of rapes

(black men raping horrified white women). Bogle (1997a) traces the changing representation of black people in American films in the early 20th century. The dominant representations ranged from the 'Tom' (the docile and endearing slave), to the coon (amusement object and black buffoon, unreliable, good for nothing). Other images noted in Bogle's study is the unfortunate mulattos, the mammy and Aunt Jemima, the brutal black buck (who is barbaric and wreaks havoc and the one that always salivates and stiffens his body in the presence of a white woman as if her mere presence is enough to bring him to a sexual climax) (also see Bogle, 1997b). Bogle argues that during that part of the twentieth century, those images were not eradicated over time but became disguised (p. 24). He writes:

> The brutes, the bucks, the tragic mulattoes all wore the guise of villains. Afterwards, during the 1920s, the audiences saw their toms and coons dressed in the guise of plantation jesters. In the 1930s, all the types were dressed in servants' uniforms. In the 1940s, they sported entertainers' costumes. In the late 1940s and the 1950s, they donned the gear of troubled problem people. In the 1960s, they appeared as angry militants. Because the guises were always changing, audiences were sometimes tricked into believing the depictions of the American Negro were altered too. But at the heart beneath the various guises, there lurked the familiar types (Bogle 1997, p. 24).

In a similar vein, Hall (1997b, p. 252) argues that "the repertoire of stereotypical figures drawn from 'slavery days' has never entirely disappeared", but have simply been "reworked in many of the modern and up-dated images" (Hall 1999a, p. 277). It would seem that the present is rooted in the colonial past. Pickering (2001) rightly points out that, "many representations of other cultures and other countries, are rooted in nineteenth-century nationalism and in the pseudo-scientific rationalisations of racial

difference developed at that time, in European societies conceiving themselves as modern" (p. xii).

Cottle (2000) surveyed a series of studies in Britain from the late 1950s through to the 1970s which showed the under-representation and stereotypical nature of minority portraits within entertainment genres and their negative problem-oriented portrayal within factual and news genres as well as a tendency to ignore structural inequalities and the lived racism experienced by ethnic minority groups. As hooks (1992) writes:

> There has been little change in the area of representation. Opening a magazine or book, turning on the television set, watching a film, or looking at photographs in public spaces, we are most likely to see images of black people that reinforce and reinscribe white supremacy (p. 1).

Hall (1997b) recounts the depiction of Linford Christie, in the British newspapers when he won the men's 100 metres Olympic Gold medal in Barcelona 1992. The British tabloid press made great play of the vulgar, unstated but widely recognised 'joke', at his expense, of the tight-fitting Lycra shorts which he wore which accentuated the size and shape of his genitals - see fig 5 below.

The Sun in particular focused on this aspect on the morning after he won an Olympic gold medal. So, despite his considerable achievement, he was described by the size of his 'lunch box' rather than his sporting excellence, using

> a euphemism which some have taken so literally that, he revealed, he has been approached by a firm wanting to market its lunchboxes around his image! Linford Christie has observed about these innuendos: "I felt humiliated. My first instinct was that it was racist. There we are stereotyping a black man. I can take a good joke. But it happened the day after I won the greatest accolade an athlete can win. I don't want to go through life being known for what I have got in my shorts" (Christie quoted in Hall 1997b, p. 230).

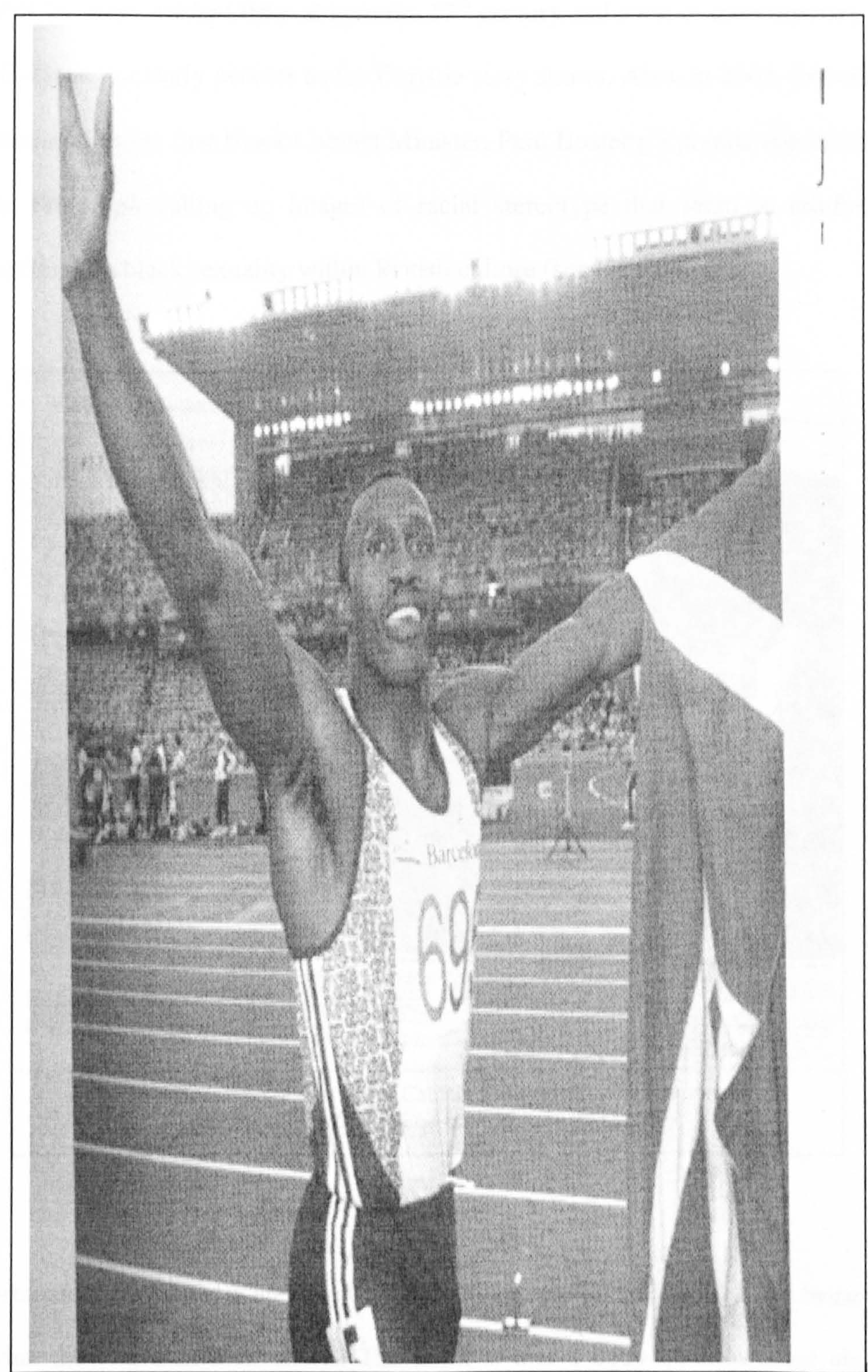

Fig 5 Linford Christie, holding the Union Jack, having won the men's 100 metre Olympic gold medal, Barcelona 1992. [Hall 1997b, p. 229]

The white *man's* interest in black sexuality and the myth surrounding the size of genitals has been evident from at least the 17th century and even in contemporary times, this fascination clearly persists as the Christie story shows. Also, in 2002, following his appointment as the first Black Cabinet Minister, Paul Boateng's photos appeared in *The Daily Telegraph* calling up images of racial stereotype that seem to reinforce the obsession with black sexuality within British culture (see fig 6 below).

A man who refuses to be defined by colour

Boateng

Fig 6 Paul Boateng, the first Black Cabinet Minister: Calling attention to his lunchbox? *The Daily Telegraph* 30 May 2002 p. 5.

Unfortunately for Christie and Boateng, they may have to go through life being known for what they have in their shorts. The point is that a body of knowledge about the African has been created by Europeans and from the first contact with the 'other' world, Europe has been building and circulating their 'impressions' about the world. These representations and perceptions have been used as significant weapons of colonial

power to keep the colonised people subservient. McLeod (2000, p. 19) writes: "to be blunt, the British empire did not rule by military and physical power alone. It endured by getting both colonising and colonised people to see their world and themselves in an particular way, internalising the language of Empire as representing the natural and true order of life" (see also Cesaire, 1972; Fanon, 1986; Memmi, 1990; Said, 1995; Lewis, 1996). Colonialism interpellates colonial subjects by incorporating them in a system of representation.

Why are negative images of black people so persistent in the media? Why is it that despite efforts at positive representations of black people within the media (see Lewis, 1997), the media still seem to be fixated with negative representations? O'Reilly (2003) offers a possible answer by insisting that television production of all kinds is guided by a set of conventions which privilege images that are culturally meaningful for the majority of the audience. She further argues that the majority of audience members need stereotyping to identify characters who are in turn identified by an understanding of racialised myths. Behind the implied preferences of the majority is the inherent economic gain to be derived by pleasing a majority of the audience who are consumers of media output, as Sparks (1999) makes clear:

> Newspapers in Britain are first and foremost businesses. They do not exist to report the news, to act as watchdogs for the public, to check on the doings of the government, to defend the ordinary citizens against abuses of power, to unearth scandals or do any of other fine and noble things that are sometimes claimed of the press. They exist to make money just as any other business does (p. 50).[10]

[10] The Paten case recounted in Chambers (2000b) is a good example of the dynamics involved in production of media content. Chambers recounts how Rupert Murdock exercised control over his publishing company over the publication of the book written by Chris Paten which criticised the totalitarian regime of Republic of China. It is believed that Murdoch felt the book posed a threat to his commercial interest in China and therefore stopped its publication. This typifies not only how ownership could control media content, but also shows the economic gain that drives many of the media publication (see Chambers 2000b, p. 96).

Undoubtedly, making a profit is critical for news industries and could explain why minority groups are underrepresented or negatively represented since they do not have the economic power, as a group, to form a distinctive and challenging voice. Cottle (2000) examined various structures, contexts and dynamics that inform and shape media representations and suggests how they impact on the representations of minorities in the media. Some of these include: regulatory, institutional, commercial, organisational, professional and cultural/ideological. Not to be overlooked is the cultural and social terrain in which the journalist operates which, in the words of Cottle (1999, p. 197), still carry "traces of imperialism, colonialism and a deeply ingrained sense of white superiority."

It seems the media have been blamed for always reporting race issues as negative. Braham (1982) however argues in defence of the media, saying that race reports in the British news simply follow so-called news values which tend to focus on conflict and tension. Furthermore, he disagrees with the view expressed by some people (e.g. Van Dijk, 1991) that by focusing on the manifestation, rather than the causes of racism, the media are playing a central role in fanning racial hostility. Braham argues that historically, ethnocentrism and hostility to 'foreigners' is a deep-rooted and widely diffused phenomenon for which the media cannot be held responsible. Braham's argument challenges the power of the media to reinforce beliefs, attitudes and conceptions, but he ignores the reality that the media act on and are responded to by the society in which they exist. Cottle (2000) has also addressed the issue of news values as they affect the representations of ethnic minorities. He argues that the question is not so much whether particular news values are exclusive to ethnic reporting because clearly, they inform other news stories as well but rather, to what extent they figure in the disproportionate number of stories about ethnic minorities framed in negative ways.

Chapter Four will examine the issue of news values as they are used by journalists and how these news values (especially when examined in relation to the sites where news production takes place) are mythologized.

Conclusion

Across the centuries, there has been a consistent pattern in the representations of black Africans. In this chapter, I have adopted an historical approach to examine these patterns, tracing the trajectories of racial representation from the 17th century up to the contemporary times. Many of the colonial images of black Africans which suggest a dysfunctional and dependent society in terrible need of redemption, are still discernible in contemporary culture, suggesting that the colonising framework is still in place. Through the circulation and sustaining of ideologies, Anglo-Saxon Europeans nations continue to keep the former colonies in a position of relative inferiority, powerlessness and subalternity. Within postcolonial times, negative images have hardly changed, but merely been reworked through modern and up-to-date images. Postcolonial representations of Africans mostly thrive on stereotypes and racist assumptions. These assumptions are covertly (rather than overtly) manifest in language and discourses embedded in media representations and are only visible through scrutiny of texts. In this chapter, I also briefly explored feminist spaces within postcolonial context. As I have previously discussed, questions of difference and power feature very highly and it is possible that women from the former colonies are particularly disadvantaged through being negated from discourse either by being denied voice or through negative processes of inscription. To subvert the perpetuation of subalternity, feminists might be persuaded to link across very awkward but perhaps not quite impossible differences and

distances. One way this could be enhanced is by reaching across cultures and opening up dialogue. In this thesis, this dialogue is created within the news space in Nigeria and Britain. I shall now examine the sites of news construction.

PART TWO

MAPPING BOUNDARIES (2)

❖ Chapter Four

The context of news production: news, ideology and representation

Introduction

In this chapter, I suggest that news is a mediated product, which hardly comes in its raw form, but rather is shaped by many factors such as the political, social, economic and cultural milieu within which newspapers operate and news is produced. I explore the formative dynamics of ideology, stereotyping, and otherness and how these consistently shape media representation. I also explore some of the factors that might influence news production in Nigeria and Britain. I use two case studies (one from Nigeria and one from Britain) to show the operation of the press in both countries and how ideologies shape and are shaped into news reports, arguing that news is both constructed and ideologically configured.

Meaning and theories of representation

In simple terms, representation could mean using language to say something meaningful about the world to other people, describing something to make it resonate with others or perhaps simply to symbolise. Hall (1997a) explores the complexity of representation as a signifying practice which operates through signs and symbols since language is not simply a mirror that reflects true meaning as it exists in the world or solely possessed by the author. Rather, it is as Barker (2002) suggests "the means and medium for the generation of significance or meaning" (p. 227). Media representation therefore is not a neutral depiction but dependent on sign systems that operate

symbolically and connotatively (Macdonald 2003, p. 12). As I will show in this thesis, the interpellation of ideology and newspaper sign systems makes representation seem natural and commonsensical. Contemporary theories of representation thus stress the constructionist approach to representation, which according to Hall (1997a) summarily implies that things do not *mean*, rather, they *signify*.[1] As I show in subsequent discussions, the constructionist approach to representation underpins this study.

Ideology and representation

It has been argued from a number of social and critical perspectives, that language as a system of signification – what is commonly referred to as discourse – is endemically and pervasively imbued with ideology (see Barthes, 1972; Fairclough, 1995). Ferguson (1998, p. 10) contends that "there is no way that we can write and research the media and representation of 'race' in the media and somehow stand outside ideology and the ideological". Hall (1999a, p. 271) argues that racism and the media touch directly the problem of ideology since the media's main sphere of operations is the production and transformation of ideologies. The intervention into the media's construction of race is an intervention in the ideological terrain of struggle. Writing about the role of the media in contemporary Nigerian society, Kanu (1996, p. 128) observes a link between cultural gender ideologies and the choice of programmes and columns in the media. She observes that Nigerian television, newspapers and magazines targeted at women mostly feature fashion, beauty contests, lifestyle and quotes from the wives of men in power, keep fit exercise, childcare, husband care, and so on. These are in line with the cultural ideologies of gender within Nigerian society. In line with the pervasiveness of ideology

[1] Hall (1997a) discusses other theories of representations – the mimetic and intentional. See especially p. 24 – 26.

in discourses, Stephens (1992, p. 8) writes: "a narrative without ideology is unthinkable: ideology is formulated in and by language, meanings within language are socially determined, and narratives are constructed out of language". Therefore, understanding ideology, at least a working theory of ideology is crucial in order to make judgements and analyses of any forms of representation, be it that of class, gender, race, disability, ethnicity, or anything else.

One of the most commonly held notions about ideology is its function as "illusion, false consciousness, unreality, upside down reality, etc." (Williams 1976, p. 128). Within the social sciences, ideology is considered an elusive term. It is thought to work because often we consider it "someone else's thought, seldom our own" (McLellan 1986, p. 1). In asking about the validity of someone else's thoughts and ideas, we forget to question our own and the ideological blanket through which we speak. Exempting our own beliefs from an ideological position therefore renders ideology invisible but pervasive. McLellan (1986) further declares: "any examination of ideology makes it difficult to avoid the rueful conclusion that all views about ideology are themselves ideological" (p. 2).

Marx (see Marx and Engel, 1970) and Althusser (1972) both made significant contributions to the theory of ideology. Though criticised in some aspects (e.g. its exclusive and unproblematic focus on class without attending to other determining variables within the category 'class' such as gender), Marx's views of ideology as serving political interests is relevant to the use I make of ideology in this thesis. For example, political interests could shape gender and racial discourses, for patriarchal and white supremacy may be perpetuated through the emphasis on essentialist notions of sex and race, which place sex and race categories into binary opposition. Althusser's

concept of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), which include religion, family, school, church and media, locates media as harbingers of ideologies which sustain cultural hegemony. I have previously examined theories which stress human 'differences' and inequalities and affirm the superiority and inferiority of groups of people (Chapter Three, p. 73 – 76) and Guillaumin (1995) argues that such theories enter into social practice to become part of the country's institutions, a process of application which in no way suggests any casual link between theory and institutionalisation. She writes:

> But the theory, a mode of perception rationalized into doctrine, attracts all the attention at the expense of the ideology that engendered it, and people tend all too readily to confuse two things, one of which feeds on the other but without exhausting its potential. Ideology, more diffuse but also more wide spread, is the mode of apprehension of reality *shared by a whole culture, to the point where it becomes omnipresent and, for that very reason, goes unrecognised* (my emphasis) (Guillaumin 1995, p. 35).

I share Guillaumin's views of the culture specificity of ideology but I wonder if 'mode of apprehension of reality' is actually *shared* by the whole culture or merely *acknowledged*? Ideology in recent times has come to have a wider, more descriptive, less systematic reference than it did in classical Marxist texts and has now come to be used to refer to all organised forms of social thinking which as Hall (1996) explains, involves

> The mental frameworks – the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and systems of representation – which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works (p. 26).

Hall's use of the words "make sense" is similar to Guillaumin's use of "mode of apprehension" of reality. They both recognise that there may be other modes or forms of 'making sense' or of 'apprehension' and that one's understanding of reality may not

necessarily be the only reality. Therefore, ideology varies from culture to culture, predates individuals and is underpinned by a taken-for-grantedness. Hall elucidates:

> They (ideologies) work most effectively when we are not aware that how we formulate and construct a statement about the world is underpinned by ideological premises; when our formations seem to be simply descriptive statements about how things are (i.e. must be), or of what we can 'take-for-granted' (1999a, p. 272).

It is within this taken-for-granted truth that meanings are constructed, opinions formed, images created and representations made.

The politics of representations: stereotyping and the concept of 'the Other'

So far, I have briefly explored the relationship between ideology, language and representation. Put simply, language is informed by ideology which is then shaped into representational forms. Representation therefore provides ways of describing and at the same time thinking, about groups or individuals and could as well shape how these groups or individuals describe or think of themselves. Representations are imbued with politics because, as Pickering (2001) suggests, they have the "power to select, arrange, and prioritise certain assumptions and ideas about different kinds of people, bringing some to fore, dramatising or demonising them, while casting others into the social margins, so that they have little active presence or only a narrow and negative public image"(p. xiii). Two representational strategies relevant to this thesis which are central to the politics of representations are stereotyping and 'the Other'.

The concept of stereotyping

Walter Lipmann is credited as having first introduced the concept of stereotyping into social science in 1922 (Perkins, 1997) and since then, it has been used in numerous studies in different ways (see O'Donnell, 1997; Karpf, 1997; Barker, 1997; Dyer 1999). Numerous scholars have interrogated the concept of stereotyping and how it works in representing individuals and groups. Stereotypes were initially assumed to be simple, erroneous and resistant to modification. Perkins (1997) however disputes these earlier assumptions insisting that stereotypes are both simple and complex; they are like symbols as they mean something more than what they seem to say. She further argues that stereotypes might not necessarily be pejorative, but in usage, they more often call up pejorative images rather than laudatory ones. Barker (1997) adds another dimension to stereotypes, which is, the truth-value inherent in them. Barker's understanding of stereotyping assumes a pre-existent reality-out-there against which images and representations can be transparently measured, but makes a relevant argument as stereotypes work because they have some traits, which resemble an aspect of 'truth'. Like ideology, stereotyping works because it gives an illusion of reality (see Perkins, 1997). It reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes 'difference' by taking hold of the 'few, simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognized' (Hall 1997b, p. 259) characteristics of a person or a group, reducing everything about the person or the group to those few traits while amplifying and exaggerating them (see Hall, 1997b; Pickering, 2001).

Stereotyping also tends to occur where there are gross inequalities of power; power usually directed against the subordinate or excluded people. Closely related to questions of power are questions of order whereby stereotyping practices offer 'closure' and exclusion, symbolically fixing boundaries that exclude everything which does not

belong. Stereotyping fails to account for the constantly changing world, as it maintains an inflexibility which is designed to exclude (Barker 2003, p. 263).

According to Perkins (1997), there are two ways of understanding stereotypes. First, is in the sense that they are 'believed in' and second in the sense that we know that a stereotype exists about a particular group and what it is, even though we do not necessarily believe it. Perkins however asserts that often the difference between the two is not always clear, because stereotypes being widely known and distributed are readily available as tools to interpret the world, if the occasion demands. The problem with this is that already a framework has been imposed in our thinking about things and people and very often we unwittingly respond to it. This could perhaps explain the confines of women and or black people within narrow repertoires of images, which are simply recycled from pre-existing stereotypes. Stereotypes thus pigeonhole people, considering those who do not fit as 'deviants' of some sort.

The ways in which news media function makes them susceptible to the use of stereotypes. Easily cited is the time constraint in which many of the news are produced. Richard Hoggart writes in the foreword to *Bad News* (Glasgow University Media Group, 1976) that:

> (News) is the result each day of a process of selection so speedy and habitual as to seem almost instinctive. There is simply too much possible material; there have to be filters, devices to select what shall be shown, in what order, at what length and with what stresses. Those devices have to be, as it were in the blood; there isn't time to have a daily conference on first principles.... (p. ix –x)

Such a tight schedule and 'instinctive' choice heightens the possibility of calling up known stereotypes in both the choice and in the presentation of news stories. Stereotypes are inextricably linked with the cultural air we breathe, with the entire

ideological atmosphere of society. In this respect, stereotypes are "prototypes of 'shared cultural meanings'" (Perkins 1997, p. 78). As I show in subsequent chapters, stereotypical images or allusions which have remained a central source of contention in the politics of representation, recur across various contexts and discourses in news about Africa. It is necessary that I also interrogate its 'twin' component – the notion of the Other/otherness.

The concept of 'the Other'

While stereotypes occur in different discourses and draw on varied ideological assumptions, they operate as a means of placing and attempting to fix other people or cultures from a particular and privileged perspective. This is also true of the process of 'othering' (Pickering 2001, p. 47). The notion of 'the Other' seems to have evolved to demonstrate, conceptually, how 'others' are different from 'us': how 'they' are different from 'us' rather than how 'we' are different from 'them.'[2] Particularly important is who has the ability to name and define who is 'the Other'. Here lies the domain of power and the source of the politics of domination. The idea of difference has created distinctions between human beings and continues to influence the ways in which people are perceived and represented and the concept of the Other has been explained in at least three different ways: linguistic, social and cultural (see Hall, 1997b). One of the major arguments of these theories is that difference is essential to meaning-creation and construction and in the ordering of things. The notion of binary opposition is introduced to show how difference is crucial to the making of meaning. Meaning tends to be created through binary opposition where the meaning of a word is defined in relation to its direct opposite. This view however has been criticised for its rather crude

[2] The use of 'us', 'we' and 'they', 'them' suggest the included and the excluded respectively.

reductionism in establishing meaning and has been found especially inadequate by the more fluid and polysemic notions of meaning and signification inherent in postmodernism and queer theory. Though binary opposition fails to explain all aspects of the production of meaning, it is often a first step in understanding meaning and has been a consistent tool of dominant ideology (e.g. by people in privileged position fixing 'others' in their place). Ideological significations are evident in the relationship and the use, of terms such as: man/woman; white/black; civilisation/primitiveness, white feminism/black feminism etc. These binary categories are also used as political tools to create hierarchy, call up negative feeling as well as exclude what has ideologically been structured as 'impure' and 'abnormal'. Pickering (2001) writes:

> The politics of representation here consisted of what the Other represented for 'us', often more or less *unfairly*. 'Unfairly' because the study of other, faraway peoples was not about them at all. It is about 'us' refracted through 'them', and 'them' temporally excised from the social exclusivity of 'us' (p. 55 –56).

When difference is translated into "Otherness" then dialogue, interaction and change are denied. Otherness therefore becomes both a limiting and a political concept. The 'Othered' person is cast into the periphery and the person who does the othering attempts to separate and distance the self from the subjugated Other.

Within gender discourse for example, women have been seen to be constructed as the Other of men by being defined against the male norm (Rowbotham, 1982; de Beauvoir, 1988). De Beauvoir argues that men have conceived themselves as essential beings, women as in/essential; men as the subject, women as the object. She writes: "He is the subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other" (1988, p. 16). Cultural idea(l)s of gender construct a woman as everything a man is not: weak, soft, emotional, irrational,

childlike, etc. Such stereotypical othering of course has been highly challenged by feminism.

Within discourses on race, black people have been constructed and conceived of as the other of white people (despite the existence of people from dual heritage backgrounds who do not fall into either category). Thus, black people seem to be everything that white people are not. As de Beauvoir writes:

> These whites define blacks as the antithesis of civilisation. Magnificently gifted in music and dance, full of animal instincts (including an extraordinary sensuality), carefree, thoughtless, dreamers, poets, given to religious feeling, undisciplined, childish – that's the conventional image of blacks that these whites readily construct. And they are 'drawn to' blacks because they have projected onto them what they would like to be but are not. Those who feel the greatest fascination are people who feel most deeply deficient themselves (de Beauvoir 1999, cited in Pickering 2001, p. 62-63).

In the above quotation, de Beauvoir introduces a very significant feature of the Other, which is often its ambivalent response which belies its apparent fixity. The Other therefore, both attracts and repels, fascinates and repulses. Women and black people have been liberally invested with these contradictory positionalities. For black African women who are doubly othered – as women and as blacks - the scenario is even worse.

As will become evident as this thesis progresses, interrogating the twin concepts of stereotype and otherness provides an analytical compass in identifying the workings of news texts and images. What comes out strongly is the highly constructed form of the news. I now explore news as construction in detail.

The ideological configuration of news

News needs to be regarded as a construction because journalists do not generally report the news in its raw form. Certain factors come to play in the framing and the meaning it gains within a particular setting. These factors may include the state, the political affiliation of the newspaper, the publisher's ideology and indeed particular ideologies that permeate a society.

> There seem to be no such person as the 'individual' communicator. She or he has to cooperate with colleagues, has to take the specific needs, routines and traditions of the organisations into account, and is limited by the social, economic and legal embedding of the media institution (van Zoonen 1994, p. 49).

Van Zoonen's argument seems valid, and heightens the possibility that even when news is thought of as being 'out there' to be found, what is found passes through a highly selective process of construction. It is possible also to suggest that news as a construction is ideologically configured, operating as a set of mythical structures. Barthes (1972) suggests that myth is "a system of communication ...a message ... a mode of signification" (p. 109). Barthes' conception of myth goes beyond the surface obviousness to the hidden meanings and undercurrents (what might be called the *message within the message*). By reading newspapers as mythical structures rather than mere conveyors of information, we can understand how they work as complex systems of signification. Newspapers operate within certain codes and conventions, each of which has significance. The placement of the story, point size of the headlines, space occupied by the item/headline etc. all 'say something': they signify or convey meaning. Newspapers contain both words and pictures functioning as signifiers and makers of meaning. To unmask the meaning constructed in newspapers, therefore, involves a

critical examination of both language-based and the image-based aspects of the newspapers. Language in the sense I use it here refers specifically to written words while image refers to photographs and their accompanying texts. Nixon (1997) has suggested that certain codes help deconstruct the meaning of photographs. One of these codes is the code of casting. This refers to the physical characteristics of the subject especially when s/he is a representative of others as the news is not necessarily about her or him. In such a case, the person in the photograph becomes a model who is deliberately used to convey certain messages about the group s/he represents. Nixon further suggests that the subject's posing and expression are important elements in deconstructing a photograph and calls attention to the position of the spectator as s/he looks at the photograph. Thus, newspapers as mythical structures work through sign systems in which the meanings embedded in the texts are read off and as Hartley claims:

> It is not the *event* which is reported that determines the form, content, meaning or 'truth' of the news, but rather the *news* that determines what it is that the event means: Its meaning results from the features of the sign-system and the context in which it is uttered and received (1982, p. 15).

The combinations of headline and photograph plus the story in the newspapers work together to reinforce the signification. They are read simultaneously and in combination. Photographs for example serve to authenticate/tell the "truth"[3]. They validate the headline and story within which they occur. Gilman's (1985, p. 204) arguments about the iconographic and mythical qualities of artistic representations might also be applied to photographs in the newspaper. Gilman argues that even with its supposedly mimetic portrayals, it is apparent that when individuals are shown within a

[3] Unless trained and poised to deconstruct them, most people believe them because they wish to believe their eyes.

work of art (no matter how broadly defined), the ideologically charged iconographic nature of the representation dominates. It dominates in a very specific manner, for the representation of an individual goes beyond the individual to a connection with some greater group/type to which the individual is seen to belong. This mechanism based on individual representation serves to synthesize our perception of the uniformity of certain groups into a convincingly homogenous image, thus focusing the viewer's attention on the relationship between the portrayed individual and the general qualities ascribed to the associated group. Specific individual realities are thus given mythic extension through association with specific qualities of a certain group. Such portrayal could translate into otherness and stereotypes, which often assume an illusion of reality (Perkins, 1997). These 'realities' manifest themselves as icons representing perceived attributes of the group into which the individual has been placed. The myths associated with the specific group (especially the myth of difference from the rest of humanity) is thus, to an extent, composed of fragments of the real world, perceived through the ideological bias/lens of the observer in relation to the representation that has been constructed. This of course is merely one theory of how we 'read' or 'look' at constructed artefacts such as news stories. By contrast, Hall's encoding/decoding thesis (1999b) makes clear that we are all capable of reading against the grain, of consciously challenging the 'embedded' meaning in a text. So while news is constructed within a mythological structure determined, to a large extent, by the macho 'norms' of a male-dominated and patriarchal news culture, the audience can nonetheless choose to reject the ideology contained within those constructed narratives.

The function of myth, Barthes explains, is to "purify and make innocent" (1972, p. 156) the ideological aspect of representation. Newspapers as institutions of symbolic power are able to 'persuade' readers that their messages are natural and innocent. News for

example still tends to present itself in a few standard formats, which then form a context for reading that can be taken as evidence of the professionalism in general and objectivity in particular. This notion remains central to the self-understanding of news workers and continues to be one of the myths of the profession. Lidchi (1997) asserts: "all cultural producers – advertisers, designers, curators, authors are involved in the creation of myths. As a consequence, these producers are inevitably holders of symbolic power" (p. 179).

Making news is about newsworthiness. News is expected to have passed the news values 'tests' such as timeliness, proximity, prominence, consequence, human interest (Gans, 1980; Mogekwu, 2003).[4] If we examine critically the sites where news production takes place (the newsrooms), the dominant practices within these sites and the discourses privileged by those working in these sites, we may find as Louw (2001, p. 161) argues, an "obfuscated and mythologized notion of 'newsworthiness', as used by journalists". According to Louw (2001), news-making is constrained in an indirect manner starting from the appointment processes and staffing of a newspaper organisation, so it is unlikely that a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) would be appointed whose worldview is incompatible with that of the owner or the board (see also Oduwole, 1997). The CEO in turn appoints and socialises the rest of the staff. So indirectly, staffing decisions are gatekeeping decisions and accordingly:

> there is no need for directives concerning which discourses should be favoured because good staffing decisions (from CEO downwards) can be relied on to create self-policing mechanisms (through staff 'cloning'). Discourses serving the hegemonically dominant will be adhered to because staff cloning will ensure 'appropriate' gatekeepers are in position (Louw 2001, p. 157).

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[4] See also Fowler (1991, p. 13 – 14) for a list of twelve news values produced in a seminal study by Galtung and Ruge (1965).

The concept of gatekeeping was thought to have been introduced in 1947 by Kurt Lewin (Schudson 1996, p. 142) and has come to be closely associated with journalism practices. In a newsroom context, the term refers to the tendency for news items to pass through the gates of many media people who decide whether the items are newsworthy or not. These people are termed gatekeepers because they are capable of shutting or closing the gates on news items based on their own set of experiences, attitudes and expectations. The gatekeeping model, while reinforcing the subjectivity of news, has nonetheless been found insufficient to describe news as construction. At best, "it provides a handy metaphor for the relation of news organisation for news products; but it leaves information sociologically untouched" (Schudson 1996, p. 142).

An equally important constraint on news construction is the socialisation processes that go on in the newsroom. Newsroom workers are assimilated into the 'way things are done', and as Louw (2001) suggests, during the on-the-job socialisation of new journalists, senior and older members of staff cultivate the journalists, hand them lists of 'useful' contacts. These 'useful' contacts are of course the ones considered 'appropriate' by the organisation. Learning whom news editors consider 'appropriate' contacts constitutes an important part of the 'staff cloning' process in the newsroom. Many a journalist, who has come into the newsroom with 'ideas' about how things ought to be done, suddenly finds s/he is 'constrained' by the way things *are* done in the newsroom. Van Zoonen (1989) seems to confirm this in her study, which shows how socialisation processes have a strong effect on the way journalism is practiced and perhaps more pertinent to my study, also give rise to gendered professionalism. She discovered that women journalists who espoused feminist principles (e.g. such as trying to make women as visible as men) during the course of training were obliged to become more ambivalent when faced with established patterns of authority in the newsroom, the

attitudes of colleagues, organisational routines and the general apathy towards feminist principles. While some went on with their career, adjusting smoothly to the patterns in the newsroom, others become deeply disappointed and left for other professions. Newsworthiness seems therefore to be a learned and routinised process as journalists internalise the 'appropriate' vision of newsworthiness. Parenti (1986) describes news values as "culturally specific story-telling codes" (p. 19). He argues that journalists cannot report facts 'objectively' because the raw materials of news (e.g. sources) often favour dominant interests in society. News values as culturally specific codes of meaning suggest that objectivity is necessarily a myth. As Anna Coote questions:

> We concur in decision about what is a 'good story' and what is not, what is central and what is peripheral, what is 'hard' news and what is 'soft' ... these (news values) have been developed of course by white, middleclass men, generation upon generation of them, forming opinions, imposing them, learning them and passing them on as Holy writ. We have inherited a *hierarchy* of news values. What are the major stories of the day? The economy, industry, politics (of Whitehall and Westminster) foreign affairs and so on, down the scale. A hard story is generally deemed to be based on facts, on something precise which has happened, in a particular sphere already labelled 'important' a story based on description, individual experience, nuance – a 'human interest' story perhaps, or something which has happened in a sphere *not* labelled 'important' – may be considered 'good', but nevertheless 'soft' or 'offbeat'. Why? Where did these ideas come from? Are they objective, universal or simply man-made? (Coote cited in Hartley 1982, p. 80 – 81).

It is not only 'news values' that have been passed on, but also the manner of news presentation. Standard formats which are generally taken as evidence of professionalism and objectivity of the press have been passed on from generation to generation, and have significant implications. Most journalists have in the course of their training imbibed news as factual and unbiased (untainted with personal opinion). This implies strict adherence to the 5Ws and H of news story – who says what, why,

when, where and possibly how. Arguing the implication of this for the profession, Louw (2001) argues:

> The idea that one is 'objective' because only 'the facts' (WWWWWH) are reported is a powerful professional-discourse and 'value-system' and is central to journalistic practice. In essence, because hard, concrete facts are privileged, the stories acquire a 'tangibility' and so appear 'factual' rather than 'constructed' (Louw 2001, p.161).

As I later show in subsequent sections, such strict adherence to the 5Ws and H in news writing has its ideological consequences. Objectivity is one of the myths of journalism profession that has had prime importance in assigning credibility to new stories. Tuchman (1978, p. 82) has described objectivity as 'facticity' (a mechanism which allows journalists to hide even from themselves the 'constructed' and 'partial' nature of their stories). Tuchman (1978, p. 1) regards news as window on the world. As the size, nature, position of the window frame affects the visibility of the outside scenes, so also does the news frame hide, blur or clearly present the world to us. Tuchman also argues that news which is professionally 'selected' is guided more by organizational needs than by professionalism.

Many people often wonder how newspapers can be produced daily. Considering the enormous amount of work involved in the collection, collation, writing, editing and the production of news, people are still mystified about how this enormous job could be completed and the newspaper produced and distributed to a mass audience every day. A possible explanation is the standardization of the news process and the patterns of news convention. Because newspapers are organized institutions with 'conventional' ways of doing things, and because the news process requires immediacy and speed, then newspapers have come to rely on particular news sources and routines as quick

gateways to meeting deadlines. It is so to say in their blood. Writing in Glasgow University Media Group (1976), Hoggart refers to television news and suggests four main filtering devices through which news selects itself, which include: simple constraints germane to the medium, the tradition of news values, values particular to the medium and most importantly, the cultural air in which we breathe, the "whole ideological atmosphere of our society, which tells us that some things can be said and others had best not be said" (p. x). By applying these filters concurrently and almost instantaneously, news is presented to us as 'objective' but what is

> In reality a heavily selected interpretation of events, one which structures reality for us, which shapes and frames a world for us to inhabit and accept as real and legitimate, one which sets agenda within which – except by a positive effort at remaking – we are led to discuss our lives (Glasgow University Media Group 1976, p. x).

All these continue to point to the idea that news is a construction. News is neither out there nor a simple reflection of reality. News is shaped by ideological, commercial and semiotic structures through which it is produced. As Bignell (1997, p. 90) suggests, "since journalists narrate news using the codes of news values in general and their newspaper in particular, the news discourse which they produce cannot be the 'natural' way of understanding news or an 'objective' account of the facts". News realism is possibly only a myth.

I now examine the factors that affect the operation of the press in Nigeria and Britain and how they shape and are shaped into representations.

The Press in Nigeria – Practices and Challenges

Some scholars have argued that the set-up (culture) of the press in Nigeria is a colonial legacy. One argument in particular suggests that the Nigerian press has imbibed the propagandist nature of the colonial press (Momoh, 1996). The educated elites who felt marginalized by the colonialists were driven to seek "salvation and relevance in newspaper ownership and publications with foundations of primordial ethnic and regional loyalties" (Momoh 1996, p. 5). The result was the creation of a *nationalist* press dedicated to reclaiming the Nigerian nation from British colonial rule but without first institutionalising a national culture and tradition in its professional outlook, practice and philosophy. This legacy seems still to be with the nation even after forty-four years of independence. Its main features are an advocacy press where political groups establish their own newspapers to advocate their cause, where ethnic groups demand to be heard through their own newspapers, where the government press becomes only its masters' voice, and wealthy individuals create their own medium in which to propagate their ideology. This tendency is reflected in the pattern of newspaper ownership that often seems to reflect one interest or the other. Quoting Dare (1996), Tettey (2001) writes of the Nigerian press: "What operates for the most part is an instrumental press that tends to espouse causes that advance the interests of their proprietors or their ethnic groups, often times with scant regard for the larger public interest" (p. 6).

The advancement of the interests of a particular group of people to the detriment of the larger public interest points to a major ethical problem facing Nigerian journalists: sycophancy. More often, sycophancy leads to incompetence as sycophantic journalists might "twist facts, falsify information or indulge in sensationalism to promote the

interest of the person being flattered" (Okunna 2003, p. 87). Apart from flattering individuals, such journalists might also, in seeking approval of particular ethnic or religious groups, sacrifice ethical ideals. This in turn affects the choice of news subjects, the slants given to news stories as well as the language employed in news reports.

Nigerian journalism also has to contend with invasion of 'charlatans' into the profession. Because the profession has not been able to enforce the minimum required qualifications for practice (see Akinfele, 1996), there are no barriers to employing untrained people who sometimes provide cheap labour for newspaper owners who wish to maximise profits. This has cheapened the journalism profession in Nigeria and makes enforcing the code of ethics (see Appendix 1) a near impossibility. Lack of professionalism and unenforceable professional codes of practice have increased the possibility of unethical behaviours (such as receiving pay-offs, popularly known as "brown envelopes" or "Awufu syndrome" in journalism parlance in Nigeria) (Onyisi 1996, p. 79 – 80). This also has wider implications both for accuracy, fairness and the unbiased nature of reports. Often those who pay the piper dictate the tune and such financial interests amongst journalists thus could unduly influence news reporting in Nigeria.

A dominant pattern of Nigerian newspaper journalism is the strict adherence to the traditional pattern of news writing, popularly called the 5 Ws and H of news writing as discussed a little earlier. This style of news reportage provides little room for 'opinionating' and editorialising of the news and such a pattern has thrived in Nigerian

newspapers since the interpretation of news is often left to news magazine[5]. In many countries of the world where consumer magazines are prevalent, newspapers have the added function of making the news interesting for the audience. In such countries, newspapers often give in-depth stories, a function mostly left to the news magazines in Nigeria. A key implication of the non-interpretative nature of newspapers in Nigeria is that newspapers make an attempt at verbatim reporting of news sources, refraining from challenging some of the claims made by such sources. This is a very big weakness of the press as it makes them susceptible to the promotion of ethnic and cultural ideologies especially in the choice of news stories and who is given voice on issues. Galadima and Enighe (2001) assessing news reporting in time of crisis see this pattern as a major weakness. They describe the newspapers as "viewspapers" and in their view:

> There are more viewspapers than newspapers.... If one picked up a copy of any print medium on the news stand, then one would see what is meant here: more interviews, less news. The reason for this is simple: In news, you investigate and get true facts, because you are not satisfied with what is said; but in views, you only interview people for their opinions on the crises and these opinions are often laced with prejudices, half truths and sometimes blatant lies (p. 68).

I have argued elsewhere (Omenugha, 2003) that the pattern of news writing in Nigeria gives prominence to who is involved and often times and consequently who said what becomes more important than what was said; (i.e. the maker of the news becomes more important than the news itself). This situation continually leaves women, the poor and the disadvantaged out of the centre, as they usually do not occupy positions of sufficient power where their utterances would be considered newsworthy.

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[5] Nigeria has a thriving magazine culture, mostly the news types. Some examples of the News magazines in Nigeria are Newswatch, The News, The Tell, This Week. Many of them are weekly and offer more in depth analysis of the news.

It is equally important to recognise the political environment in which the press in Nigeria operate. It is crucial to recognise that Nigerian journalists have (especially during the various military eras) suffered physical abuse and intimidation and risking the loss of their jobs and even death. The 1980s and early 1990s witnessed the closure of many newspaper houses and the imprisonments of many journalists.[6] Such acts were done to force journalists to toe the line of people in power. I must say that there still remain many committed journalists who would prefer death to sycophancy[7], but it remains a reality that for many journalists, keeping mute or offering compromised reporting remains a better option than death.

Alimi (1996) points out another factor that could work to compromise the quality and standards of the press in Nigeria. He referred to the continuous rise in the cost of print and resource materials, many of which are imported at exorbitant prices. Alimi argues that to be and stay in business, some of the newspaper industries might turn into the "rumour industry", a trend dangerous to the profession and the nation at large. High production cost and dwindling circulation sales impact negatively on the security of tenure, wages and conditions of service of working journalists and as Njemanze (1996, p. 167) argues, would expose journalists to "the temptation of unethical conduct especially when done to make ends meet". In the next section, I present a case study to illustrate the operation of the Nigerian press, focusing on Nigerian press reports of the Hausa/Yoruba ethnic clash of February 2002, which occurred within the period of this research.

6 See www.mediaresistance.org/afrique/news_tempo.html for details. [Accessed 20th August 2004].
7 Dele Giwa, one of the founding editors of the Newswatch magazine was murdered through a letter bomb in October 19, 1986. It is widely believed that his death was not unconnected with his firebrand and investigative journalism. His killers have not been found till date.

Constructing difference: Nigerian press reports of the Yoruba / Hausa Ethnic Clash of February 2002

In February 2002, there was a clash between two major ethnic groups in Nigeria – the Yoruba and the Hausa. The press reports of this clash reveal the ethnically oriented ideological framework of the Nigerian press. In analysing the press reports, I refer to four Nigerian newspapers[8], which, as I explain in Chapter Five, are chosen for this study because they represent distinct ethnic voices in Nigeria. In this analysis however, more references are made to *The Punch* and *New Nigerian* as respectively they represent the voices of the Yoruba and Hausa who are key players in the crisis. The newspapers used many tropes that emphasise difference in reporting the crisis. This section focuses on how they reported the cause of the crisis and the casualty statistics.[9]

In reporting the cause of the clash, the Nigerian press treated the public to a cacophony of conflicting versions. I wish to consider the versions presented by *New Nigerian* and *The Punch* newspapers. The following are the versions of the cause of the ethnic clash as reported by *New Nigerian*:

Version 1

Initial reports said the clash was sparked off by the *death of a Yoruba boy* who was allegedly apprehended by Hausa youth for *defecating near a mosque in the area.* The report said the dead boy was subsequently taken to the residence of the *Sarkin Hausawa* (Hausa community leader) who allegedly said there was little he could do under the circumstances. The sources said this purportedly infuriated the *aggrieved protesters* who were said to have mobilized the youth in the area. The Hausa youth were said to have *retaliated the attack on them in self-defence* (*New Nigerian*, 5 February 2002, p. 1).

[8] The Punch, New Nigerian, Daily Champion & The Guardian [N] – See Chapter Five for a brief outline of the newspapers.
[9] For more academic discourse on the press reports of this crisis see Omenugha (2004)

Version 2

Trouble started when *a houseboy* went to a nearby bush to defecate. The *areaboys*[10] were said to have accosted him, beat him up and robbed him of about 3,000 Naira. This was said to have enraged the Hausa youth in the area who took the victim to the scene of the incident, rounded them up and inflicted injuries on them in retaliation. This was said to have attracted the OPC[11] members purportedly holding a meeting in the area who allegedly mobilized and attacked the Hausa youth (*New Nigerian,* 5 February 2002, p. 1-2).

Version 3

According to police sources, trouble started when a Hausa man could not pay for using a public toilet. Accordingly misunderstanding ensued and the young man was allegedly beaten up by some *ruffians* manning the public toilet. In the process, the Hausa man allegedly lost 2,500 Naira to the *ruffians*. He was said to have gone to report the incident to his kinsmen, who accompanied him to go and find out, but they too were attacked by the *ruffians* (*New Nigerian,* 6 February 2002, p. 2).

In the above versions presented by *New Nigerian*, the rhetorical language is deployed to persuade readers to believe that the Yoruba are the initiators of the crisis while the Hausa people fought back in self-defence. Hartley (1982, p.154 – 180) explores how the strategy of rhetoric is influential in framing people in a particular way. He defines rhetoric as "the art of using language to persuade or influence others" (p. 163). This was effectively used in the news reports of the clash.

[10] This is used in Nigerian parlance for the group of social miscreants and hoodlums who ply the routes of Lagos, intimidating people. They take the slightest opportunities of any disorder to loot properties. Indeed they have been accused of starting some confusion to carry out their nefarious activities. The Government knows that they exist but apparently has not been able to do anything about them.

11 The Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC) is a militant socio-cultural Yoruba nationalist organization formed in 1997.

The Punch's versions differing significantly from that of the *New Nigerian*, constructed the news to suggest that the Hausa people are the guilty party. The following are the versions of the cause of the crisis as reported by *The Punch*:

Version 1

The confrontation started on Friday evening when a meeting organized by the OPC was allegedly disrupted by a man identified as a Hausa. Eyewitnesses said the unnamed Hausa man had gone to ease himself at a place close to where the OPC members were meeting. When the OPC protested, the Hausa man allegedly responded in a manner that angered them (OPC members). An argument reportedly ensued as a result of which the Hausa man received a slap. The confrontation *later became bloody* when scores of *fully armed* Hausa men allegedly invaded the meeting arena and *attacked* the members of the OPC some of whom received gunshots and machete cut wounds (*The Punch,* 4 February 2002, p. 56).

Version 2

Somebody went to defecate in a public toilet. People normally pay when they go there. *Area boys* asked him to pay but he said he had no money to pay. So he was rough-handled and beaten up. He ran back and told his people that he had lost N2, 000 and his wristwatch. They mobilized and they came and that was how the trouble started (*The Punch,* 4 February 2002, p. 56).

The reader of the newspapers faced with this kaleidoscopic of versions would wonder which is the correct version. Even within accounts that seem similar, the discrepancies in stories make it obvious that slants are given to stories in favour of the ethnic group with whom the newspapers identify. *New Nigerian's* repetitive use of words like "banned OPC", "protesters", "ruffians", etc to refer to the Yoruba people effectively closes the meaning on the Yoruba as a bunch of troublemakers who always run foul of the law. To the newspaper too, the Hausas "retaliated to the attack on them in self-

defence". The notion of self-defence is continuously emphasized in the stories of the clash carried by the *New Nigerian* newspaper, giving the reader a preferred reading of the image of the Hausa people as peace-loving who fought only because they were pushed to the wall.

The Punch newspapers in the careful choice of the encoded signs adopted the same ideological closure and preferred readings of the texts. According to the newspaper, the confrontation became bloody when "scores of fully armed Hausa men invaded the meeting arena and attacked members of the OPC some of whom received gunshot and machete cut wounds". Further reports in the newspapers say that the clash was brought under control, but "fresh hostilities began when some houses said to be owned by the Yoruba were being attacked and set ablaze"(*The Punch*, 4 February 2002, p. 56). Continuing to effect ideological closure, *The Punch* further reports: "pockets of Hausa men spread themselves around the area between Mushin and Idi Araba, shooting innocent citizens." The Hausas are thus projected as being responsible for the loss of lives and properties.

In a similar manner, the public was bombarded with conflicting and irreconcilable statistics of the casualties in the clash. On Monday, 4 February, *The Guardian [N]* and *The Punch* gave the statistics of casualties as *14 people feared dead while four houses* were set ablaze (*The Guardian*, 4 February 2002, p. 2; The *Punch*, 4 February 2002, p. 56). Interestingly, on the same day the *Daily Champion* reported that *70 people were dead and several houses and 15 vehicles burnt* (*Daily Champion,* 4 February 2002, p.1). By the next day, (Tuesday, 5 February), *Daily Champion* recorded an astronomical figure of *300 deaths, 200 burnt houses, 1000 displaced families, 57 seriously wounded people and 150 people with minor injuries.* (*Daily Champion*, 5 February 2002, p. 1).

The Guardian [N] is silent on the number that died. *New Nigerian* reports the death of only *three persons* (5 February 2002, p. 1), while *The Punch* put the figure at 20 (5 February 2002, p. 1.) By Wednesday, *The Punch* put the death toll at *55* (6 February 2002, p. 56) while that of *The Guardian* [N] came to *100* (6 February 2002, p. 1). *New Nigerian* reports that "unconfirmed sources put the death toll at 100", attributing to police sources that only 19 persons have died in the skirmishes (6 February 2002, p. 2). The question is: which is the correct version? One remarkable feature of the *Daily Champion* is its apparent sensationalisation of the stories. All reported as front-page news but the *Daily Champion* keeps heightening the tension to a crescendo. This could be seen in the wordings of the headlines (mostly banner) recorded here in their daily appearance: " *70 Killed in Hausa-OPC Clash, Lagos boils again*" (*Daily Champion,* 4 February 2002, p. 1). "Hausa-OPC clash: *300 now killed" (Daily Champion,* 5 2002, p. 1)*;* Lagos mayhem spreads, *1,000 houses burnt (Daily Champion*, 6 February, 2002, p. 1)*; Riots victims flee Lagos en masse*, as fragile peace returns (*Daily Champion,* 7 February, 2002, p. 1). *The Guardian*[N] also displayed similarly worded headlines backing them up with front-page pictures of the displaced persons.

By closely examining the examples of the reports cited above one could make the following deductions.

- The newspapers are more interested in colouring the stories to defend their ethnic group rather than identifying the real cause of the crisis and how the nation can forge ahead. To all the newspapers, the 'unnamed' man who purportedly triggered the crisis remained unnamed. None of the newspapers interviewed the man. Who knows, the man may not really exist. Rather more salience is given to castigating and blaming others while defending their ethnicity. It could be right to say that the Nigerian press is polarized along regional, sectional and ethnic lines with every side "protecting' and "supporting" their kith and kin
- There is a lack of authenticity of the sources of information, reaffirming the doubts expressed by Galadima and Enighe about

Nigerian press reports of the June 12, 1994 annulments of elections. They argue that "most of the reports we read in the press border on speculations than on hard facts. Even rumours and gossips picked up in taxi cabs and market places were good front stories" (Galadima and Enighe 2001, p.68).

- There is an apparent celebration of the crisis, through sensationalism especially by *Daily Champion* and *The Guardian* [N] newspapers which ethnic groups are not direct players in the crisis. Like two naughty children encouraging a fighting duo by clapping for them, the two newspapers through their pattern of news reports continue to add embers to the fire of the crisis.
- No attention is given to how Nigeria can forge ahead as nation and avoid such ethnic confrontation in future. For example, due attention is not given to the perpetrators of the conflict. Some of the newspapers merely reported that some people have been arrested in connection with the incident. Who are the people? What was done to them? When the press follows the arrest, trial and possible imprisonment of the perpetrators of violence, the citizens would begin to have faith in the institutions and begin to identify with a national identity.

The above indicates that Nigerian press reports operate within certain ideological frameworks. It is these frameworks, which are explored, relived, made explicit for the readers in the repeated mulling over of tales. The newspapers are interested not in reporting the truth, as it is, the events as they occurred, but rather to reconstruct and reaffirm their ethnic and cultural positions or identities. It really shows how possible it is for different people to view the same event and see totally different things. This lends credence to the idea that how much Nigerian press sees and reports is a construction of its ideological or cultural positions.

The Press in Britain: Practices and Challenges

Part of the history of the British press has been its journey to professionalise and establish its credentials in the eyes of government and public alike. This meant the establishment of key professional skills and practices. Journalism had to be taken out of

the hands of "mere hack-writers" and placed in the hands of "men of fixed opinions, of consummate knowledge and deliberate purpose" (Boyce 1978, p. 23). The changes, Boyce argues started to come to fruition in the 19th century (1978, p. 24).

The professionalism of journalism in Britain meant that repeal of the remaining 'tax on knowledge' in 1861, inaugurated a new era of press freedom and liberty, but was to bring in its wake according to Curran and Seaton (1991, p. 9) a new system of press censorship more effective than anything that had gone before. In their study, they refer to the market forces, the repeal of the taxes, the use of advertising, new technological development, the growth of news agencies, cheap paper and the increasingly literate population as factors that assisted the British press in becoming big business enterprises. The result of these formative dynamics created a core of journalists, whose interest was not primarily in enlightening/informing public opinion nor in criticising public policy, but in making money by giving the public what they wanted – or at least what it was supposed by the newspaper entrepreneur to want (Boyce 1978, p. 25). Therefore, although the British press became more independent of political parties and of government, it operated within an economic framework, which limited its compliance to the ideology of good journalism practice. This continues to be a dilemma for British journalism. Harcup (2002) exploring questions of ethics and professionalism in the British news media writes:

> Journalists operate in (at least) two worlds, working in the field that is (ostensibly) constituted by a professional commitment to ethics and truth telling while at the same time being expendable employees expected to produce whatever stories are demanded in the market place (p. 103).

Sparks (1999) also (in his examination of the major features of the UK national daily press) concludes that the British press is thoroughly commercial, acting competitively

in an economic free market. It is also oligopolistic in nature, which means that product differentiation is a prime form of competition between titles. These characteristics have huge implications for the practice of journalism. Driven by the commercial logic, they discharge their public duties in so far as they succeed as businesses, sometimes going towards sensationalism, to get their market share. It also implies that the press might have on occasion to cut corners in order to gain a competitive edge over their rivals. Sparks (1999) sees this as a state of crisis and suggests that:

> Producing a press that sees as its main task the production of material that informs all of its readers objectively about the dangers and opportunities of their world, that presents them impartially with a range of informed opinions about desirable policy options, and that sees as one of its main functions providing them with the forum in which to articulate their own views and opinions, is an impossibility in a free market (p. 59).

The fears expressed as long ago as 1978 by Elliot as he projected a future for the British press seems to have been reasonably justified. He feared that the trend towards monopoly and oligopoly might affect the creed that "truth will triumph over competing falsehood" (1978, p. 189).

This set-up of the British press has had a huge impact on its relationship with minorities (e.g. black people) in Britain and with the disadvantaged people from the 'former colonies'. In a section of chapter three (Postcolonial media representations), I signposted the dynamics that inform and shape media representations of black people/minorities in Britain. I noted that the economic prerogative of newspapers in Britain could possibly lead to the exclusion from the news media, those who are not key players in economic globalisation. This is because, striving for economic gains also implies giving to the public what they supposedly want through privileging images that

are culturally meaningful to the majority of the audiences. As O'Reilly (2003) suggests, this could be through stereotyping since majority of audiences need stereotypes to identify with characters. This situation negatively affects representations of black people/minorities, as in most cases there is increasing possibility of reinforcing racial myths. As has been seen to be the case (see Chapter Three) journalists in Britain operate in a society where imperialism, colonialism and racial superiority are deeply ingrained (Cottle 1999, p.197). These factors continue to shape news media representations, as I illustrate in relation to reports of the Victoria Climbié story, which is discussed in the next section.

Representing the racial 'Other': the Victoria Climbié child abuse story

Theoretical perspectives on otherness and stereotypes seem a good prelude to an analysis of British press reports of the Victoria Climbié child abuse case. Slavery, colonialism and racist theories together form some of the key myths of Africa and the otherness of Africans. One form of otherness prevalent in Western representation of Africa is a construction of the 'image of the savage represented by violence' – a depiction of barbarism and primitiveness (Goldberg 1993, p. 23, see also p. 63 – 69; 155 – 162). The analysis of the Climbié story addresses how the news seems to have been constructed via a régime of 'racial knowledge'.

In the UK, on February 25, 2000, a black African girl from Ivory Coast, called Victoria Climbié[12] (aged 8) died of abuse at the hands of her great aunt Marie Kaouo[13] and her

[12] Victoria was sometimes called Anna – a pseudo name given to her by Marie Kaouo.
[13] As reported in the news, Kaouo was introduced to the Climbiés as one of their relatives during a family funeral. Within most African cultures, however, this is not unusual. A popular saying among these cultures is that you could show one who is one's relation, but cannot show one who one's friend is.

aunt's boyfriend, Carl Manning.[14] Marie Kaouo (also from Ivory Coast) brought Victoria, (with her parents' consent) to Europe with the promise of a better life. Instead, Victoria was abused, neglected and tortured and she died after some months. Dr Nathaniel Carey who carried out the postmortem on Victoria described her injuries as "the worst I have ever dealt with, and it is just about the worst I have ever heard of" (Laming 2003, p. 2). Deaths resulting from child abuse are not new in Britain (or indeed anywhere else). *The Observer* reported that in 2001, 65 children under seven (mainly babies) were killed unlawfully in the UK mostly by their parents (*The Observer* 24 February 2002, p. 28). During the last two decades, Britain has had more than 30 public inquiries into child abuse deaths (Johnson and Petrie, 2004). The inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié, conducted by Lord Laming, identified organisational failings in the four Social Services departments, three housing authorities, two hospitals, two police and child protection teams and one independent sector agency - all of whom had responsibility for Victoria at some time in the eleven months she spent in England. It is to be noted that Victoria passed through the hands of each of these agencies at some point during the time she was being abused. Yet, no one detected she was in desperate need of help:

> Victoria was not hidden away.... The dreadful reality was that these services knew little or nothing more about Victoria at the end of the process than they did when she was first referred to Ealing Social Services by the Homeless Persons' Unit in April 1999. The final irony was that Haringey Social Services formally closed Victoria's case on the very day she died. The extent of the failure to protect Victoria was lamentable. Tragically, it required nothing more than basic good practice being put into operation. This never happened (Laming 2003, p. 3).

[14] Carl Manning described throughout the news mostly as 'her bus diver boyfriend' is also black.

In discussing the Climbié case, Johnson and Petrie (2004) described how the inquiries into this and previous cases of child abuse revealed organisational failures. Their research shows that the inability of Social Services and other agencies to protect children known to them who were suffering from abuse - sometimes for prolonged periods - is frequently a consequence of significant systemic as well as practice failures. Johnson and Petrie analysed in detail the latent and active failures of these agencies in protecting Victoria. Importantly, they pointed to the lack of prominence given to systemic and organisational issues apparent in many inquiries into child death from abuse, which would ensure that avoidable tragedies would not re-occur. By contrast, British press reports of the Climbié case seem to be constructed more around the 'intrigues' of 'Other' culture, rather than the failures of the system to 'save' Victoria. One manifestation of this 'Other' culture is the image of the 'savage' and 'monster' through which Maria Kaouo and Manning are represented. In line with racist assumptions about black Africans as violent and barbaric, Kaouo's and Manning's violence on Victoria is prioritised, while the agencies involvements seem to be de-emphasised.

Another form of the 'othering' is through the depiction of the culture of fostering within the African extended family. The family is a key source of ambivalence between white and black feminists. It has been argued that whereas white women see the family as a site of oppression, for the black women, the family provides support especially in the context of racial oppression (Amos and Parmar, 2001; Bhavnami and Coulson, 2001). In most societies in Africa, the extended family plays a crucial supportive role and is considered indispensable in the societies' way of life (Egbue, 1997; Agbasiere, 2000). This is culturally different from the predominantly Eurocentric model of the nuclear family, which is prevalent in Britain. Black writers have often challenged the manner in

which cultures 'alien' to British way of life are often translated into racist laws (Amos and Parmar, 2001). One example is the arranged marriage in Asian cultures, which has been attacked at governmental level. The former Home Secretary, David Blunkett was once reported in the press to have said to Asian men, "Find wives in Britain"[15], a reasonable interpretation of which could be that Blunkett fails to appreciate the significance of arranged marriages within Asian cultures. Taking the example further, according to Amos and Palmer (2001, p. 23) stereotypes about the black family have been used by the state to justify particular forms of oppression. Citing the issue of fostering and adoption of black children, they see such stereotypes as being responsible for black families being often seen as 'unfit' for fostering and adoption. Such discourses around black families cannot be ignored when looking at the construction of the press reports on the Victoria Climbié child abuse story. I have explained the concept of 'the Other' in a previous section, and the purpose it serves to 'Otherise' other people's cultures. As with stereotypes, Othering works by drawing on various ideological assumptions, which attempt to 'fix in place', other people or cultures from a particular and privileged perspective (see Pickering 2001, p. 47; Hall, 1997b). The Victoria Climbié case provided an opportunity for the British press to exploit notions of otherness when reporting the case. After examining over 200 accounts on Victoria Climbié child abuse, through the University of Gloucestershire proquest,[16] I addressed a crucial question: what is the polysemic construct of this story?

First, it is the story of a wasteland – Ivory Coast - from where Victoria had to be taken away, to Europe for a better life:

15 The Daily Telegraph 8 February 2002 p. 1.

16 I conducted an online search of all UK national newspapers through the University of Gloucestershire proquest (Lexis-Nexis professional) using Climbié as a key word. This yielded over 500 items. I chose items mostly from The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph, but I occasionally referred to relevant items in other UK national newspapers.

> When Anna Climbié left the crumbling shacks of the sprawling shanty suburb of Abobo, Ivory Coast, in November 1997 she was "happy and excited". The child was leaving the muddy streets and crammed housing of the West African country and going to a new life with her aunt. The seven year old was being taken first to France and then to Britain for a better education and standard of living... (*The Guardian* (UK) 13 January 2001, p.1).

In the above short lead of the story, there are at least seven qualifiers describing the poverty in Ivory Coast. In constructing images and conceptions of otherness, Europe is cast as a place of economic development and opportunities while Africa is portrayed as the continent of underdevelopment, anchored firmly in economic backwardness (see Akurang-Parry 2001, p. 76). The emphasis of the news stories on the poverty of Ivory Coast sustains the myth of the dependency of Africa on Europe's benevolence.

Second, the news is the story of savagery reflected in the horrific abuse of Victoria by Maria Kaouo and her lover Carl Manning. The image of 'the savage' is played up in the news through prioritising the injuries to Victoria and through the highly negative adjectives, which are used in relation to Kaouo (and to some extent Manning). This is particularly significant when examined in the context of the third construct of the news: the story of dereliction of duties by the agencies involved. Laming (2003) indicted these agencies for failing Victoria. Within the news, however, the role of the agencies seems to be downplayed. Kaouo, Manning and the agencies failed Victoria, but there is an apparent lack of balance in the news with regard to reporting the role of these key players in Victoria's fate. While the roles of Kaouo and Manning are very evident in the news, the same cannot be said about the roles played by the agencies. In some of the news reports, the roles of the agencies are totally ignored, or at best presented as 'minor

footnotes'. For example in a story of 2607 words,[17] words which related to the agencies (social services, police, hospital, nurses, doctors, etc) were mentioned less than 35 times. The story concentrated on describing the wretchedness of the Ivory Coast, the injuries to Victoria, the dubious life lived by Kaouo, her liaison with Manning and their subsequent arrest and imprisonment. While we are left in no doubt of the "savage existence" of Victoria, her "horrendous physical and emotional abuse" by her "demented aunt" and "her bus driver boyfriend", the roles of the agencies could only be described as fall-outs of the story. Little emphasis is placed on their roles in Victoria's eventual death.

The photograph of Victoria published on the front page of *The Guardian* [UK] (29 January 2003) following Laming's report arguably seems to sustain the myth of the black savage. The deep four column close-up photograph of Victoria Climbié shows her face disfigured with burns and wounds (see fig. 7). If it was meant to send shock waves, it succeeded. The caption read: "A photograph of Victoria Climbié released by the inquiry, taken in July 1999 after she was admitted to a hospital casualty unit with scalding on her face and head. Released back into the care of her aunt (who with her boyfriend is now serving a life sentence for Victoria's murder), she was dead within seven months."

Was Victoria's photograph used like this intended to shock because as Ian Mayes argues, "the context and content of Lord Laming's report justified it" and its intention

[17] "The death of Anna Climbié: For Anna, the promise of a new life ended in pain, fear and filth: agencies failed to act as girl, eight, suffered", The Guardian 13 January 2001. p. 1.

was to pose a very basic question: "how on earth did so many professionals miss so many signs that something was wrong?"[18]

The queen of routine In G2

Our Hitler obsession In G2

The Guardian

There were 12 chances to save Victoria Climbié. This was one. Seven months later she was dead

Fig 7 The Guardian [UK] 29 January 2003, p. 1

Or did this photograph, which apparently poses such a well-meaning question, also reinforce the belief that underneath every black woman or man lurks the face of a savage? For in being capable of inflicting such violence on Victoria, Kaouo and Manning seem to manifest precisely the savagery and violence about which African communities have often been accused.

The fourth layer of the news is the story of a primitive and backward custom – extended family fostering in Africa. In constructing images of otherness, conceptions and customs of others are viewed through dominant cultural perspectives (here, British

[18] See Mayes, I. (2003) Comments and Analysis: Open door: A justified disturbance: The readers' editor on… the front page picture of Victoria Climbié. The Guardian[UK] 3 February, 2003. p. 19.

ones). The result is a projection of dominant British norms onto that of the Other (in this case Africa) and a mapping of meanings against a British cultural baseline. The reportage of the Climbié story by British news media is constructed along the lines of a hegemonic British culture and Eurocentric norms of family played against the extended family relationships prevalent in many Africa countries. The question seems to be, how could the Climbiés hand over their child to a relative stranger? However, within the ideology of the family in Africa, Kaouo is not a stranger to the Climbiés. Citing the Igbo of Nigeria, Agbasiere (2000, p. 90) explains that the family "comprises of blood-relatives, both paternal and maternal, stretching almost to the fourth and fifth degree of kinship relations". In discussing the role of the African extended family in the socialization of children, Egbue (1997) stresses that:

> Extended family members expose children to a much wider variety of personalities all of whom (are) united by bonds of kinship who mostly have the well being of the child in mind. As a result of availability of other adults who possessed strong kinship ties to the child, parenting, in the sense of specified responsibilities by biological parents towards a child was not of such vital importance as in nuclear family (Egbue 1997, p. 149).

Egbue points to one of the principles guiding family relationships in most of Africa – the shared responsibility in the upbringing of children from the same kinship group. This ideology of the African family makes it the most 'natural' of things for the Climbiés to let Victoria go with Kaouo for within this ideology, Kaouo is certainly not a stranger (see Text Boxt 3 below). In constructing the Climbié news however, the dominant projection by the British press is how most unnatural it is for one to transfer the responsibility of the upbringing of one's child to another. The *Mail on Sunday*'s report cited below is typical of the position some journalists adopted:

> Victoria's parents put their small daughter in the care of the relative of whom they knew almost nothing, and let her be taken away to countries whose laws and customs were mysteries to them. They cannot really place the whole burden as Victoria's mother has sought to do, on British hospitals, social workers and police officers. They must accept that they took an unacceptable risk by sending a beloved child to the unknown (*Mail on Sunday* 30 September 2001, p. 24).

In the part of Nigeria where I come from, we say: "Ora nwe nwa", meaning, "The child belongs to all." I believe a similar philosophy guides many African countries including Ivory Coast where the Climbiés come from. The involvement of children in very estranged relationships could dampen the friction involved in such relationships. Thus in many African cultures: "uzo eji nwa adighi echi echi": "The path that holds a child can never be overgrown with weeds". This and similar sayings depict the high esteem and near reverence in which children are held. It is unthinkable for an adult to maltreat a child.* The burden is shared in childcare especially in the training** of children. One could discipline an erring child or protect a vulnerable one even without knowing the parents. Should an abuse occur, the society is structured to deal with it and to take responsibility to end it. I recall the case involving a relation of mine who was given a girl from the extended family to live with so that she could help in the girl's upbringing. My relation's status as a teacher gives her such privilege. She abused the privilege and the traditional society*** stepped in. She injured the girl while spanking her. The next day, the injuries were noticed by one of the *inyom di*****. The woman demanded to know what happened. My relation could offer no excuse except that it was an accident. The meeting of all *inyom di* was called. My relation was brought before the tribunal, found guilty of abuse and heavily fined. As is the rule in the society, any fine imposed on one by the *inyom di* is also paid by the guilty person in all the associations or groups the person belongs to. If the person fails to do so, the person risks being excommunicated by the society. The Victoria Climbié child abuse case may be difficult to happen in such a society *and* people fail to say or do anything.

* Though child abuse still occurs, the structure of the society is such that erring adults are automatically brought to book.
** Many African societies still believe in sparing the child and spoiling the rod.
*** I use the term traditional because I do recognise that many of these structures have been caught up in modernity. Thus for those who live in the cities, it may be difficult to apply the sanctions.
****Literally co – wives, being name for women married into the same kindred.

Text Box 3

Throughout the news texts examined, little attempt is made to explain the concept of fostering in Africa. Rather, the news is constructed exclusively along Eurocentric ideologies of the family.

Such a construction could significantly undermine the challenges to racist immigration laws that have the effect of separating African family members (see Amos and Parmar, 2001). As discussed in relation to the Nigerian press, the British press also operates within cultural ideologies that continue to shape news product.

Conclusion

My examination of Nigerian and British press has raised interesting aspects of their operation. How does the journalist reconcile both ethical ideals and society's pressures? Fairness, accuracy, objectivity, balance, are globally regarded as essential qualities of a good and sustainable journalism (Okunna, 1998), but it seems that they are extremely difficult to achieve. The pervasiveness and invisibility of ideology makes it easy to be shaped unconsciously into news products. One example is the way in which 'known' stereotypes are called up in the news reports and representations of minorities. I have in this chapter explored the synergy of ideology, language, news and representation. It seems news hardly comes in 'raw' form, but is in most cases a highly mediated product. This situation presents a dilemma to journalists as the ethical 'ideals' of journalism and the realities of journalistic practices sit oddly against each other. There is an increasing possibility, therefore, that news and news values are highly mythologized concepts.

I explored in this chapter, the contexts within which news is produced in Nigeria and Britain. In analysing the Nigerian press reports of the Yoruba/Hausa ethnic clash I

showed that how much Nigerian press 'sees' is a construction of its ideological or cultural position. Reports of the clash suggest the discordant voices in Nigeria and the emphasis on 'difference'. Yet, as I show in subsequent chapters, news discourses in Nigeria show a unity on issues of gender and the relative powerlessness of women to men in Nigeria. Similarly, the British press reports of the Victoria Climbié case signifies how the press operates within cultural ideologies that continue to shape news product. The framing of Kaouo suggests the gendered nature of reporting. She is somehow seen as 'different' in her 'savage' propensity to harm, which is in contrast to naturalised traits of woman-as-nurturer. Both case studies present news as an ideological construct, which comes with biases, prejudices, and assumptions. In chapters six and seven I explore these notions further in relation to news representations of Africa and African women.

❖ Chapter Five

Feminist cross-cultural research

Introduction

This chapter explores my research process[1] and the steps I took to collect my data (including my pains, agonies, frustrations, successes). More importantly, it explores key theories that informed my research decisions in relation to both the methods I employed and their ethical implications. Maynard (1994a, p. 10) defines method as the techniques of gathering research material while methodology provides both theory and analysis of the research process. Skeggs (1995a, p. 2) defines methodology as a theory of methods, which informs decisions about such things as what to study, how to analyse, what theories to use, how to interpret, how to write. What I have done in this chapter is encapsulated in these two definitions. Skeggs (1995a) further generates a series of questions to aid researchers in focusing on their methodology:

- Why was the area of study chosen, what institutional, economic and socio-political factors underpinned the choice?
- Which frameworks of established knowledge were used, referred to, challenged, ignored and why?
- Which methods were chosen for study and why? Why were other approaches not used?
- How did the initial questions and research relate to the final product?
- How did the process of writing influence the final product? (p. 4)

An engagement with these questions forms the crux of this chapter. Because this research is a type of feminist sociological inquiry, the answers provided to these

1 See Appendix 2 for table showing my research journey.

questions are guided by feminist epistemology. Simply put, epistemology is the study of how to know the social and apprehend its meaning. It is concerned with providing a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate (Fonow and Cook, 1991; Maynard, 1994a). Our philosophies inform both the methodologies and the methods that we combine in order to study the objects of our enquiry. In other words, the way we see and perceive the world impacts on the methods we adopt to study the world. For example, feminists' perception of the social world as an interconnected web of human relations and their emphasis on accommodation and bonding have consistently influenced their choice of methods and how they have dealt with their subjects of inquiry (Gunter, 2000). This does not in any way signify that there is a unitary feminist epistemology, for as Alcoff and Porter (1993) argue, we have different feminist epistemologies because knowledge is always context dependent. Skeggs (1995a) makes it clear that "the ontological recognitions of our raced, gendered and classed existence are linked to wider debates about epistemology, about what knowledge actually is" (p. 14). In other words, the knowledge we produce as feminist researchers may be coloured by a lot of factors, other than our being female-embodied social subjects (Phoenix, 1994). If there are multiple 'feminisms' and multiple forms of 'other' identifications such as for instance race, ethnicity, sexuality, disability and so on, it may also follow that there are multiple ways of knowing (Ross, 2000). No doubt my research and the methods I have employed are informed by my being a black African Nigerian female who suddenly found herself catapulted to Britain to study for a PhD. The tensions, contradictions and ambivalences between the 'two worlds' in which I have lived have continuously shaped my research process.

Being a feminist researcher

In this work, I have claimed to be a feminist, pursuing a feminist inquiry. I now wish to explore some of the debates surrounding what it means to be a feminist researcher. Prominent among these debates are issues about the inevitability of power dimensions in the relationship between the researcher and the researched and the ethics of research practices (including matters of exploitation and control within the research process (Maynard and Purvis ed., 1994)). Feminists too have argued about the subject of feminist research, claiming that it should be 'on, for and about women' (Bowles and Klein ed., 1983). Controversy has also raged about what constitutes acceptable feminist methods (Kelly *et al.*, 1994).

Since the 1970s, there has been a chasm between quantitative and the qualitative research methods (the latter being thought to be quintessentially feminist). This chasm has emanated from the criticism of quantitative methods with their 'neat', 'systematic' and hygienic' approaches which have been said to exclude women. Maynard (1994a) explains the quantitative/qualitative divide thus:

> Quantitative research was seen to represent a 'masculinist' form of knowing, where the emphasis was on the detachment of the researcher and the collection and measurement of 'objective' social facts through a (supposedly) value-free form of data collection. By contrast, the use of qualitative methods, which focus more on the subjective experiences and meanings of those being researched, was regarded as more appropriate to the kind of knowledge that feminist wished to make available, as well as being more in keeping with the politics of doing research as a feminist (p. 11).

Many feminists, consequently were attracted to qualitative methods, emphasising the importance of listening to, recording and understanding women's own descriptions and

accounts (Roberts, 1981; Bowles and Duelli-Klein, 1983; Stanley and Wise, 1983; Bell and Roberts, 1984; Harding, 1987; Smith, 1988). This position has also been the subject of criticism, even amongst feminist researchers who have argued that the methods, which have been endorsed as 'feminist', were not created by feminism (Gelsthorpe, 1990; Kelly *et al.*, 1994). Indeed, they constitute pre-existing methods in social research that have been appropriated by feminists. Again, the argument that feminist research must begin and end with women has been questioned as in some instances exploring men's perspectives might also lead to understandings of the subordination of women (Alcoff and Potter, 1993; Etherington, 2004). Many feminist researchers who had hitherto vetoed the sole use of qualitative methods in feminist research have had a rethink. Kelly (1990) for example, in tracing her journey from a belief in qualitative methods (especially face to face interviews with women) as the paradigmatic method used by feminist social researchers now believes that there is no one way to do a feminist research. As she writes:

> I have moved from a methodological purism to wanting to explore and develop methodologies appropriate to the research question/s. The question you are seeking to answer will point to using certain methods. The issue then is how to apply a feminist standpoint to that method or a combination of methods (Kelly 1990, p. 114).

Feminist debates on methods have thus moved from 'methodological purism' towards more flexible approaches depending on the topic and the scale of study in question. Kelly *et al.* (1994) argue that what makes a research 'feminist', is not the methods employed but the framework within which they are located and the particular ways in which they are deployed. Maynard and Purvis (1994, p. 3) suggest that, not only should the method adopted be that most appropriate to the specific set of research questions at

hand, but that it is frequently useful to select a range of methods, with a view to achieving the best possible feminist ends in the research. In media and communication studies, researchers have tended to opt for the convergence of perspectives and methods, drawing on the strengths of some of the methods to counteract the limitations in others (Deacon *et al.*, 1999; Gunter, 2000; Stokes, 2003). Depending on the nature and purpose of research, either a single method or a combination of methods seems permissible. Feminist media researchers have used one approach or the other depending on the nature of their research. Even though it has been argued that feminists are prone to using softer, qualitative research techniques and case study approaches to investigating social scientific questions (Gunter, 2000), quantitative methods have also been employed to serve feminist ends (GMMP, 2000).

In this study I have employed various approaches, in a similar way to what Glucksmann (1994, p.158) has called a "multi-sourced approach". I have thus employed both quantitative and qualitative methods, which combine survey, an analysis of texts and group discussions to collect my data. Other feminists have also used such mixed methods (Kelly *et al.*, 1994; Skeggs, 1994). Maynard and Purvis (1994) write that "the challenge of feminists lies less in the critique of a simplistic quantitative / qualitative polarization and more in how it might be possible to make all methods 'feminist-user-friendly'" (p. 4).

Obviously there is no distinctive feminist method and ostensibly, any method could be appropriated to serve a feminist end. Some feminists have argued that there are certain practices in the research process that makes research distinctively feminist (Kelly *et al.*, 1994). Although there is no exact agreement, even amongst feminists of how to define gender, some feminist researchers have insisted that for a research to qualify as feminist

research, it has to focus on gender (Bowles and Duelli Klein ed., 1983). Others have prioritised issues of power and more especially power relations between the researcher and the researched. They have been critical of the ways in which sociological research involves, often unacknowledged, hierarchical power relationships (Oakley, 1981). For instance, some sociological methods have stressed emotional detachment in order for the researcher to be in control of collection of data. Feminists, however, have argued against this stance stressing that it reduces the researched to a mere passive giver of information, with the researcher imposing herself on the researched. Reinharz's (1979) goes as far as to draw images associated with a rape and violation:

> The researchers take, hit and run. They intrude into their subjects' privacy, disrupt their perception, utilise false pretences, manipulate the relationship and give little or nothing in return (p. 95).

Feminist researchers have condemned this exploitation of the researched and have argued for the absolute necessity for a non–hierarchical power relationship between the researcher and the researched (i.e. working towards a genuine rather than an instrumental rapport). Feminist research, therefore, can be characterised by the sharing of information rather than exploitation of the researched. Essential to this is the aim of achieving emphatic understanding of the research participants by the researcher at every stage of the research process. The researcher must also assume full responsibility for her actions and ultimately for the welfare of the informants, including protecting the identity of the participants even after the research is completed. The outcome, of course, was to obtain the best quality information.

In empathising with the researched, feminist researchers come up against ethical problems. For example, there are the possibilities of becoming too attached, carried

away and becoming emotionally involved (see Holland and Ramazanoglu, 1994; Glucksmann, 1994; Skeggs, 1995b). As Skeggs (1995b) writes: "how we understand the experience of the research, the researched and our own had always presented specific dilemmas for feminist theorists" (p. 199).

Feminists have tried to counteract this dilemma by calling for openness and honesty in research process. This involves among others things, a recognition of the involvement of the researcher in the research process and the need to make it visible in its presentation. Ultimately the researcher becomes simultaneously an inquirer and a participant in the research (Hill, 2003). Gelsthorpe (1990) recognising the involvement of feminist researchers with research subjects calls for researchers to record the impact of the research on themselves. To her, no feminist research is 'value free' and feminist researchers should set out to make their own values explicit. This argument is in line with Stanley and Wise's (1983) assertion that a feminist research is characterised by a concern to record the subjective experiences of doing research. As they point out, whether we like it not, researchers remain human beings complete with all the usual assembly of feelings and moods. They further argue that:

> Our consciousness is always the medium through which the research occurs; there is no method or technique of doing research other than through the medium of the researcher (Stanley and Wise 1983, p. 157).

In feminist research, it is therefore a legitimate act to draw on one's personal experience when conducting research because the problems raised in personal accounts of research are themselves of sociological importance (Roberts 1981, p. 1). Feminists, having called for openness and honesty in the research process, also call for the employment of suitable methods to achieve this.

Self-reflexivity has become extremely important to feminist researchers because it offers insights into the research process, its difficulties and its compensations (Skeggs ed., 1995; Green, 1999; Hill, 2003). For Fonow and Cook (1991), reflexivity is "the tendency of feminists to reflect upon, examine critically and explore analytically the nature of the research process" (p. 2). This process explores personal involvement with (and connections to) social research, both in terms of the processes of the research and the impact on the researcher. It also exposes the researcher's own thinking to critical scrutiny enabling others to assess the validity of the material gathered.

I had to make a conscious decision on whether to employ this approach and how it would be of benefit to my research. Here I am in Britain pursuing a PhD more than 4,000 miles from home. The agonies, frustrations, pains and challenges involved in conducting research in an environment that is both foreign and culturally different seemed too much of a dynamic to dismiss. In Nigeria, I had received different training from the one prevalent in the British academy, an academy that has always been drummed in my ears as being very superior. I have often been tormented by self-doubts, bouts of nervousness and anxiety as to whether I could meet up with the 'standards' expected of me to fit into the British academy. For me, this research represents a journey – how I grew from the frightened woman that came on a cold winter morning to Britain dazed with fear of not knowing what was expected of her, to a woman who could just 'let herself be'. It represents how I grew from the woman who yearned for a friendly face and perhaps a smile because I was so unsure of myself, to one who has learnt to smile and let the world go by as I gained in confidence. I came to Britain with notions of the superiority of the 'white race'. This research represents a rebirth for me, as I realised that even the 'rich do cry'. It is also a journey from childhood to adulthood, a journey from innocence to awareness. As I gulped down all the new theories that I

had to digest within so short a time, as I became more piqued by all the conflicting critiques of these theories, as I became frustrated reading difficult materials and trying to tease out what the hell they are all about, I realised that, for survival, I called up one of the greatest stereotypes of the African woman – 'the strong woman'. I still tell myself that I am an African woman and therefore a survivor and shall be undaunted. Only the use of a self-reflexive method would allow me capture this actuality and reality of my research. Birch (1998) is right when she says that the researcher is a person and her personhood or self cannot be left out of the research process.

Being an African woman doing research in Britain is not without its problems. In the first instance, I am faced with the limits of my Western/British cultural capital.[2] This was apparent to me not only in my daily life but also in understanding the media, which I have come to study. I still remember the earlier seminars I attended, where I was at loss as the participants discussed issues and films they had watched. As I struggled not only to understand their accent but also to make sense out of what they were saying, the limits of my cultural capital stared me in the face. This awareness of my lack of cultural capital was to inform the type of approaches I was to choose later in my study. No doubt the feelings of being an 'outsider' were very pervasive and I was continuously tormented with the fear that I may be ill equipped to meet up to the challenges of a UK PhD. Other black researchers in the British academy have expressed similar trepidation (Collins, 1991; Marshall, 1994). Marshall (1994) reflecting about her PhD writes:

> Self-doubt about my intellectual abilities ... obstructs my writing. Rather than seeing my uncertainty... as part of the nature of conducting fieldwork, I worry that I am theoretically deficient .... As

2 Pierre Bourdieu is the originator of this concept. Cultural capital involves those attitudes and aptitudes, which individuals bring into their interpretation framework. These aptitudes and attitudes are often taken for granted, for often they have been cultivated as a result of appropriate socialisation and systematic education (See Harker *et al.*, 1990). Richard Harker (1990) in his article "Bourdieu –Education and Reproduction" explores the concept of cultural capital in depth especially in relation to education.

> a black feminist, I endure the additional problems of dealing with my insider/outsider situation ... and the pressure to be a Black superwoman (p. 120).

I tried to devise some defensive mechanisms to deal with this alienation within the British academy. For example, in seminars, instead of feeling alienated by discussions, which excluded my reality, I tried to relate these discussions to my reality. What for example, I wondered would be the reactions of my people to issues of sexuality and sexual identities, which frequently featured in the seminars I attended? This is because while the West allows the expression of variant sexual identities, for many African societies lesbianism and homosexuality are nothing but abominations (Aina 1998, p. 72). I also recall a seminar I attended where we were shown video clippings of women dancing: a ballet it was called. I marvelled at the way the women's legs were stretched and raised to such incredible heights. I expected their thighs would come apart at any moment. The dancers were highly applauded. Again, when I read that against my culture, I felt that my people would be scandalised to see women stretching their legs to such lengths. Also, in Nigeria where marriage is of prime importance, you can be rest assured that no man would ever want to marry such girls. Engaging with these cross-cultural dilemmas (not only in seminars but also in daily lives) helped me to deal with my self-consciousness as I struggled to adapt culturally in Britain. It also brought forcibly to me the need to culturally situate my analysis of messages and images while also attempting to engage in cross-cultural conversations. This again was to affect the approach I adopted in my research. As I engaged in such mental exercises about different cultural perspectives, the idea of conducting a cross-cultural study was born.

As I conducted my literature review of feminism, I initially thought that most had been produced in the West and mostly by white women. Some of it has also been produced by 'diasporic black' African women. While the former considers gender of primary importance, the latter calls for an inclusion of racial identity in the discussion of the oppression of women. In their 'diasporic scholarship', it seems that these black Africans, (in response to what is perceived as the ethnocentric perception of Africa and their cultures) have idealised the African past (Oyewumi, 1997). While the west tended to produce vesicles of 'bad' in relation to black African cultures, black Africans in response mark out the racially female voice as a metaphor for 'good'. Both are caught up in rehearsing their own speeches and most likely do not really hear one another. This scenario, which could be likened to 'the dialogue of the deaf', has continued to increase the difficulty of Weststream and African feminism to engage in any productive conversation especially on issues of representation.

Research design and philosophy

This research attempts to step across the boundaries between Africa and the West that I have just outlined briefly, by exploring another basis for interpreting media messages. Rather than using the axis of either 'gender' or 'race' as the defining factor in the construction of femininity, as argued by Weststream and African feminists, this study looks at the production of meaning with regard to both these factors. This involves an engagement in both cultural and cross-cultural analysis of the representation of the black African woman in the media.

One of the more recent approaches to intercultural relations is postcolonial theory. Postcolonial theory has re-emphasised the implications of the colonial past for present social interactions and cultural forms between the West and people from the so-called 'former colonies'. As I have discussed in the preceding chapters, intellectuals in the 'former colonies' as well as literary and historical researchers from the West have addressed numerous issues from various perspectives (see Achebe, 1975; Ngugi, 1986a; 1986b; Barker *et al.* 1994; Ashcroft *et al.*, 1995; McLeod, 2000). Debates have however moved from attempting historical definitions of postcolonialism, which might focus on economic and political mechanisms of oppression to attempting some discursive definitions, which shift attention towards narratives and worldviews as a cultural means of oppression. This view privileges power – the power to define the 'Other' (Jensen, 2002a). Spivak stands out as a critic who is prepared to try to diffuse this power as she tries to step across the boundaries between western and non-western feminisms. She takes the explicit stance of making discursive room for the 'Other' to exist (Spivak, 1988, 1995). Landry and MacLean (1996) write that one of Spivak's important contributions has been to consider "unlearning one's privilege as one's loss". As they explain:

> Our privileges whatever they may be in terms of race, class nationality, gender, and the like, may have prevented us from gaining a certain kind of Other knowledge: not simply information that we have not yet received, but the knowledge that we are not equipped to understand by reason of our social positions. To unlearn our privileges means, on the one hand, to do our homework, to work hard at gaining some knowledge of the others who occupy those spaces most closed to our privileged view. On the other hand, it means attempting to speak to those others in such a way that they might take us seriously, and, most important of all, be able to answer back (p. 4 –5).

Spivak recognises the potential for alternative viewpoints and resistance arguing that, "ethics are not a problem of knowledge but a call of relationship" (Landry and MacLean 1996, p. 5). She calls therefore for the beginning of an ethical relation to the 'Other'. Spivak however has been accused of concentrating her analytical efforts on developing abstract and rather speculative theories of discourse (McLeod, 2000; Jensen, 2002a). She has also been criticised for treating material realities as purely textual or theoretical phenomenon. As Moore-Gilbert (1997) argues that "the more the subaltern is seen as a "theoretical" fiction ... the more the sufferings and exploitation of the subaltern becomes a theoretical fiction, too" (p. 102). Jensen (2002a) explores this issue further and writes:

> A central question has been how – through what discursive forms – an autonomous and genuinely postcolonial subject might finally articulate itself. As a result (Spivak) could be said to neglect both the material contexts of discourse and the *variable interpretations of discourse by actual, embodied human beings* (my emphasis) (p. 180).

This research is an attempt to provide some kind of material context to such discourse, to provide variable interpretations of the discourse on African women by actual embodied human beings. This involves my attempts to 'cross cultures' which has attendant problems. In order to be 'culture sensitive', I decided that I needed to provide a space whereby African and western cultures could be in dialogue with each other. I however occupy a pivotal place in this dialogue as often my authorial voice is quite discernible as I draw from my own experiences to make sense of the data. Having ethnographic knowledge of both Nigerian and British cultures provides the insight to draw from mine and other people's cultural experiences to negotiate spatial cultural differences.

In a way, I 'poach' from traditional ethnography and as Richardson (2000) suggests, it is quite valid to do so. With my presence in the UK as a catalyst, I create cultural insights into gendered/racial experiences in Nigeria and Britain through self-reflexivity and autobiographical accounts. Using oneself to some degree as a research instrument has been found to be very valuable as it not only frees the researcher from traditional conventions/constraints of writing, but also honours one's unique voice in the work and gives reader a sense of the writer as a full human being (Sparkes, 2002). In bringing autobiographical experiences (in both Nigeria and Britain) to bear in this thesis, I hope to carry the "traces of one community into another and then dislocate the traditions of both, opening possibilities for new forms of relationship" (Gergen and Gergen 2002, p. 12). Thus by creating insights into both cultures I offer possibilities for a new form of relationship between Weststream and African feminists. A consistent challenge to the use of personal accounts has been that they evoke a possible sense of artifice and provoke readers to wonder how authentic these experiences are (Etherington, 2004). For me, any misgivings I have about having used this method were not about questions of authenticity (for I know the stories told are not invented), but more about how much I wished to invite the reader into my 'personal' experiences. Moreover, I also worried about whether other people linked to my tales and revelations would see my words as an invasion of their privacy. I hope however that the critical reflections, which these stories might ignite (in both myself and readers) about 'our' gendered existence might offer the future[3] a basis for an 'ethical' relationship with 'the other'.

3 One of the criticisms that has been labelled against ethnography is that its presentation fails to imply any future beyond that directly given (Gergen and Gergen 2002, p. 23)

Creating a dialogue space: choosing media texts

My prior experience in newspaper production made newspapers an obvious choice of text for my research.[4] As to be expected, an initial task that I faced when I arrived Britain was to acquaint myself with the British press tradition. I easily noticed that in contrast to Nigeria, Britain in addition to quality newspapers also has the tradition of tabloid newspapers.[5] Nigerian newspapers in their content are considered quality newspapers. To address the differences in type between Nigerian and many British newspapers, I decided to concentrate only on British quality newspapers as the British element of my research in order to tally with Nigerian press tradition. As the Nigerian press tends to be ethnically and geographically oriented, so, the cultural bias of the newspapers I chose to analyse (*New Nigerian*, *The Punch*, *Daily Champion* and *The Guardian* [N]) is mirrored by the political bias of two English newspapers, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian* (UK). I deliberately chose *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian* (UK) because both represent the polarised ends of the British politics – the conservative and the liberal (The British Council, 1999). *The Daily Telegraph* has an inclination towards the Conservatives; a trend started by previous owners such as Lord Hartell, while *The Guardian* (UK) leans towards a liberal stance and was once known as 'Britain's non-conformist conscience' (The British Council, 1999). Together with *The Times*, these newspapers form Britain's 'big three quality' newspapers with very high circulation and readership. In my choice of Nigerian newspapers, I wanted newspapers that represented the distinct ethnic voices of the country. Thus, Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo ethnic groups are respectively represented in *New Nigerian, The*

4 I had for several years in Nigeria taught undergraduate courses on Newspaper Production in the Department of Mass Communication, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria as well as been a member of the advisory staff of a provincial newspaper Newsweek also published in Nigeria.

5 Nigeria's first tabloid newspaper (also called The Sun) became established in August 2003. The Governor of Abia State, Orji Uzor Kalu, established it.

Punch, and *Daily Champion.* The Ibru family who come from one of the many minority ethnic groups own *The Guardian* (N). *The Guardian* (N) however cannot be said to represent the minorities, as the minority ethnic groups in Nigeria do not have the political coalition to form a distinct voice in the country. I have nonetheless decided to examine the news reports in *The Guardian* (N) in order to add to the debate on the working of the Nigerian press, especially against the backdrop of *The Guardian*'s claim of 'independence' from any political party, ethnic community, religious or other interest group[6]. Interestingly, in Nigeria, more than the other newspapers, *The Guardian* [N] is considered 'national' in its outlook.

Gathering the data

How I gathered my data was shaped by a number of factors. First, while I was immersing myself in order to become acquainted with the British press, I noted the preponderance of negative news about Africa. African women dominated the news photos, while making minimal appearances in the news stories. My first decision was to analyse thematically the representation of Africa in the British news, seeking a possible link between the construction of Africanness and the regimes of racial representations. It was difficult for me to keep track of newspaper representations physically on a daily basis. I relied therefore, on the assistance of the Lexis-Nexis professional of the University of Gloucestershire Infotrac, to conduct an online search for one year (2002) of news articles on Africa in the British press (*The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian* (UK)). This was quite significant; since it is within the context of Africanness that I was to go on to examine the representation of African women.

[6] See The Guardian [N] web site www.ngrguardiannews.com

Second, with my growing familiarity with the British press, I became aware of a sharp contrast between photos of African women in British newspapers and those, which appeared in Nigerian ones. While the British newspapers mostly showed suffering, sick, hungry and displaced African women, Nigerian newspapers provided images of African women in the prime of their life. Through systematic analysis of two British newspapers, *The Guardian* (UK) and *The Daily Telegraph*, I collected photographs of African women and then analysed them by way of a comparative analysis with African women in Nigerian press.

As I have previously suggested, African women featured very little in the British news stories. The only story on an African woman, which was given much detail in British newspaper in the year 2002 (which was the period of my study), was the Victoria Climbié child abuse case. I used this story as a case study, to provide more insight into the thematic analysis of the representation of Africa in the British news (Jensen, 2002a).

Being in the UK, I did not have easy access to Nigerian newspapers. In order to be able to explore the dominant representation of African women within Nigerian newspapers, I used a tactic of what I called 'critical events'. These events happened during the year of study (2002) and were reported by both Nigeria and Britain press. A contact in Nigeria bought the relevant editions of the Nigerian newspapers and sent them over to me by post. No doubt, this was both inconvenient and expensive. The aim of using the 'critical events' formula was to provide a link between the representations of African women in both countries. These critical events are the following:

The Hausa /Yoruba ethnic clash (1 – 5 February 2002).
The Queen's Golden Jubilee/World cup (24 - 28 June 2002).
The Commonwealth Games (5 – 9 August 2002).
The Miss World Contest (18 – 22 November 2002).

I conducted a one-week study of my chosen newspapers for each of the critical events chosen. I studied five editions of each of the newspapers for each week (except weekends) within which the critical event fell. The number of newspapers studied within the critical events can be represented thus:

> Nigeria: (5+5+5+5) x 4 = 80
> Britain: (5+5) x 4 = 40.

This means that within these periods, I studied 120 newspaper editions (80 Nigerian and 40 of British). One of the greatest problems I encountered was how to keep such quantity of physical newspapers in the space I was allotted as a research student. Sometimes, my reading space became a maze of newspapers as I tried to make head and tail out of them. Faced with such kaleidoscopic of data, what I needed was an uncomplicated way to analyse the data and make discoveries about the content. McQuail (2000) asserts that:

> There is no coherent theory of media content and no consensus on the best method of analysis, since alternative methods are needed for different purposes and for different kinds of content and different media genres (p. 306).

Strengthened by McQuail's view, I decided to adopt a symptomatic approach to my data. This method seemed appropriate, as my interest was not in how often African women do feature in the news, but in what capacity they do feature. Ross (1996) is right when she writes:

> It is the poverty of black images rather than their frequency that constitutes the real problem, images constrained and constructed within a narrow band of character types in comedy and drama, or fetishized within a racialized demonology in factual programming. It is the lack of diversity when encountering black images as well as the pejorative or negative connotations which such images provoke which lie the centre of the representation debate in media mainstream (p. 170).

By using a symptomatic analysis, I decided therefore not to concern myself with the numbers (quantity) but look out for news items about African women and attempt to identify recognisable themes, patterns and trends in the reporting of black African women in the key newspapers chosen. The strength of a symptomatic analysis is in its ability to provide clues and to use such clues to tease out the 'secrets' of representation (Goring *et al.*, 2001). Such themes, patterns and trends might be considered more or less the overt messages about African women in the newspapers. They provide the clues to the covert and uncertain meanings imbued in the texts. In line with the cultural studies tradition that challenges transparency of meanings (Hall *et al.* eds., 1980; During ed, 1999), while emphasising linguistic and ideological structuration of media messages (Hall ed., 1997), I considered some other questions. What do these themes, patterns and trends in the reporting of black African women in the key Nigerian and British newspapers say about the construction of femininity in both cultures? What do the images say about Africa as well? 'Reading off' meanings that are somehow embedded in media texts is not an easy matter (French, 1992). They are not self evident and certainly not fixed. I went on to conduct a textual analysis of the news items, examining the structures and the language of the texts in relation to the news genre (Van Dijk, 2000). This involved a critical examination of the texts. I analysed topics, headlines, style of writing, etc., to tease out the subtle details of the reporting. Quite early in the process, I became cognisant of my limited knowledge of British culture and my limited access to the polysemic meanings of media texts. In thinking through a response to this, I became convinced of the need to enter into dialogue with other readers/ audiences.

Reading the text through dialogue

A recurring issue in qualitative research traditions has been the status of the text in audience studies (Jensen, 2002b). Fuelled by the concern that in textual studies, the media text was reified, many feminist media researchers have increasingly turned to audience study as a method of feminist research (Imam, 1992; Hermes, 1995). Some feminist researchers have worried therefore that concentrating on audience studies alone could in fact lose sight altogether of the texts themselves (Brunsdon, 1991). Such worries seem founded in the light of influential theoretical contributions, which asserted that media texts are 'empty' waiting only to be filled with meaning by audiences acting as 'interpretative communities' (Fish, 1979). Other interventions seem to over–emphasize in semiotic terms the 'polysemy' of media texts (Fiske, 1987). Fiske (1991), referring to television viewing, suggests that both text and audience be dissolved to give way for "the variety of cultural activities that take place in front of the screen" (p. 57), reifying what Eco (1977, p. 150) has called 'semiotic guerrilla warfare'. I needed to address this 'slippery' notion of meanings in relation to media texts. How do I claim validity and reliability of the meanings (Silverman, 1993) I make of the images of black African women within the Nigerian and British newspapers? This question guided me in making another methodological decision: the use of advisory dialogue groups. I exposed these groups of women to newspaper clippings of African women within the news both in texts and in photos. Their engagements with these clippings provided me with the avenue to cross cultures and be able to 'read' within a complex matrix of context, theory and representation. They also allowed for as much cultural sensitivity as possible by letting African and western cultures to be in dialogue with each other, rather than be dealt separately as has been the trend so far. This study therefore takes further the cross-cultural study by Liebes and Katz (1990). In their study of cross-cultural

readings of *Dallas*, a famous long running soap opera, they analysed four rhetorical forms in which viewers of differing ethnicity couch their statements about *Dallas*, with the aim of establishing a culturally specific set of readings of text. This project explores both the cultural specificity and cross-cultural production of meanings and representations with a view to creating more understanding between Western and African cultures with regard to issues of representations relating to black African women in the press.

Access issues: Initiating the contact

The next task that I faced was how to find women who would form the dialogue groups in Britain and Nigeria. In order to make initial contact I drafted a questionnaire[7] in which I introduced my research and myself. I thought that a questionnaire would be easier in initiating initial contact rather than a face-to-face contact. Since I was not in Nigeria, and would only be returning for a short period to set up the dialogue groups, I sent the questionnaires ahead through my contact in Nigeria to distribute to women. Gunter (2000) calls this tactic of administering questionnaires to participants prior to group sessions an "extended focus group". He recognises two uses of this approach: it allows the participants to develop a commitment to a position before any group discussion begins as well as ensuring that the moderator draws out minority opinions as well as more dominant majority ones (2000, p. 43). I designed the questionnaire principally to:

- Find women who regularly read the newspapers. This was one of the criteria for being in the advisory /dialogue group.

[7] See Appendix 3 for sample of the questionnaire.

- Explore the different conceptions of Africa and African women that these women (especially British ones) held which were then further explored in the discussions.
- Provide opportunity for the women to either accept or decline to participate in the discussions.

Knowing the insistence on ethics in feminist research (Neuman, 1991; Glucksmann, 1994; Skeggs, 1995b), I assured the women in the questionnaire that the information they provide would be used only for research purposes and that no subsequent information that could possibly identify them would be retained afterwards. I did however ask those willing to participate in the dialogue to provide contact details so that I could get in touch with them later. Knowing only a very limited group of people in Britain, I had to rely on the church group I belonged to, to start my snowballing process and generate further contacts (Jensen, 2002b). Discussions with my supervisors, however, helped me to address the possibility of producing only homogenous samples from this sampling strategy. I therefore specifically asked my contacts to distribute the questionnaires to the widest network of contacts outside of the church. They therefore explored other avenues, their workplace, their clubs, their families, etc. In total 20 questionnaires went out via these contacts but I quickly realised that it was not easy for these contacts to engage in distributing questionnaires on my behalf, as it was a great imposition in terms of time. I had the initial circulation that I needed for the research to take off but I decided to explore other means of distributing further questionnaires. They had however provided me with enough willing contacts to form a pilot study, which would aid me to progress with my research in several ways.

Pilot study

I developed the idea for a British pilot study for a number of reasons. Because I had little experience in interviewing for research purposes, the pilot study offered me the opportunity to try out and put into practice all the tips I had learnt from a qualitative training module that I had attended and theories about good practice (see Deacon *et al.*,1999; Gunter, 2000; Jensen ed, 2002) that I have been reading about. It also helped familiarise me with the British participants, and to get my ears accustomed to their accent in an interview situation. Because I considered myself at home with the Nigerian press and Nigerian women, I did not arrange to do a Nigerian pilot study. It was my greatest hope that the pilot study would provide themes for further exploration in my study and assist me in developing my interview schedule[8] (Silverman, 1993).

Armed with the contact phone numbers of the 'willing participants' I went on to introduce myself to them. The questionnaire proved to be a very useful method of making contact and the use of the contacts that the would-be participants were familiar with helped diffuse the initial awkwardness of meeting a stranger the first time and helping to ease the rapport between me and the interviewees (Jayarante, 1983; Maynard and Purvis, 1994). One of the first difficulties I had was to fix a mutually convenient date and time to meet. It was towards the Christmas season and most of them had one engagement or the other. I made many phone calls, often getting the answering machines. I left messages asking them to call me back at their own convenience but often no one did. I made a mental note that it was a bad time to demand people's attention. I felt I was intruding as even on the occasions I got people; I could feel the stress coming through the phone lines. I had to ring a particular woman for more than

[8] Appendix 4 shows the interview guide/schedule

ten times before I got her. When I introduced myself, she asked me to call back later as she was about to put the children to bed. I rang again an hour later – the children were still awake – I could hear their noise in the background. The husband came to the phone and asked me to wait. By the time the woman came to the phone, she sounded irritable: the children have been giving her a hard time – could I give her my number so that she calls back? She never did. Not being very comfortable with English culture, I did not know how to read this. I thought that I would have handled the situation better if it were in Nigeria, where if a person did not want to participate, she would tell you out right. However, not every contact was as frustrating for me as this one. There was a woman whom I was able to catch after a couple of calls. When I told her what I wanted, she expressed doubt about the convenience of the date, as it seemed to have coincided with the visit of her grand children. She promised to call me back as soon as she was able to contact the daughter. She called back after two days and agreed to the date. These two instances exemplify my worst and the best experiences.

Venue for the meeting

Like most qualitative researchers, I was concerned with the question of a good venue for my discussions (Phoenix, 1994; Gray, 1995). In Britain, the worry was resolved for me when one of my local contacts offered the use of her house for the sessions I had in Cheltenham. Another contact in Wales also offered the use of her house for the discussion in Newport. It is quite usual for researchers to conduct interviews in people's home (Liebes and Katz, 1990; Gray, 1995). My contacts' houses provided a non-threatening and non-bureaucratic setting, combined with a homely atmosphere. Their houses seemed to possess all the characteristics that Phoenix (1994) considered as ideal

working conditions for the interviewer: "a warm private place and provision of drinks every few hours..." (p. 59). For my Nigerian, I used my house as the venue. Even though I had to grapple with the possibility of this increasing the power relations between myself as the researcher and the participants; other considerations like easy access (no road maps in the area, and my house is in a strategic position) facilities, (like the stand by generator in case of power failure) made my house the best location to conduct the research. That was a pragmatic decision, which I had to make in the research field (see Ross, 2000). I had however given them the option of school with the available facilities and they all preferred my house as it offered more privacy and safety than a school. One ethical issue that I had to consider was what incentive and gratification I would offer the participants to entice them into the dialogue groups. It was important that it should not amount to coercion (Dane, 1990). In Britain, the promise of tea/coffee and cakes and the chance to try some Nigerian food seemed adequate. In Nigeria, the situation was different. I had to include an added incentive of the transportation money. This was because at that period, many of the civil servants had not been paid for months and I did not want my research to be an added burden to them or impoverish them the more. Moreover, many of participants would have been unable to attend otherwise. The money I provided for them was just adequate for their transportation and nothing more. It is significant that those of them who lived close enough to the venue refused to take any money as they did not take a cab.

Recording of research proceedings

Another issue, which I needed to address, was the issue of recording research proceedings. There are various ways of doing this: writing field notes, keeping research

diaries, videotaping and audio taping the proceedings. Each has its strengths and weaknesses and all raise ethical issues (see Dane, 1990; Hansen *et al.*, 1998; Silverman, 2000). I had little problem negotiating the ethics involved in keeping a research diary, as I made sure I simply recorded what had occurred. Even though I did not keep a daily account of my research journey, I put down whatever I had felt very strongly about, whether in daily life or during a strictly research process. In addition, after each discussion, I wrote what I felt about the event, its strengths and weaknesses and how this might be improved in subsequent discussions. I took each new encounter as a learning experience (whether I felt that it had gone well or badly) as in its uniqueness there was always a source of learning. For instance after one of the discussions (the pilot study) I wrote:

> I think I left giving the materials a little late. I believe they were already exhausted before I gave them the materials to read. I had to prod them for answers, many of which came from their regular contact with the media rather than what they had immediately read. Guess the materials were too many? Should consider the possibility of giving them out earlier (Research Diary 15/12/2002).

My research diary was useful to me, not only in documenting the trajectories of my research, but also as a resourceful tool for improvement.

Another issue with many ethical implications was the recording of the interview process (Silverman, 1993). I had requested the permission of the respondents to tape the proceedings of the discussion and in Nigerian case even recorded them on video.[9] I had also assured them that their anonymity would be preserved. Both seem contradictory. Going ahead with the discussions knowing that both their images and voices may be trapped in the machines shows the degree of trust they had in me. I chose recording

[9] I had to make the decision to record Nigerian dialogue group to serve as evidence, should my supervisors require it. The video would be destroyed as soon as my research is concluded.

instead of writing field notes because of the great advantage the former has on the latter (see Silverman, 2000). In the first instance, it left me free to freely interact with the respondents rather than concentrating on writing copious notes. Tape recording also provided the verbatim record of the events for subsequent analysis and re-analysis as fresh ideas emerged. It also took note of record of the minute details of the interview process, which otherwise I would have missed out because we cannot certainly rely on our recollections of conversations or depend effectively on our memories to summarise what people have said (Silverman 2000, p. 149). This point has been elaborated in Silverman (1993), when citing Heritage (1984) he writes:

> The use of recorded data is an essential corrective to the limitations of intuition and recollection. In enabling repeated and detailed examination of the events of interaction, the use of recordings extends the range and precision of the observations which can be made. It permits other researchers to have direct access to the data about which claims are being made, thus making analysis subject to detailed public scrutiny and helping to minimise the influence of personal preconceptions or analytical biases. Finally it may be noted that because the data are available in 'raw' form, they can be re-used in a variety of investigations and can be re-examined in the context of new findings (Heritage 1984 cited in Silverman 1993, p. 119).

Recording certainly does have enormous advantages but enormous too are the ethical problems involved in its use. Feminist researchers have concerned themselves with guarding against the misuse of data and transcripts. Glucksmann (1994) for example feels that the question of ethics should be raised not just on how data is elicited but also on the use made of the interview materials. She argues that what one does with the tape is totally left at the hands of the researcher who can graft the excerpts to suit her purpose, amounting to misrepresentation of the meanings intended by the respondents. Thus, while some researchers have suggested group data analysis session to listen to or

watch audio video recordings as a panacea to misuse of data (Silverman, 1993), some favour showing the end result as opposed to the unedited transcript to the people it was based on (Glucksmann, 1994). Both suggestions, though worthy, often times, however, may not be feasible especially if the discussions had involved a lot of people and making long journeys (as was the case with my work in Nigeria). To ensure the reliability of the transcripts, I listened to the tape with friends, and called the assistance of others, especially in sections that had proved difficult for me to decipher because my difficulties with the accent of the persons involved. The transcripts too had been sent to my supervisors who offered some suggestions. I do not claim, however, to have produced perfect transcripts, but I have made efforts to make them as near perfect as possible. As Silverman (1993, p. 149) writes:

> It is important that we do not delude ourselves into seeking a 'perfect' transcript. Transcripts can always be improved and the search for perfection is illusory and time consuming. Rather, the aim is to arrive at an agreed transcript, adequate for the task ahead.

Reflections on the Pilot study

The pilot study helped to refine my research. One of the first things that I realised was that bringing the newspaper clippings into the interview and giving the women time to go through them did not allow enough time to engage in meaning construction of the texts. I had tried to adapt the method used by earlier researchers on decodings i.e. who have studied the readings of the television programmes on site by engaging the participants in taking part in the activity of watching the programme at the same time such as Liebes and Katz, (1990); Jennings, (1998); Morley and Brunsdon, (1999) and I noticed this did not work for my participants, largely because reading newspapers is an independent activity, where each reader goes at her own pace. I quickly realised that

while the time I allotted to examine the newspapers was enough for some participants, it was not enough for others. Moreover, it became clear that within time constraints it was difficult for participants to adequately read and offer meaningful decodings of the messages. I therefore decided that in subsequent meetings I would send the newspapers clippings earlier to the participants giving them a minimum of one week's advance, to afford them the time to read them. Conducting the pilot study also helped me note errors especially in time management and control of the discussion situation. This helped me adjust my interview guide. Also, throughout the discussion I sensed a distance that I could not fathom. I therefore had a rethink about my method of gathering the respondents. I spoke to all of them on the phone but had met just a couple of them myself. In subsequent discussions with other groups, I decided to endeavour to set up meetings with the participants before the actual day of the meeting. This ensured that we were properly introduced and increased a smoother relationship. Again, I had gone to the meeting in my national dress. I did not think it necessary to be particular with what I wore. Since I have often won my national address routinely, I did not think to make an exception on this day. Since then, I have had a rethink of the attire to put on while interviewing people (Gray, 1995). What Peters (1997) writes about dressing for the researcher rings very true: "What to wear is not just an issue of vanity; the presentation of self is very important to a researcher's acceptance" (cited in Green 1999, p. 100). I saw my national dress as putting more barriers between the British women and I. It made me to stand apart – to shout my difference. This was confirmed when in the preliminary discussions we had, I asked them whether anything came to their mind when they saw me, one of them replied: "I said to myself, she must be new since doesn't dress like one of us". This statement to my mind already divided us: "me" versus "them". For subsequent interviews, I decided to dress like 'them', to play down

the difference (if I can, my colour seems to shout it!), and to play up the empathy. This experience affected how I dress in Britain. I minimised the times I wore my national dress because I realised that "dressing like them" could possibly reduce (even if slightly) the difference that 'they' see in me.

After the discussion, I had conversations with the women during mealtime. This opened another possible way for me to conduct my study. Reacting to the photographs of African women that I gave to them, one of the women said that there was a possibility that I selected those that would serve my purpose. Even though I do not claim that the photographs were all the photographs of African women that appeared in the newspapers at that period, they were not selected with any ulterior motive. When I discussed this with my supervisors, they advised that in subsequent interviews I should ask the women to come with samples of news stories on African women they have come across. I could then see how these compare with the ones I collected. Working with their advice, in subsequent interviews, I gave the participants an assignment of getting any newspaper cuttings where African women featured in the news. This worked well and it was striking that there was great similarity between what I collected and the samples the women provided.[10]

Going into the field: Fieldwork in Britain

I read one methodology book after another on how to conduct interviews, focus groups, and so on. I conducted the pilot study, which had indeed enriched my experience and added to my confidence. For the next stage, I sent the news extracts ahead of time

[10] See Appendix 5 for the summary of the images that emanated from the assignment.

accompanied by a letter where I assured them of confidentiality and protection.[11] I made sure I had seen majority of the participants face to face before the interview date to explain my research verbally and build up more empathic understanding (see Kelly, 1990). This was made easier for me because after the pilot study, I had embarked on finding the participants myself. I turned every opportunity I had into a research opportunity. I distributed the questionnaires at seminars, in the bus, at offices, through friends of colleagues, other friends not in Cheltenham. In some ways, it was really quite an aggressive approach and it yielded a lot. In the end, out of fifty questionnaires distributed, about 25 women met all the criteria: they read newspapers regularly, were willing to participate in a group discussion and provided addresses and phone numbers for further contact. I contacted them on the phone or through emails and in most cases set up meetings with them so that we were properly introduced. In the end, two group discussions were held in Cheltenham, England and one was held in Wales. The age range of the women fell within 25 to 60 years. My contacts' sitting rooms provided much needed warmth and space. None of these preparations however really prepared me for the actual field experience (Glucksmann, 1994).

I made sure I was at the venue about one hour before the time, to test the cassette recorder and put a final touch to things. Each time I was racked with worry whether the participants would actually turn up. In the end, I saw that there was no need for the worries for apart from one woman in the Wales group who was unable to attend because of a recent bereavement, all the other women that promised to come did so. The Wales group was particularly worrisome for me, for apart from two of the participants, I had not met the others earlier. It was in that group, however, that I

[11] Appendix 6 contains the sample of letter to the participants.

experienced a kind of sorority and bond between the women and myself. I recorded this in my research diary thus:

> I went to Wales with some trepidation, not knowing what to expect. Apart from sending letters and the materials to read ahead through my contact, I had not met majority of the women. Leaving Cheltenham for Wales that day, I felt a little afraid. But it turned out to be a pleasurable experience. The women turned out to be very warm. Immediately the first two arrived and encircled me in a warm hug, I felt the tension ease out from me and I knew it was going to be all right. It turned out to be such a warm gathering of women with lively dispositions and engaging personalities. I did not realise I could enjoy myself in the company of white women like that. There was this bond – a sisterhood I never felt before in the other groups…(Research Diary 22/3/2003).

This situation made me reflect on how unfathomable the research situation could be. Most times things do not always turn out the way we expect it to.

Reflections on the dialogue group discussion in Britain

Most of my respondents knew before hand that I was a Nigerian. I introduced myself as such in the questionnaire, told them so over the phone or via email and since I saw most of them before the meetings, my ethnic identity was not in question. This probably minimised negative reactions, which some black researchers in white communities have experienced in the course of their research (Phoenix, 1994). I could not however help noticing that I was an object for curiosity to some of them. A couple, both in their late forties confessed I was the first African woman they had met. I did not ask them, but I assumed that their curiosity to meet an African woman may have motivated them to join in the discussion. I jokingly asked one of them whether I was what she imagined an African woman would be. She replied:

> Well, you do not certainly represent what I thought a typical African woman is. The African woman I know from the media here is a grovelling destitute and an illiterate. And you certainly do not look that.

I did not know whether to be happy or sad. I considered it, however, the most open and direct reply I got to my questions. I had to probe for answers before I could get a reply, even then in a circumventive way. In my research diary, I likened the situation to "playing cat and mouse." I had the feeling that they were being guarded with their utterances especially in the issues of race and what they think of African women. In most cases, they made it clear to me that it is what they get from the media and not necessarily, what they believe. Yet as Ross (1996) has argued:

> Knowledge about those who are different from 'us' is often gained vicariously through various media forms. The repetitive framing of particular images in certain ways eventually leads to those images being seen as a definitive statement on 'those' people and groups to 'which 'they' belong. Images thus become transformed over time from being merely 'symbolic' to connoting reality (p. 4).

In some cases too, when their curiosity got the better of them, they turned their answers into questions addressed to me. For example, one of them asked me: "Is it true you do not have running taps in your homes?"[12] I tried to answer their questions as much as I could, remembering that in some of the literature I had reviewed (Oakley, 1981, 1993) that it is not 'bad science' to allow the balance of power within interviews to be shifted by giving the respondents opportunities to ask questions which the researcher answers rather than parries. I felt the need, however to try to gauge what the questions they asked meant. In some situations, I interpreted their questions as their lack of knowledge

[12] See also Kolawole (1997) esp. p 195 – 196 for similar questions asked her about Africa.

about Africa (seeing me as a link to affirm or disprove their 'knowledge' about Africa). In other situations, I saw their questions as ploys to evade my own questions and the sign of an increasing power tussle, which seemed to be continuously playing up in the discussions. The position I adopted, whether I answered the questions they asked or parried them depended on how I interpreted the questions asked. Several days after one of the dialogue groups, I had the chance to speak with one of the women and said that I felt that their responses to me were guarded. She said they were just being cautious because they did not know if what they would say would cause me hurt. This is one way where the colour of a researcher comes between her and her research (see May, 1993). I do not know whether my questions would have elicited different responses if asked by a white person. Simply being women and discussing women's issues in the context of a research interview obviously was not sufficient in this case for the establishment of rapport and seamless flow of discussions. Phoenix (1994) is right when she argues that the dynamics of race, social class, the issue being researched and the intersection of the agendas of interviewers and interviewees all have as much impact as gender on the interview situation.

Fieldwork in Nigeria

One assumption I had when I had difficulties in getting the participants for the dialogue groups in Britain was that it was going to be much easier in Nigeria. I had assumed that because my network of friends and contacts are much greater there. I therefore considered finding at least fifteen women to participate in the dialogue group an easy game. This assumption was soon punctured when I arrived Nigeria. It is amazing how many factors; lack of infrastructures, non-payment of salaries, lack of

telecommunications, all conspired to make the search for participants more difficult than my experience in Britain. I then thought of African feminists such as Nnaemeka (1998), who has stated that because of the differences in priorities, feminism in the West and in African has continued to follow different paths. For one, the inadequate communication systems in Nigeria meant that travelling to the various locations where the women resided was the only means of getting in contact with the women. In many instances, I made several trips before finding the person I wanted. Further, finding women who read newspapers proved a very arduous task. In Nigeria, this is related to the poor economic state of the nation. Most of the women I needed to talk with were workers in various government organizations. Many of them in the state have been owed salaries for months on end. In such a situation, buying the newspapers was their least priority. I had to go to several organizations especially schools and hospitals and from the contacts given to me by friends, I approached some people who I had been tipped off as people who read newspapers. Some agreed that they used to read newspapers, but because of the situation in the country, reading the newspapers was a luxury they could ill afford. Eventually, however, I was able to find women who still managed to read newspapers. In Britain, I found women who read newspapers from their responses to my questionnaire. Although I had sent questionnaires to be distributed in advance to Nigerian women, I came home to discover these women had not filled in the questionnaires. Those who did, had done so in a haphazard manner. While the women were busy with issue of survival, filling out questionnaires for a person considered to be among the high echelons of the society – a 'been-to'[13] was their

[13] This is used in Nigerian parlance for a person who has been 'abroad' to the country of the white people. In the earlier days, such people are usually viewed with awe. In this times however, they are usually greatly respected and envied by those who have not. See Chinua Achebe's *No longer at Ease* (1960).

least worry. The age of the women I spoke with ranged from 25 to 55 years. These women, though well educated were not as media savvy as the British women and they were certainly less critical of the media. I could have gone to the Nigerian cities where the women are richer, 'more elitist' and perhaps more critical of the media, but then I made a purposive choice to have participants who reside in the village set-up, who are as educated as the urban elites but more in contact with the localites. These women were more 'ordinary' and more 'real' than the 'urban elitist women' (see Syvertsen, 2001). Within white feminism, the identity 'feminist' has been constructed partly in contrast with the 'ordinary woman' and much feminist media criticism has installed the figure of the ordinary woman as both the object of study and in some ways, the person on whose behalf the study is undertaken (see Brunsdon, 1997, 2000). The term 'ordinary woman' however has also been questioned. As Hallam and Marshment (1995, p. 169) argue: "the experiences and values which these (ordinary) viewers brought to the text were not as ordinary or as conventional as academic constructions of the 'ordinary viewer' tend to imply." The Nigerian women's dialogue groups were neither so highly placed that they lose touch with reality nor are they so ordinary that they do not make a meaningful contribution. One of the greatest criticisms of feminist scholarship in Africa is its elitist nature (Aina, 1998). Feminist scholarship in Africa has hardly identified with women in the grassroots level. Aina (1998) has argued that such tendency has continued to infantilise feminist struggles in Africa. I reasoned that whatever feminist consciousness my research might raise among the participants would be carried down to the grassroots women more easily, than if I had used the urban-based educated women. This decision created some logistic problems for me, for in the village I had to contend with poor infrastructure – bad roads, lack of constant power

supply, lack of telephones and poverty. In the end, it probably took me more than twice as much, both in time and money, as it would have taken me had I gone for urban-based women. Situations seemed to have worsened in Nigeria since I left for Britain, and the fact that I had become used to a much better communication system for nearly two years in Britain heightened the frustrations that I felt. The fieldwork in Nigeria certainly afforded me the opportunity to reflect on why African feminists have continuously insisted that Africa and the West have different priorities – priorities which continue to ensure that feminisms of the Africans and the West had trodden different paths.

Reflections on the discussions with the dialogue groups in Nigerian

If I had any doubts about my location and centrality within my research, discussions with the dialogue groups in Nigeria erased this completely. Like the British women who were constantly asking questions about Africa, and expecting me to provide answers, the Nigerian women equally asked me questions about white women and what is obtainable in Britain. This situation positioned me squarely as the bridge between both cultures, as the pipe through which the words of the one is carried to the other. As I did with the British, I also tried to gauge what the Nigerian women's questions meant, and underneath it seemed to me that in many ways I was seen as a 'model figure'; having been in a white society which they have been made to believe is very superior to theirs.[14] Perhaps, sharing similar cultural codes with the Nigerian women and knowing that my 'been-to' status has certainly increased my social status in Nigeria convinced

[14] The ideology of the superiority of the west has been soaked into the subconscious of many Africans right from the earliest contact with white people who have 'imposed' their superiority on Africans through various means, one of which Ngugi (1986a) has called 'cultural bomb'. As Ngugi passionately argues: "the effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves.... Amidst this wasteland which it has created, imperialism presents itself as the cure..." (p. 3).

me of this conclusion. Coming home to Nigeria for my field work at the time I did was quite significant in my study. Men, who had hitherto ignored my views and opinions because I *was* a woman, suddenly sought them. The most significant for me was the demystifying of the 'gizzard', a part of the chicken, which in my tradition, women were not expected to eat. I had gone out with my husband to the shop where we bought some gizzards as well as some other 'special parts' of the chicken. As we ate, I ignored taking the gizzard, knowing that as a woman I was not expected to take it. I was very surprised when my husband invited me to eat the gizzards as well. I could not contain my surprise and had to confirm from him, before I ate them, whether he really meant it. That was a very significant moment for me. I have lived with my husband for 15 years and all those years, he had always shared the gizzard with *his* sons while making sure *my* daughters knew they were not expected to eat it. For my husband, who is rather traditional and set in his ways, this was really spectacular. He seemed to have offered me a peace token. It however made me think of Adrienne Rich's speech in 1979 that

> There's a false power which masculine society offers to a few women who "think like men" on condition that they use it to maintain things as they are. This is the meaning of female tokenism: that power withheld from the vast majority is offered to a few, so that it may appear that any truly qualified woman can gain access to leadership, recognition, and reward; hence that justice based on merit truly prevails. The token woman is encouraged to see herself as different from most other women, as exceptionally talented and deserving; and so separate herself from the wider female condition; and she is perceived by "ordinary" women as separate also: perhaps even as stronger than themselves (Rich, 1979 cited in Landry and MacLean 1996, p. 34).

I grew therefore in awareness of how awkwardly I am positioned between my acquired social status and my feminist ideals. Even with the best intentions, power relations do exist between the researcher and the researched. I came to realise that my 'been to'

status definitely heightened the power relations between the Nigerian women and me as a researcher. I tried to play it down as much I could. For instance for the interview, I chose a very simply attire and did not bother to have my hair styled. I had wanted to dress in native attire, but when most of the women came out in western apparels, I had to change to a simple western attire, to blend with them. Majority of them were wearing new hair looks.[15] I think they were quite conscious that they were going to be videoed and wanted to look their best. Indeed one of them complained that I did not style my hair, and I assured her that whoever would look at the video had seen me both at my worst and best moments. Indeed the women seem to enjoy being videoed. Except for one woman who came when the discussions had already started, none of the other women raised any objection. I was taken aback when the woman put her hands across her face and asked not to be videoed. I asked the camera operator to put the camera off and wanted to know why she objected. She told me she did not want her husband to see her because he did not know she was here, as she did not inform him. I later discovered that the husband worked and lived differently from the family, more than 700 km away. I assured her that only my supervisors and perhaps examiners, all white, would see the tape and there was no way the husband would see the video. The video would be destroyed after my research. It was after that that she consented to be videoed. I jokingly told her that her husband lived so far away and did not tell her of his every movement. She replied that both their cases were different as she was a woman. It made me think of how much disparity in gender relations is entrenched in my culture. It also made me more aware of the ethics involved in doing research and the need for the researchers to uphold these ethics. Neuman (1991) writes: "Ethics begins and ends with

[15] Traditionally women in my culture are expected to cover their hair with a scarf or a headgear. This is one way of ensuring women's docility, conformity and compliance. The women I discussed with, being educated women, have views that are more liberal and have no inhibitions leaving their hair open.

you the researcher. A researcher's personal moral code is the strongest defence against unethical behaviour" (p. 437).

Apart from the occasional interruption by power failure, the discussions went on quite smoothly. It was interesting that in the first group discussion I held (where all of us were Igbo speakers) the women preferred that we talked in English. I was not surprised of their choice for like in many African countries with histories of British colonisation, English has acquired the status of a mark of erudition (see Ngugi, 1986b). The women obviously did not want to be seen as illiterates. In the other discussions, English was the only means of communication because we did not all speak the same language. I had tried to cater for the diversity that is Nigeria in terms of cultural differences by trying to bring people from the three dominant ethnic groups (Ibo, Hausa and Yoruba) for the discussion.

Most of the women I spoke to had not been subjects of research before and although my impression here can only be subjective, I also got the impression that they felt important too, even though they seemed to defer to me. Rather than feel happy about the deference to me, I felt like an outsider. I felt the women were too eager to please, as if they wanted to tell me what they thought I wanted to hear. It may be that I am misinterpreting their eagerness to 'help' me with my research and their eagerness to answer questions. Bridging the insider- outsider position (Collins, 1991) was very difficult for me. This situation was confirmed when one of the women said "azu, you have been away too long, and you do not know what is happening in the country". I had been away for only a year and five months after staying in the country for more than thirty-five years of my life! Collins (1991) has argued there are a number of benefits of insider – outsider status that actually enhance the production of knowledge. One of

these is greater objectivity and the ability to see patterns insiders are too much immersed to see. Further, the status affords the privilege to challenge the knowledge claims of insiders, to acknowledge discrepancies between the insider accounts and 'insider – outsider' researcher's experience and be able to identify the anomalies. It was my aim therefore to use that for the benefit my research. Mostly this was to recognise that I would aim to be a researcher who is empathically an interpretive subject, whose ambition was to cross cultures - cultures which I rapidly realised were less clear cut than I had anticipated (i.e. where I belonged and did not belong was more complex than just a British/Nigerian split).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have given attention to the qualitative aspects of this research, its design and conduct. The complexity and the enormity of the decisions and ethics involved in dealing with human subjects has been one of the most striking things for me. Feminist research which involves human subjects requires that every step is interrogated and it is only when this has been done that the feminist researcher can move to the next stage. In chapters Six and Seven, my focus shifts as I analyse the images of Africa and African women in British and Nigerian newspapers. The success of my engagement in these chapters must be judged to some degree by the strategies that I have outlined here as it is in this space that I moved on to think more carefully about my own cross-cultural role.

PART THREE

NEWS SPACE (RE)CREATING IMAGES

❖ Chapter Six

The press in Britain: news and Africanness

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explore how Africanness is constructed within British news. As I mentioned in Chapter Five, this forms an important context for my examination of the representation of African women in the news (Chapter Seven). I structure this chapter in relations to notions of stereotypes and otherness (see Chapter Three), and examine the news constructs within the constraints of journalism practice. In this chapter, therefore, I explore the dominant factors that possibly influence western construction of Africa in the news. I discuss noticeable presentation styles of the news stories on Africa, exploring its implication for the images of Africa in the British press. I further explore how these formative dynamics in the British press produce news about Africa which can most often be seen as stories constructed within narrow repertoires of images, which although probably benign in intent reaffirms and projects Africa as 'the other'.

Spicing the news or the right to tell?

News is often thought as a *selective* view of what happens in the world (Harcup 2004, p. 30). Journalists working with some taxonomy of news values (see Chapter Four) are expected to produce what is considered objective, impartial and value-free account of

events in the world (Keeble, 2001a; Harcup, 2004). As Schudson explains, news works within objective norm which

> Guides journalists to separate facts from values and to report only the facts. Objective reporting is supposed to be cool, rather than emotional, in tone.... According to the objectivity norm, the journalist's job consists of reporting something called 'news' without commenting on it, slanting it, or shaping its formulation in any way (Schudson 2001 cited in Harcup 2004, p. 60).

This view however has been highly contestable in contemporary times. As I discussed in Chapter Four, current debates about news suggest that objectivity and impartiality may be mere myths of the profession. The conviction that journalists, by observing certain professionally codified methods of reporting, will be able to set aside their individual preoccupations and depict 'reality' 'as it actually is' is increasingly becoming suspect. According to Hall, "news values appear as a set of neutral, routine practices: but we need also to see formal news values as an ideological structure – to examine these rules as the formalisation and operationalisation of an *ideology of news*" (Hall cited in Eldridge 1995, p. 50). A powerful and professional discourse central to journalistic practice is the manner of news reports; which eschews any form of emotion or opinion, strictly adhering to the 5Ws and H of news writing. Any deviation from this, the claim suggests is tainted with bias. These traditional tenets of journalism have however in recent times been scrutinised and challenged. In the first instance, the notion of news as selection of one event and *not* the other has introduced a possible bias in reporting. Yet, the complexity of society implies that there has to be a mechanism for simplifying, and bringing order into an otherwise chaotic mass of events. News values and selections are meant to fill this role (Klaidman and Beauchamp 1987, p. 67). Other analysts of the bias debate view bias as a manifest of the beholder of the news, rather

than a resultant of choice of stories by the journalists. In line with this debate, Steven and Green argue that "what consumers see as biased news is often material which is discrepant with information already in their heads, material which evoke an evaluative response. If so, news bias is less a function of reporter's accuracy or fairness and more a function of what readers and viewers think the situation ought to be" (Steven and Green cited in Klaidman and Beauchamp 1987, p. 69). This argument seems feasible when we consider the place of ideology within which we all speak. As I suggested in Chapter Four, in asking about the validity of someone else's thoughts, we forget to question our own and the ideological blanket through which we speak. It is therefore important that we proceed carefully in suggesting elements of possible bias in the news reports being examined. Other debates about bias challenge the manner of news presentation, and seem polarised along notions of experiences associated with masculinity and femininity. Feminist criticism of the so-called objective news report insist that male journalists' detachment and indifference is "a shield to distance themselves against the kind of sensitivity and sympathy that journalism requires" (Van Zoonen cited in Chambers *et al.*, 2004, p. 104). What they seem to advocate is a kind of humanizing of the news in order that readers can find it relevant to their lives, identify with and be stirred by it. This style, which is closer to feature presentation, has found its way into various news reports, and informs most of the stories about Africa. As I will be discussing subsequently, it has various implications. The changing context of news in both newspapers and television that has been argued as tending towards entertainment has attracted global debates about media standards (see Sparks and Tulloch ed, 2000) leading to the dumbing down/tabloidisation controversy (Keeble, 2001b). The increasing commercial interest in the media implies that journalists appear concerned with how to win more audiences, which could imply both a compromising of

standards and the further commodification of news (Macdonald, 2003). Entertainment (sex, show biz, humour, etc.) become prime importance to the detriment of more 'serious news'. Harcup (2004) sees this entertainment quality infiltrating into the 'more serious news' and as he explains:

> More serious news is reported in ways designed to be entertaining. News is told in form of stories that usually focus on individual people.... News stories are written in language that is accessible, active and sometimes colourful. And news stories may be presented visually and creatively to attract an audience (p. 91).

News, thus is reported as human interest, and like feature stories allows flexibility, colour, and the 'presence of the journalist' in the news (Okoro, 2000; Harcup, 2004). Bird (2000) interestingly thinks human-interest story could deteriorate to tabloidisation if it is the 'central component of news' (p. 216). Macdonald links human-interest stories with 'personalisation' (Macdonald, 2003) stories or what she also calls 'case studies' (Macdonald, 2000). Barnet and Seymour however argue against interpreting this shift as purely negative sign stating that earlier news format were bland, standardized and often limited in appeal (Barnet and Seymour cited in Macdonald 2003, p. 59). Though the flexibility of news styles has the advantage of calling up vivid images, making news more interesting to read, bringing the news closer to the people and offering more space for the ordinary people, it also raises some problems within news reports. Moeller (1999) argues that media reports of Africa call up graphic images and pictures, which border on sensationalised treatment. She argues that the persistence of these images produces compassion fatigue. As she argues, "images are stopgap measure, at best their repetition breeds indifference" (p. 14). The implication of this is that the human-interest approach to news reports, which could involve emotive descriptions possibly to create forms of identification with the 'problems' often reported, could in fact, work in

a counter hegemonic way. Linking human-interest news reports with principles of story telling, Macdonald (2003) sees it as a powerful means of holding attention and possibly bridging geographical and cultural distance. She however suggests some problems that could possibly be associated with using this method in media reports. According to her, there are potential dangers surrounding their use (if they are deployed too selectively) to justify a monocular thesis, or if personal experience becomes the only source of evidence (Macdonald 2003, p. 65 – 66). To test the reliability of this form of presentation, Macdonald (2003) suggests we ascertain "whether the affective quality of the case study is taking us into a developed understanding of the complexity of an issue, or whether it is being used to stir strong emotions without supplying the dialogic prompts that might stimulate awareness of a discursive contest, between different frames of understanding" (p. 66). I will examine British news reports of Africa in relation to this suggestion. Macdonald also worries that personalization sometimes results from lazy journalism and inadequate research (encouraged by tightening resources) (2003, p. 61) but can be highly valued when it opens up perspectives (p. 78). Considering however the constraints often associated with British press reports of Africa, how readily might these perspectives be opened?

It has been argued (Philo *et al.*, 1999; Van Dijk, 2000) that news about 'Africa' in the British or Western press, is structured by a discernible racialisation of news discourses as mobilised by journalists, suggesting 'racial bias' in the ritualised practices of 'objective' news reporting. Distinctively, it is argued that the news from the 'Third World' has low priority in the Western news agenda. Often there is scant representation and the range of explorations offered in the news reports is limited (Philo *et al.*, 1999). However, this argument may be challenged somewhat when positioned within the ideology of news values that privileges geographical proximity (Fowler, 1991). 'Africa'

is far away from the West (e.g. Britain) and there is a possibility that such issues as affecting 'Africa' may be low on the ladder of Western news values. Scholars, however, while recognising this as a possibility, have questioned the voyeurism implied in the 'selection' of news on Africa. Badawi (1988) for example argues that Africa becomes news in the Western press, when there "is some sort of spectacle to behold" (p. 137). Underscoring the tendency of the press to define the negative as a "good story", Badawi (1988) using the television argues in respect of Western press reports of Africa:

> It is understandable that in Britain, television priority will go to domestic rather than foreign issues, and that foreign issue will only displace domestic ones if they are judged to be a 'good story', which will appeal to a wide audience. The trouble is that 'good stories' all too often fall into one of only two categories: the 'cultural kaleidoscope' or the 'compassion seeking' (p. 138).

Badawi's argument suggests another distinctive argument about news of Africa in the Western press, that is, that of the preponderance of the negative.[1] Though news values generally privilege the negative (see Braham, 1982), scholars have argued for the disproportionate number of the negative in news on Africa. One of the factors responsible for this is what Philo *et al.* (1999) call the 'fire-brigade' approach to reporting Africa. They argue that journalists are sent to 'Africa' on short periods for the 'big' story. One effect of this approach is the tendency to rely on clichés about Africa. O'Reilly (2003) has suggested that time constraints could increase reliance on images that are culturally meaningful to the majority of the audiences. Similarly, Fergal Keane

[1] When I commenced my examination of British press for news on Africa within the periods I have called critical events (see Chapter Five), I wondered if news on Africa would show continuum of trajectories of racial representations. The predominance of negative stories during the periods monitored suggested to me that a racialised construction might be in operation (see Appendix 7 for summary of news about Africa during the period of the critical events). Three critical events recorded 35 news items and 10 news photos, none of which showed any positive representation of Africa. In line with previous research on Africa (see Philo et al., 1999; Akurang-Parry, 2001) in the Western press, news on war, corruption, famine and poverty, joggled for space.

expresses that "too much of reporting Africa has been conditioned by a view of its people as an eternally miserable smudge of blackness stretching across the decades ..." (cited in Philo *et al.* 1999, p. 225). This 'racial knowledge' of Africa is traceable to colonial and slave discourses and sustained in 'modern' reworked and updated images (Hall, 1999a). Africa has been historically constructed as marooned, evil, a place of negation, primitivism, violence and conflicts. Within the time constraints of news production, it is possible these discourses are called up.

A related issue to the 'fire brigade' approach discussed above is that journalists on such short trips to Africa are ill equipped for reporting 'Africa'. Because African countries are so often lumped together so that a homogenous Africa is more evident than the diverse countries that make up the continent, journalists often lack proper knowledge of the politics or language of the areas they are sent to report. Quoting Ryle, Philo *et al.* (1999) note:

> No British or American organisation would dream of sending a representative to France who did no speak French, but it is rare to find even aid workers who speak any African language. This is true even in places that have been the subject of quite intense, long-term, sophisticated news coverage like South Africa (p. 227 – 228).

The point is that lack of 'commitment' to news on Africa may continuously sustain the Western construction of Africa as the 'Other'. To be fair, the report about Africa may not just be dismissed as lack of commitment, as commitment intersects with other factors, which have debilitating effect on the actual practice of journalism. As Moeller (1999) notes: tight budgets, shutting of bureaus abroad, and so on, force foreign correspondents to cover more and more territories (p. 26). This results in parachute journalism whereby "journalists become parachutists jetting madly to regional crises,

jumping into situations cold" (p. 26). No doubt, this affects other regions of the world, not just Africa.

The news value of geographical proximity is stretched when there is a suggested relationship between the way continental Africa is reported in the Western media and the position and status of diasporic Africans within multicultural Western states. Parekh (1988) signposts this when he suggests a relationship between the respect of immigrants in Britain and the 'successes' of their home countries:

> The destiny of the black man (sic) in England is integrally tied up with the Third World, in that the latter's success or failure inevitably affects the way the white community looks upon him (1988, p. 117).

Taking this further and referring to the Western representations of Africa, Badawi (1988) suggests that the way Africans are portrayed in the international arena reflects on the image of black people in Britain.

> If blacks abroad are for example seen as starving, helpless and in need of assistance, it can reinforce in *some* British people's minds the idea that black immigrants *here* are fleeing economic hardship from their own poverty stricken countries. They are the 'needy outsider' who take up jobs, scrounge off social security and live in luxury off councils etc (Badawi 1988, p. 139).

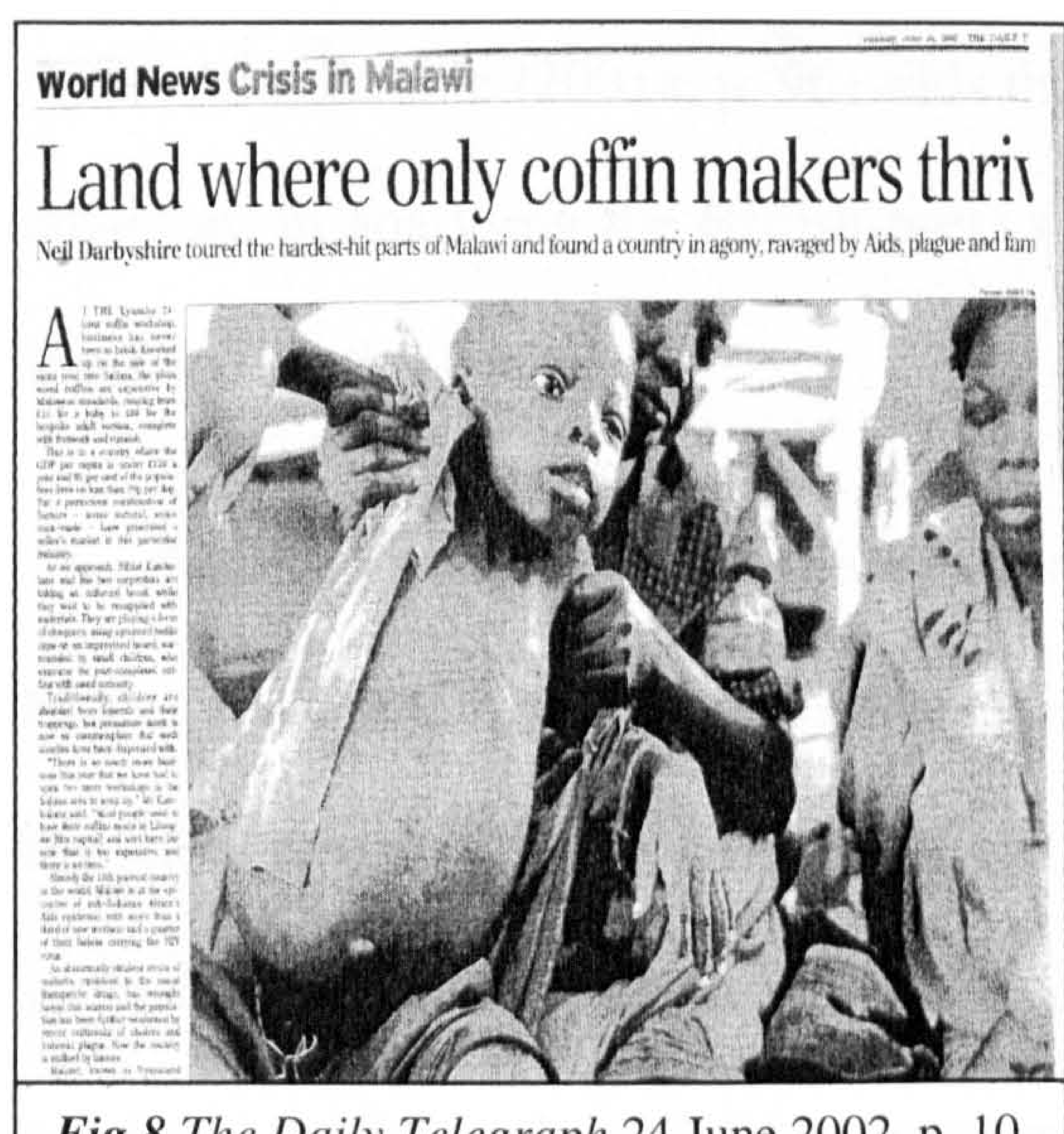
Such a perspective, Badawi argues, does not make for good racial relationship. 'Africa' thus seems not so far away, for the portrayal of Africa might to some degree impact on those in Britain.

Increasingly more concern has been shown about how news of Africa and the Third World is framed (Philo *et al.*, 1999; Moeller, 1999; Egwu, 2001). The onus seems to be

on transcending the apparent truth-value of news on Africa, which feature mostly famine, wars, diseases, corruptions and disasters: In reality, some African countries battle with wars, hunger, diseases, corruption and epidemic of all sorts. Therefore, assumption that news on Africa reflects the reality is quite high. Cottle (2000) however advises that we deploy sensitive analytical tools to recover racialised and racist meanings embedded within images of media representation. Hall (1999a) suggests that every word may be impregnated with unconscious racism, what he calls 'inferential racism' because they may be spoken through the racial ideologies that are active in the society. Interest, therefore, seems to be mounting with regard to the language and the discourse of news on Africa (Moeller, 1999; Akurang-Parry, 2001). Textual and analytical approaches have informed these studies geared at showing how hegemonic ideologies and racial knowledge are buried in media texts. Additionally, the studies suggest how Western media "construction of myths, symbols and images are normalised based on stereotypical selection of facts, emphasising particular events endowed with primordial tones and tinge that border on crises, wars and development" (Akurang-Parry 2001, p. 75). Drawing from theories of race and Otherness, I argue how contemporary news constructions of Africa within the British press create racial hierarchies and project Africa as 'the Other'.

The format of the page where the 'news' on Africa appears suggests this 'otherness' – e.g. - most of these stories appear on pages with *International News* or *World News* above them. "News" boldly written on the page of a newspaper invites the readers thus: "now to what really happened." It proclaims factuality and readers are brought automatically within the system of news discourses (i.e. the domain of the 'real' within which news operates). "International News" or "World News" also warns the reader that this 'news' is about 'them' not 'us'. (See figs 8 and 9 below). When this caption is

read together with the headlines of negative stories, the 'other' is reduced to an object for voyeurism. This signification thus sets the tone and character of the whole news (see Appendices 8 and 9 for full scripts of the stories)


World News Crisis in Malawi

Land where only coffin makers thriv

Neil Darbyshire toured the hardest-hit parts of Malawi and found a country in agony, ravaged by Aids, plague and fam

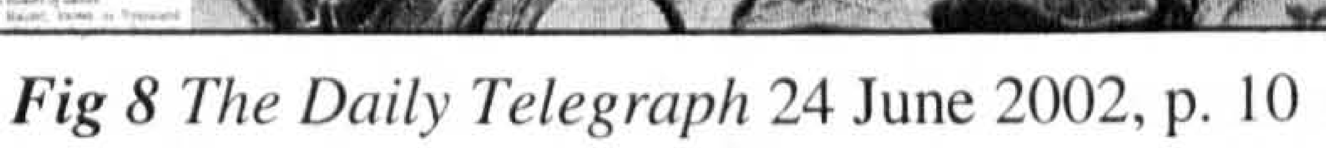


Fig 8 The Daily Telegraph 24 June 2002, p. 10

International news

Congo: an everyday story of horror and grief

Tentative talk of peace matters little to victims who have lost everything

Fig 9 The Guardian [UK] 24 July 2002, p. 15

The headlines in Figs 8 and 9 above run across several columns. This device is used within the newspaper practice to call attention and to increase the visibility of the news stories. The headlines also have accompanying photographs. Within news discourses, photographs offer 'true image' of the world, authenticate news stories as well as increase the validity or believability of such stories (Barthes 1972, 1977; Hall, 1981). By repressing the ideological dimensions of news messages and offering themselves as literal visual-transcriptions of the 'real' world it is possible that news photos sustain the ideology of unbiased and objective journalism (Hall, 1981). This is a device maximised by the British news reports of African stories as most of these stories have accompanying photographs, which 'impose meaning at a stroke'. The 1984 Eye-Track research conducted at the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, America suggests how eyes move on the printed page (see Garcia, 2002). The study shows that readers enter a

printed page through the largest image on the page, usually a photograph. The majority of the readers see the headlines next, before they read the text. The third most frequently visited part of the page according to the study is the captions under the photos. Therefore, the best opportunities to grab attention of readers will be in these three areas. Keeble (2001a, p. 96) adds the intro (lead) of the news as one of the foci of attention. In analysing the British press reports of Africa in this chapter, I place more emphasis on these areas.

The choice of the photographs in figs 8 and 9 (like in most photos of Africans in the British press) seem deliberately chosen to suggest lifelessness and despair. Fig 8 shows the photo of a child in the advanced stage of Kwashiorkor being held by a woman. This is the denotative (first layer) meaning of the photos. Barthes calls it the 'denoted message' or 'the analogon'– the 'literal reality' (1977, p. 16 – 19). However, the image is not the reality itself (Barthes 1977, p. 16). Barthes further suggests that to impose a second meaning (the connotative meaning) on the photo we need to look at the production of the photograph:

> For the press photograph which apparently is not imitation but suggests reality, connotation cannot readily be grasped at the level of the message. It can however be already inferred from certain phenomenon which occur at the levels of production .... On the one hand, the press photograph is an object that has been worked on, chosen, composed, constructed, treated according to professional, aesthetic or ideological norms which are so many factors of connotation (1977, p. 19).

Using either Barthes' suggested production of the photograph (choice, technical treatment, framing, layout) as frame for analysis or Nixon's (1997) code of casting, the photo of the child suggests a deliberate 'pose' for the camera, suggesting that the way the child is positioned on the lap of the woman as if on display for the 'world to see'.

The child seems deliberately 'held up' by the woman suggesting an awareness of being photographed. In a similar manner, the posing of the sick man in Fig 9 suggests a consciousness on his part of being photographed. While not looking directly at the camera, he has his eyes raised, with the pupils of his eyes on the side. One adopts this posture when one suddenly looks up. In this case, the camera operator may have called his attention and taken the photos as he looked up. As in Fig 8, this suggests a deliberate posing for the camera. Obviously, the child and the man were not 'just out there'. They have been selected among other signs and seem to have been positioned and 'laid out' for some effects.

By Barthes' contention also, this choice, preference, layout and technical treatment of a photo is made within ideological norms. The ideology of Africa as a place of 'death' has been a constant in Western societies from their earliest contact with Africa, where many deaths of Europeans, were recorded (see Brantlinger 1986, p.193). Africa was termed the 'white man's grave'. Within postcolonial news discourses, Africa seems to have metamorphosed from the white man's grave of colonial legacy to African's grave. In both stories above, the image of death is constant, sustained in the *deathly* looking duo and the choice of headlines and words. *"Land where only coffin makers thrive; Neil Darbyshire toured the hardest-hit parts of Malawi and found a country in agony, ravaged by Aids, plague and famine"* (fig 8), contributes to the wealth of narratives about Africans' deaths that frequent British newspapers. The concentration on the trade of coffin making is a powerful device to communicate the rising death toll, which in turn acts as a metaphor for Africa as a grave. Explored at an ideological level, the use of the words "found a country" is interesting. "Found" as used in this headline is an active verb – the past tense of find – meaning to "discover". Within its usage here, the action of finding and discovery is performed by the "Western subject" while the African

country is constructed in passive terms of being discovered. This again is in line with the colonial discourses of Africa as a 'lost' and obscure place waiting to be discovered by the Western world. In a similar manner the use of the word "everyday" as used in the headline: *"Congo: an everyday of horror and grief"* (fig 9) routinises horror and grief, constructing it as commonplace and way of life in Congo. I recognise that these analyses are arguable, but when situated within the historical relationship of Africa and the West, they can hardly be faulted. As Allan (1998) suggests,

> The language of news can never be ideologically 'neutral'. Rather each word of the news account for a 'two-sided act' in that it is continuously *oriented towards an addressee*, that is, it is conditioned by *whose* word it is and *for whom* is it meant. The meaning of a word can never be affixed once and for all, as it is actively negotiated through the reciprocal relationship between addresser and addressee (Allan 1998, p. 127).

Allan uses this in relation to gender and the news, but it could also be applied to all forms of news representations where there is 'unequal' power relations, as exists between Africa and the West. I would argue that claim to objectivity is a 'defensive strategy', which assists the journalists to cloak this construction of unequal relationship as manifested in the news. Tuchman (1978) suggests news should be seen as a window, which frames and the viewer's position affect the visibility of what is observed. Taking this metaphor further, the position the viewer occupies at the window or the choice of the window through which one views depends on how much one wants to see (or to be seen) and what it is that one observes. In other words, the viewer could make some decisions on the position s/he occupies and even sometimes the choice of the frame through which the observation takes place. This, no doubt, depends on the relationship between the viewer and the viewed.

Within the British press, where the dominant white gaze (viewer) is on Africa (viewed) it is possible to detect a viewing position that is distanced – one that privileges difference and 'otherness'. This may not be astonishing, as historically in the West 'whiteness' has been constructed in hierarchical relation to 'blackness'. This hierarchical relationship forms a large part of the frame through which Africa is viewed in the British press. This frame operates at an ideological level and may be apparent only on scrutiny of the texts.

Once upon a time .... News on Africa in the British press

As may have been noticed, I have so far in this thesis been using news interchangeably with story. Within the journalism parlance, news is sometimes called a story or a news story. Journalists have been called "professional story tellers" (Bell 1999, p. 236). This is in recognition that there is a story underpinning every news item. McQuail reading Morin's (1976) analysis of news form puts it aptly: "an event has to be rendered into a 'story about an event'" (McQuail 2000, p. 347). It is this *rendering into a story* that constitutes news. Thus, it is popular to say that 'news is not an event but the account of an event', that is, an event rendered into a story. News and story therefore share a similarity; they both have *telling* quality. Both recount or narrate an event. This *telling* quality makes it difficult to distinguish what precisely constitutes news and story or what is the nature of these two terms. Harcup quoting Michael Frayn writes:

> Very deep in both journalism and fiction and life in general is the concept of a story....All journalists recognise a story and that is why they begin to tell it, but it is very difficult to say what a story is (Frayn cited in Harcup 2004, p. 32).

Frayn's claim though paradoxical is suggestive of the conflictive use of story and news in journalism. A *story* has been defined as the telling of a happening or connected series of happenings, whether, true or fictitious[2]. News however is considered a veridical account of an event. Perplexingly, news is often thought of as stories. Reah (2002) writes:

> We talk about 'news stories'. Other texts that deliver information are not referred to as 'stories'. We don't talk about 'report stories' or 'lecture stories' or 'textbook stories'. A story is an 'account of imaginary or past events, narrative tale, anecdote ....*colloquial* fib'. Why are news stories referred to in any way that gives them the status of fictional accounts? The definition 'account of past events' may to some extent relate to a factual account, but carries the implication of interpretation, elaboration and the creation of a narrative (p. 5).

It is possible that this loophole allows journalists to use words imaginatively, employ fictional devices and use personalised anecdotes. As I mentioned in the earlier section, this has some positive uses, but could possibly challenge the veracity of the news accounts. In the words of Tuchman (1978), "once upon a time is the obvious start of a fairy tale". Writing specifically about eyewitness accounts (one of the devices employed in telling a story) Macdonald notes:

> In newspaper news and features, eye-witness account and personal experience also provide affect, varying from titillation (in the 'kiss and tell' story) to celebration of human spirit (in the 'triumph over adversity' story) to vicarious grieving (in the 'tragedy/victim' story). In each case, the personalised account invites reading *as if it were fiction*. Its 'repetition with difference' mimics the generic structure of popular narratives, which also elicit basic emotional responses through crafting scenarios and characters that offer familiar modes of identification (p. 69) (emphasis added).

[2] Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language

I now examine the presentation styles of news on Africa in British press using the prevalent stories about Africa in the British press: for example, the story of AIDS, hunger, rape, famine and spatial under development.

Constructing Africanness: styles and presentation techniques in reports of Africa

While I was going through the British press, I found stories about Africa (which mostly appear in the international pages) all very captivating and moving. This is not surprising as the graphic nature of the stories and the dominating imageries make such an effect inevitable. But one question that persistently nagged me was: why does the British press categorise Africa by images to such a great extent? This question no doubt needs a lot of unpacking and I will start by discussing three presentation techniques I noticed in the report of Africa in the British press.

The use of personalised accounts

Evident in the stories on Africa is the use of personal and individual accounts. Possibly this has the capacity of sustaining interest and holding the reader's attention. But how do we know that the news accounts go beyond merely holding readers captive? Let us look at AIDS story (for clarity called Aids story 1). Reporting from Mbale, Uganda, on a charity plan to help victims of the epidemic Darbyshire's reports:

> It is impossible with words and cold statistics fully to convey the distress and alienation of a generation of African children orphaned by Aids. Already traumatised by the untimely deaths of their parents and struggling to cope with their own pain and confusion, children, as young as 14 or 15 frequently find themselves heading a family driven to the margins of society by a combination of poverty, stigma and

> exploitation.... At a small settlement in the Sironko district of Uganda, Beatrice Namutosi begins to weep as she contemplates the future of five children, four of them under 13. Beatrice, who lost her husband to Aids in 1998, is clearly in the advanced stages of the disease herself. Her face is gaunt, her skin is becoming translucent, her limbs are stick-thin and she suffers from persistent fever and coughing fits. "I want to teach the children to look after themselves but I just don't have enough strength," she said. "I don't see how they can live with their grandmother for very long. She can't take care of them because she is weak and needy and old. My husband's family are poor and my children can't live with my sister because she already has eight children of her own".... A few miles away in Mbale district, Rose Amunat has been pushed into the role of mother and main breadwinner many years before her time. Rose was 15 when her mother died of Aids, leaving her to look after five younger brothers and sisters, the youngest a baby of 18 months (*The Daily Telegraph* 30 November 2002, p. 22).

There appear to be well-intentioned thoughts in the Aids story 1 reported above. First, it creates a vivid image of the agony of Aids through the recounting of individual experiences. One cannot but be moved by Beatrice who 'weeps' as she obviously realises she was going to die of AIDS and will be leaving her children orphans (having lost the husband to Aids) or by Rose who at the age of 15 is left to look after five young brothers and sisters, one of whom is just 18 months. Yet, it is worrying that the stories offer no further analysis than human miseries and fail to address political and economic differences between the West and Africa. It would be an avenue to offer positive and constructive suggestions about how the Aids problems in Africa might be solved (for example, if these individuals were in richer countries, they would have more access to drugs. Also, how would richer countries aid the people to combat the disease?). This is one of the difficulties signposted by Macdonald (2000, p. 255) about the use of individual accounts in the media as it may offer "opportunities for constructing polemic rather than analysis or for promoting voyeurism rather than understanding". This seems to be the case in the story of AIDS as in constructing the vivid accounts without

providing any analysis; it feeds a style of reporting capable of intensifying the stigmatisation of those already stigmatised.

One of the dominant myths circulating in British society about Africans is their sexuality. Within colonial discourses, Africans have been constructed as strongly sexed, and sexually irrepressible. Walvin (1982) suggests that the alleged size of the African penis has been linked to his alleged sexual activities and immorality. In Africa at least, AIDS is claimed to be largely transmitted through heterosexual sex. These stories thus seem to fan the myth of Africans as highly sexed with an unbridled sexuality. The issue is not whether AIDS is a problem in African societies. Statistics show that it is. However, we need to keep our antenna tuned to the possibility that rather than reporting AIDS as a problem that needs to be addressed, the construction of the stories merely feed on the circulating myths about Africa to give them legitimacy.

One of the ways in which these myths are legitimised is by *Africanising* AIDS. AIDS seems to be given an African face, and indeed so have all kinds of other ills or adversities – violence, sickness, corruption, poverty, etc. On its admission, *The Guardian* (UK) writes in its Leader pages, "Africa is often viewed through a lens smeared by poverty and cracked by violence. News of the continent often features shantytowns and war zones, stagnant poverty and brutal corrupt leadership" (*The Guardian* (UK) 5 June 2002, p. 19). Representations circulating about Africa have become so embedded in the British collective imagination as to move beyond specific suffering and become a metaphor for all kinds of suffering. For example in the wake of Ainlee Labonte's death by abuse, describing the agony that Ainlee must have undergone through being starved, Prof Jonathon Sibert, a 'paediatric expert' likened Ainlee's behaviour before she died to that of 'an African famine victim' (*The*

Independent 7 September 2002, p. 11). In the same vein, writing about the starvation and illness in Afghanistan *The Guardian* [UK] writes:

> Abdul Kade has the spongey-soft cheek of any normal toddler, but when his mother peels off his trousers and lifts his sweater we see a shockingly different person. His legs are matchsticks, his buttocks hang wrinkled and limp, and his tummy is swollen in severe malnutrition. *The image is out of Africa, so it seems fitting that the two nurse nutritionists looking after Abdul and the other tiny Afghans in a feeding centre run by charity World vision should be Africans* (*The Guardian* [UK] 4 April 2002, p. 17).

I have cited these two instances to show how Africa seems to have become a general metaphor for many ills and discursively circulated in the media. It would not be surprising therefore, if these personalisation stories simply feed from pre-exiting myths about Africa discursively circulated within the society. Within the time constraints in reporting Africa and the tightening of resources, this could be a valid argument, for as Macdonald (2003, p. 61) notes, personalization sometimes results from lazy journalism and inadequate research.

Figurative devices

An obvious observation in the language of the stories on Africa is the use of many literary devices. Literary devices are often used to illuminate and embellish stories. Literary devices used in the stories about Africa range from metaphors, personification, hyperbole, euphemism, to literary allusions. Tim Butcher's reports of AIDS in South Africa (Aids story 2 for the purpose of clarity), titled "Cry for Aids orphans of the beloved country" (*Daily Telegraph* 30 March 2002, p. 20) is a literary allusion. It is a play on Alan Paton's novel *Cry the Beloved Country. Cry the Beloved Country* set against the turmoil in South Africa during the 1940s and 1950s, tells of South Africa –

the beloved country fractured with racial hatred. Throughout the narrative, Paton describes the problems and ills that plagued South Africa during the apartheid era that leaves one completely disillusioned. The novel paints a picture of fear, gloom and disillusionment. He however offers some hope, hope through love and forgiveness. The allusion to this literary text in the story about AIDS in South Africa seems to suggest that South Africa has hardly changed, even with the apparent abolition of racism and the control of power by the majority blacks. It seems to have traded one form of ill with another: racism with AIDS. While Paton offered hope for the country through love and forgiveness, the ill of AIDS as presented in the news closes up all hopes. This is seen in the fatalistic end to the story:

There comes a time when we call the ambulance and they do not return. Outside the voices of the school choir practice could be heard. The AIDS tragedy in South Africa is sad beyond any singing of it.

Such ends, which are expressive and extremely moving, are routinely used in the ending of the stories on Aids in Africa.[3]

Further interrogating the use of literary devices to create effect, the news of AIDS in the British newspapers seems replete with euphemistic expressions. For example, in Aids story 2, describing the death of Vuma's the parents, the news reports that they *"became ill, lost their appetite, refused to leave their beds and finally disappeared in an ambulance to the local hospital 40 miles away, never to return"*. This is a euphemistic way of expressing the pains of death by AIDS, refusing to leave their beds referring to

[3] See "Ray of hope for the orphan generation" *The Daily Telegraph* 30 November 2002, p. 22; "Africa's ugly sisters leave trail of death" *The Guardian* [UK] 30 October 2002, p. 20 and "Land where only coffin makers thrive", *The Daily Telegraph* 24 June 2002, p. 11 for similar endings.

being bed-ridden. This form of expression jars with the western belief of the language of the news. Keeble writes:

> Journalists stress their commitment to plain English and so it is not surprising that euphemisms (bland expressions) are considered out. Thus never write so-and-so 'passed away' or 'slipped away calmly' – they died (2001, p. 85).

Like other figurative languages used in the news, euphemism is for a special effect. For such similar effect too, *The Guardian* [UK], writing in a headline "Starving Zambia spurns GM food aid" begins the story thus: *"In the woodlands of southern Zambia hunger arrives with the rhythmic clack of stone against stone as villagers pound open the hard mungongo nuts, a food of last resort..."*(*The Guardian* [UK] 17 October 2002, p. 19).

Hunger here is personified. Personification is a figure of speech that gives human qualities to abstract ideas, animals, and inanimate objects. By giving the human quality *arrives* to an abstract thing like *hunger*, the story creates a special image in the reader's minds. This effect is heightened by the alliterative use of words that follow: *"the rhythmic clack of stone against stone as villagers pound open..."*

The issue is that the use of literary devices in 'news' makes it less impersonal, draws readers to become involved by creating and calling up so many images in their minds. There is no problem with that as their use possibly indicates a serious attempt to find effective ways of engaging and holding the attention of the readers. However, we need to address the issue raised by Macdonald (2003, p. 66): does the affective quality of stories take us into a developed understanding of the complexity of an issue, or is merely being used to stir strong emotions? The similarity in the use of devices in the stories makes the latter option a possibility. The use of fictional devices, which call up

emotion, turn 'real life' into spectacle; and invites the reader's voyeuristic gaze. Voyeurism is used in this sense, not as "sexualized form of gazing, but to the *frission* of the emotional excitement that comes in part from knowing that we are safe from a returning look" (Macdonald 2003, p. 70). As the camera provides the means of scrutiny and engaging in voyeurism, so also do the literary devices, which paint cinematic pictures, provide avenue for scrutiny and at the same time creating a distance between the reader and the objectified Africans. This distance is a prerequisite for a voyeuristic gaze. As Moeller (1999) notes: "too much harping on the same set of images, too much strident coverage with insufficient background and context, exhaust the public." (p. 25). The public however are safe in the knowledge that 'we' are not like 'them' – increasing both the distance and the voyeurism.

The use of attribution

Another device used in the British press to create the story of Africa is the use of attribution. Journalists, though obviously influenced by certain constraints retain the right to choose whom to interview for or quote in a story. In using the interviews and quotes in the news, however, in order to conform to the ideology of news objectivity, the journalist is expected to attribute them. Attribution takes place when journalists credit their knowledge to some source. This usually increases the believability and credibility of the stories. Unattributed or anonymous sources lessen a story's credibility. Journalists have been known to stretch this requirement to the limit by writing around sources, rather than revealing them. Thus, it is not unusual to see in the papers phrases such as "unconfirmed sources say that ...", "sources close to the governor revealed that...", "A woman (name withheld)..." etc. While this may suggest the possibility of lack of credible or non-existent source, it could also suggest that the journalists

acquired the information on an oath of confidentiality. One of the few absolutes in journalism is that confidential sources must be protected. A confidential source is simply someone who has given information or who has appeared anonymously in an interview on the promise that the identity will be kept secret (Wilson 1996, p.86). There have been several cases of journalists being jailed for refusing to reveal their sources. Attribution however serves an important function in the telling of news stories.

> It reminds the audience that this is an account that originated with certain persons and organisations.... In theory, a news story should be regarded as embedded under a stack of attributions, each consisting of source, time and place (Bell 1991 in Harcup 2004, p.109).

By using attribution therefore, the journalist detaches *self* from the story and projects a sense of neutrality and balance. Keeble writes:

> Reporters use sources to distance themselves from the issues explored. Rather than express their views on a subject, reporters use sources to present a range of views over which they can appear to remain objective and neutral (Keeble 2001a, p. 44).

Newspaper practice requires also that people in the news are accompanied by a title or description as the reader needs to know on what authority or on what basis they are speaking. In most cases, such people are identifiable people. There are occasions however when the people in the news are not expected to be named or identified. One of such is in reporting rape and indecency stories. The codes of practice for journalists in both Nigeria and Britain are explicit that "the press should not identify victims of sexual assault or publish material likely to contribute to such identification unless, by

law, it is free to do so"[4]. Harris and Spark (1997) give the few exceptions when the person can be named:

> The woman (sic) can be named if she is herself charged with a criminal offence arising from the rape allegation; or if the accused persuades the judge that the restriction prejudices his defence; or if the judge decides that the restriction unreasonably restricts reporting; or if the woman agrees in writing to the reporting restriction being lifted....Newspapers normally do not name child victims of indecent assault (p. 119).

I argue that the use of attribution in the news on Africa in British press is a codified method of reporting that hides the ideological preoccupation. I intend to illustrate this claim by using one of the most prevalent stories about Africa in the British press: the story of rape.

Using attribution in the story of rape

Another narrative about Africa that features consistently in the British newspapers is the story of rape. Scholars have argued that there is a relationship between the ideological atmosphere of the society and what can be said in the news and what is best not be said (see Glasgow Media Group 1976, 1980). Stories of rape support one of the dominant ideologies about African men in British society that have circulated since times of slavery (African/Black men as rapists) (hooks, 1982). Explaining 17th century European construction of polygamy in Africa, Van Den Boogart (1982) writes: "African men had few restrictions in the gratification of their sexual desires ... the size of their penises also demonstrates their great libido...." (p. 48).

[4] See Appendix 10 for the UK Press Complaints Commission Code of Practice

Incidences of rape have their own share of news reports in Nigerian newspapers[5] and it goes without saying that in the British 'home pages', too, rape incidences are frequently reported. As bad news, rape obviously meets key news values and is more newsworthy than the good. There are however racial connotations discernible in the reports of the rape stories happening in 'Africa' as reported in the British press. My starting point is to comment briefly, on how the British press reports rape incidences that happen in Britain to create a point of reference to how incidences of rapes in Africa are constructed within British news. Text Box 4 below is a sample of typical rape incident in Britain as reported by the press.

First, we need to recognise that the story focuses on one subject: rape. The lead, which indeed aptly summarises the story, serves as an abstract. This is a recognised function of leads in news writing. The story then moves forward quoting sources and attributing the quotes to *recognisable* persons. *Antoni, Imiela, 48, from Appledore, Kent, was charged with nine offences of rape, Detective superintendent Mark Warwick, of Thames Valley Police, the acting head of Operation Orb, confirmed. "This is a complex investigation which has involved five police forces working together in close co-operation. The co-operation and close working continue," he said.* In the news item also, the victims of the rape cases are unnamed. This is an acceptable practice in journalism (Harris and Spark, 1997). The language too is distanced, telling the story in simple unobtrusive style that simply gives the 'kernel' of the story. We may need to compare this type of presentation with that seen in the story of rape in Africa as reported in British press (see news item below: Fig 10) [6]

[5] See Appendix 11, for summary of news stories in the Nigerian press where women are central focus during the period of the critical events.
[6] See Appendix 12 for more legible and fuller account of story

HEADLINE: Man charged with nine **rapes**
BYLINE: Rebecca Allison
BODY:
A married railway worker was last night charged in connection with a string of sex attacks on girls and women across the south-east of England.
Antoni Imiela, 48, from Appledore, Kent, was charged with nine offences of rape, Detective superintendent Mark Warwick, of Thames Valley police, the acting head of Operation Orb, confirmed.
"This is a complex investigation which has involved five police forces working together in close cooperation. The co-operation and close working continues," he said.
The attacker has struck against women and girls aged from 10 to 52 across London, Kent, Berkshire, Surrey and Hertfordshire in the past year. More than 100 officers from five forces were involved in Operation Orb, the biggest manhunt since the Yorkshire Ripper.
Mr Imiela was arrested in his car at a police roadblock on the M20 near Ashford on Monday night, and had been held for questioning at Folkestone police station.
He was charged by Kent police 72 hours later, and is due to appear before Canterbury magistrates this morning.
The first of the charges relates to the rape of a 10-year-old girl in Ashford, Kent, on November 15 2001.
The other charges relate to rapes this year, four of which took place in July: of a 12-year-old girl in Bracknell, Berkshire; a 30-year-old woman in Earlswood, Surrey; a 26-year-old woman on Putney common, south-west London; and an 18-year-old woman in Woking, Surrev.
There are charges relating to two rapes in the following month: of a 52-year-old woman on Wimbledon common, south-west London, on August 6, and a 26-year-oid woman in Epsom, Surrey, on August 7.
The other two charges concern the rapes of a 13-year-old girl near Woking on September 6, and a 14-year-old girl in Stevenage, Hertforshire, on October 25.

Rape 1: The Guardian 7 December 2002, p. 2: Source University of Gloucestershire Lexis- Nexis Professional

Text Box 4

The lead of the story starts thus: "*In the past years Neema Mushobora has been raped by soldiers from two armies, has watched as her uncle and grandmother were hacked to death and seen her friends die of hunger.*"

World News

Glimmer of hope for nation ruined by years of war

Adrian Blomfield reports from Panzi as a peace plan is agreed

"She was raped by troops from rival groups and saw her family hacked to death"

Fig 10 *The Daily Telegraph* 6 August 2002, p. 12

The lead begins in a dramatic style. The question one could ask is who is Neema Mushobora? The answer is provided in the third paragraph of the story: *Neema is a victim of the Congolese war.* But other than that, we do not know anything more about Neema. Who is she? Where is she from? How old is she? How could she be traced? The story offers nothing further on her except to say how she has been kept prisoner and raped severally by the militiamen. In *her own words*: *"everyday I would be raped, sometimes by many men", she said. "Some of the other women were raped 20 or 30 times, one soldier after the other. Then they just bled to death"*. The use of attribution here works to factualise and validate the story as news, but could possibly be a façade underneath which lurks some racial connotations. As van Dijk (2000) points out, racist discourses rarely appear blatantly in media texts, but operate via forms of 'discursive' significations. First, we address the lead of the story, which ostensibly addresses the issue of rape (*has been raped by soldiers from two armies*) but in fact addresses other ills: brutality (*has watched as her uncle and grandmother were hacked to death*), and

hunger (*seen her friends die of hunger*). Within the single sentence, a cinematic picture of barbarism and death is created.[7] As the story moves on, telling more stories of corruption and providing very little picture of Neema, or other people mentioned in the story, the possibility increases that they are constructed not as the subjects of the news, but as merely narrative objects, simply to move the tales of horror along and substantiate racial beliefs and knowledge.

In rape cases, journalism ethics require that the victims are unidentified. Why is Neema or Heeshima Tupatie (raped as a 13 year old and gave birth to a child called Chance) mentioned in the story? In the rape story in Britain above none of the victims were mentioned and no gory details of how they were raped was given. In Nigeria, though rape issues are often given scanty space in the news and with hardly enough background or follow up, rape victims are most often not mentioned. This increases the suspicion that the stories on rape that happened in Africa as reported in British press may have been crafted to bring Africa under a voyeuristic stare to sustain racial myths and beliefs. Part of the story further reads:

Neema escaped in October when the Mayi Mayi went on another pillaging spree. She fled to an ill-equipped hospital in Panzi, outside the town of Bukavu. In May she gave birth to a girl, Rebecca, the product of rape.

The attribution of time and place used in the story also suggests truism, but provides the smokescreen to emphasise a dysfunctional society: 'Mai Mai went on another pillaging spree', 'an ill-equipped hospital in Panzi', and 'Rebecca, the product of rape'. One would imagine that having recounted how several men raped Neema several times, that if she gets pregnant as a result, the child is its product. So why is the emphasis put on

[7] For similar device, see 'Just talk talk talk and we are left to die' *The Daily Telegraph* 28 June 2002 p. 14; 'Since I was born, I've never seen such hunger' *The Guardian* [UK] 7 November 2002, p. 21.

Rebecca as 'the product of rape'? Rape is considered an act of a dysfunctional mind. Rebecca may possibly be a symbol of African children in the narrative whose dysfunctional production is symbolically transferred on African children. This seems to be the preferred reading as the news recounts: "Rebecca and Chance are the Congo's future…."

After reading Fig 10 above, we know there is a war, but we are none the wiser about the explanations for the war. This is one of the key problems, which has been noticed about coverage of developing countries (Glasgow Media Group, 2002). There are very limited explanations, which are given (if at all) of events such as political conflict and war happening in developing countries. Using the Rwandan refugee crisis of 1994, Glasgow Media Group (2002) found "a very large number of references which stressed the scale of the fight and the large number of people involved but gave no account of why these events were occurring".[8] Similarly, in Fig 10 above, which tells of the Congolese war, we read of 'raped by soldiers', 'hacked to death', 'blood thirsty militiamen', 'three million people have died from war related famine and disease', '2,600 people are dying a day as a result of the war', 'tribal militia', 'bent on revenge', 'crippling corrupt government', 'avaricious neighbour', 'ranks full of killers and rapists', 'unimaginable brutality', 'country totally bankrupt', 'infrastructure has collapsed', 'little food left stolen by soldiers', 'millions of people have fled their homes'. We read little about the background to the war and the political explanations. The absence of more complex social and political explanations, constructs Africa as inherently evil, full of 'tribal conflicts' and brutality. Africa thus seems to have hardly changed from the days of colonial invasion and the racist discourses that were generated at that time. Africa is still constructed as 'marooned, historically abandoned, a fetish land inhabited by

[8] http://www.glas.ac.uk/departments/sociology/debate.html [Accessed 6th July 2003].

cannibals, dervishes and witch doctors' (Hall 1997b, p. 239). The historical consequences of colonialism seem to be very much alive in the media representations. Hesse (2002) has called this "racialised trajectories of continuity and reconfiguration", which as Hall (1996) has suggested are still part of the contemporary society. Many of the words (e.g. 'ill-equipped hospital' 'infrastructure has collapsed', 'crippling corrupt government') (though probably true) subtly included in the story introduce the concept of underdevelopment and corruption, which also form part of the 'story of Africa.'

The story of spatial underdevelopment

According to Goldberg:

> The category of space is discursively produced and ordered. Just as spatial distinctions like "West" and "East" are racialized in their conception and application, so racial categories have been variously spatialized more or less since their inception into continental divides, national localities, and geographic regions (Goldberg 1993, p. 185).

By Goldberg's theoretical assumptions, racial categories are projected unto spatial distinctions. Put in another way, spatial distinctions are transformed into racial categories. Thus, spatial representations could project racialised and otherised meanings. Akurang-Parry's (2001) study using President Clinton's visit to Ghana shows how "Euro-American agents present Africa as barren of spatial and infrastructural culture" (p. 78). He notes the disparaging spatial images which characterised Western press reports of Africa during Clinton's visit and the neglect of coverage of structures in Africa that 'compete' with Western architecture. This form of representation he argues "is an otherness implicating that Africa lacks such structures or

simply that African architectural forms do not match Western architecture, a blueprint of advanced technology, 'civilisation', control and nurture of physical environment" (p. 79). This view though simplistic signposts the binaries with which Africa and the West have been constructed: progressive/retrogressive; deprived/ privileged; civilised/barbaric. It would seem that such binaries, shape news construction of Africa in British press.

News on Africa in British press is often coded into representational forms, which project Africa as a jungle. A good example is the photograph below: (fig 11).

News

Aids terror of British tourist raped by gang

Deaths and disaster cast a shadow over South African tourism

Fig 11 *The Daily Telegraph* 19 November 2002, p. 3

This is an accompanying photograph to the story of how a British woman on tour in South Africa was raped by 'gang'. The caption of the photo reads: *"The 29 – year- old*

woman and her boyfriend were kidnapped at a popular picnic spot along South African's winding Long Tom Pass above. It leads to the Kruger national Park which is famous for its game". The caption (accompanying text) tells us (otherwise we wouldn't have known it) that the photograph is that of Long Tom Pass and it seems an appropriate photo to accompany the story because according to the text, the woman and her boyfriend were kidnapped along the place. This meaning created by the text is at the informational level (Barthes 1977, p. 52). Barthes however suggests that

> The text helps to identify purely and simply the elements of the scene and the scene itself; it is a matter of the denotative description of the image (a description which is often incomplete) ... as opposed to connotation. (1977, p. 39).

Reading meaning from the text alone is limiting because "it banishes one possible signified ...because of its unpleasantness and orientates the reading towards a more flattering signified" (Barthes 1977, p. 40). Barthes further argues that the text may hide the ideological because it causes the reader to avoid some signifieds through 'selective elucidation', "a metalanguage applied not to the totality of the iconic message but only to certain of its signs" (Barthes 1977, p. 40). The text has focused our attention on Long Tom Pass, but says nothing about the elephant pictured along with it. Long Tom Pass is a great tourist attraction in South Africa because of its picturesque nature and its historical relevance. The road "as used today was opened in 1953 and was given the name Long Tom Pass to commemorate a famous battle between the Boers and the British along the road in September 1900".[9] Pictures of the Long Tom Pass that I saw in various Internet sites though constructed as picturesque did not show any indication that animals roam there. So, what is the photograph of the elephant doing there, one may

[9] www.dungbettle.co.za/longtom.htm [Accessed: 20th August 2004].

ask. The elephant looks out of context in the photo, as one could see that the rough terrain, which the picture depicts, is hardly a habitat for elephants, which normally inhabit the plains. Is the photo of the elephant then deliberately superimposed to create some effect? This seems plausible if we consider that by certain photographic arrangement of the scene, the picture of Long Tom Pass is transformed into that of a jungle (the pass is hardly visible). Further closing the meaning on the 'jungle image' is the suggestion that elephants are jungle animals. If we read both signs (elephant, jungle) with the headline (gang, rape), the image of a jungle, which also connotes lawlessness, is complete. One of the dominant perceptions of Africa in the West is that of a jungle where wild animals roam. This spatial representation of Africa in the photo above seems based on familiarity with certain stereotypes of Africa and calls up "ecological imageries, built on primeval symbolism of wild animals roaming the plains and forests of Africa" (Akurang-Parry 2001, p. 76).

In many stories about Africa in the British press, there is a lot of emphasis, which seems to be on constructing images of underdevelopment and deprivation by calling up many disparaging spatial culture. *The Guardian* [UK] constructs this image when it writes:

> In the woodlands of southern Zambia hunger arrives ... as villagers pound open the hard mungongo nuts, a food of last resort for which they compete with monkeys and elephants. The pounding is the only sound in hamlets such as Siatumbu where families slump in front of thatched huts ... We go further into the bush to find nuts and berries... (*The Guardian* [UK] 17 October 2002, p. 19).

Such words as 'woodlands' 'hamlets' 'thatched huts' 'bush', again construct Zambians as living in a jungle and suggest backwardness and underdevelopment. More significantly, the image of the Zambia as a jungle where animals roam is sustained in

this phrase: "food of last resort for which they compete with monkeys and elephants". This reduces the Zambians to the level of animals as well as suggesting underdevelopment. A similar imagery is evident when *The Guardian* (UK) also writes about "the bleached shantytowns of southern Africa ...a shack dustier than most ... a sprawling shantytown in northern Zambia ..." (*The Guardian* (UK) 30 October 2002, p. 20). During Tony Blairs' visit to Ghana in 2002, the press described what Blair saw thus: "He saw the *women and children carrying huge burdens on their heads; the corrugated-iron roof, the abandoned cars, the mud huts*" (*The Guardian* (UK) 9 February 2002, p. 13).

While it is possible to argue that the British press probably report what they see in Africa, the deliberate 'black out' of the structures in Africa that could suggest spatial development makes such an argument contestable. Akurang-Parry (2001) notes this deliberate blackout in the report of Ghana during Clinton's visit. Such could also be noticed in the reports of Nigeria during Tony Blair's visit in 2002. Reporting Nigeria during Blair's visit, *The Guardian* [UK]writes:

> Tony Blair starts his mission to save Africa today in a city that might have been built to show what Nigeria could be, not what it is. Abuja, Nigeria's capital for the past decade, was carved out of the bush, away from the maddening crowds of Lagos, Port Harcourt or any one of the number of other packed Nigerian cities served by intermittent electricity and water and plagued by violence... (*The Guardian* [UK] 7 February 2002, p. 16).

In the story above, Abuja, a beautiful city is dismissed in a few words (a city that might have been built to show what Nigeria could be, not what it is). Instead, emphasis seems to be on the less palatable cities in Nigeria (maddening crowds, packed ...cites, intermittent electricity and water, plagued by violence). The news went to mention

Nigeria's "elected but unpopular government" grappling to turn around a "shattered economy", "country disintegrating under rising ethnic and religious tension fuelled by poverty". In the end what emerges is the representation of a country that is bedevilled with many problems, in line with the dominant ideologies of Africa in the West. It is the use of such stereotypes and narrow repertoires of images that is worrisome. As Moeller (1999) notes:

> The image of Africa as 'primitive' and 'tribal', for example persists in words and images – we can't seem to shake the mythic Africa, made famous by Stanley and Livingstone, Teddy Roosevelt and Edgar Rice Burroughs. Coverage of Africa still runs heavily in such topics as travel safaris and animals... or war, epidemics and famine (p. 24).

In construction of news on Africa, references are often made to the perceived over population of Africa suggesting a link between that and underdevelopment. The issue of overpopulation is often linked to many of the myths circulating about Africa. It again signifies the perceived unbridled sexuality of African women and men, especially constructed as animalistic lust. Within racist construction, sexual indulgence is often seen as a sign of inferiority and social backwardness (Marshall 1996, p. 7). Suggesting a relationship between such a construction and the denial of certain benefits to black Africans in Britain Marshall writes, "It is claimed that instead of contributing to the British economy we have too many children and are social scroungers" (Marshall 1996, p. 16).

The following extract from the news story in *The Daily Telegraph* illustrates a possible 'panic' about Africa's population.

> There was a sense of terror in the Ivorian city of Bouake yesterday as its civilians fled in panic. By the thousands they streamed south, an endless line of men, women and children, clutching a few bags and

> balancing bundles on their heads, snaking through the dense African bush for mile after mile, waving their arms at the few vehicles still with enough fuel to operate near the besieged city, they begged for help in French, English and numerous African dialects (*The Daily Telegraph* 28 September, 2002, p. 20).[10]

This is a 'news report' about the Ivory Coast. The use of numbers – 'by the thousands' - fully engages readers in the speculative guesses about the 'real' numbers and heightens the hyperbolic nature of the phrase (see van Dijk, 2000). This device associates Africa with problems of over population. The graphic description of the exodus reminds one of ants said to move in lines in millions. The same animal imagery seems to continue as the story further describes them as "snaking" through the "African bush." This seems an appropriate imagery as animals certainly live in the bush but the implication is of Ivorians as animals. Furthermore, the writer mentions that people begged in: French and English but referred to Ivorian languages as "numerous African dialects". While French and English qualify as languages, the Ivorian languages could only be regarded as 'deviant' forms of language. This is similar to Achebe's argument when he comments on a write-up once carried by the *Christian Science Monitor:* "In London, there is an enormous immigration of children who speak Indian or Nigerian dialects, or some other native language" (Achebe 1997, p. 124). Achebe considers the use of dialect erroneous in the context in which it was used. He goes on to argue: "(It) is almost a reflex action caused by an instinctive desire of the writer to downgrade the discussion to the level of Africa and India" (Achebe 1997, p. 124). It is in a similar manner that I think that instinctively in the news, language is considered too grand for Africans and instead classifies them as 'dialects'. Yet, the various languages could point to the

[10] See also for more reference on population: Adrain Blomfield "Thousand pack Nairobi as poll campaign opens" *The Daily Telegraph* 19 November 2002, p. 18.

diverse people who inhabit the Ivory Coast – people that obviously do not share the same language and have French as their common 'official' language.

Scholars have argued that while the Western press focuses on underdevelopment of Africa, it fails to focus on the inequalities between nations, colonialism and neo-colonialism, imperialism, and so on, which have continued to widen the gulf between Africa and the West. Rather a 'blame-the-victim-approach', is adopted where Africans are constructed as the 'architects of their own problems'. Rod Liddle's essay in *The Guardian* [UK] typifies this view:

> If Africa is hopeless, it is because it has been ruled for the past 60 or more years by a fantastic collection of conspicuously vile dictators; gangsters, incompetents, corrupt self-serving megalomaniacs, cretinous Marxist ideologues, half-wits, imbeciles, murderous tribal warlords and, plainly, the barking mad and the criminally insane...(*The Guardian* [UK] 7 February 2002, p. 4).

What often is forgotten are the years of Western domination in Africa and their role in placing Africa at a subservient level. Problems, which were created and fanned by the West, are transmuted and projected as Africans' inabilities. For example, many conflicts between the ethnic groups in contemporary Nigeria are the offshoot of the amalgamation of the people so diverse in language, culture and religion by the British colonial administrators for the British *own* administrative convenience. It is established that banks in Europe and America conspire with the corruption of African elites by the 'safe keeping' of huge sums of looted funds. In their analysis of the Rwandan 1994 crisis, Philo *et al.*, citing Fergal Keane's essay in *The Guardian* (UK) ask that

> It should never be forgotten that the identity card system which allowed the Hutu extremists to round up their opponents with such ease was introduced by the colonialists or it was German troops who

> tutored Rwandan peasants on the arts of massacre in the last century (1999, p. 225).

The point is that there are often international links to many of the problems in Africa. Although such links could sometimes be seen in British media, "the crucial point is that it is not routinely referenced in ... news accounts, and when it does appear in the media it is in diverse and fragmented forms" (Glasgow Media Group 2002, p. 15).

In the discourse of the racialised othering of Africa, while the Western involvement in problems in African countries is de-emphasised, a single problem in an African country is exaggerated to include the whole of Africa. There is a tendency for the West to see Africa as monolithic, as a country rather than a continent (see Glasgow Media Group, 2002). This collapsing of all African countries into one makes it easy to stereotype. The racial undertone of this tendency is underscored by the fact that for example, the crisis in Bosnia was not called a European crisis. To push the example further, in England the mad cow disease was never portrayed as a disease of Europe, but was identified with Britain alone. However, it is conventional within the ambience of Western media discourse to tout an outbreak of disease of catastrophe in one African country as an African disease/catastrophe. The following headlines illustrate this tendency.

- "Blair gets first sight of African poverty". (*The Guardian* [UK] February 9 2002, p. 13): The story then goes on to describe Blair's visit to Nankasi, a village in Ghana.
- "Straw finds the 'healing Africa' is a tough task" (*The Daily Telegraph* 24 January 2002, p. 20). This was a headline written after the trip of Jack Straw, the British Foreign secretary to Congo, making the problem in Congo a problem for Africa
- "Africa declares war on its invisible scourge: Ambitious plan to end centuries of poverty by killing off tsetse fly and end centuries of poverty". This story is about Ethiopia. Part of the story reads: "Starting here in six month's time, Mr Kabayo hopes to see the beginning of the destruction of an animal which has held Africa back since the Bronze Age" (*The Guardian* [UK] 31 May 2002, p.

20). The story then goes on about the devastation of tsetse fly in Africa when in fact the story is about Ethiopia.

- "Africa's ugly sisters leave trail of death: a summit next week will explore ways to fight the twin evils of Aids and famine" (*The Guardian* [UK] 30 October 2002, p. 20). The story is on Southern Africa, to be precise South Africa and the aid epidemic in the country, but the press reports relate it to Africa.
- Drought in Africa 'could become a catastrophe' (*The Daily Telegraph* 29 July 2002, p. 3) The lead of this news then goes on to say "the drought in southern Africa could become a catastrophe because of Zimbabwe's refusal to allow commercial imports of grain to enable better- off Zimbabweans to feed themselves, Clare Short, the International development secretary warned yesterday."

These headlines would seem to be misleading, giving an impression of the whole of Africa being infected with Aids, famine, drought, etc, when in actual fact the affected areas are only some countries in Africa. The misleading nature of the headlines is heightened by the fact that in most cases headlines make the most lasting impressions on the readers. Van Dijk (2000) underscores this when he writes:

> Since topics express the most important information of a text and in news are further signalled by prominent headlines and leads, they are also best understood and memorized by the readers. In other words, negative topics have negative consequences in the minds of the recipients (p. 38).

The nature of newspaper reading where time is often a big constraint also hinders critical readings of the messages (Hermes, 1995). There is an increasing possibility therefore that most newspaper readers would not interrogate dominant messages about Africa in the headlines in British newspapers and the further possibility that the preferred reading of Africa as monolithic would go uncontested.

Behold Father Christmas: News construction of Europe's relations with Africa

News about Africa in the British press is constructed in ways that subjugate Africa while celebrating the superiority of Europe. There seem to be inherent binaries in the news construction of Africa and Europe in the press. For example while Africa is projected as corrupt, incapable of self-government, passive, uncivilised, etc, Europe is constructed as always there to pick up the pieces, to be benevolent, patronising and to save Africa from itself. It seems there is a difficulty to report Africa without prejudice. Achebe notes "the continuing desire – one might say – the need in Western psychology to set Africa up as a foil to Europe, a place of negations, at once remote and vaguely familiar in comparison with which Europe's own state of spiritual grace will be manifest" (Achebe, cited in Brantlinger 1986, p. 218). According to Goldberg (1993):

> Formally, primitive societies were theorized as in binary differentiation from a civilized order .... In popular terms, nonwhite primitives have come to be conceived as childlike, intuitive, and spontaneous; they require the iron fist of European governance and paternalistic governance to control inherent physical violence .... (p. 158)

The images of dependency, passivity and unruliness in relation to Africa are resurrected in the press reports of Africa, while Europe is depicted as the Father Christmas per excellence. *The Guardian* [UK] explicitly expresses Africa's incapability:

> The delicious irony is that in those African countries where there is a semblance of hope, it is because of a canny, enlightened neo-colonialism from the charities, bi-lateral donors and UN organisations (*The Guardian* [UK] 7 February 2002, p. 4).

Racist ideologies about blackness and whiteness formed through construction of racial typologies by people like Gobineau (Biddis, 1970) who has maintained that 'all' civilisations were dependent on whites, for their founding and continuance. Conquering the 'inferior races' was thus considered both a necessity and a duty for Europeans. These thoughts seem to be still alive in the general strategy of 'positive self representation' and 'negative other- representation' (Van Dijk, 2000) that is prevalent in Western dominant 'news' discourse about Africans. Writing about the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) an initiative to improve development in Africa, *The Daily Telegraph* writes:

> The much-hyped initiative to rebuild Africa elicited little enthusiasm from Mercy Mugai as she clutched her two underfed children and glanced wistfully at the fast-food café in central Nairobi. 'All these people do is talk, talk, talk,' she said. 'If our leaders do get any money from the Wazungu (white men), they steal it for themselves. We have no food, no schools, no future. We are just left to die.' New Partnership for Africa's development (Nepad) requires the West to pump in billions in annual investments in exchange for good political and economic governance (*The Daily Telegraph* 28 June 2002, p. 14).

The story above juxtaposes African corruption ('*If our leaders do get any money from the Wazungu (white men), they steal it for themselves*') with white generosity (*requires the West to pump in money*). A similar imagery of European generosity and African dependency is sustained in the headline and photo below (fig 12).

The headline in figure 12 below ('Britons urged to help avert African catastrophe') constructs Africa as passive and incapable of any informed decision. It is left to the magnanimity of Britons to avert the catastrophe in Africa. The *Daily Telegraph* writes: "*But in Africa, a soon as one problem is solved, another opens up*"(*The Daily Telegraph* 6 February 2002, p. 16).

International news

Appeal launched as millions face famine caused by prolonged drought compounded by political upheaval

Britons urged to help avert African catastrophe

Chris McGreal in Johannesburg

decade.

Two years of poor rains, compounded by periodic flooding in some countries and political upheaval and war in others, has already led to the death of thousands of people and the spectre of mass famine hanging over millions of others in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Lesotho and Angola.

The UK's Disasters Emergency Committee, a group of 12 aid agencies, including the British Red Cross, Oxfam, Save the Children and Christian Aid, made the appeal yesterday to the public for donations to provide food and medical and agricultural assistance.

"We are seeking to fund a major aid operation in a bid to avert a catastrophic famine in the region over the coming months," the committee's chief executive, Brendan Gormley, said.

"The appeal will help fund health programmes, distribution of seeds and tools to subsistence farmers, and food aid for the most vulnerable. There is still time to prevent the worst case scenario of death on a massive scale."

The UN World Food Programme has appealed to governments for $500m (£318m) to supply about 1m tonnes of food in the coming months. So far it has received only about a fifth of what it needs. The worst hit country is Zimbabwe, where it is estimated that 6 million people will be in need of food by the end of September, twice as many as in any other country.

Brendan Paddy, an official of the Save the Children Fund who has just completed a tour of Zimbabwe, says that, the

their chickens and goats – but the value of livestock compared to the price of

mean they are not malnourished. When the famine hits, they will already be weak."

Compounding the seriousness of the crisis is the pervasiveness of HIV/Aids. The condition is more likely to take hold in immune systems weakened by hunger.

Earlier this month Britain donated £33m to alleviate food shortages in Zimbabwe, but the appeal for the entire region has been hampered by fraught relations between some African governments and western donors.

Confrontation

Ten years ago drought caused an even sharper fall in food production by subsistence farmers in several countries, including Zimbabwe. People in Mozambique were digging deep into dry river beds in search of water.

But on that occasion a catastrophe was averted by large-scale aid deliveries months before critical food shortages began. Zimbabwe led the way in mobilising an international response.

This year confrontations between donors and the governments of two of the countries most in need, Zimbabwe and Malawi, have played a major part in holding up aid to the entire region.

ActionAid says that a concerted response has been held up by those involved blaming each other for the lack of preparation for the food shortages, which have been more than a year in the making: the EU blaming African governments for maladministration and the Africans accusing western governments of playing politics with food.

The crisis has been further complicated

A year-old malnourished child in Malawi, which is suffering a severe drop in maize production. Neighbouring Zambia has refused to accept GM maize from America
Photograph: Debbie Yazbek/EPA

'The number of children at risk is a staggering 7 million. That's equivalent to the population of London'
Deborah Crowe
Save the Children

cost and logistical obstacles to getting it to the hungry.

On Wednesday a senior American government aid official, Roger Winter, appealed to the Zambian and Zimbabwean authorities to accept GM maize. "It is the same food that Americans eat every day," he told Associated Press. "We want to help in this food emergency but we don't have a substitute [for the corn], and the volumes are not available anywhere else."

The governments concerned have suggested that the grain should be milled

Fig 12 *The Guardian* [UK] 26 July 2002, p. 20

Africa while being a compendium of problems relies on Europeans for survival. The image of passivity is played up in the news construction of Africa.

Van Dijk's (2000) research indicates that in the report of minorities of any kind, the British media represent them in a passive role. This passivity is clearly reflected in the stories on Africa. Discourses of indolence and stupidity have consistently been attributed to black Africans. These discourses consider Africans so stupid that they failed to see the disastrous consequences of their own indolence (see Walvin, 1982) and these discourses seems still to inform the representations of Africa within the British newspapers. This can be illustrated by looking at the news construction of the discourses about GM Maize:

> When Britain launched its public debate last week on genetically modified crops, the talk was of government indifference to the outcome. But the British response to GM has an importance that extends far beyond its shores. While this country's full-bellied citizens discuss the niceties of outcrossing and allergenicity, Africans are listening, for countries where the issues are raw and overshadowed by starvation. Only last month one African country rejected GM food aid after consultations with Europe. Britain's – and Europe's – attitudes to GM are profoundly shaping the African response... (*The Daily Telegraph* 20 November 2002, p. 26).

Africa's passive role in the discourses about genetically modified crops is seen in the use of these words: "Africans are listening". Listening is a behaviour more associated with passivity and the dominated. This image of the dominated is sustained in the news by referring to an action taken by an African country as being "after consultations with Europe" while image of the domination by Europe is suggested in this phrase: "Britain's – and Europe's – attitudes to GM are profoundly shaping the African response".

The visit of Tony Blair to countries in Africa provides images associated with uncivilised behaviour and disorder, drawn from primordial discourses about Africa. The image of the horde and the mob are resurrected in the description of the Blair's visit to Ghana:

> Tony Blair saw rural Africa where the bulk of the continent's population live for the first time yesterday.... In Nankasi, he was *mobbed by hundreds of villagers*. "It moved his heart", a colleague travelling with him said. "He could not be other than affected by the dignity of the Ghanaian villagers" (*The Guardian* [UK] 9 February 2002, p. 13).

The use of the words "mobbed by hundreds of villagers" to describe the Ghanaians' enthusiastic welcome to Blair echo the image of an unruly crowd. Blair is also

presented as the messiah whose presence the villagers wanted desperately to behold. As in the days of Christ when Christ "saw a great crowd and had compassion for them for they were like sheep without a shepherd" (Mark 6: 34), Tony Blair's heart was moved by the mob of villagers and could not but be affected by their 'dignity'. Ghanaians are thus constructed as 'objects to be pitied' by the benevolent white man. This type of representation of Westerners when they visit Africa has been previously noted (see Badawi, 1988). In the representation of Nigeria during Blair's visit, the unruly imagery is also sustained. The speaker of the national assembly was described as 'giggling', National assembly members 'sat in comfy airport armchairs when *they are not milling about*, the speaker's request that mobile phones be switched off was answered by repeated electronic thrilling' (*The Daily Telegraph* 8 February 2002, p. 17). Nigerians' unruly and uncivilised behaviour is contrasted with Tony Blair's who is constructed as deeply restrained. The story on Nigeria continues:

> The Prime Minister was welcomed by a brass band that pumped out waltzes and tangos with vigour. Its rendition of the national anthem rather collapsed in the last bars, somewhere around "long to reign over us", *but Mr Blair did not flinch. (The Daily Telegraph* 8 February 2002, p. 17).

The extract above constructs disorderliness of Nigerians. As truthful as this may appear, it is the myth of Africa's incapability, unruliness and childlikeness that is being reinforced in this story. The fact that in spite of the 'confusion' *Blair did not flinch*, portrays him as the quintessential signifier of Western civilised controlled order.

The gendered nature of the stories

In this section, I wish to signal the gendered nature of the news stories which are then taken up and fully explored in the next chapter (Chapter Seven). In telling the stories about Africa (Aids, rape, hunger, etc), women rather than men are mostly used as characters. One possible reason for this is that news on Africa is constructed mostly within victim-victimisation paradigm and women are easily used as victims in news reports (GMMP, 2000). The news constructs further reinforce and confirm rather than challenge dominant notions of gender. For example, though the impact of Aids stories could possibly have been explored as the effect of Aids on families, it is easy in the stories to resort to the image of women as nurtures/ carers by making the devastating effect of Aids manifest mostly through women as they struggle to 'keep' their children. Little opportunity however is provided in the news stories to know who the women really are and largely, they remain the silent objects of both racialised and gendered construction. These views are taken up in the next chapter (Chapter Seven).

Conclusion

News reports of Africa in the British press are too complex to be explained away as racial bias. Various factors dialectically function to create the dominant images of Africa prevalent in the British press. In this chapter, I have explored the constraints of reporting Africa by British journalists. The constraints of time, money, logistics, personnel, etc. continue to imply that journalists might continuously resort to myths and stereotypes as a gateway to meeting deadlines. This implies that Africa is consistently reported within narrow repertoires of understanding, which are dominated by mostly negative images. These constraints however intertwine with the ideological terrain of the British society, which also means that images are produced within the dominantly

conceived notions about a group of people. As I argued in this chapter, this possibly influences the use of human-interest forms of reporting in telling the stories about Africa. In personalised stories performed using individual's accounts; in the use of imagery and attribution, what possibly emerges is the voyeurism implicit in these stories. Africa seems to be brought under scrutiny to celebrate their 'otherness'. This 'otherness' is often propelled presenting women objects. A possible reason for the use of women, as suggested in this chapter, is that women often fit the victim/victimisation paradigm within which news of Africa is constructed. In all these converging factors, what is possible is that news about Africa in the British press is a powerful reinforcer of long-held ideologies and myths of race and/or gender.

❖ Chapter Seven

Across Cultures: News and African women

Introduction

In Chapter Six, I examined the presentation of Africa within British news discourses, suggesting it is characterised by ethnocentrism, 'otherness' and stereotyping. I also signposted how these stories are possibly constructed from a gendered perspective – e.g. women are mostly used to propel the tales of Africa along. In this chapter, I examine this issue further, suggesting possible reasons for the choice of women as "characters" in the stories. Possibly, African women are constructed within news in Britain from a framework that is both gendered and racialised.

Within Nigerian news discourses, although racial identity forms an insignificant factor in the construction of gender, there is a suggested marginalisation of women in the manner that news is constructed to frame them (Okunna, 2002; Chude, 2003). Such a situation makes the call by some feminists of African origin to 'exclude sexism from our praxis' and for 'Africana women and men to dismiss the primacy of gender issues in their reality' rather unrealistic (see Hudson-Weems 1994, p. 8, 25). Evidence from the stories in Nigerian press which I discuss in this chapter suggests an endemic patriarchy in Nigeria, which forms and shapes representation. In British and Nigerian cultures, the African woman seems to be on the receiving end of ideologies that use a different yardstick for masculinity and femininity. This has been noted as a global tendency: news reports seem to be highly gendered. I therefore start this chapter with a focus on the global situation of women in the news by discussing statistics from the

GMMP 2000. I then follow it up with a cross-cultural analysis of what my study reveals about the construction of African women in Nigerian and British news discourses.

Current situation of women in world news - GMMP 2000 revisited[1]

In this section, I examine the data provided by the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) 2000 on gender and news media. I decided to revisit GMMP 2000 because it is the most comprehensive, large-scale, cross-national quantitative study of women's portrayal in the media and its findings have been used (in addition to those of the earlier monitoring project in 1995) as a basis for feminist media advocacy. The architects of the GMMP 2000 describes its project as

> The most comprehensive overview ever compiled of gender portrayal in the world's media. It therefore stands as a reference point - it is our best international picture to date of the roles of women and men in media... (GMMP 2000, p.13).

The above assertion could sound lofty especially in the face of a project representing a 'snapshot' view of the world's media and describing merely one day in the life of its people. Yet, it is undoubtedly comprehensive as the project provides researchers with the opportunity to obtain a sweeping glance at the pattern of women's representation in the media on a global level.

The bond created among participants of GMMP is significant, since feminisms with their emphasis on difference, need a mechanism to enable them to work together towards a common goal. As a participant in this particular project, I could feel the bond like a thread connecting me across miles to the women and men in the 70 countries in 8

[1] Global media Monitoring Project (GMMP) 2000 was conducted by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) London, on February 1. WACC has scheduled another monitoring project for 16 February 2005.

regions of the world (Africa, Europe, Asia, Caribbean, Latin America, Middle East, North America and Oceania),[2] who were participating in putting the world's media under scrutiny in relation to gender portrayal on exactly the same day.

GMMP 2000 was held five years after the first global media-monitoring project.[3] GMMP 2000 identified 50,000 people who appeared in more than 16,000 news stories, exploring two broad areas of participation of women in the world's news media: the numbers of women and men who appear in different news media and in different countries and the roles women and men perform in news stories.[4]

One day in the news of the world

As expected, women are seriously under-reported.
[Nigeria]

Fig. 13 GMMP in action: Kate (first from left) and other members of the UNIZIK group participating in the monitoring – *Who makes the news?* p. 49.

GMMP 2000 revealed that globally, women accounted for just 18% of news subjects while men accounted for 82% (GMMP 2000, p. 15). In the period 1995-2000, women

[2] See Appendix 13 for list of countries that participated in GMMP 2000.
[3] The global media monitoring project organised by Media Watch, Canada took place in 71 countries on 18th January 1995. the 1995 research revealed that women represented just 17% and men 83% of the news subject in television, radio and newspaper for that day.
[4] This includes the types of stories they appear in, the occupations and positions in society that they portray, and the ways that news stories present them. This section however focuses, not on the journalists or announcers who appear in the different media, but on the "news subjects" and in the context of GMMP 2000 refers to all those who are the focus of news coverage. In radio and television newscasts, this term includes each person who speaks or is central to the story. In newspapers, it includes each person who is named, quoted or shown in a photo.

had increased their visibility in the media by just 1% of visibility. The GMMP expresses this as an important concern, arguing:

> Women form half of the world's population, so all things being equal; one would expect that half the subjects in news programmes should be women. The fact that women make up just 18 percent of news subjects, not 50, raises fundamental questions about the nature of news and about the structure of the society (GMMP 2000, p. 27).

Other research on women and the news have such similar concerns. Gallagher (2001) reviews some previous research on women portrayal in the media and concludes that, "by and large media content still reflects a masculine vision of the world and of what is important" (2001, p. 7). Results from the GMMP 2000 reveal a lack of gender balance in many areas of the news. Women are more represented in traditional female occupations, and more likely than men to be identified in terms of marital or family status. There is also a very high proportion of stories featuring women as victims.

GMMP 2000 also examined the women and men who appeared in photographs and who were quoted in news stories. GMMP 2000 argues that the use of quotes and photographs are both conscious decisions on the part of the reporters and the editors, yet, there is no significant difference between the proportions of women (33 percent) and men (35 percent) who were quoted in newspaper articles while there was a significant difference between the appearance of women in photographs (25 percent) when compared to men (11 percent). This suggests that the use of women in photographs is partly for decorative purposes especially in celebrity news, entertainments and sports. This suggestion of the GMMP will be revisited in a later section where I will consider the use of photographs of African women as news in Nigerian and British press.

GMMP 2000 seems to suggest that, at the dawn of the 21st century, very little has changed with regard to women and/in the news. The fundamental patterns of media representation that have characterised both theory and research about women and the news in the 1970s and 1980s remain relatively intact (see Ceulemans and Fauconnier, 1979; Gallagher, 1979, 1981; Creedon, 1989). Women are still over-reported in terms of representatives of traditional female roles, (i.e. in home and family) and are still invisible or silently present in news programmes. This continues despite the increasing number of women participating in the media. Studies that are more recent conducted in individual countries like Nigeria (see Okunna, 2002; Omenugha, 2003; Chude 2003) show that the pattern has hardly changed over time. Women are still not being given prominence in news media, in terms of frequency of appearance. They are also being denied prominence as sources (see Okunna, 2002), as well as being stereotyped and criminalized (see Omenugha, 2003).

GMMP 2000 suggests a universal definition of what seems to constitute the role of women in many societies. Women's representation in the media is therefore integrally related to cultural assumptions about gender. In this, there seems to be an uncanny similarity between the quite diverse countries and regions that participated in the project (see Appendix 13). For every African country that was monitored, a higher proportion of women than men were portrayed as victims. In Asian countries, the general impression given by gender patterns in the news on the monitoring day suggests a world where women have little authority or public acknowledgement. In the Caribbean countries, despite an above-average news presence, women are primarily portrayed in the role of 'ordinary citizen' rather than as experts or authorities in their fields. In Europe, the gender patterns that emerge automatically divide the news into feminine and masculine. Women were significantly absent in news on politics and war

(hard news stories) and tended to make the news in arts, entertainments and celebrity (soft news). A similar trend is also noticed in the Middle East, which shows mainly a world of men, preoccupied with issues of war and the military. In Latin America, too, the general pattern is women's lack of visibility, a reflection of an extremely conservative view of what news is. In North America (United States and Canada) and Oceania (e.g. Australia and Fiji), as with almost everywhere in the world, women are mostly portrayed in traditional roles, and more likely to be identified in terms of family status. This uncanny similarity in the news findings across the continents seems to suggest that there are striking similarities in the construction of femininity and gender across the countries of the world. The GMMP writes:

> One of the greatest strengths of the global media monitoring project is its ability to demonstrate that women's representation in the news is characterised by more similarities than differences even in countries as divergent as Canada and Cuba (GMMP 2000, p. 48).

GMMP seems to reaffirm that woman as a social group *does* exist and collectively are seen through very similar male 'eyes' even in cultures very different from each other. This becomes a legitimate reason for women to find strength amidst their differences, "and form alliances across those differences" (Cranny-Francis *et al.* 2003, p. 55). The fight for the emancipation of women is far from won. As Terisita Hermano and Anna Turley commenting on GMMP 2000 rightly point out:

> While we often hear that news is a reflection of what is happening, this close-up look across borders and time zones, reminds women that reflections of their lives and their issues are still absent, despite their increasing presence in newsrooms. GMMP 2000 has provided the means for us to answer some of our questions, but what it does is to raise so many more to which answers must be found (Hermano and Turley 2001, p. 79).

In the ensuing sections, I now explore the how African women are represented in both Nigerian and British press, attempting a cross-cultural analysis of these representations.

Concordant representation

Silencing women

In a manner similar to the findings of GMMP (2000), news discourses in Nigeria and Britain both seem to construct African women as voiceless. This pattern, however seems to be universal for women. A simple, but powerful example which I showed in Chapter One was how Theresa May's speech was simply reduced to the leopard-skin shoes she was wearing (see fig 3, p. 51). This is a device, which not only trivialises women but also renders them voiceless. Possibly, this construction links to a universal assumption of the inferior value of women's speech. Feminist linguistic theorists have noted a general assumption that female speech patterns and practices are inferior to men's. Cameron (1992) for example observes that an inferior value is attributed to the so-called 'women's speech style'. She argues that such inferiorisation of women's speech style (if such a thing as women's speech style exists) reflects and reinforces social differences and inequalities:

> So long as women are subordinate to men, their language will continue to be stereotyped as indicating natural subservience, unintelligence and immaturity. So long as men dominate women in conversation by restricting their talk, our folklinguistic beliefs will include the idea that women talk incessantly (p. 43).

In relation to men, women's speech is considered less worthy. At best, it is considered gossip that should be ignored (Olurode 1990, p. 13). Gossiping, bitching, nagging,

giggling etc., are terms often associated with women while there is no corresponding construct for men: they simply talk (Macdonald, 1995). Such social constructions of women's speech are measures of patriarchal dominance. If 'women talk' is considered irrelevant, emotional and childish, it amounts to a justification for keeping them silent. A popular proverb among the Yoruba of Nigeria is *"Ile ti obinrin ti nse toto arere ni hu nibe"* which means *"A home where a woman can speak freely will have the foul smelling arere tree growing in the house (arere tree normally grows in the wild because of the foul odour).* Speech is associated with power and liberation; silence a symbol of oppression. Part of feminists' struggle has been for women's own definition of themselves, rather than through a male-centred vision. Black feminists too have challenged their lack of privilege to articulate their needs but have had to carry inscriptions projected on them by the white 'supremacist' feminist culture (hooks, 2000). In insisting on naming the struggles of African women, themselves, many African women give credence to the politics involved not just in naming but also in having a voice (Acholonu, 1995; Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994). Voice, here takes expression through language and is thus an empowering tool for defining a group's identity. Within the media, group identity can be defined not just by giving space for their utterances, but also by the weight or meaning imposed on these utterances within the media discourses. For example within news discourses, women who speak in social ceremonies might be assigned less importance than women who present an annual budget. This is because while one belongs to the area termed 'soft' the other belongs to the hard news, which carries more status within news discourses (van Zoonen, 1988; Ogunsuji, 1989; Patterson, 2000). Thus, lack of voice does not mean silence, it might refer also to what Cameron (1992) has called being 'muted'. A muted group according to Cameron "may speak a great deal, the important issue is whether they are able to say

all they would wish to say, where and when they wish to say it" (p. 140). Referring to the relationship between language and gender in media practice, Macdonald (1995) suggests we refer less to grammar and structure of the language and "more to relative entitlement of men and women to speak up and be heard, and to define the world we live in" (p. 44). This ability to speak and define the world has been noted as one of the privileges denied women globally within the media. GMMP (2000) shows that globally there is a low percentage of women as spokespersons. This includes areas that are of specific importance and concern to women.

I noticed a similar trend in relation to black African women in both Nigeria and British news discourses within the period of study. In Britain, African women hardly featured as making any recognisable speeches or comments (even African affairs). Because there seems universality in the denying of voice to females (Cameron, 1992; GMMP, 2000) it may be argued that the absence of African women's voices is perhaps the result of an endemic universal patriarchy than racism. It could also be argued that the paucity of African women's voices in the British news is not because of conscious sexism but is rather a reflection of the way journalists judge and define news. Traditional pecking orders put politics in the forefront of newsworthy events and in most African states politics is still predominantly a male affair. Thus, the rarity of African women's voices in British news discourses might be seen to reflect a pattern visible in many African nations (see GMMP, 2000). What is of interest however is how speech attributed to African women is more often than not couched in racist undertone, indicating they are impacted by both gender and race. In the previous chapter, I suggested that news about Africa might be seen as narratives woven to reinforce pre-existing myths and racial beliefs about Africa. In these stories (e.g. AIDS, rape, underdevelopment, brutality, etc), African women more than the men are used to propel these tales along.

Consequently rather than being subjects of the 'news' they are narrative objects. This is because in the stories, they seem to be stripped of their identity, lose their individuality, and become symbols of Africa, which as I have argued has become a metaphor for all form of ills. In such cases, the racial identity of African women might be seen to have informed their usage within the news discourses. A typical example is the story of hunger as reported in *The Guardian* (UK). Part of the story reads:

> The old woman crawls from her hut and slowly stands up. She walks unsteadily to greet the visitors. 'Pardon me', she says politely in the Ndebele language. 'I am weak. We have gone two days without food. We are gathering wild berries but they are not enough. We are losing strength'. 'Since I was born in 1924, I have never seen such hunger', says Maria Nyathi (whose name has been changed to avoid retaliation) (7 November 2002, p. 21).

In the extract above the woman remains anonymous – rendered invisible and silent. This is because, contrary to journalistic principles (where people in the news are accompanied by titles or description), (see Keeble 2002, p. 99), the woman like majority of women used in the story of Africa, is merely a stock character. What the story above and others previously cited do is to take away African women's individuality and fuse their representation with Africa's. Their stories are told not as intrinsically theirs, but as the story of Africa. It is as if the African women are without a name. Goldberg (1993) writes:

> Power is exercised epistemologically in the dual process of naming and evaluating. In naming or refusing to name things in the order of thought, existence is recognized or refused, significance assigned or ignored, beings elevated or rendered invisible (p. 150).

Being both female and African has thus rendered African women doubly invisible, doubly ignored and doubly 'othered' in British news. It is in this context that Spivak's words ring so true, "If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no

history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadows…"(1995, p. 28).

Within many Nigerian cultures, the predominant ideology of a 'good' woman is one who is seen and not heard. Edoga -Ugwuoju's poem read in the literature in primary schools captures this ideology relating to the female voice:

A good woman should resemble three things

She should be like the town clock

Keep time and regularity

She should not however like the town clock

Speak so loudly that all the town might hear

She should be like a snail

Keep within her own house

She should not however like the snail

Carry all she has on her back

She should be like an echo

Speak when spoken to

She should not however like an echo

Be determined always to have the last word

A good woman should be seen and not heard (Edoga-Ugwuoju in Odejide 1996, p.120).

In Nigeria, the cultural imposition of silence on women seems manifest in the manner in which news reports of women's issues are framed. For instance in *Daily Champion* (25 June 2002) item with the caption: "Women are agents of change – Udofia" (p. 6), the news is about how the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited (SPDC) organised a special oil and gas seminar for women opinion leaders.

> Deputy Managing Director of the Shell Development Company of Nigeria Limited (SPDC) Mr Joshua Udofia, has described women as "the pillars of the society and the agents of change". Mr Udofia who made this known while addressing participants of special oil and gas seminar for women opinion leaders organised by his company said the petroleum industry in Nigeria was strategic for all stakeholders to be knowledgeable about. He pointed out that women's voice (sic) were very crucial in resolving national issues particularly in the Niger Delta, adding that neglecting them was neglecting more than half the population. "Women are very important part of the society. If you look at the Niger Delta and most of the issues that are there and look for a group of people who can make substantial input into the resolution of the issues you find that women are well-placed to do that", he said. He said it was necessary to resolve (sic) women in the planning of the economy because of their positions in the families, communities and the entire society, adding that women are associated with all the economic aspects because they bear the brunt of what is happening in the society. He said: "We believe that, first of all, they have the leverage to the youths, they also have the leverage to also look at the community and assess performance. And quite a number of the women are also in one non-governmental organisation or the other that can have influence into changing what is happening in the country" (*Daily Champion* 25 June 2002, p. 6).

Even though the report indicates that "women's voices were very crucial in resolving national issues", the story focused only on the speech of the deputy manager, ignoring the views of the women who were the focus of the seminar. As emphasised by (GMMP, 2000), women were talked about but were not talked to. Similarly in the news reports by *The Guardian* [N], *The Punch* and *Daily Champion* newspapers of the conference on "African Women and the New Partnership of African Development", an event that attracted many women from all parts of Africa (including many who would be considered high achievers), none of the newspapers focused on any of the women who attended the conference. Rather, they all dwelt on the speech of the President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo. *The Guardian* (N) (5 February 2002, p. 96) reported it as "Obasanjo lists leaders' steps to transform Africa", *The Daily Champion* (6 February 2002, p.15) gave it the title: "Dream to reduce poverty in Africa dims" being its own

version of the summary of the president's speech and *The Punch* (6 February 2002, p. 7) called it "Change focus, Obasanjo tells African leaders". In all these, none represented the views of women for whose interests the conference was apparently organised (see fig 14 below for full sample text).

Obasanjo lists leaders' steps to transform Africa

PRESIDENT Olusegun Obasanjo yesterday reviewed Africa's approach to development and concluded that the journey had been tortuous, uninspiring and was responsible for its distorted growth.

While acknowledging the enormous challenges before the African continent, President Obasanjo maintained that with its political leaders' new philosophy of governance that places premium on grassroots participation, Africa is set to return to the path of sustained growth and prosperity.

He spoke at the regional conference on "African Women and the New Partnership of African Development," organised by the Africa Leadership Forum in conjunction with the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the French Embassy in Nigeria, at Ota, Ogun State.

Speaking on the African failed attempt at development, the President, waxing philosophical, said: "It appears that Africa missed the boat of development long ago, we have rushed to the airport only to discover that we cannot afford the air ticket and finally stood at the airport watching and wailing as the plane of development takes off."

However, Obasanjo said he believes that Africa still has a chance to catch the flight of development. "Rather than bemoaning the aircraft that has taken off, we should approach development through a fast moving vehicle because we would not advance if we continue to brood about the traffic jam that would be encountered."

"We can wish away the other obstacles or we can get up and decide to do something about our condition. The political leaders have managed to fashion out a framework; a high-speed vehicle has been provided, the development partners have indicated willingness to provide the fuel in principle, a driver is available, but where are the passengers?" he asked in reference to the masses' participation.

His address was delivered by the Minister of Aviation, Dr. Kema Chikwe, at the conference being attended by African leaders, opinion moulders, women leaders like the President of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Benin, Prof. Conceptia Ouinso, the Ghananian Minister of Culture and Tourism, Mrs. Yakubu Hawah, The Gambian Minister of Fisheries and Environment, Mrs. Susan Woffa-Ogoo, and Minister of Defence (Navy), Mrs. Modupe Adelaja and her Women Affairs' counterpart Hajia Amina Ismail.

Obasanjo said African leaders agreed with the international development goal to reduce poverty by 50 per cent by 2015, a goal which, he noted, requires effective planning and ingenuity on the part of the leadership to achieve.

"While a nine per cent yearly growth rate is required for eradicating poverty in Africa, the current projections do not envisage more than five per cent per annum. Most of the countries of the continent lack the fundamentals for sustained future growth at rates required to realise the poverty reduction target," he stressed.

He, therefore, called on women to take the lead in the process because it is paramount to the successful implementation of NEPAD, its objectives, programmes and projects.

"As we approach the dawn of the new millennium the defining feature of our increasingly interdependent world is accelerated by globalisation and the liberalisation of production, trade, investment and finance", he emphasized.

Obasanjo expressed hope that sustainable economic growth based on human security, peace and stability in Africa; poverty eradication, enhancement of the role of women to achieve gender equality in school enrolment by 2005, while reducing infact and maternal mortality would be achieved on the continent through a range of carefully designed and agreed sectoral priorities.

Obasanjo solicited the support of the civil society and the generality of the people on whose behalf, he claimed, the leaders act.

He added: "At the political level, we have set targets, made commitments and are serious about these
and commitment. W
these goals, targets and
mitment as the basis
covenant with our peo
the basis of our engag
with our development
ners and as the basis
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mation of our contin
several respects.

"Popular partici
based on accounta
openness and transp
is not a one-way stree
leadership may set th
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beat, raise the tempo
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tate the effective rest
ing of Africa. Words
ties, political talks ar
tastic strategy pape
never enough. A seri
derstanding of the e
tion never to look bac
your hand in on the
is critical.

"The world is not
by mere good int
Neither will intention
do. A degree of adr
hardheaded pursui
willingness to walk
through the maze
quired. The partners
not only be with ou
opment partners, it w
be with our people
particular the organis
society will be a criti
of the equation," he s

He challenged the
folk to rise up to t
lenges saying: "Our
cannot be left out; w
talk about global
about the need for
cohesion in a glo
world and still h
women in contempt."

***Fig 14** The Guardian* [N] 5 February 2002, p. 96

Certainly in the Nigerian newspapers that I surveyed, news about women achievers ignores their actual achievements. A clear example of this can be seen in the news report on Justice Rose Ukeje's thanksgiving on her appointment as a chief judge of the Federal High Court. With the headline: "Cleric scores politicians, judiciary low" the

report dwelt on the clergyman's sermon offering nothing of substance with regard to Justice Rose Ukeje's achievements or biography etc., (see fig 15).

Cleric scores politicians, judiciary low

By Ibe Nwaleke
Judicial Correspondent

THE present administration and the crop of politicians in the country have completely forgotten our military past and have continued to behave as if nothing matters to them as the people continue to groan under the pain and suffering brought upon them by misrule of their leaders."

That was the Vicar of Our Saviour's Church, Tafawa Balewa Square, Lagos, Rev. Akin Odejide, as he critically decried the scorecards of politicians and judiciary yesterday.

Delivering a sermon during a thanksgiving service at the weekend in honour of the newly appointed Chief Judge of the Federal High Court, Justice Rose N. Ukeje, the cleric expressed disappointment with the way the country is being governed by the present administration.

At the ceremony attended by governors, members of the National Assembly, judges, generals, politicians, legal luminaries and captains of industries, Rev Odejide lamented that the leaders have abandoned the path of truth and righteousness which, he warned, would in the end, lead to catastrophe and doom.

He said: "I am disappointed with our leaders in this our hard-earned democracy. They have worsened the living conditions of the people and had increased their hardship and suffering. I have no apology to them if they are here."

Rev. Odejide, therefore, urged the leaders to retrace their steps and correct their mistakes "before the wrath of God will be visited on them."

He urged the judiciary to uphold the truth at all times and to apply the check and balance on the executive and the legislature, to curbs their excess and to bring the last hope to the common man.

He prayed for wisdom and protection of the new Chief Judge and thanked the Almighty for making it possible for her to be appointed to that position.

In attendance at the elaborate gathering were the former Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, Commodore Ebitu Ukiwe; the former Governor of Delta S[tate] Chief Felix Ibru; former Military Gove[rnor] of Lagos State, Com[mo]dore Gbolahan Mudas[iru] (rtd); former Sport[s Min]ister, Commodore En[ebi] Omeruah (rtd) and S[ena]tor Ike Nwachukwu.

Others were Chief A[...] Ajegbo, chairman [...] Committee on the J[udici]ary; Court of Appeal [Port] Harcourt judge, J[ustice] Ignatius Pat Achoi[...] immediate past C[hief] Judge of the Federal [High] Court, Justice Mah[...] Babatunde Belgore; [La]gos State Chief Ju[dge] Justice Inumidi[...] Shotiminu; Justice B[...] Rhodes Vivour of the [La]gos High Court and [Pro]fessor Anya O. Anya.

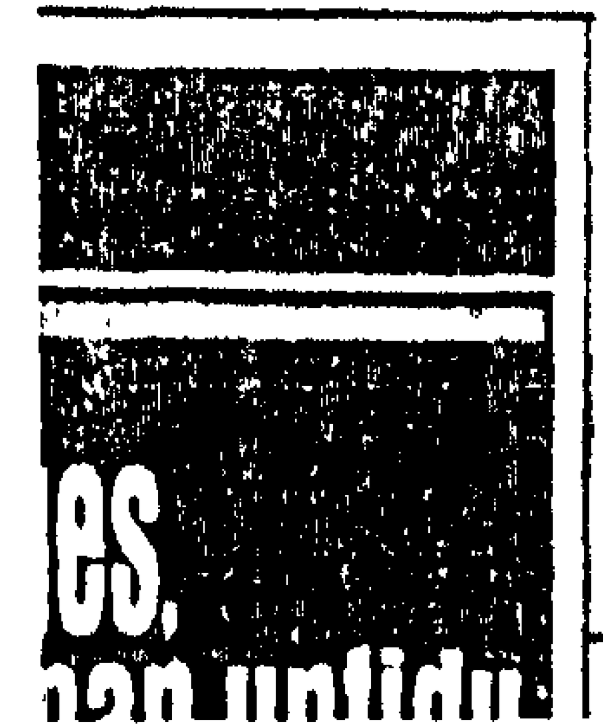


Fig 15 The Guardian [N] 4 February 2002, p. 4

In this item, the concentration is predominantly on the sermon and at the end even inserts a litany of the prominent men.

In Chapter Three, I explored the main pattern of Nigerian news reports. As I have indicated, the key pattern thrives on the verbatim reports of news sources, a factor which has caused some scholars to describe the press as 'viewspapers' (Galadima and Enighe, 2001). It is the reality that in most Nigerian societies, it is men rather than women who are given speaking rights. It is possible that the news simply reflects this

cultural preference and power relation. Cameron (1992, p. 220) has suggested the possibility of language being used to maintain male dominance. Nigerian news with its preference for verbatim reports of news sources would seem to mirror this by restricting/silencing the voice of women. Another possibility is that the structure of Nigerian news might be a reflection of globally accepted news values, the key one being: prominence (Mogekwu, 2003)(who is involved) in news selection. It is possible that the events cited as evidence above are selected as news in the first place in Nigeria because men who attended the occasion are considered prominent. More likely, it is a combination of these factors that render women voiceless in the Nigerian news discourses.

Sinners or Saints?

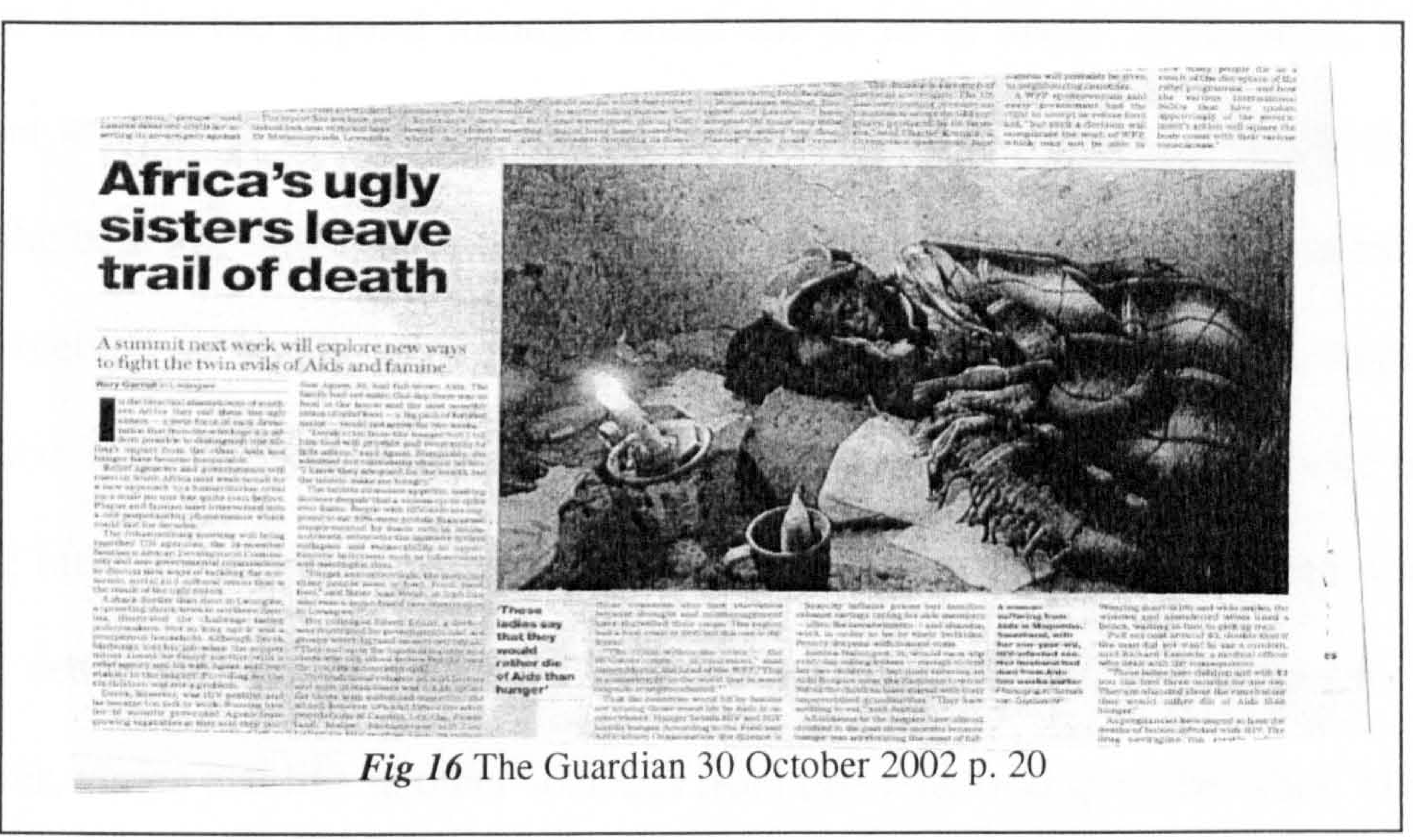
As I have indicated in the previous chapter, one of the most prevalent constructions within British news discourses revolves around myths surrounding sexuality, circulated particularly through stories on rape and prostitution involving African women. In Britain, images prevalent about black female sexuality define her as "sensuous and animalistic, as prostitute, breeder ...." (Marshall 1996, p. 11). Such images can be linked to slave discourses where black sexuality was denigrated and to justify the sexual exploitations of the black female on the plantations and in the homes of their white owners (Mama, 1995). This construct of black African women as promiscuous and animalistic seems, however, to have remained an undercurrent since. By contrast, it has also served the purpose of setting white women off as 'pure' passionless and de sexed (Mama, 1995, p. 149). The construction of rape and prostitution stories in British media thus resonates strongly with long held European myths about African women's sexuality. Reporting the Congo war, *The Guardian* [UK] writes:

> There are reports of women hawking their bodies to survive the war: every evening, Adele Buhendwa, 32, slaps on a blonde wig, daubs on bright pink lipstick, and sells herself in Bukavu's bars. Before the war she taught sewing in a nearby village school. But after rebel soldiers killed her husband and looted her house, she fled to the border town with her two young daughters in tow. "My children don't know what I do", says Ms Buhendwa, her wig slipping to reveal a close-cropped scalp. It's a terrible job; so many risks, so much disease." Rebel soldiers are often her only clients (*The Guardian* [N] 24 July 2002, p. 15).

One way of interpreting the journalist's prose is that there is an ideological undertone that prostitution may be an attribute of the African woman. I think that words like 'hawking their bodies', 'sells herself', give voice to explicit judgement on the women. The picture created of Adele Buhendwa with her 'blonde wig'; 'bright pink lipstick' 'close-cropped scalp' is that of a 'scarlet woman' rather than a woman with no other recourse but to become a prostitute for survival. I do not in any way suggest that the choice of words are deliberate, nor do I subscribe to a grand conspiracy theory, but it is just possible that such categorisations of sexual myth linked to European discourses about African women as prostitutes may have played a role in naturalising them to the extent that the journalists are not even aware of the choices of phrases. Writing about the phenomenon of 'categorisation', Fowler (1991) writes:

> In so far as we regard the category of person as displaying strongly predictable attributes or behaviour, the category may harden into a stereotype, an extremely simplified mental model which fails to see individual features, only the values that are believed to be appropriate to the type. A socially constructed model of the world is projected on to the objects of perception and cognition, so that essentially the things we see and think about are constructed according to the scheme of values, not entities directly perceived (p. 92).

Hammonds (1997) also worries that the supposedly uncontrolled sexuality of African women is one of the key features in the representation of black women in the AIDS epidemic. There is a possibility therefore that the belief of the sexual promiscuity of African women may have informed their representation in the Aids epidemic. This suggestion seems to acquire its own 'regime of truth' if we consider some metaphors used to describe the Aids epidemic in the newspapers. Referring to Aids and famine *The Guardian* [UK] writes in one of its headlines: "Africa's ugly sisters leave trail of death" (*The Guardian* [UK] 30 October 2002, p. 20) (See fig. 16 below).[5]



Africa's ugly sisters leave trail of death

A summit next week will explore new ways to fight the twin evils of Aids and famine

'These ladies say that they would rather die of Aids than hunger'

Fig 16 The Guardian 30 October 2002 p. 20

A lingering ideology, positing women as evil, may possibly explain the use of female models to depict Aids and famine. This discourse is part of the Judaic-Christian discourses on women as temptresses traceable to Genesis and the biblical story of Eve in the Garden of Eden and the subsequent fall of Adam. This story has presented all women ideologically as potential temptresses susceptible to unruly sexuality, and in need of man's guidance, though paradoxically they are held responsible when men succumbed to their sexual desire for them (Summers, 2000). While this ideology may

[5] See Appendix 14 for full text.

have framed the news on African women, another contrasting one seems to construct African women as passive in relation to their men. For example, the photo above (fig 16) of an Africa woman infected with AIDS and lying in the squalid environment suggests passivity, helplessness, disempowered demeanour, rather than an image of a temptress. This contradictory view is not surprising for women as cultural symbols typically gyrate between extremes (Macdonald, 1995) The symbolic nature of a woman allows varied inscriptions on her and what she means depends on the context in which she is used. As Macdonald (1995, p. 32) argues: " 'woman' springs to life only when culture decides the apparel through which she is to be seen". Sometimes, therefore African women (as in the photo above) are constructed as victims, probably stemming from the belief of the sexual passivity of women in relation to men. Consequently, they are perceived as highly susceptible to sexually transmitted disease. Overlapping this discourse is another on African women, which constructs them as very docile (seen as having little say in relationships to discuss sexual issues with men). African women, it would seem are thus incapable of sexual negotiation. Sexual negotiation in Africa, however, varies just like in other societies from one relationship to the other. Thus, just as in other societies too, you could have African women who are active participants in the search for a way to protect themselves in sexual situations and those that are not (Susser and Stein, 2000). The dominant ideology in the West, however, is to see African women as very subservient to men in most affairs (because it is assumed that they are culturally bound to be silent) (See Susser and Stein, 2000).

In most Nigerian societies, (as in British Victorian era, when being passionless was considered a virtue for the white female), sexual restraint is stressed as a feminine (not a masculine) virtue. A woman is likened to a breakable plate (nwanyi bu efele owuwa). Amadiume explains the use of this metaphor to describe women thus:

> The likening of a woman to a breakable plate reflects indigenous ideas about male and female sexuality, which supported the socio-cultural significance made of the female biological process. It basically means that, because of biological differences, a woman is sexually more vulnerable than a man. A woman gets pregnant, a man does not. Since this culture stigmatized pregnancy before marriage, the socialization of girls stressed sexual restraint and preparation for their future roles as wives and mothers. Socialization of the boys, on the other hand stressed masculinity equated with virility, violence, valour and authority (1987, p. 94).

Female sexuality thus is something guarded very jealously both in her father's family and by her husband who is in perpetual fear of alien blood entering his family line through her wife's sexual indiscretion[6]. The construction of rape and prostitution in Nigerian news discourses, thus could be better understood in relation to the dominant discourses in the society around women and men's sexuality. In most traditional societies in Nigeria, polygamy is very permissible. Until recently, especially in Igbos of Nigeria, a man's wealth was judged by the number of wives, children and the barns of yams he had (see Achebe, 1965). This tradition is waned through influence of Christianity and more so for economic reasons (see Olurode, 1990). Farming too (where more hands are needed and thus justifies polygamy) is no longer the prime occupation and with increasing number of educated women, monogamy seems to be a preference (Adedokun, 1990). This has not however waned the society's belief in the polygamous nature of man. Thus, male adulterers could only be termed virile while the female ones are sluts or whores. Nigerian society is full of such double standards where men are allowed to have sex but women must remain virgins. It is such need to have absolute control over female sexuality that is translated into cultural rites like female genital mutilation. A popular proverb in Nigeria is: "a woman's clitoris is the hat of

[6] Interestingly too, a woman may be secretly given out to another man to produce children for the husband, in a case of a confirmed impotency of the husband. The relatives of the husband however choose the man carefully, and often such a man is chosen from within the husband's lineage.

prostitution". Cultural ideologies around sexuality find their way, of course, into news discourses. In Nigeria, a sexually active woman meets the news values of the bizarre, and the unusual. She is thus considered very newsworthy. At the time of writing, there are debates going on in Nigeria about outlawing what is termed as 'indecent dressing' in the universities. From the list of clothes mentioned as banned, it is obvious that the targets are the females, not males. The common reasons suggested for this ban was that indecent dressing leads to sexual harassment as the students distract their lecturers with what they wear. The female students thus take the blame for the questionable characters exhibited by the male lecturers.[7] *The News*, a Nigerian magazine reported that a 41-year-old woman, Miss Funke Adedoyin, whose nomination for a government appointment was not approved by the Senate was because of 'social irresponsibility' (she had a child out of wedlock,[8] though no doubt, the father of the baby would not have his career marred by such 'crime'). Similar translations are made in news discourses of rape and prostitution where sometimes there is a suggested blame-the-victim approach in framing rape issues. For example, in a rape case reported in *The Punch*, (27 June 2002, p. 6), *The Punch* writes, "An Ibadan Chief Magistrate court has ordered an 18-year-old boy to be remanded in prison custody for allegedly raping a lady." Further, down in the story, age of the 'lady' is also revealed to be 18. Why are male and female of the same age regarded differently? Regarding the male as a 'boy' constructs him as not understanding the weight of his actions and thus assigns less weight to his offence. Also sometimes, in reporting incidences of rape, the language used suggests a lack of serious commitment in tackling the offence. For instance, a

[7] Here is a comment published by *Saturday Sun* [N] June 26 2004 circulated in our network of Womenwatch Nigeria which typifies the male reactions to the ban of the so-called indecent dresses. Mr B.O.Igbenedu, lecturer, department of European languages, University of Lagos says most of the girls tempt lecturers: "'It is a very good idea. Most of the girls tempt lecturers by their indecent dressing. This could result to rape or near rape. To prevent this I support a dress code. Girls cry of harassment, do they ask themselves how they contribute to it? Students know better than to come to my office if they are not well dressed.'

[8] 'Guilty of our crime' (The News vol. 21 No 04 July 2003) p. 70

report in *The Punch* (4 February 2002, p. 7) reported the high incidence of rape in Abuja. The article reports "the high incidence of rape cases involving children between the ages of 10 and 15 years in Abuja the nation's capital city has become a source of worry to women". Clearly, the use of the words "has become a source of worry to women" reduces the rape problem to only the concern of women and as such (i.e. not relevant to men) it becomes trivialized.

Nurturers

One of the dominant constructs of femininity regarding African women in both the Nigerian and British news is that of woman as caregiver/mother. Often in both news discourses, African women are photographed with children, or shown breastfeeding. I would imagine that in most societies, the central icon of a caring person is a mother. Because motherhood has been one of the contentious issues in feminism, it is important that its usage and construction in the media be properly interrogated. I have previously argued that African women in the British press are symbolically fused with Africa itself. Africa is thus constructed as female: hence "Mother Africa". As Osabu-Kle (2004) states, to diasporic Africans:

> Mother Africa is a common ancestor of all people of African descent irrespective of their physical characteristics and current location in this planet.... Mother Africa is known by several names including ... the Human Spirit, and the Mother of the Human race... the two names also emphasize the undeniable fact that human life originated from Africa even as science has also confirmed (Osabu-Kle 2004, p. 1).

Within western news discourses, however, Africa seems to have become evil personified. The feminisation of Africa creates a hierarchical relationship between Africa and the West, placing the West in a subject position to inscribe meanings on

Africa while objectifying it. This is in a manner similar to the societal construct of femininity and masculinity within patriarchal dominance. This unequal power relation allows the victimisation of Africa to be inscribed on by the West. I have taken this position for two reasons. The first is that while it may be usual within British press to link white women with children, it is often difficult to find a white woman photographed breastfeeding a child. The image of the African woman breastfeeding a child signifies life, nurture and posterity. Any inscription on her therefore transcends her to envelop Africa as a whole. Macdonald (1995) suggests we look beyond the face of woman, to 'see' her symbolic nature. Referring to Marina Warner's *Monuments and Maiden*, which demonstrates the various ways images of women have repeatedly signified qualities of a symbolic nature, she writes:

> Men often appear as themselves, as individuals, but women attest the identity and value of someone else... meanings of all kinds flow through the figures of women, and they do not often include who she herself is (Warner cited in Macdonald 1995, p. 32).

If a woman alone is a bearer of multiple meanings, a woman nursing a child is even more deeply symbolic (see fig 17).

The second reason why I adopt the position that Africa being feminised through the symbol of motherhood allowed varied inscriptions on 'her' by the West is when I analyse the situation in which African women are portrayed. In most times they are shown during crisis, hunger, diseases, wars, oppression and epidemic of all sorts.

Fig 17 The Guardian (N) 7 August 2002, p. 1

Bryson (1999) argues that conflict, racism, etc, impact differently on women and men because of the meaning/status of gender. Bryson suggests there are gendered forms of oppression, arguing that such oppressions could arise from women's roles as symbols of motherhood, purity and integrity in their community. A woman nursing a child deepens the symbolic nature of the woman as it suggests the future of the nation. These symbolic meanings combine to make women and children the most vulnerable groups of a society whose 'fate' is thus inextricably linked to that of the whole society. This could explain why for instance 'rape' has become a weapon in racist, ethnic and nationalistic conflicts. To rape an enemy's woman is a way of diluting the 'purity' of its stock and threatening patriarchal power of the enemy. In the era of slavery, black women's bodies (see hooks, 1982) were used sexually to maintain racist institutions and practices. White men's sexual exploitation of female slaves was not only an abuse of women involved, but also a way of controlling and humiliating black people as a group. Women in both conflicts and slave periods cited above are seen as symbols of a group identity and purity whose contamination pollutes the group as a whole. Shakespeare in his *Macbeth* shows the link between children and posterity when Macbeth's reaction to Banquo's death and the escape of Fleance, Banquo's son both of whom he has sent

some murderers to kill, was "you have only scotched the snake not killed it ..." In this statement, Shakespeare suggests a link between children and the continuation of a lineage. Any hurt inflicted on women and children therefore is symbolically transferred on the posterity of the society. There is a possibility that 'disfigured' African woman with the children as represented in the British 'news' rather than simply suggesting motherhood and nurture symbolically serves an ideological purpose of maintaining discourses of racial superiority.

Fig 18 *The Daily Telegraph* 13 November 2002, p. 12	*Fig 19* *The Daily Telegraph* 20 August 2002, p. 6

While the above may be one of the ideological connotations of the news on African women, it however remains glaring that at a denotative level, a woman nursing a child

suggests nurture and care. Femininity in many cultures has been cherished for its caring qualities. Mother, as icon of care and nurture has been constructed as selfless and self-sacrificing. That again may be one of the discourses underpinning the prevalence of African women with children in the British news as represented in times of wars and conflicts. Macdonald (1995) however argues that by late 1990s within the western culture

> The 'new traditional' of family values juggles the value of motherhood against a surface recognition that caring has a new fluidity: mothers are now permitted to be unruly, or carry filofaxes; fathers, and even single men, can be nurturing and loving. Friendships between women, given novel expression in the 'female buddy' films induce the acts of sacrifice and devotion previously imagined only in the sanctity of the hearth and home (p. 132).

The point Macdonald makes here is that in the West, traditional association of motherhood with nurture has lessened with modernity. In recognition of women's changing domestic status it may no longer be fashionable to represent western women in their traditional roles of caring and nurture. This change however has not been recognised in black African women who still are represented as instinctive mothers, "finding a satisfaction in caring that compensated for their lowly social status" (Macdonald 1995, p. 136).

While the British news representation of African women as mothers may be to instinctively confine them to 'lowly status', in Nigeria, there is recognition and an increasing awareness of the changing women's status. This will be understood in the context of the debate around the private and public spheres. In many traditional families in Nigeria, there are expected roles of women and men within the family (Adedokun, 1990). The man is expected to be the breadwinner of the family (which implies going

outside the home to find food for the family) while the woman is expected to look inwards to take care of the family[9]. Thus, for the man, the public sphere is his domain while the private sphere remains the exclusive domain of the female. The public sphere within the traditional societies is constructed as active and productive while the private sphere has been constructed as passive and consumptive. This is reflected in the names given to wives in some cultures in Nigeria. In Igbo culture of Eastern Nigeria, wives are called "Oriaku" which means "eater of wealth". Within colonial period, more men than women had access to formal education. This situation exacerbated the division of public and private spheres along gender lines. Thus, while more men entered the public sphere to earn money as clerks, interpreters, catechists, etc, women are confined to keeping homes or at best taught domestic duties (Ogunlade, 1990). The private sphere seems condemned to its consumptive and passive state.

However, with the wind of social change blowing across societies, boundaries between private and public spheres are shifting. Increasingly, many Nigerian women are entering the public sphere. Writing in the 1990s, Oyekanmi noted:

> From the 1930s, gradually more women entered into law, medicine and nursing. However, considerable prejudice affected the relatively few women who sought employment in the 1940s. The labour code then prescribed a lower salary for single women than men, and women had to resign their appointments on marriage. In some cases, the husband had to give permission to allow his wife to continue in paid employment. Yet, these women had to resign their appointment if they waned to go on maternity leave. Things have changed a lot since then. The female population in Nigerian universities has risen from the ratio of 1:40 around 1950 to about 1:4 in 1980s. This is a significant achievement which has tended to give higher economic and social status to women. This has led to the present situation in which educated women are found in virtually all professions (1990, p. 45).

[9] This in no way suggests that African women are simply 'housewives'. They certainly engage in many activities to supplement the family income. The issue is how 'recognised' are those things by the society?

Indeed, within the contemporary Nigerian society, more women than men are acquiring university education. For the educated woman, her place is strictly no longer at home (my presence in the UK testifies to this). For other women who may not have had high education, the increasingly economic constraints within Nigerian societies makes it imperative that they engage in forms of trade that are more than supplements to the family income. With the change in women's economic power, more women are contributing financially to the family, a lot are the major breadwinners. It is within this scenario that Nwabueze (1990) revisited the terms for an Igbo wife "Oriaku" (eater of wealth) and considers it a derogatory term for wives in the face of their changing economic power and contributions of women to the family.

The boundaries between private and public spheres have certainly shifted, which are not reflected within Nigerian news discourses that remain tenacious in setting gender expectations. The image of Madonna is persistent in Nigerian newspapers, not just in the constancy with which women are often represented in company of children, but in the frequency of the nursing breast in the news discourse. The woman's breast is often regarded as the epitome of her sexuality. Yet, as a source of milk, it is a symbol of life and nurture linked to motherhood. The female breast thus encapsulates maternity and sexuality. In most cases, performing both functions sits oddly against each other. For example, women who want to keep their figures and maintain sexual attraction often would not breastfeed. In many cultures in Nigeria where female sexuality and libido may be suppressed, the sexualised nature of the female breast is likely to be de-emphasised while the maternal nature is played up. It is a possibility that this ideology shapes the portrayal of nursing breasts and mothers within news discourses in Nigeria. This possibility is heightened when we compare how a similar issue is treated in a culture like Britain where there is apparently freer sexual expression and where

motherhood seem to have become less 'fashionable'. British society seems to celebrate sexuality of the female breast going by their frequent display in the tabloids. The British tabloids (e.g. *The Sun, Daily Star, Daily Mirror, Daily Mail,* etc) construct the female breasts as sexual objects to titillate and tantalise (Macdonald 1995, p. 133) (see figs 20 & 21 below)

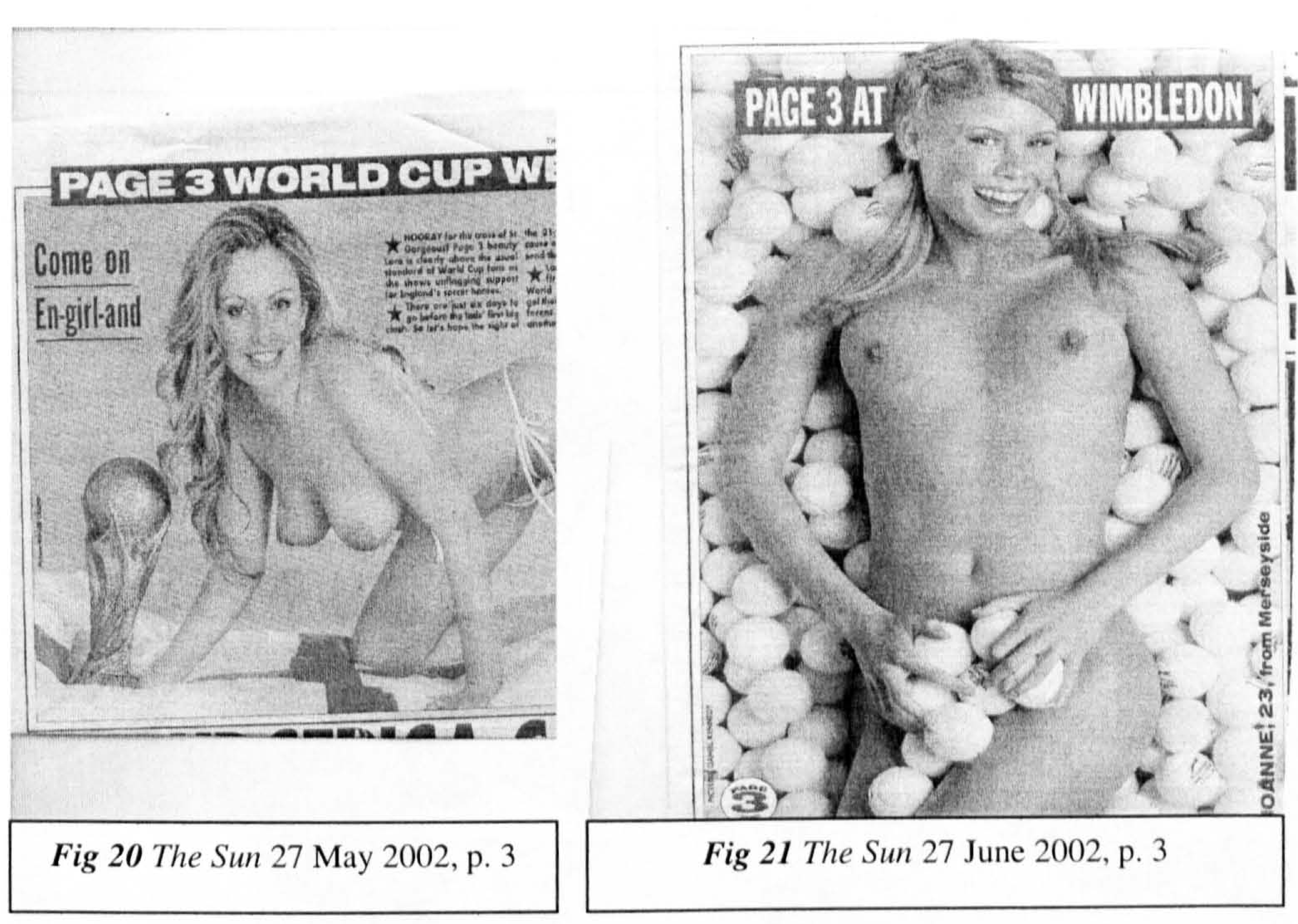


Fig 20 *The Sun* 27 May 2002, p. 3

Fig 21 *The Sun* 27 June 2002, p. 3

This possibly explains the confused reactions, which the nursing breasts emit within the society. In Britain, it is considered in bad taste to breastfeed in the public. This is manifest in the way that nursing mothers' rooms are usually located out of public sight. Within the quality style newspapers, it is hard to find a nursing breast. In contrast, however nursing breasts (rather than the tantalising ones of the British tabloids) are frequent sights in Nigerian newspapers (see fig 17 above, fig 22 below).

There is an increasing fear in Nigerian society that education and western influence, entice women out of the home (Olurode, 1990). This corresponded with the increasing moral decadence and juvenile delinquencies. The media are used to construct the ideology of motherhood in the society that places the weight of the wrongs of the society on women. A popular saying in some African societies is "if a child is good s/he resembles the father, but if the child is bad, s/he resembles the mother".

• *Mrs. Rashidat Onasanya (left); Mrs. Olufunke Idowu and Mrs. Charity Akabogu, at the launching of Breast-Feeding Project, in Lagos... on Tuesday. Photo: Sam Adeko.*

Fig 22 *The Punch* 7 August 2002, p. 2

Such could be read from the reports about breastfeeding by majority of the newspapers during the 2002 breastfeeding week. For example, *The Punch* (August 9, 2002) writes: "Low IQ attributed to poor breastfeeding" (p. 11). Attributing the speech to the chief medical officer, Federal Medical Center, Umuahia, Mrs. Uzoma Uhiara, the reporter, Joe Effiong reports that the low intelligent quotient among youths has been attributed to

inadequate breastfeeding. No scientific backing was reported to back the claims. Further, the interrelated issues of breastfeeding to the welfare system, women friendly policies, and burden of leaving domestic chores to women alone were not raised in the newspapers. This raises the worry that the newspapers are accomplices in trying to entice the women back to the 'home'. Beyond this however is the threat to patriarchal dominance which women's contemporary status poses. Women contribute a lot to the economic, political and social aspects of the society, much more than acknowledged or recognised. Olurode (1990) suggests that the present state of confusion on women's status and role has arisen in reaction to "men's fear of competition in areas which for one reason or the other have previously been the preserves of men. At workplace and in politics, women and men are being drawn into competition. In order to maintain certain privileges men may be stressing certain stereotyped notions of the female gender" (1990, p.14). So there is also a political agenda to maintain patriarchal dominance, whereby the media amplify the stereotypes of femininity within Nigerian societies, projecting women as there to unquestioningly fulfil their destiny (Nfah-Abbenyi 1997).

Discordant representation?

An obvious contrast between news representation of African women in Nigerian and British newspapers is in the portrayal of the their occupational endeavour. Within the British news, it is hard to find an African woman portrayed as economically active or engaged in any professional occupation. What prevail are images of wretchedness, destitution, poverty, and passivity.[10] In contrast, however, within the Nigerian newspapers, Nigerian women are often portrayed in positions, which depict their affluence – as wives of governors and heads of states, as holding political offices and as

[10] See sample news photos both in text and in the appendices.

professional women.[11] In both situations, the ideology of the news values and news worthiness is influential in shaping the images of African women in both cultures. The everyday mundane lives of African women may not be news worthy in Britain as they may not be bizarre enough to make the headlines. In Nigeria, however they meet the news values of prominence. While the British press will be uninterested in the wife of a governor in Nigeria who goes to visit the motherless babies home, for the Nigerian press, such could make headlines as it reflects the society's admiration for wives of men in power. Though Nigerian press report of African women is more diverse than the ones found in British press news discourses, many of the representations are couched in sexist undertones and gender stereotypes. Sexism "is usually thought of as a set expectations of women's appearances, actions, skills, emotions and proper place in society" (Wilson 1997, p. 47). It manifests itself also in the language used about women. Fowler (1991, p. 96) lists some of the sexist codes found in the language of the news, but I will refer to a couple that I refer to in this work:

- The use of marked expressions containing extra morphemes or words to refer to females, implying deviance or irregularity or at least drawing attention gratuitously to the sex of the person referred to.
- Titles and address forms: the choice between 'Mrs' and 'Miss', forcing a woman to declare her marital status (sexual availability) where a man with just 'Mr', does not have to do so. (p. 96)

Using the personalities in the news and their activities as well as the language of the news reports, I discuss the following recognisable pattern of the Nigerian press reports of African women.

[11] See Appendix 11, which shows women who were central focus of news in Nigerian press during the critical events, & Appendix 15 for summary of women in news photos in Nigeria press.

'First Lady News' Syndrome

What Lang said more than two decades ago about the American society is still very true of the Nigerian society. Lang (1978, p.148) writes that the American woman becomes news worthy when "she has mothered, married or been sired by a man of achievement". The only difference however is that in the Nigerian situation very few women make news as daughters. Hardly does a daughter old enough to be married make news through the father. A daughter is most often considered more of a pride to the family as a married person. Typically reflecting this, it is popular to say in Igbo culture, "a woman at a stage passes 'whose daughter?' to that of 'whose wife?' (see Amadiume 1987, p. 69). The attention that the press continually accords the wives of men in power suggests the society's admiration for them. I have termed this *first lady syndrome*. This news discourse is informed by the prevalent ideology in Nigerian society of feminine success.

Traditionally, in many cultures in Nigeria, a woman is defined in relation to her husband. '*Mma nwanyi bu inwe di*': "the beauty of a woman is in having a husband", is a popular saying in Eastern Nigeria. In some cultures in Nigeria, many efforts are geared into preparing a girl for marriage. Among the Efik people of Nigeria, the fattening room is a rite of passage for girls to prepare them for wifehood and motherhood. The traditional mark of female beauty among the Efik is being fat. To that regard, to increase a girl's chances of marriage she is kept in a kind of school (with other girls and elderly matrons). Here, she is fed to grow fat and imparted tips on how to be successful mother and wife. In Nigeria (nor in the UK), I have never heard of a 'school' where men are taught to be good husbands and fathers. This is an indication of the premium placed on acquisition of husbands and the pressure put on women to do so.

This pressure has often been translated into various forms of exclusionary practices. For example, most families when pushed to make a decision, prefer to pay for males' education, rather than females' because investing on the women could be considered a 'waste' as she is expected to get married and leave the family (Asoegwu, 2003). In many instances too, single girls are discriminated against both in their home family and in the wider society (Olurode, 1990). The issue is that in most Nigerian societies, marriage is regarded as central to social mobility of women (Omoluabi, 1990). This cultural ideology is consistently reinforced in the Nigerian news media by the attention accorded to the wives of the men in power. A cursory glance at the news summary (see Appendix 11) shows that the majority of the female newsmakers are "first ladies": wives of governors and heads of state. Out of 71 women that made news as individuals, 22 of them made news in their capacities as wives, mothers or mother in laws. They make news as appendages of their husbands, sons or sons-in-law. This is what Lang (1978) calls making news as satellite status. This is often reflected in the pattern of the news writing. Often the news starts with the following words, "the wife of the governor of...", "or the mother of the deputy governor ....Mrs ...." Or the mother –in- law of .... has passed on ..." - indications that the statuses of their men rub off on women. The following examples of the headlines or leads from some of the Nigerian newspapers illustrate this:

- "Cross River State first lady, Mrs Onari Duke has alerted the risk of the world having 40 million orphans this year if the HIV/AIDS scourge was not fought to a standstill" (lead) (*Daily Champion* 24 June 2002, p. 9).
- Ogun first lady urges parents to de-worm children (headline) (*The Guardian* [N] 27 June 2002, p. 14)
- Mrs Awolowo pledges assistance to INEC (headline) "The wife of late Obafemi Awolowo Chief (Mrs) H.I.D. Awolowo has offered to assist the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) in mobilising people of Ogun State for the forthcoming voters registration exercise (lead) (*New Nigerian* 6 August 2002, p. 25).

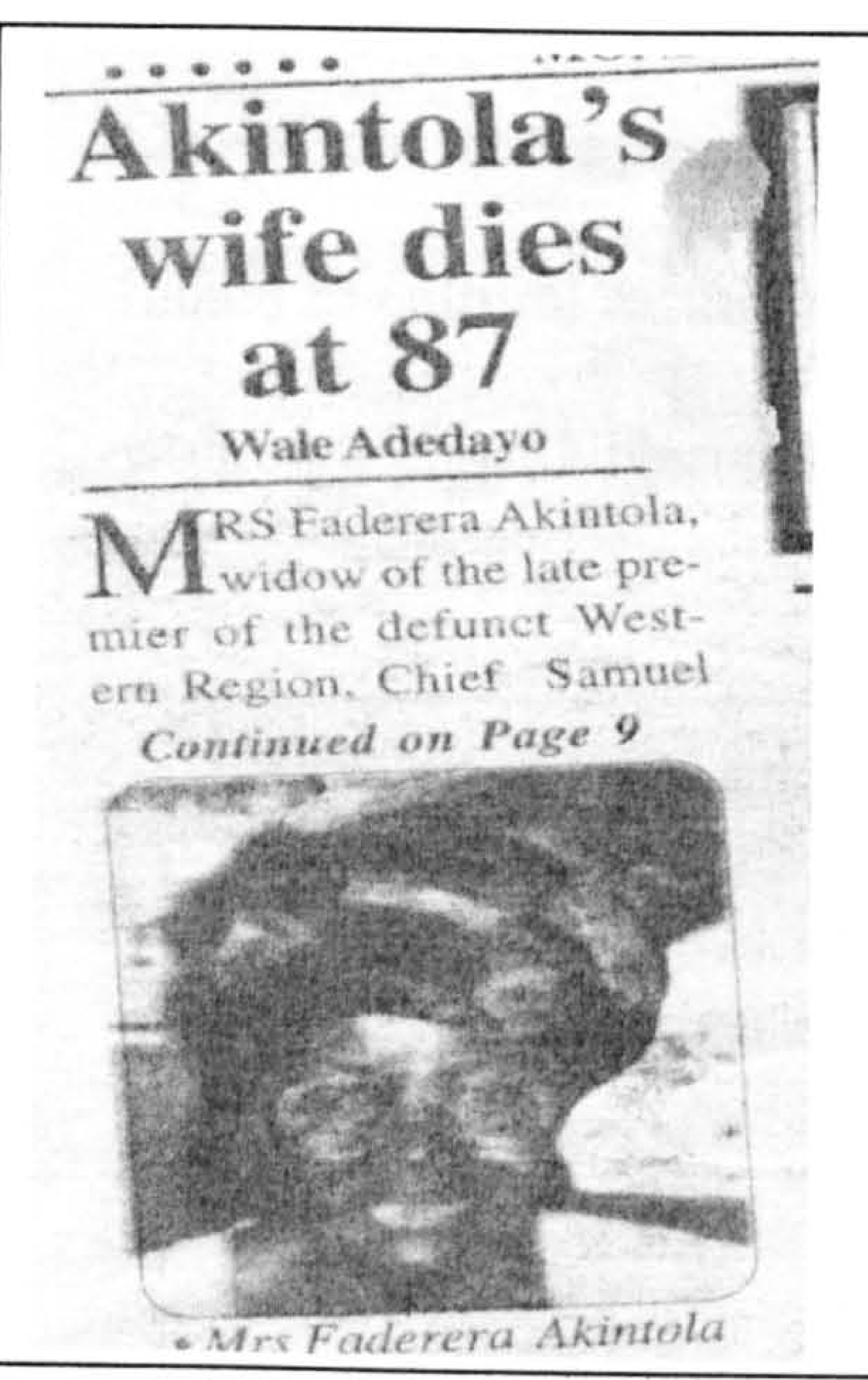
- Gaius Obaseki loses mother-in-law (headline) (*The Punch* 9 August 2002, p. 10).

However, because so much of the intensive coverage is replete with sex role stereotypes, it seems to suggest that the women are there for the pleasure of the men – to add to the glory of the men. For example, most of the activities of the first ladies revolve around children: while the husbands are out taking care of the important and 'serious affairs' of the state, the wives are taking care of the 'home'. Mrs. Onari Duke, Cross River State first lady sees 'HIV/AIDS induced orphans' as her concern (*Daily Champion*, 24 June, 2002, p. 9). Mrs. Titi Abubakar, wife of the Vice President is guest of honour for the fundraising in aid of the underprivileged children (*The Punch*, 25 June, 2002, p. 3). Wife of Ekiti state governor, Mrs. Angela Adebayo is reported with the combantrin kids club (*The Punch*, 26 June, 2002, p.7). Ogun First lady, Beere Aderinsola Osoba calls on parents to de-worm their children and leads by example. She is shown in the picture de- worming a child (*The Guardian*, 27 June, 2002, p. 14). Mrs Duke, the wife of the Cross River State Governor counsels religious leaders on AIDS (*New Nigerian* 25 June 2002, p. 18). The list goes on and on. One thing that is difficult to find in Nigerian newspapers is a male with a child or asked to give opinion on issues concerning children and their welfare. It is always the 'exclusive domain' of the females. The first ladies who are tacit women leaders are portrayed as giving the good examples of the proper place of a woman in the society.

Soft newsmakers

Many women newsmakers in Nigerian press during the period of study are in the areas considered soft: marriage ceremonies, social ceremonies, obituary, health issues, human-interest stories etc. These areas if not reported would have little impact on the society. (see Appendix 11).

As Appendix 11 also shows, even women who made news by themselves [i.e. not through the men in their lives] , are often attributed speeches which have mostly to do with women and children and hardly any about 'serious' affairs of the state



Akintola's wife dies at 87

Wale Adedayo

MRS Faderera Akintola, widow of the late premier of the defunct Western Region, Chief Samuel

Continued on Page 9

• *Mrs Faderera Akintola*

Fig 23 *The Punch* 5 August 2002, p. 1

Gaius-Obaseki loses mother-in-law

A community leader in Warri, Delta State, Mrs. Omere-Ofo-eden Oki, is dead.

A statement by Mr. Ndu Ugbamadu quoted a spokesman of the family, Femi Oki as saying that the deceased died in Warri on Wednesday June 19, 2002 after a brief illness at 73.

A devout Christian, Ok was born in 1929 to the fam ily of Ololo of Orugbo i Koko, Warri South and Nor Local Government areas Delta State.

Oki, who will be buried Friday, August 23, 2002 survived by seven childr including Pastor Oki a Mrs. Roxana Gaius-Obase the wife of the Group M aging Director of the Ni rian National Petroleum C poration (NNPC), Jackson Gaius-Obaseki.

Fig 24 *The Punch* 5 August 2002, p. 1

Obasanjo's wife in Lagos for book launch

STELLA Obasanjo, will Tuesday, direct affairs the launch of the book, "T *Breast-feeding Project*", compendium on the adva tages and disadvantages breast-feeding in chi health-care.

The book written by I Bunmi Ogundimu, aside fr highlighting the advantag and disadvantages inhere in breast-feeding and ch development, also highlig some of the taboos a myths surrounding brea feeding.

The book also comes w sonorous songs in the va ous Nigerian languag highlighting the advanta of breast-feeding, an a proach meant to draw att tion to the project, using m sic.

The launch, slated for Eko FM Multipurpose h along Agidingbi Road, Ik has the *Baba Adinni* of L gos, Alhaji Wahab Folaw and *Otunba* Johnson Fasa as chief launchers.

The *Ayangburin* Ikorodu and the *Menu T* of Badagry, Oba Babatu

Fig 25 *The Punch* 6 August 2002, p. 3

I have previously suggested that soft news lacks the drawing power of hard news. Often too in newspaper parlance, soft news is considered less important than hard news. Women newsmakers in Nigerian press are predominantly in the area considered 'soft', conforming to previous research on women and the news (See Gallagher 1979; Tseago, 1996; Kanu, 1996; GMMP, 2000). This form of representation is imbued with ideological conceptions of notions of femininity and womanhood in Nigeria that is linked to cultural assumptions about the inferiority of women. The cultural inferiority of women in most Nigerian cultures becomes apparent when applying a commutation test.

DAILY CHAMPION, Friday, February 8, 2002

NEWS

V.P.'s wife calls for end to violence

WIFE of the Vice-President, Hajia Amina Titi Atiku Abubakar has enjoined Nigerians to imbibe the spirit of tolerance and peaceful co-existence wherever they reside, in order to ensure the survival of democracy.

Expressing her displeasure over the recent spate of violence in some parts of the country, Mrs. Abubakar noted that people must see democracy as an era of love and freedom and not violence.

She spoke in her office when a delegation of Moslem women from Zaria under the aegis of Al-Amin Foundation visited her.

According to her, there is urgent need for a stop sign against 'violence' in all parts of the country as the spate of violence is becoming embarrassing to the country.

"It is pathetic. All these crises should stop. We cannot afford to continue killing ourselves. So the best option is to live peacefully together," she stated.

She urged the citizenry to be patient with the present administration as it strives to make life better for all.

While calling for prayers, she urged women, especially the enlightened ones to take the lead to champion a peaceful Nigeria, since women and children are usually the major losers in times of crisis.

She said, "Much of the responsibility of child upbringing rests on the mother. So we have a lot to do in educating our children. We should always preach peace."

She also frowned at the continued operation of cult groups in the nation's tertiary institutions, as well as human trafficking. According to her, if parents do their jobs adequately at home, such vices would come to an end.

Earlier in her speech, the president of Al-Amin Foundation, Hajia Aljannatu Abubakar Wambai commended Mrs. Abubakar for her efforts in championing the cause of Nigerian women and children.

She presented Mrs. Abubakar with a Merit Award of the foundation for her positive contribution to the development of the Nigerian women and children

Meanwhile, wife of the vice-president Wednesday granted audience to a delegation from the Lagos State branch of the Medical Women's Association of Nigeria (MWAN). The delegation was led by the president, Dr. P.C. Campbell.

Mrs. Tinubu urges perseverance among youths

By
Lere Ojedokun

WIFE of Lagos State Governor, Chief (Mrs.) Oluremi Tinubu has advised youths to embrace perseverance and hardwork in their quest to realise set goals.

According to her, there is nothing impossible in life through diligence and persistence, more so as the world is full of unlimited opportunities.

"There is nothing you can't do in life if you put your heart in it and believe you can. In life, some people need time to grasp things while others require little time. With persistence, hardwork and perseverance you can achieve anything," she stated.

Mrs. Tinubu, who is also the president, New Era Foundation (NEF) spoke recently at the grand finale of this year's annual Spelling Bee competition where the last year's winner, Mr. Chukwuebuka Anisiobi, was presented with a computer laptop by the state government as well as the Canadian Youth Advocacy award. The recipient now studies computer engineering at Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife and is expected to formally receive the award on August 13 in Canada.

Fig 26 *Daily Champion* 8 February 2002, p. 15

This works by simple substitution. When a Nigerian woman is described as being a man, the society (including the woman herself) feels she has been invited to eat with royalty. It has the capacity of calling up attitudes and images like strength of character, tenaciousness, achievements, etc; but tell a man that he is a woman; it is considered an insult and evokes negative reactions. Why do both situations evoke different reactions? This is because culturally women in Nigeria have been deemed inferior to men and

have most often been imposed with negative attributes.[12] Within the media, attitudes to female and male voices are a powerful tool in determining when and where women and men might be granted speaking rights within the news. Opinions are sought from very few women even when they are supposedly 'experts' in the particulate area. During the period of this study, the woman who featured most prominently in the Nigerian newspapers was Kema Chikwe, the then Aviation minister. However, apart from one news item where she explains the purge on Aviation (*The Punch* 24 June 2002, p. 8) she is predominantly photographed and reported in social functions. Similarly, Lady Nwizu the then Comptroller General of Nigerian Immigration Services just like Justice Rose Ukeje, a chief Judge of the federal High Court (cited earlier who featured in the news in relation to the thanksgiving ceremony for her appointment), made news during her thanksgiving for recovering from an illness. It is as if there is a stoic attempt to confine women to 'domestic' matters, unacknowledging their capabilities in more responsible and diverse occupations. It is only in few instances that women in highly placed positions are reported in their official capacities. News such as Mrs Mary Akiode the then general manager of National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) touring her zone is scarce in general news patterns (see fig 28).

Lady Nwizu, Immigration boss, thanks God

FAMILY of Comptroller-General of Nigeria Immigration Services (NIS) Lady (Mrs) Uzoamaka Nwizu has thanked Nigerians and the government for their prayers and support during the period of sickness, which took her abroad for five months.

many had thought that she will not survive the trying moments, she noted that it would have been highly demoralising to hear on a sick bed that she has been sacked.

"I want to therefore use this opportunity to declare to all Nigerians that, though I had a lot of programmes for the service before my illness, with the latest support, I want to assure all that I will not let them down; so that when I finish my tenure, God's name will be glorified." she declared.

Earlier, her husband, Dr Chimezie Nwizu, said "a very senior public officer due to the NIS top position had said that Mrs. Nwizu cannot survive the disease which they infested her with."

Fig 27 *Daily Champion* 25 June 2002, p. 3

[12] In Chapter Eight, Nigerian dialogue group seem to share this view.

Page Six

NEWS

Mrs Akiode, NEPA GM tours zone, reassures customers

By *Luke Okoro*

NATIONAL Electric Power Authority (NEPA) has assured its customers in Benin zone of improved power delivery, blaming past governments for the current poor services.

The assurance was given last week by the general manager (distribution) for Benin zone, Mrs Mary Akiode who is currently on familiarization tour of the zone.

An official of the authority in Benin, told *Daily Champion* in a telephone interview that a fresh allocation of distribution transformers, feeder pillars, aluminium conductors as well as poles and control panels to beef up its network.

Upon receipt of these allocation, she assured that some of the existing problems in the distribution network would be resolved, and power delivery improved.

At Sapele, Mrs Akiode announced that a new van had been given to the undertak-

staff strength in the areas of administration and ancilliary services, the areas of engineering and transmission, are said to be poorly staff, hence creating efficiency problem for the authority.

Mrs Akiode, who resumed in Benin zone about three months ago, had maintained that the authority was out to strengthen its services and improve its image before the public.

While addressing the staff of the authority upon resumption of

the present government, warning them against extortion and waste of official time and materials on private matters.

She made it clear that the present management of NEPA and the Federal Government were sensitive to indolence, laziness and corruption, and as such would not be tolerated in the zone.

She enjoined the staff to embrace "change" or risk being disgraced out of the authority because the management would not blink an eye to dismiss anybody caught

Fig 28 *Daily Champion* 25 June 2002, p. 6

Few women who make their mark in the world of politics are given parity with men but are safely tucked away in pages designated women's page. The *Daily Champion*'s page is called the "Champion woman". There are, of course, no corresponding pages in the newspapers for men. This suggests that males are considered the norm and having a separate newspaper section for women implies that all other news areas are exclusively male territory and that men are not interested in 'women's issues' (Chambers *et al.*, 2004).

"Tagged Women"

Nigerians love for titles is reflected in the frequency with which they are used to address people in the newspapers. Because of the need to conserve space and because a headline is meant to fit a predetermined space, the headline is highly skeletonised (Okoye, 2000). Only words considered very important in summarising the story are included. For the Nigerian press, the title 'Mrs.' is very important in describing a woman because of the society's emphasis on marriage and the respect that comes with being married. Thus, 'Mrs' is important enough to often appear in the headline for it accords both respect and admiration to the bearer. It is to be noted that almost all the women in the news are mentioned in their marital status. Fowler (1991) has suggested that there is a sexism inherent in 'forcing' women to declare their marital status. It is usual to see headlines starting like these: "Mrs. Akiode, NEPA GM tours zone, reassures customers" (see fig 28 above); "Mrs. Atiku intensifies war against child abuse" (*New Nigerian*, 26 June 2002, p. 25); "Mrs. Duke counsels religious leaders on AIDS", (*New Nigerian*, 25 June 2002, p. 18) etc. Similar tags of identification are most often used in public spheres regarded as the domain of men, with women there seen as exceptions to the rule. For instance, big parastatal corporations in Nigeria, synonymous with power and strength are often regarded as the territories of men, who are assumed possessors of these attributes. Women who dared into them are given female identification tags to show that they are the variants (e.g. see Fowler, 1991). This possibly can be seen in the use of such headlines like "Mrs. Akiode, NEPA GM tours zone, reassures customers" (*Daily Champion*, 25 June 2002, p. 6); "Lady Nwizu, Immigration boss thanks God" both in the (*Daily Champion*, 25 June 2002, p. 3). Being Immigration boss and being a General manager of National Electric Power authority (NEPA) are both 'tough' and high-ranking jobs conventionally seen as the 'rights' of

men, just as neuter nouns are seen a implicitly masculine, and variants used to denote the female. Were they males, however, "NEPA GM tours zone", "Immigration boss thanks God" would have sufficed[13]

Though the Nigerian representation of their women is couched in sexism, it provides quite a contrast to the British representation of African women, which seems to focus on destitution, poverty and illness. In the British context, what struck me was the power of photographic representation in the circulation of these constructs. In the next section, I will concentrate on a discussion of such photographs.

News Photos of African women in British and Nigerian press

One thing, that is apparent in the story of Africa as represented in British press, is the use of women as illustrations of crises-ridden Africa. Many women appear in the news photographs as evidence of Africa's story. A consistent survey of *The Guardian* (UK) and *The Daily Telegraph* that I conducted between January–December 2002 yielded sixty photographs of African women, men and children. I do not claim that these were all the photos concerning Africa that appeared in that year but they do form a set of rather indicative photographs of Africa in the British press. I organised them by developing a coding pattern related to the dominant themes they portrayed.[14] [see Table One below]

[13] Compare also the following news in the Nigerian press depicting females and males: "PDP stalwart alleges threat to life [male] (The Punch 27 June 2002 p. 12); A female senatorial aspirant under the PDP [female] (Daily Champion, 27 June 2002 p. 6). Woman aspirant vows to fight poverty [female] (The Punch 6 August 2002, p. 11); Five lawmakers resign to contest for LG polls [males] (The Punch 27 June 2002 p. 12).

[14] For a period of one year, I intermittently went to the library to collect these photos, which I scanned for later use. I did not routinely do this everyday. These photos however were the ones I was able to collect for the days I went to the library.

A look at Table One below reveals that, amongst the photographs of Africans in the newspapers, a high percentage was of women. They account for 48.3% while men and children account for 26.7% and 25% respectively. Men featured mostly in relation to politics, which constituted over 44% of the total photographs of men. Put together, women and children represented over 70% of the photographs of Africans in the newspapers, the great majority featuring them as victims of famine, crises, and sickness..

Faces of African women appear in the British news more than those of African men. This contrasts with the Nigerian newspapers where men's faces are more frequent (Chude, 2003). Out of 462 news photos that appeared in the Nigerian newspapers within the period of this research (using three critical events)[15], women appeared in only 67 (representing 14.5 %) of the photographs [See Table Two below].

Both situations, contrast with the GMMP (2000) that suggested that women appear more in photo for decorative purposes. Considering the grotesque nature of most of the photos in British newspapers, it would be hard to argue for women's decorative purposes here. One way that the concept of decorative could be thought of, however, might be in the sense that their photos could be used for illustration even when the story is not explicitly about them (that is drawing symbolically on the link between the black African woman standing for Africa itself).

[15] I explained the periods that covered the critical events in Chapter Five. For these photos, I used the periods of February, June and August. See Appendix 15 for a description of some of the photos of African women in Nigerian press during those periods.

Table One: Table showing some photographs of Africans encountered in a one-year survey of *The Guardian* [UK] and the *Daily Telegraph*

Photo Description	Women	Indicative samples	Men	Indicative Samples	Children	Indicative Samples	Total
Politics	3	Figs 4 , 5, 7 (apndx. 21)	7	Figs 1, 3, 4 (apndx. 22)	-	-	10
Famine/ Hunger	9	Figs 6 (apndx. 21), Fig 29 (in text)	1	-	6	Pix 2, 7 (apndx. 7)	16
Sickness/ Poverty	4	Fig 18 (in text)	1	Fig 9 (in text)	3	Fig 8 (in text)	8
War & Other conflicts	4	Fig 32, 34 (in text)	4	Fig 8 (apndx. 22)	2	Pix 8 (apndx. 7)	10
Victims of all kinds	6	Fig 19 (in text), Fig 1 (apndx. 21)	-	-	2	Fig 8, 10 (apndx 21)	8
Others	3	Fig 3 (appndx 21)	3	Fig 6 (apndx. 22)	2	Pix 6 (apndx 7)	8
Total %	29 48.3		16 26.7		15 25		60 100

As I have indicated, women who appear in photos in Nigerian newspapers were often in social functions and were more explicitly used decoratively as fillers (i.e. when the photograph has no direct bearing to a news story but is used deliberately to fill up some remaining spaces on the page).

Table Two News photos in Nigerian newspapers using three critical events

Newspapers	Total No of news photos 125		Total no of news photos 224		Total no of news photos 113		Overall number of news photos 462	
	February 2002,		June 2002		August 2002		Total	Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
The Guardian [N]	35	11	44	3	30	5	109	19
Daily Champion	21	1	27	8	17	4	65	13
New Nigerian	38	2	98	5	-	-	136	7
The Punch	28	3	43	15	44	10	115	28
Total	122	17	212	31	91	19	425	67
							Grand total M+F = **496**	
%							92 %	14.5 %

Photographs as Signs

In Chapter Four, I have suggested that we read photographs as signs rather than literal-transcriptions of the 'real' world. Although photographs are considered an optional element in newspaper page planning, they are indispensable in creating effects in the newspapers. My experience in newspaper page planning has taught me by hands-on experience that photographs can serve many purposes. First, they can be used to break up the massive greyness of the newspaper pages, let in air and 'beautify' the page. Second, they can serve as fillers. Barthes observed, that 'pictures ...are more imperative than writing, they impose meaning at one stroke, without analysing or diluting it'

(1972, p.110). Hall also suggests, "In modern newspaper, the text is still an essential element, the photographs an optional one. Yet, photographs when they appear add new dimension to a text" (1981, p.226). In the newspaper parlance, it is popular to say, "A picture is worth more than a thousand words". Hall's and Barthe's comments, though spanning over two decades ago still have currency in contemporary times (see also Newton, 2001). These comments are rooted in the functions of photographs in the newspaper – functions that enhance what Barthes calls 'having-been-there' of all photographs (Barthes 1977, p. 44). Yet, the conscious decision to include one photo and not the other makes the photograph a highly mediated and subjective product. The decision of what would be the subject of the photograph is in itself subjective (the informational value of the photograph is mediated through the perspective of the photographer). The picture editor further mediates through the overall placing of the photographs in the page layout. Thus, rather than photographs reflecting meaning, meaning is constructed from it. It symbolises. As constructionists would say, it signifies. A photograph thus becomes more than a mere reflection of visual facts, and turns out to be a mode of representation of the dominant ideology in which it has been constructed. As journalists reject one photo in preference for another, as they consciously place one event in picture and not the other, as they spread the newspaper pages with one female face rather the other, they are caught within an ideological matrix. Hall is persuasive when he writes:

> News photos operate under a hidden marked sign marked 'this really happened, see for yourself'. Of course the choice of *this* moment of an event as against that, of *this* person rather than that, of *this* angle rather than any other, indeed the selection of this photographed incident to represent a whole complex chain of events and meaning, is a highly ideological procedure (1981, p. 241).

If photographs are consciously selected, they are bound to be reasons for preferring one photo to the other. What possible reasons might there be for the preference of African women in photos in the British newspapers? What ideological purpose might they serve and how might they intersect with further circulations of cross-cultural meaning/ mythologies? These issues are explored subsequently.

African Women as Models/Icons of Africa

I want to refer again to Gilman's (1985, p. 204) arguments about the iconographic and mythical qualities of artistic representations, which I have indicated might be applied to photographs in the newspaper. Gilman's major argument, as I have previously outlined, (see Chapter Four) is that when individuals are shown in any work of art, the ideologically charged iconographic nature goes beyond the individual portrayed to embrace the whole class to which that individual is seen to belong. Consequently, individual realities may be given a mythic extension through association with the qualities of a class. Following a similar argument, Nixon (1997) provides the elements, which help unmask some of the hidden social meanings of photographs. Nixon suggests that the person in a photograph may become a model deliberately sought to convey certain messages about the group s/he represents. An African woman in a photograph could therefore be either an icon of 'women' in general or an icon of a black African or perhaps more likely, both. Each representation could gain prominence depending on who is observing her and/ or where she is observed. To explore the photographs of Africa women in British newspapers is therefore to engage with the constitutive dynamics of gender and race as identities, which both define and depict African women. As I stated in previous chapters, being female and black in a country like Britain is to bear a double burden as racially marked and gendered subject. It is possible

that the British press discourses of women as well as discourses on africanness, both of which have been previously discussed combine to frame African women as models/icons in photos in the newspapers.

Samples of news photos of African women in British newspapers

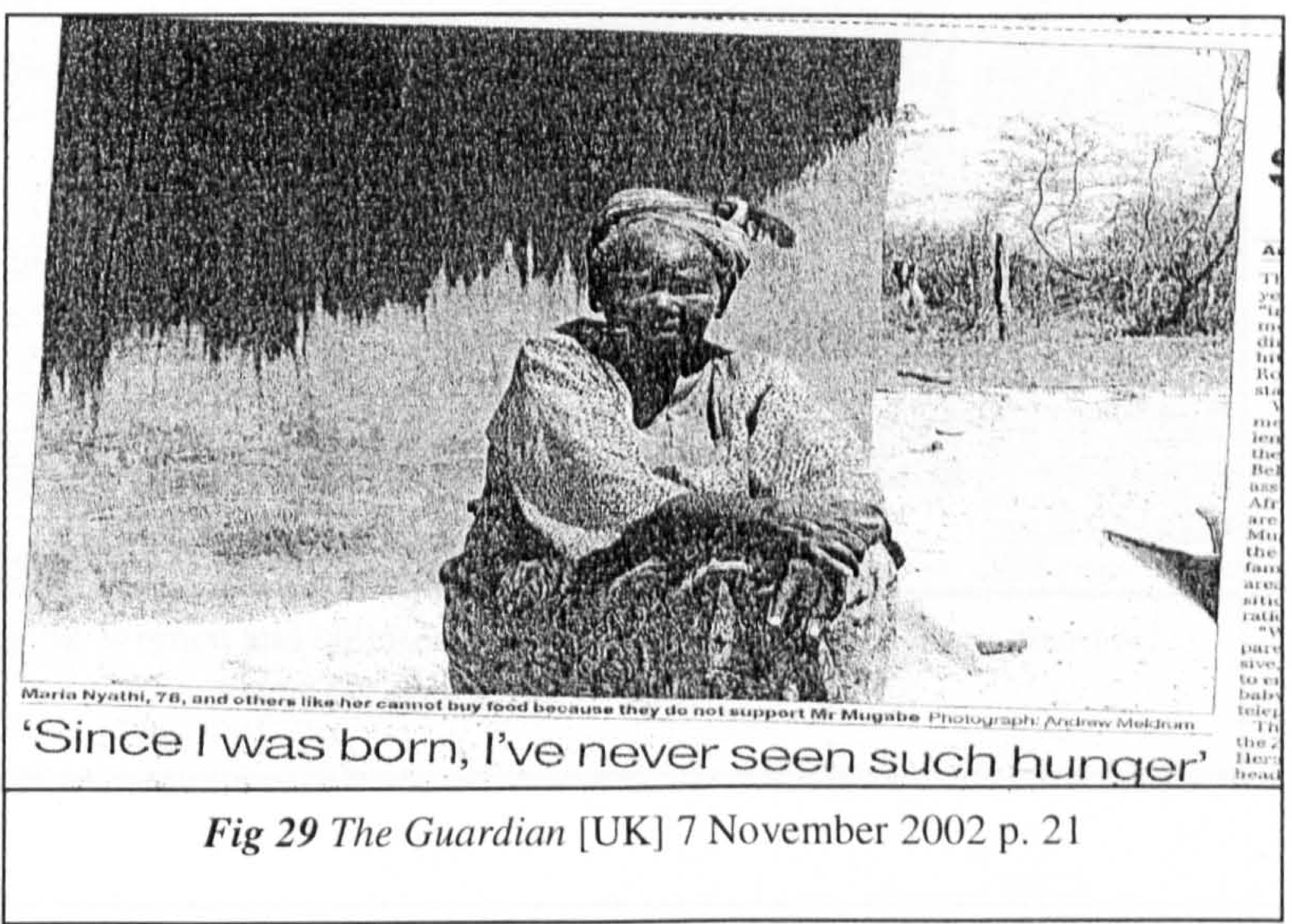


Fig 29 *The Guardian* [UK] 7 November 2002 p. 21

Fig 30 *The Daily Telegraph* 26 April 2002, p. 14

Fig 31 *The Daily Telegraph* 9 September 2000, p. 12

18 The Guardian Thursday March 7 2002

International news

Oil fuels flames of war in Sudan

Civilians pay price as Khartoum mobilises for showdown with newly united rebels

Julie Flint in Nyal, southern Sudan

Destroyed convoy

Broke off talks

Survivors say one helicopter gunship circled

Women and children displaced by air attacks on villages near southern oilfields Photograph: Julie Flint

Fig 32 Women and children displaced by air attacks near southern *oil fields The Guardian* 7 March 2002, p. 18

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH Thursday, November 28, 2002

World

Wine, women and taxis for tribesmen with £4m windfall

By Adrian Blomfield in Nairobi

KENYAN tribesmen maimed or bereaved by British Army explosives celebrated the arrival of millions of pounds in compensation from the British Government yesterday by going on an enormous binge.

Clad in traditional red blankets, swords strapped to their waists, hundreds of Samburu tribesmen, women and children – some of them missing arms or legs – travelled from their isolated rural homes, walked through the streets of Nanyuki town and crowded into the Standard Chartered Bank.

There staff worked frantically to distribute up to £4·5 million, the amount the Ministry of Defence agreed to pay 228 tribesmen in July after admitting limited liability for the deaths of 76 people killed when they trod on unexploded munitions in a military training zone shared by the British, Kenyan and American armies.

Individual compensation ranged from £8,000 to £270,000. The money is a huge windfall for the Samburus, who usually measure their wealth in cattle.

In a country where 50 per cent of the population earn less than 70p a day, the cattle herders have joined the cream of Kenya's elite.

As they emerged from the bank they held one of the biggest parties Nanyuki has ever seen. The rather staid town, which straddles the Equator, is one of the last bastions of Kenya's dwindling white farmers and is also home to a hotch-potch of British soldiers, tour operators and up and coming black Kenyans.

The arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi and the actors John Hurt and Stephanie Powers have lived in the town. Prominent among Nanyuki's visitors in the past 10 years have been Prince William and Osama bin Laden.

But yesterday belonged to the Samburu. First they went shopping, swapping their rubber-tyre sandals for the best footwear Nanyuki had to offer and buying up vast quantities of clothes. The young men hit the bars, drinking heavily and eating copious quantities of goat meat from ten in the morning.

Many of them handed over large quantities of cash for clapped-out vehicles, saying they planned to start transport businesses. They did not seem to care that few, if any, possessed a driving licence.

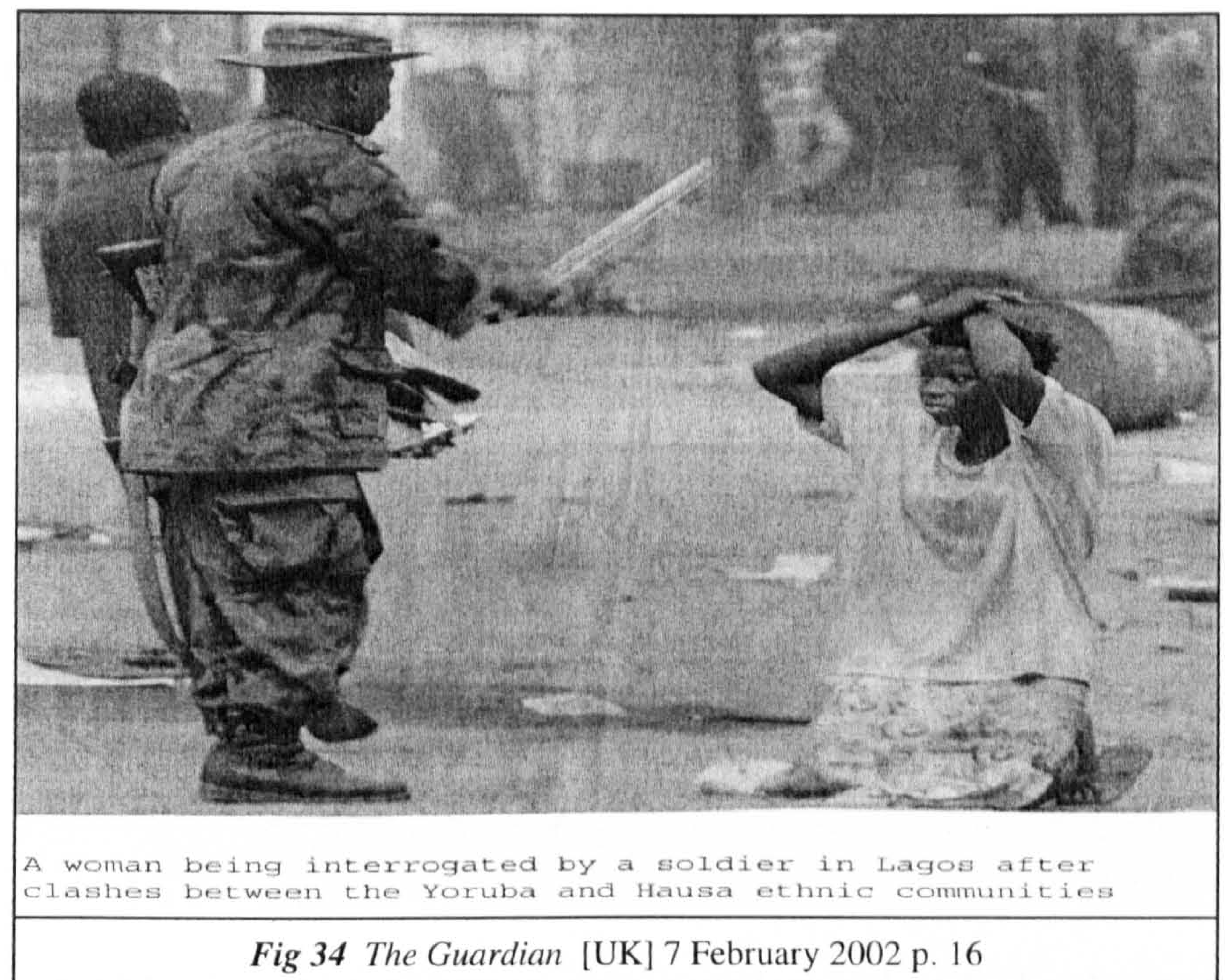
Battery-powered radios and bedding were also in high demand and prostitutes descended from miles around. There were fears that the huge influx of money would cause local inflation.

Some of those who received compensation had attended a two-week course sponsored by Standard Chartered to teach them to use the money wisely. Most had not.

"The town was full of Samburus and prostitutes," a white resident said. "They ate all the meat, drank all the beer, slept with all the women then bugged off, singing, in 30 clapped-out old taxis."

Samburu girls in traditional dress. Hundreds from the tribe swept into Nanyuki yesterday to launch a wild celebration of their new-found wealth

Fig 33 Samburu girls in traditional dress. Hundreds form the tribe swept into Nanyuki yesterday to launch a wild celebration of their newfound wealth. The *Daily Telegraph* 28 November 2002, p. 24



A woman being interrogated by a soldier in Lagos after clashes between the Yoruba and Hausa ethnic communities

Fig 34 The Guardian [UK] 7 February 2002 p. 16

Looking at the sample photos above (figs 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34), they take the story of Africa further to authenticate it and to give it legitimacy. Part of the story of Africa is that of passivity and dependency. Figs 30 &31 close up this image of dependency. Fig 31 is the photograph of an African woman carrying a bag of cornmeal on her head. Boldly inscribed on the bag is USA and USAID, the caption of the photo then suggests the preferred reading: "A Zimbabwean woman carries a bag of food from America on her head for her family". The dependence on the West for survival is captured in the photo. In a similar manner, the press suggests a preferred reading of passivity and hunger to the photo of the old woman with the 'smiling' wrinkles looking ahead (fig 30). To me the woman looks quite dignified and suggests nothing of a beggared nature, but the photograph tells us in words how exactly the photo 'ought to be read' through the caption: "A woman waits for food in Chipepo, Zambia as UN Predicts famine".

Waiting for food also suggests passivity reflecting a mythology of Africa as incapable of any informed decision. Hall sees this hangover in what he describes as "the 'Old Country' - white version". He describes the 'nostalgia' with which modern and updated images of black Africans in western media feed from colonial discourses. Just as he argues:

> The dependent people who couldn't manage a day without the protection and the know-how of their white masters, reappear as the starving victims of the Third World, passive and waiting for the technology or the Aid to arrive, objects of our pity. They are not represented as the subjects of continuing exploitation or dependency, or the global division of wealth and labour.... (1999, p. 277)

The story of Africa is a story of hunger, famine and spatial underdevelopment. Fig 29 authenticates this story. Part of the cutline reads 'since I was born, I have never seen such hunger. In line with this also is Fig 2 (p. 42). With the headline "Food crisis hits Harare as bread runs out", comes a photograph of a woman cooking a meal for her children. The caption reads "a woman prepares a family meal at a camp near Harare for 'internally displaced people' many of whom were left homeless after the eviction of white farmers". The squalid environment, the makeshift fire, the unkempt children all suggests backwardness and sufferings.

The story of Africa is also the story of war and crisis. Figs 32 & 34 authenticate such stories. Fig 32 is the photo of dishevelled woman and children. This is an accompanying photograph of the war in Sudan. The caption reads: "women and children displaced by air attacks on villages near southern oil fields." Fig 34 is the photo of a Nigerian woman kneeling before a soldier. The caption reads: "a woman being interrogated by a soldier in Lagos after clashes between the Yoruba and Hausa ethnic communities". Both photos offer women as 'evidence' of the crises in Africa.

The story of Africa features the story of prostitution. In 2002, some Kenyans won compensation from the British government for the bereavement or maiming caused by the British army explosives. Fig 33 "Wine, women and taxis for tribesmen with £4m windfall" is the headline that carried the story, which describes how 'Kenyan tribesmen' celebrated the 'arrival of millions of pounds' from the British government by 'going on an enormous binge' [see Appendix 16 for full text]. The accompanied photograph is that of three Kenyan women who according to the cutline are "Samburu girls in traditional dress. Hundreds from the tribe swept into Nanyuki yesterday to launch a wild celebration on the new found wealth". The story concludes thus: "the town was full of Samburus and prostitutes", according to a white resident. "They ate all the meat, drank all the beer, slept with all the women, then buggered off, singing in 30 dapped-out old taxis". Reading this 'news story', one gets an image of prostitution, indolence and stupidity.

Photographs of African women in British and Nigerian newspapers: graffiti?[16]

Hedbidge writes:

> Even so, graffiti makes fascinating reading. They draw attention to themselves. They are expression both of impotence and power – the power to disfigure.[17]

Hedbidge in so few words encapsulates my argument about the photographs of African women in British newspapers. First, the photos draw attention – being the bad and ugly

[16] I use grafitti in two ways here: first is to suggest the cultural inscriptions on African women by news photos/discourses in Nigeria and Britain, the second is to signal a possibility of the doubtful picture of Africa and African women these photos create.
[17] Hedbige, D. (1979) Subculture: Meaning and Style. London, Methuen & Co. Ltd. p. 3.

and thus wont to attract more attention than the good. This is in line with news worthiness, which seems to privilege disasters of all kinds. These photos too are expression of power, the power to define. The hierarchical relations that exist between Africa and Europe have assigned more power to the European press. More so, within the British media, this power is more defined, as the eye with which the African woman is seen privileges otherness and difference. This is transformed into cultural expressions that aim to show how 'they' are different from 'us'. Historically, racist discourses in the West have defined black African women as 'ugly' and white women as supposedly incarnate of 'asexual purity and beauty' (Mama 1995, p. 149). Within the British newspapers, photos of white women even at cursory glance are often those of celebrities, the rich, the great and the good. The situation however changes when it comes to the faces of black African women in the news. African women's experience of representations in Britain is that of a society that still carries traces of imperialism and white superiority (Cottle, 1997). This, no doubt, affects the inscriptions with which she is endowed. Inscriptions (graffiti) are fascinating because they signify both powerlessness and power. In inscribing African women with the scrawlings of destitution, poverty, diseases, etc, and barely presenting any versions that suggest otherwise, the British press rather than reflecting the complexity and changing status of African women holds on to stereotypes, a one-sided representation, in the interest of order, security and dominance (see Pickering, 2001). This powerlessness to stop the 'other' from transcending known stereotypes is evident when these photos are contrasted with those photos that appear in the Nigerian press. While the British press suggests destitution, the Nigerian photos suggest affluence and wealth – suggesting that there is another African women beyond the destitute, beggars, prostitutes, etc that are dominantly circulated in the British press. Yet, the preponderance of the affluent

women to a near exclusion of the 'ordinary' Nigeria women has some obvious implication. The Nigerian press may be failing to signal the weaknesses in the society by glossing over, rather than facing the truth about the living standards of the Nigerian people.[18] Hiding behind the news values of prominence, the press fails to report stories, which would bring the ordinary people, the community, the *real* people at the centre. This form of representation works against women by giving the impression that women who do make the news are the deserving ones and those who do not, need only to carve some niche for themselves (even by marrying influential men) to become newsworthy. It therefore ignores the macho 'norms' of a male-dominated news culture. Perhaps there is the need to redefine and expand our news values bringing to bear feminists ideals of "more personal, human-interest oriented" (Chambers *et al.* 2004, p. 123) form of journalism. Perhaps in this way, diverse images of Nigerian women could be created.

Samples of photos of African women in Nigerian newspapers

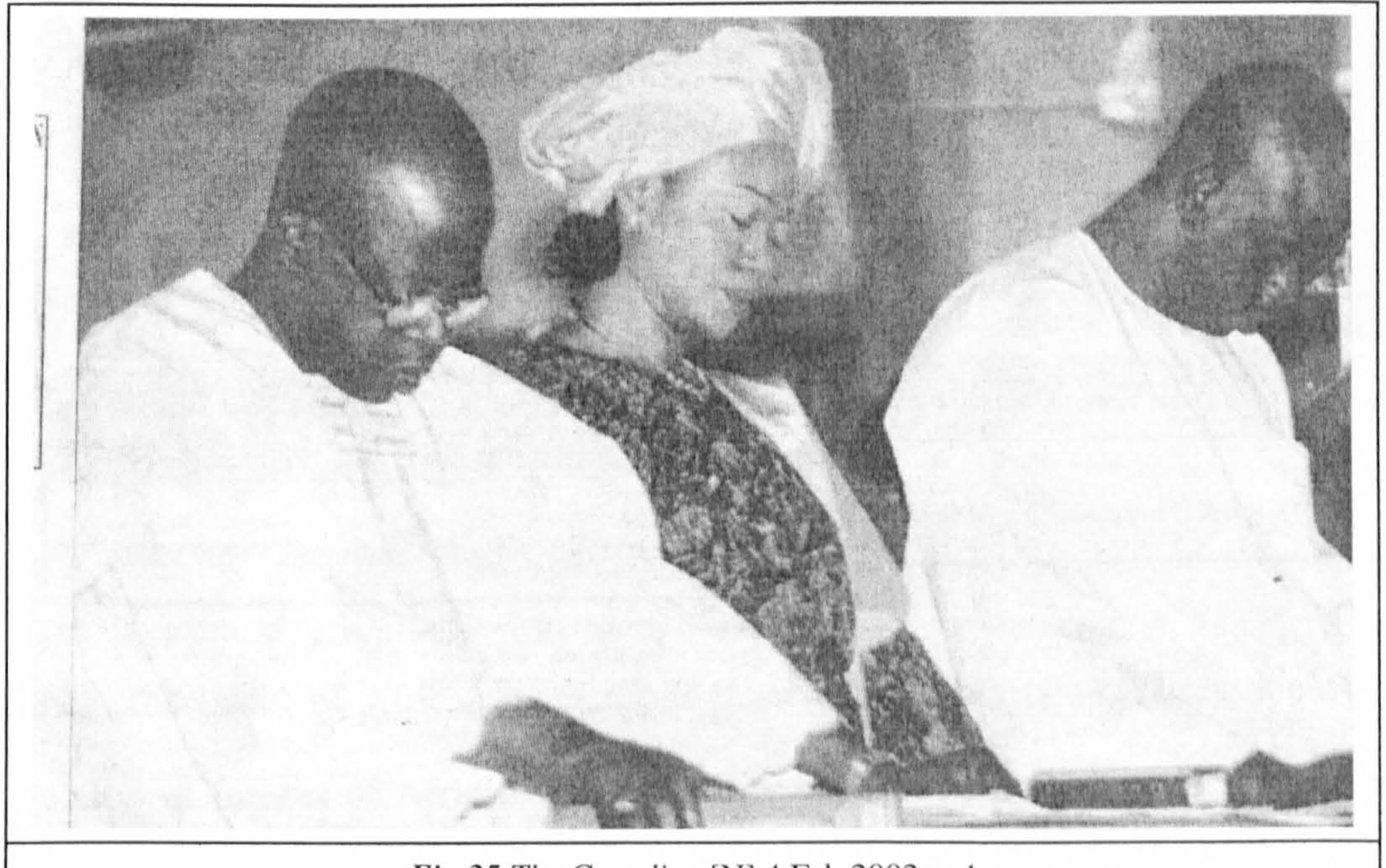


Fig 35 *The Guardian* [N] 4 Feb 2002 p. 1

18 The Federal Office of Statistics Lagos Nigeria reports that by 1996 more than half the population was livingbelow the poverty line. Cited in Hodges (2001, p. 20)

Fig 36 *The Punch* 5 August 2002, p. 3

Fig 37 *Daily Champion* 28 June 2002, p. 1

Wife of the Vice-President/Founder Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF), Chief Mrs. Titi Abubakar (2nd right) presents a WOTCLEF banner to Miss Ndueso Solomon, UNILAG student (left) to flag off the launching of the campaign against girls' trafficking and female commercial sex workers in campus. With him is Vice-Chancellor UNILAG, Prof. Oye Ibidapo-Obe right and Chief Mrs. Oluremi Tinubu, wife of Lagos State governor.
Photo: Kingston Daniel

Fig 38 *Daily Champion* 7 August 2002, p. 34

Fig 39 *Daily Champion* 6 August 2002, p. 38

The 'other side' of African women presented in Nigerian news, raises doubts about 'reality' of images of African women as presented in British press. However, though the Nigerian news shows that another form of African women (rather than the grovelling destitute of the British press) does exist, its composition also raises some questions about the ideology that inform choice of stories in the press, for surely, not all

Nigerians are wealthy? Perhaps what appears as "unbiased and objective journalism" and "literal visual-transcriptions" (Hall 1981) of the 'real' world of Africa is indeed a construct of the dominant ideologies within both societies whether governed by patriarchal and or racial dominance. The stereotypical selection of 'facts', which emphasises certain events and not others, present a 'disfigured' version of African women in both countries. It is in the light of this that I would suggest that the photos of African women in British and Nigerian press are graffiti (albeit of different kinds), and both create and present doubtful pictures of African women and Africa. They tally as I have mentioned earlier with Hedbige's notion of graffiti illustrating impotence, power and disfigurement and cannot just be taken at face value.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored the representations of African women in Nigerian and British news discourses. Cross-cultural analysis indicates that images of African women portrayed in news discourses in Nigeria and Britain are constructed through a similar strategy of stereotyping. I identified three constructs of femininity relating to African women that are visible in both cultures around which the news discourses operate. They are: voice, sexuality, and nurture. The news constructs in Nigerian press suggest a society in which women are denied a voice. It enacts the pressure that society imposes on women to speak in a particular way or to remain silent. From the first ladies whose roles are confined to the 'domestic public sphere', through women who are soft newsmakers, to women achievers whose achievements are glossed over, the thread running through seems to be the relative entitlement of women and men to speak and define the world in which we live in. Cultural attitudes to female and male voice have

been particularly powerful in determining where and when women might be granted speaking rights within the news. As in Nigerian news discourse, being voiceless is one of the constructs of African women's femininity in British news discourses. This however comes out in a different way: through the presentation of African women portrayed as objects to be pitied, totally incapacitated by disease, violence, hunger and famine. Most of the stories (AIDS, rape, prostitution, etc) are woven around African women who though attributed some speeches however still have muted voices for many reasons. First, in a manner similar to Cameron's (1992) argument, a muted group (or person) might speak a great deal, but what is important is the context in which they (she) speak(s). This influences the meanings and use inscribed on or made of the speech. Many women in the stories are nameless. Some of them have pseudo names or named in such a way that they remain unidentifiable persons. In such situations, their function is to add to the myth-like quality of Africa and to emphasize the symbolic nature of women. This symbolic nature is played up by the use of the photos of African women to 'tell' the story of Africa, significantly without giving them any speech. In this situation, it is possible for various inscriptions to be made on the women, and for them to mean what culture wants them to mean. They are thus the bearers, not makers of meaning.

In this chapter also, I identified some cultural variance in the representation of African women in both countries. Nigeria news discourses seem to endorse patriarchal hegemony through the dominance of women in traditional roles, endorsing wifehood and motherhood while de-emphasising female sexuality and professionalism. This is possibly a ploy to lure women back to the hearth and home. This thesis is supported by the news discourses (e.g. breastfeeding stories) that invite women to take the blame for societal delinquencies.

In British news, I noted the subtle encoding of lingering myths about racial identity in defining the femininity of African women. The most obvious encoding of this in news discourses in Britain appears in the photographs of African women during the period of study. These photos suggest an overall image of deprivation and "to-be-pitied-ness" contrasting strongly with photos of African women presented in Nigerian press, which suggest health and affluence. Yet, as I have argued, both situations heighten the possibility of the photos having been mediated through ideologies of racial or patriarchal dominance, capable of calling up known stereotypes.

What seems to have emerged in this chapter is the symbolic roles of African women in both Nigerian and British news discourses. In both societies, African women do not necessarily represent individual women but are used iconographically to attest the "identity and value of someone else". In British news discourse, African women assume the identity of Africa itself as defined in British racial discourses. Thus, cultural meanings of all kinds about Africa flow from her: savage, corrupt, promiscuous, survival of the fittest, etc, and resonate a wider ideological construct of Africa, the jungle. Within Nigerian news discourses, women represent the struggle between traditional and modern values (notions of the post-modern state do not yet apply to most African societies). The changing status of women challenges the traditional concept of femininity within the society. There is however an increasing fear that allowing women to embrace modern values would obliterate what society hold sacred (e.g. wifehood). The media as cultural producers seem determined to amplify traditional values to maintain cultural hegemony.

❖ Chapter Eight

Voices bridging over: cross-cultural dialogue

Introduction

The previous chapters (Six and Seven) presented academic readings of my survey of news texts. Part of the criticism that has been directed against postcolonial feminist critics is that they have often sacrificed grounded material contexts on the altar of theory (Waters, 1996; Moore-Gilbert, 1997; McLeod, 2000; Jensen, 2002a). Moreover, scholars such as de Certeau (1988) have wondered whether the 'reading' activity is reserved solely for the academic critic. Part of the aim of this thesis is to provide a material/embodied context for the discussion of the news texts. In this chapter therefore, I engage with the discussions I held with dialogue groups of Nigerian and British women. As I have indicated in Chapter Five, I have chosen to use the term dialogue group rather than focus group to emphasise the active role these women played in combining to be a cross-cultural critical voice/context for my academic endeavours. Albeit through me, this approach in my research is an attempt to allow Western (British) and African (Nigerian) women to be in dialogue with each other and to attempt to overcome what I have previously termed 'a dialogue of the deaf' between Weststream and African feminists (whereby each group of feminists has held tenaciously to its views while not hearing/accounting for those of the other). Primarily, my use of these dialogue groups was in an advisory capacity, for in engaging with them I was able to test out my own readings of the representation of African women in

British and Nigerian press, which I have discussed in previous chapters. During my research journey, I found the British dialogue groups were hugely important to me as by engaging with British press, and interrogating representations therein, I was operating within a cultural context that was not my own. The importance of my discussions with Nigerian women was somewhat different as not only did it offer a small space/intervention in academia where black African women were able to 'speak back' to dominant representation of black African women in British and Nigerian press but it provided a salutary reminder for me of my shift in cultural positioning since commencing the research (e.g. as I discussed in Chapter Five, my status as a 'been-to' not only changed my relationship with my Nigerian peers but also allowed me to see the deeper theoretical perspective that I took to my analysis since starting my studies in England).

For my analysis of my dialogue group discussions, I found that keeping a research diary was invaluable. It provided me with the means to note and reflect upon my thoughts about the responses of the women as they occurred. Thus, theorising has been occurring throughout the research process and whatever ideas I have come up with about representations of African women were generated and tested out in the conversations I had with them. As Silverman (2000, p. 119) suggests, "In most qualitative research, unless you are analysing your data more or less from day one, you will always have to play catch-up'". I used my research diary to guard against this.

I organised meetings with six different groups of women; three with women from Nigeria and three with women from the UK.[1] Each session lasted for more than two

[1] This excludes the pilot study with a group in Britain that was primarily conducted to test out my interview schedule and sharpen my interview skills.

hours.[2] At the end, after the transcriptions, I had a vast amount of material to work from. I could not possibly use all of them or quote them all, but have used excerpts from the transcripts, which illustrate the themes I pursue. I make no claim about the use I made of the materials being the best or the only use to which it could be put. I have however examined them in a way that would enable me to create a link between what the women were saying and the discourses on femininity of African women that I have outlined in previous chapters.

Introducing the participants in the dialogue

I recognise that in line with the ethics of conducting feminist research (Skeggs, 1995b) maintaining anonymity of the research participants is essential. That said, I consider it is important that I make readers aware of the women who participated in the research, without giving any clue as to their real identity. I therefore briefly present the women who participated in the dialogue group in a broad, rather than a specific way.

The British women's dialogue groups

All of the women were middle class and educated (with at least a first degree) and this would seem to go hand in hand with regular readers of the quality newspapers that formed the core of my study. As news media, newspapers require a fair level of literacy for its audience to participate effectively. A few of the women were quite travelled and some had met black African women before. The vast majority had not. Two of the women said that I was the first African woman they had met. For most of them, therefore, all that they knew about African women emanated from media forms (films,

[2] See Appendix 17 & Appendix 18 for samples of part of dialogue group transcripts for UK and Nigeria respectively.

television, novels, magazines and, of course, newspapers). Two of the women had travelled to some African countries, though many years ago. One of the women is married to a Nigerian and has been to Nigeria a couple of times. In addition to just media-based understandings of Africa, a few of the women were able to talk about African women by also drawing on their own observations and experiences.

All the women seemed aware of the way that African women are generally represented/conceived of (that is the most pervasive dominant ideologies) within the British culture. From my conversations, it became clear to me that although experience sometimes may challenge dominant ideological views, experience will not necessarily prevail. For instance, while most of the research participants declared they did not trust the media, one stated she had always accepted the truth-values of media messages without ever doubting them. The women's general cynicism and distrust of the media, however, can clearly be seen here:

> M: Even though I get most of my information from the media, there is also this suspicion that it is not rounded enough, there is always this bias, I feel their perspectives are often so politically slanted. We don't report things if it doesn't suit the political mood of today. So I am always searching for the other side of the story, which is not available to me. I discovered that through my travels in all my conversations that the other side is not always available to me at all (Newport, 22 February 2003).

Yet, even with these explicitly expressed doubts, in practice, media messages are still accepted at least in some areas of their thinking (Kitzinger, 1999). Although they did express doubts about the 'reality' of media images, I saw them slipping back to the acceptance of media messages in the process of conversation. The following discussion

about Zimbabwe, which came up when I asked them to produce their assignments,[3] illustrates this:

K: Could you share with us what you brought as news clippings of Africa or African women particularly? Could you summarize what you got please?
C: For me most of the stories are negative.
D: Sometimes it is something totally out of the control of the women like the Aids crisis. Something has happened, something very overwhelming and you feel the political manipulations in the way the drug companies operate and that access to medication that we take so much for granted here. That's the feeling that I get. And the people want to carry on with their lives and then you get this thing quite beyond them.
V: And these are countries so rich in resources and everywhere you look seems to be totally mismanaged, so that people can't take advantage of the natural resources that they have.
S: You see somewhere like Zimbabwe. Women there no matter how they struggle, they have very little opportunity, have very little control over their lives. Indeed the people in general.
K: Have you been to Zimbabwe?
S: No
K: So how did you know that?
S: From the impression I get from what I read in the papers (Cheltenham, 23 March 2003).

It is obvious from the above that even while challenging the media representations, the women continuously draw from them. Kitzinger's (1999) advice to be cautious about media messages and audience use of them rings true, "it is important to note that cultural representations and media coverage of issues are not homogeneous. People may consume different messages, and they may also challenge one representation by drawing on another" (p. 13).

[3] In chapter five, I explained that following my pilot study, I decided that to counteract any possibility of being accused of bias in choice of stories, I had given participants the assignment of bringing to the discussion any newspaper clippings they have about Africa/ African women.

Inquiry into their media practices revealed that, in a similar way to watching television (when they do 'a lot of jumping from station to station until they 'find something decent), many of them skim through the newspapers in a rather haphazard way:

> A: I normally look at the front page with a cup of tea in the morning, but if I look at it again, it will be either lunch time or sometime in the evening, I've learnt to skim through it rather quickly intending as far as I know the substance by now.
>
> K: From what you said you look at it, you don't read it do you?
> A: Yeah it depends if it is worth it, it depends on what's going on. You look at the title and you read the various lines of various paragraphs, if it interests you; you carry on *(at the background, the others are concurring).* (Cheltenham, December 2002)

Indeed, all the women generally agreed that they hardly sit down to read newspapers thoroughly[4]. They usually read the headlines and maybe the leads to get the gist of the story. This seems to suggest that many newspaper readers are headline readers, taking little time to deconstruct messages. Kitzinger (1999) also suggests the possibility that audience behaviour in a research setting may be quite different from the day-to-day one. The ability to deconstruct media messages and develop critical readings in a research setting is not necessarily the same as being able to reject the message conveyed via the media in a day-to-day level. It is sometimes only when invited to do so within the research setting that people challenge attitudes or facts conveyed by the media, which they had previously accepted without question. In a discussion with one of the women at the stage of initiating contact, I explained to her my interest in her 'readings' of the news on Africa. She admitted that she had never really thought about it. Evidence of critical readings from organised research sessions therefore does not necessarily apply in 'everyday' situation. Understanding this ambivalence between

[4] This reflects Hermes' (1995) views on women's practice in relation to magazines, which are quickly picked up and easily put down.

everyday media encounters and media encounters in organised research sessions helped me to gauge the responses of the women.

The Nigerian women's dialogue groups

As in the UK group, all the women in the dialogue groups had at least a first degree or equivalent. Newspapers, as I have already mentioned, require some level of literacy for meaningful engagement with them. Many of the women were civil servants, teachers and nurses. One was a businesswoman; some were doing their National Youth service (NYSC) while another was an unemployed graduate. I did my best to include women who reflected the three dominant cultures of Nigeria (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba). Those doing the NYSC provided this opportunity. So in one of the groups there was a Hausa woman, while in the other there was a woman who is Yoruba by marriage. A few of the women had travelled out of Nigeria and had experienced cultures other than their own (one lived for a long time in America), so some of them had knowledge of other cultures with which they compare the African culture they know.

Like the British women, many of the women said that they skipped through the newspapers to see if there is any thing of interest to pursue. As one of them says:

> M: For me, watching the news and reading the papers is a form of entertainment. When I am idle and do not have much to do I read the papers and watch the news to while away the time. But I don't really go out of my way to get them. But when I come across it I just check out the caption. If I get something that fascinates me, I go then deeper to read it (Nigeria, 13 July 2003).

Unlike the British women, however, the Nigerian women from the outset seemed much less critical of the media in their everyday life. From their discussions, it was obvious that they have never really questioned media representations. What I could attribute as

the possible reasons for this is that many of them may have been 'indoctrinated' into compliance by the dominant patriarchal structure. This would seem to agree with Chukukere's (1998) assertion that "decades of internalization of expected social and cultural norms has prevented (African) women from overturning debilitating social conventions" (p. 144). The extent to which societal pressures for compliance and unquestioning attitudes seem to have had its toll of the women could be seen in this response to how they deal with their perceived 'oppression' from men:

> O: Women in Nigeria wouldn't want to be tagged as being too forward and being too mouthy or open mouthed, we still feel that a woman should be somehow submissive and still swallow everything in spite of our education. No woman, even the educated ones would want to be tagged as being too mouthed or being too forward and to for example take the husband to court. It is not yet in Nigeria and we haven't come to that stage. We still as much as possible try to avoid such confrontations (Nigeria, 15 June 2003).

I suspect that this type of acceptance permeates the life of most of Nigerian women. Very few dare to question issues for fear that they would be tagged "loud-mouthed' and "confrontational".

Reponses to the questionnaire and the assignment[5]

The questionnaire had a clear format (see Appendix 3). It contained eleven items. Items one to four sought to find out the women's level of exposure to the newspapers and the news. It was based on their answers to this section that they were invited to join the sessions. All the women who participated therefore read the newspapers often and were

[5] I have explained in Chapter Five the poor response of Nigerian women to the questionnaire that was administered primarily to know women who read the newspapers, to provide the women opportunity to accept or not to join in the discussion and to get an overview of their media impressions of Africa and African women. I did not give Nigerian women any assignment. Instead, I asked them preliminary questions at the sessions that gave indications of their dominant media views about African women. The issues they raised are discussed in this section.

constantly exposed to the news. Items five to eight specifically asked if they recollected any stories about Africa and African women and the sources of such stories. A key indication of their responses was that the images, which they recalled about Africa, were overwhelmingly negative (including famine, disasters, wars, AIDS, etc).[6] Their responses also suggested that the media was a constant source of the stories. A few of them also indicated they heard some of the stories from friends, some indicated literature (e.g. novels) and some from involvement with charities like CAFOD[7]. While item nine specifically asked the women to list some of the stories that have heard about Africa and African women,[8] items 10 and 11 asked respondents to describe their overall image of Africa and African women from the stories they have been exposed to. Their responses here followed the familiar negative trend[9] that had emerged in response to earlier questions.

As I have previously indicated (Chapter Five), I asked the women to bring newspaper cuttings of news on Africa. This was important to my research design, as it was a way to either corroborate my own survey of news stories, which I had gathered in the earlier part of the research, or refute it (either wholly or partially). It quickly became clear that both presented similar trends in news reports on Africa in the British press.[10]

In a manner similar to their responses in the questionnaire, the news clippings of Africa that British women brought to the discussion suggested that the images that they recalled or found in the news about Africa/African women were overwhelmingly negative. The questionnaire and clippings provided the basis for further discussions

[6] See Appendix 19 for list of news items mentioned by the British women in the questionnaire that they could recall about Africa and Appendix 20 for summary of the images of Africa /African women created from the news which the British women provided in their responses to the questionnaire.
[7] Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
[8] See Appendix 19 for summary of responses.
[9] See Appendix 20 for selected representative responses.
[10] Appendix 5 summarises the images from the newspaper cuttings the women brought.

with the British women. I gave the women my own samples of news on Africa, sending Nigerian newspapers in advance to give them the opportunity to get familiar with the newspapers before the session. In addition to wanting to get spontaneous responses from their engagement with British newspapers, I also assumed that they were conversant with the newspapers, so I distributed the British news clippings only in the session.

For the Nigerian women, as part of the preliminaries to the discussion, I asked them to mention the stories they have read in the Nigerian newspapers about African (Nigerian) women. Interestingly, their responses produced negative stories, as had been my experience with the UK women. Some of their recollection included stories on prostitution, armed robberies, child abuse, female genital mutilation, forced marriages, etc. An important possibility to be considered regarding the similarity in the predominance of negative news stories about African women in both cultures may actually lie with journalistic practices which preference the negative in news (Braham, 1982). It is also equally possible that the similarity in themes across newspapers in both countries could be traceable to similar gender ideologies prevalent in both cultures. Nigerian women emphasised that the media seemed to use different yardsticks in the reporting of crimes committed by women and men. Talking about the report of a robbery where a woman was involved, one participant recounts:

> A: There was this story about a woman that led a group, a gang of armed robbers. The way it was portrayed, the group of ladies that were part of it. And we were then saying that if it was a man, the press wouldn't have carried it the way they did. In the case of the lady, they kind of were asking, how can a lady allow herself to be used to lead the group of armed robbers? How can she? She should be dammed. You know the kind of language that was used was very degrading to the womenfolk. Unlike if you read about men, which is always there on the pages of the newspapers, they don't use that kind of language (Nigeria, 13 July 2003)

Thus, although the Nigerian women did not perhaps challenge media representations in their daily lives, they were certainly critical of the media when in women only interview situations.

Reading images, identifying positions and locating cross-cultural myths of African women.

I have already noted the increasing rate of audience studies among feminist researchers (Radway, 1987; Hermes, 1995). Parts of the reason for this is the recognition that audiences are co-producers of meanings (Louw, 2001) and often are involved in the acts of negotiation and re-negotiation of media messages (De Certeau, 1988; Hall, 1999b). Often when audiences construct meanings from media messages, they are said to be involved in the act of 'reading'. Kitzinger (1999) however advises that this term needs to be unpacked. She suggests that we should look beyond the commonly conceived notion of reading as interpretation to include reactions. According to her, audiences may frequently share a common interpretation of media messages while differing in their reactions. Most times, people do not just 'read' a report differently, but some simply refuse to believe the facts conveyed, or blatantly disagree with the media's interpretation. As will be seen in this section, this is true even in a cross-cultural study such as this. As I have noted, in most cases, Nigerian and British women seemed to share similar interpretation of the images of African women in the news. What seemed, however, most significant were the reactions that the images elicited. I was able to identify three positions related to their readings of the media messages. I arrived at this

categorisation by studying the transcripts of our discussions and examining their use of language and, more especially, their choice of words. I have chosen to describe the three positions/factors that seemed to be crucial, thus:

Colonial trajectories/positions
Feminist integrationist positions
Cultural integrationist positions

Talking from a position based in colonial trajectories/positions encompasses the realities of both nations and includes reactions that relate to colonial myths and postcolonial relations. As I will explore, it also conveys an acceptance of a white hegemony which places Western and African culture in a hierarchical relationship.

The feminist integrationist position involves women speaking from within a patriarchal matrix, showing that they have been profoundly influenced by patriarchal hegemonic culture but are able sometimes to show resistance to it. By analysing this position it will be interesting to analyse whether the British and Nigerian groups are able to speak as 'women', undivided by racial or class differences. Their conversations certainly suggest similarities in the 'problem' of being female despite inhabiting different cultures. Through this approach, too, they draw from their own experiences as women to interpret the media messages.

Talking from a cultural integrationist position was noted especially when the Nigerian women responded to British news representation of African women. While not rejecting the representations, out right, they however drew on the power of their own traditional culture to negotiate the media images. This position also seems to suggest a cultural specificity to media interpretation.

Colonial-trajectories/ positions

> M: When I think of Africa I think of people who are not educated and live in primitive ways.
> K: And what do you call primitive?
> M: No water, no schools with little to eat. But I know very little of Africa (Cheltenham, 23 March 2003).

Colonial discourses about Africa have positioned it as primitive, uncivilized, dark and infantile (Jordan, 1982; Mama, 1995; Hall, 1997b). I have already shown in various chapters in this thesis how these colonial discourses have persisted into postcolonial times. The extract above of a British woman's reaction to the news shows that the participant still thinks of Africa in terms of primitivism and deprivation, a position still in line with colonial discourses. It is interesting that in the above quotation, the words: "I know very little about Africa" imply no personal experience about Africa and therefore indicate she has been influenced by the dominance of such representations within the media.

The reactions may be in tune with media representations, but is somewhat uncomfortable if the news representations are left unchallenged. Yet, as I mentioned previously, many of the British women have expressed cynicism about the press. How does one therefore explain their readiness to unquestioningly accept news portrayal of Africa? One explanation is the possibility of the women being seeped in the racial ideologies within the British society – ideologies based on racial hierarchies. In speaking through these ideologies, the women are positioned within colonial-trajectories. This means accepting what white society says, including what it says about black Africans.

This position is manifest as the women engage with news items. For example, they described Africans severally as 'tribes' and 'tribal'. Because of the frequency with which they used the words, I wanted to find out what these words meant for them. One described them as having to do with "breakdowns and wars"; another as "a kind of feudal society, thatched houses, you don't equate it with modern society". One of the women described the word tribe as an antithesis of "western democracy", completely "alien to western belief systems". To the women, tribe "is commensurate with "strong factionalism and inter tribal troubles, leading to war and hatred".

The images that the women seemed to have in mind when they used the word 'tribe' are primitiveness, conflicts, wars, traditional societies, and 'ways so different from the European ways.' The Glasgow Media Group (2002) asked their focus group a similar question and elicited a similar response. Glasgow Media Group asked their focus group to explain what image came to their minds when they heard the word 'tribe', as used in the news. They replied that it would be people with grass skirts and spears standing in front of huts.[11] These are images, which can be traced to colonial times and in western dominant culture suggest primitiveness and backwardness (Brantlinger, 1986). The women recognise this but these images seem to have stuck as in the discussions they consistently stressed tribalism in association with Africa.

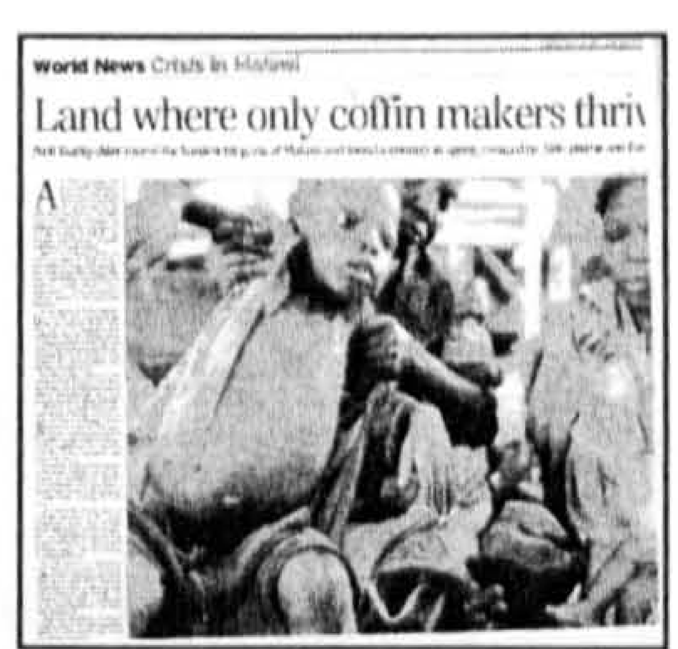
Also significant is the reliance on binary opposition when reacting to the news. Again this use of binary thinking has been consistent from the time of the first contact between English people and black Africa and has constructed Africa as 'the Other' and in a position of relative inequality (Jordan, 1982). This was evident in the women's reactions to some of the news photo clippings I gave them during the session.

[11] http://www.glas.ac.uk/departments/sociology/debate.html [Accessed 6th July 2003].

World News

Food crisis hits Harare as bread runs out

Starving Zambia spurns GM food aid



World News Crisis in Malawi

Land where only coffin makers thri

Reacting to the news photos, the British women described African women as having a 'very hard life'. What is interesting here is the inclination to measure African women's fulfilment with a lack of amenities. One of the women asked me out right: "do you have running water in the home?" Perhaps this is not surprising since they mentioned that one of the dominant images of African women they have seen in the media is that of women carrying heavy containers of water and walking miles and miles. I assumed, therefore, that the question was rhetorical. To an African woman, having good water to drink may be a priority but this does not necessarily amount to having it in the home. Who knows the very women seen carrying pots of water on their heads may be deriving some other satisfactions, which may be lacking in the lives of European women.

Since living in England, I have felt what it means to be lonely. To have the company of other women, as one walks, laughing and chatting to the stream, seems often to be a source of satisfaction, not necessarily of deprivation. Some years ago, my friend's dream to foster a girl was aborted when after three months the girl insisted she must go back to her home. Nobody could understand why. She had everything she wanted in the home of my friend, which by Western standard is a good home, because every amenity was provided. On insisting to know why the girl no longer wanted to be in my friend's house, the girl said she missed going to the stream to fetch water. To measure the 'richness' of an African woman's experience from Western expectations and standards is faulty. This is similar to what Adrienne Rich has called "'white solipsism': the tendency to think, imagine and speak as if whiteness described the world" (Spelman

2001, p. 75). This too has been one of the causes of antagonistic relation between African and Weststream feminists.

One of the stories in the Nigerian newspapers that the British women considered featured the wife of the Vice president Titi Abubakar whom it was reported burst into a song while addressing students of University of Lagos (*The Punch* 6 August 2002, p. 45). The British in reading the story saw the behaviour as "a huge cultural difference between Nigeria and Britain". Reacting to the story, they described African women as "expressive". One of them referred to a similar behaviour by Victoria Climbié's mother when she was in Britain following the murder of her daughter. Comparing African women's expressive nature with the way of life in Britain, the following conversation ensued in the UK dialogue group:

> F: It was interesting to see someone using music as communication. And bringing up all those emotions, because we don't really do. We listen to music, but we won't really think of bursting into songs if we are that happy.
> K: What does that tell you about Africans?
> F: Very expressive actually. And quite in touch with how they feel. Which we wouldn't do here. We would do that in very appropriate gathering.
> K: How would you interpret it if she were to do that within a British setting?
> A: Polite embarrassment (*general laughter*). It's good value, but please stop *(More laughter)*. Spontaneity is not a major feature of the British expression.
> H: We don't have that spontaneity because theoretically we are more sophisticated. Therefore, we have music provided on the radio, on CD. This sort of thing, therefore we no longer make our own to such an extent (Cheltenham 2nd March 2003).

I have already mentioned that western social and political thoughts tend to operate in binary opposites (see Bryson, 1999). Because of this, words like "expressive" as used by 'F' cannot be taken on face value. It could possibly reflect the assumed emotional nature of Africans, which often within racial discourses is constructed as a form of

deficiency. However, the response by 'A' shows a high degree of self-reflexivity on her part – e.g. when she says "we don't have that spontaneity because theoretically we are more sophisticated" seems to bemoan a lost of creativity that has been taken over by technology. Both adopt positions which compares one culture with the other.

In previous chapters, I have indicated one of the features of postcolonial relations is the possibility of Eurocentric cultural dominance and imperialism (Dube, 2002). I noticed this in the reactions of Nigerian women to the representations of African women in Nigerian newspapers. They recognised that representations of women in the news were wives of men in power. They also noted the different use of language to describe similar incidents in which women and men are involved. As one Nigerian participant explained when discussing the representation of the woman who was a leader of a gang of robbers (previously cited): "it is as if only men have the rights to be truants and a woman like Caesar's wife should be above board. There are different standards for both men and women" (Nigeria, 13 July 2003). I invited Nigerian women to relate the media representations to the gender expectations in Nigerian society. In doing this, women articulated a sense of African women (which, of course included themselves) as being "second–class citizens" who are expected to do the bidding of the men. Yet, culturally African women are expected to accept this position and "be under the man". African feminists make it clear that African women believe in and accept traditional roles (see Hudson-Weems, 1994; Acholonu, 1995) The women's reactions however also reflected the influence of western values.

> O: There was a couple that came back from London. My mother used to tell me, in those the days, the husband, he always carried the baby, and any time they stopped the car, the man would come out and open the car door for his wife. Do you know what happened? The umunna (kindred) called them *(general laughter).* 'Are you marrying our son or is our son marrying you? Are you the man or the woman? Or did you charm him?

> Tell us what kind of charm from London'. The man asked them, 'is it why you are calling us? To tell us how we can live in our family? Is it your business?' And they said 'No wonder, she charmed our son, look at what he is talking to us. A woman marrying a man. It cannot happen'. Then they went to the woman's family and told her mother, 'warn your daughter, we don't know what your daughter did to our son'. So what the man did was that he took the wife and went back to London. So, I don't know what to do about this our culture (Nigeria, 29 June 2003).

I suggest that these words are a form of resistance to the dominant patriarchal culture, as obviously the women no longer feel comfortable with the traditional gender roles of women. But their reactions spring from postcolonial relations. While it is acceptable within Europe for a man to push the pram, hold the doors for women; a Nigerian man who does this in Nigeria, is called a 'woman wrapper' – a derogatory name for a man tied to his wife's apron strings. The women are aware of this as possible source of conflict. One of them who was in America told us how her husband used to do 'female things' (changing napkins, going for the groceries, etc) but "as soon as we came back, up till today, he can't even get up to go the kitchen to get water for himself to drink. He would be sitting down calling whoever, even if you are downstairs, he would call you from there 'come and give me water to drink'. When I complained that he wasn't behaving this way in America, he said, 'emmm mmebesiere gia umu nwoke a sim gini? (If I do this for you what would the men tell me?)" (Nigeria, 29 June 2003). Another cited a woman who had to refuse her husband's offer for help to avoid the mockery from people and protect her husband's masculinity. In their discussion, there seem to be discontentment and in this instance, that the "way things are done in Britain" is more acceptable to them. The Nigerian women seem to share in the British women's belief of African women as "having a hard life" and "being dominated by men". Some women in one of the British dialogue groups did offer a counter position concerning African

women's relation with their men. One stated that: "I actually see African women as being quite dominant in their relationships". This contradicts the dominant images from the news clippings I gave them.

Further explorations show that they were certainly not drawing from the news at hand, but from other genres as well as colonial discourses. When I asked them why they see African women as dominant in relationships, the following discussion ensued.

> E: Because African women always seem to appear so strong.
> **K**: Is there any particular image you have seen that makes you think so?
> E: The black mama (others concurred)
> P: The matriarch.
> **K**: That is a slave image you know.
> L: Yeah but it is still here. We still think African women are still so strong.
> H: It is still very dominant.
> (Newport, 22 February 2003).

The women in the above instance take recourse to stereotypes in creating meanings from the news. In doing this, they tended to reinforce racial myths, which did not directly emanate from the news (Macdonald, 1995). In this case, Fiske's (1989) vision of a democracy of active audiences that busily produce their own meanings irrespective of those in offer does not sound too convincing. In relation to myths about African women, it would seem that the long colonial history and its lens cannot be suddenly overturned. While arguing that the media may not always be on a conspiracy mission to

keep minorities at bay, as Macdonald (1995) suggests, "we need to recognise the part we all play in keeping mythologies and ideologies alive" (p. 4).

Feminist integrationist positions

In Chapter One, I stressed the importance I give to thinking of women as embodied beings and the need to focus on commonalities as a possible form of strength and alliance. The tendency in Weststream feminism has been for African women to be considered as backward and oppressed by their patriarchal society. African feminists on the other hand deny such oppression arguing that in many African societies women are not in hierarchical position with men, (Acholonu, 1995) and that African women do wield sufficient power (Amadiume, 1987). These contradictory views suggest some form of delusion. For western women, there are similar delusions, which can be seen in what has been described as postfeminist euphoria[12] where many believe that they have achieved feminism's agenda of women's equality with men. This, however, polarises western relationships with Africa as although often no longer willing to pursue a feminist agenda in the West, they become evangelists in mission to 'save' African women. In resisting such imperialistic missions, many African women resort to the romantisization of Africa as a defence mechanism. Both instances raise a principal question: how free are Western and African women from patriarchal dominance? In answering this question, I juxtapose extracts from discussion with Nigerian and British women. These extracts are indicative of the women's reactions to the dominance of African women in traditional roles within the news. To them the portrayal seems to reflect that women are assumed incapable of engaging in challenging activities. The

[12] See Hall, E and Rodriguez, M (2003) for an academic discourse of the myth of postfeminism.

following represents their reaction to what they consider an ideal woman in their own culture:

> C: A typical African woman is one who is ready to be seen and not heard.
> D: Who is always naïve.
> E. A typical one? So timid and naïve, so timid
> O: If you are a typical African woman, you must succumb to whatever men say. (Nigeria, 29 June 2003)

> H: An ideal wife has no intelligence, has no sense of achievement. Because anything else is gonna be such a conflict in your own life and in your family life for it is very difficult when you combine the two especially in the eyes of a man. You need to be completely compliant. (Newport, 22 February 2003)

Nigerian and British women express feminist integrationists positions in the above statements. In reading the news, they speak from their positions as women, undivided by ethnic or racial identities. Both extracts show that both groups of women experience patriarchy in similar ways. Both societies seem to share the commonality that timidity, lack of intelligence and complete obedience are required in order to be "typical woman" in Africa, or an "ideal wife" in Britain. The women make it obvious from their tone that they do not necessarily share in those attributes but they recognise these features are part of the gender expectations in their societies. Yet, in order to avoid conflict in the family and hold the family together, both sets of women seem to suggest that the option of subsuming their identities under the males are the ones often left for women. In such a case, it is questionable whether African feminists' argument that African women are supposedly the sole possessors of family-centred attributes is really the case. It would seem that deep care and sacrifice for the family are also attributes shared by British women. This punctures one of the myths about white women, as often in Nigeria it is

usual to assume, that white women do not have the strength or will to make sacrifices for the family.[13] It was clear that the Nigerian participants held the more stereotypical view of white women:

K: When you talk about African women you mentioned that they can forbear. Is there any other thing strength means for you?
O: Physically they are very strong.
A: Take us for example, we are all workers. We are all married women. We have our children. We do our roles in the home, we work, we cook, we combine so many things. We also play our role in the day-to-day running of the home. A white woman cannot do this.
C: Without a nanny!
A: A white woman would say, I have a baby and therefore everything about work should stop. The white woman goes on maternity leave and stays till the baby is old enough before she can go back to work. She is not ready to bear all the stress associated with it.
K: Are you sure you are not making assumptions?
A: No I am not. It is a fact.
K: How do you know it is a fact?
A: Sometimes for them they waive off certain things in order to release stress. I read such things from the newspapers; I hear it from the television.
M: Another example is that as a practising nurse you see the cases of women going through the ordeals of labour pains, the white woman will say no I prefer an elective caesarean section.
K: Where have you seen that? From stories you have been told?
ALL: No, it is all over the television.
K: In the television?
M: Yes they say, don't section me. I want an operation.
K: Which programme do you see this in? A foreign or home programme?
ALL: In foreign programmes.
O: Even in foreign magazines and health magazines you see that.
C: That's why they don't have so many children.
N: They don't.
A: They prefer one or two because they are not strong enough to have more.
K: You think African women bear a lot of children because they are strong?
ALL: Yes (Nigeria, 15 June 2003)

[13] This has made many African families wary of allowing marriages between their sons and western women. It is usual in my culture to assume that white women are pampered and have too easy a life. Hard work and strength are highly valued and taken for granted within this culture. It is usual to tell someone who shows contrary traits (e.g. by failing to wake up at the crow of the cock (around 5 a.m.), "wake up, do you think you are a white woman?"

I couldn't help reflecting on how these views expressed by Nigerian women mirror my thoughts before I embarked on this research. I had my notions of whiteness, which among other things include the views expressed by Nigerian women of white women being thoroughly pampered and perhaps doing nothing but being waited on hand and foot. Most western films we watch in Nigeria present this easy and comfortable life. I thought of the discussions I have had with British women where some recounted their experiences of domestic violence. I remember the long hours I have seen my white women friends work and still have to meet the demands of the family – and certainly without any nannies! I did not tell the Nigerian women about these realities, but I know like I was when I encountered the realities in England, they will be surprised that the image of the white woman we have always had of being surrounded by nannies and husbands who dote on them is merely a myth. It made me reflect on how what we think of each other is based on ignorance and assumptions, fanned by our vicarious experiences of the media. (Research diary 15/6/2003)

In the discussion above, it is clear that Nigerian women's 'impressions' about the white women have been shaped by their contact with the media. The Nigerian women think themselves different from the western women based on ignorance about what life is for a typical ordinary British woman[14]. I have included this, as a feminist integrationist position because, I have lived long enough in the British society to realise that what Nigerian women so describe of their own life, is not so different from that of the

[14] I noted also that most of the assumptions about Africa by the British women was equally based on ignorance. This is possibly, why both groups of women seem to rely much on media representations to articulate their views.

ordinary British woman (only that they are not aware of that). Most 'ordinary' British women equally juggle between career, family, and relationships and still (like the Nigerian women) are expected to succeed in all. The following discussions with the British women depict this:

> S: We have the feminist revolution in the 60s and I am sure the ideology has a huge impact and then the women have this role they have to live up to, and I think we are actually at a crisis point now where women feel they have to be super women and they have to do everything and they have to...
> K: Now what do you call super women?
> A: Perfect mother, perfect career
> S: You have to have a career. In other words, you have to be able to do everything, have children, go out to work, be a good wife, do everything really. And I think we have got something of a crisis now because almost all women feel they have to work, even when they don't want to. For example when I had my children, I did not really want to work but economically I had to work otherwise we can't foot the mortgage. I think it is a choice and for many women it isn't and that's what I am saying. It is very difficult really and I think there is a lot to talk about choice, how much choice do women actually, truly have because we have got ourselves in a situation when we feel we have to do everything. (Cheltenham, December 2002).

The reality for most British women is that they combine both career and domestic chores. Many of them acknowledge that this is the lived experience of the majority of women, and this has turned them to so called super women. They have internalised feminist ideology but realise that living it is faced with many contradictions.

Since women in both cultures still battle with forms of patriarchal oppression, I would suggest that both African feminists' claims about the irrelevance of feminism and western women's belief about feminism's battle having been won are both myths. In

this brief cross-cultural exchange, indications show that the women in both societies are under the yoke of patriarchal dominance and a collective struggle is still necessary.[15]

Cultural integrationist positions

In working through their understandings of African women in the press, it seemed that the Nigerian women mostly identified with this position. One characteristic of this position is that it adopts a form of resistance to the western representations of African women. In her study, Mama (1995, p.105 – 107) explains that black Africans have historically formed resistance towards white supremacist cultures. Principal among them have been the pan-Africanist and negritude movements. One thing both have in common is "the recasting of the racial characteristics attributed to black people as positive gifts or even superior attributes, rather than signs of inferiority" (p. 107) (see also postcolonial media representations discussed in Chapter Three). This particular stance was adopted by Nigerian women in response to the British dominant representation of Africa women. I illustrate this drawing on two western conceptions about African women relating to nudity and sexuality.

African women and nudity

> P: "In our culture we don't bare it all"
> (Nigeria, 29 June 2003)

Early European explorers to African had brought back with them fantastic stories about Africans mostly characterised by self-congratulatory comparisons (Schildkrout and Keim, 1990). Ethnographic photos of Africans showed them mostly nude. Walvin

[15] In Britain, there has been little suggestion on how to deal with the birth of the twentieth century 'New Women' – the superwomen who rejoiced at the message of freedom and self-fulfilment advocated by feminism but are now caught up in the overburden of "combining career and home, cultivate independence while maintaining family relationships, remain sexually alluring but also convincingly business like " (Macdonald 1995, p. 91).

(1982) is of the opinion that African nakedness loomed large in the early English impression of Africans. This has proved both fascinating and shocking in Europe where such images then were a novelty. Some scholars however signal that these stories and images about Africans may be based on exaggeration and distortions (Brantlinger, 1986) mostly to rationalise European civilising mission to Africa. Despite this signal, these early impressions have endured well into the 20th century, if not to this day as stereotypes/ myths. As one of the Nigerian participants recounted:

> O: when I was in America someone asked me whether we live on trees, I said no and he asked, but you live in the jungle and when I said no, I am sure he didn't believe me (general laughter). He asked do you have houses in Africa? I said yes. Do you wear clothes in Africa? I said yes. 'O I thought you go naked" (Nigeria, 29 June 2003)

This woman's experiences are not peculiar to her. Many Africans who have visited the West have been bombarded with similar questions based on 'racial knowledge' and stereotypes (Kolawole, 1997). In a similar vein, I remember one of my white friends here expressing some surprise when I told her that I did not know how to dance, she said, 'o but I thought Africans are very musical and dance very well'. We both laughed about how easily she fell into stereotypes and myths about Africa.

The myth of naked Africans seems to have been sustained through the contemporary western photojournalism of Africa (Aidoo, 1998), which depicts ill clad women and children. In the discussion with the British women, the perverseness of this ideology was noticeable in their reactions to two of the stories in Nigerian newspapers. These stories are the 'nude' story and the 'breastfeeding' story.[16] The Nigerian newspapers reported how some Nigerian women held the workers in a multinational oil company

[16] These terms, 'nude' story and 'breastfeeding' story were adopted throughout our discussions to respectively describe the news of the threat to go nude by Nigerian women and news showing women breastfeeding their babies.

hostage for days by threatening to go nude if they did not heed to their demands. They were demanding that their husbands and children be employed as compensation for the pollution of their lands. The threat to go nude was enough to stop the oil workers from working and to negotiate with the women. The clippings I gave to the women also contained several photographs of exposed breasts of women while breastfeeding their babies. To the British women, seeing African women bare-breasted was not unusual and the myth of African nudity was strongly in place. The threat to go nude therefore seemed strange. Trying to reconcile such apparently contradictory notions questioned some of the myths that they have believed about African women.

As one Nigerian participant said, "In our culture we do not bare it all". Not baring it all in this sense implies not exposing the vagina, as a woman's vagina is considered very sacred as it culturally symbolises the passage of life. No matter how ill clad an African woman is, that part of her is covered. This is why it is doubtful whether it is appropriate to talk about African women as "naked", "comfortable with their body and nudity" as they have been described by the British women. In many African societies too, women are revered as mothers and seeing a woman's nakedness is tantamount within the culture to having carnal knowledge of one's own mother and is considered an abomination. It is only in extreme provocation that African women could use their nudity as a weapon. Amadiume (1997) notes three cases where this has been used: Kom

women of Cameroun, Gikuyu women of Kenya and Igbo women of Nigeria (p. 165). As she writes:

> In situations of extreme oppression, danger and anger, women fought with their bodies by exposing that which is held sacred.... The greatest insult to an African is to curse his or her mother or to refer to his or her mother's vagina... (Amadiume 1997, p.165).

Many African societies are still tradition-bound and this possibly explains why the threat to go nude was enough to stop the oil workers from working. The British women admitted that a similar threat in Britain would have had an opposite effect on men and the women would even be invited to do so as it would be seen as entertaining. In reading the stories, Nigerian women adopted the cultural integrationist position by asserting the powers of the African female body on the society as expressed in the following:

> C: A particular man was maltreating his mother. They kept warning him, the umuadas[17] kept warning him, he didn't heed to their warnings, and one day like that they had to demonstrate. They went to his house. He didn't know what they were planning. Very early in the morning, he was still on the bed when they came. So opening the door he saw all of them. So one by one, they started removing their clothes. They were stark naked – old women – older than his own mothers, some of them his mother's age mate. They said "now, you can as well beat all of us". Something like that. The man continued begging them and they were thrusting their naked body on him. He ran here, this person grabbed him and he ran there, and that person held him. He didn't have a route of escape until he wept and asked for their forgiveness and promised not to touch his mother. In another setting, this man was making his wife always pregnant – up to 13th issue and it became out of place and they went to the man and say 'today, you'd pregnant all of us, even your own mother' and he had to stop. And I mean it has a very strong meaning for our culture (Nigeria, 13 July 2003)

[17] Meaning daughters from the same kindred.

It is obvious in the above that for Nigerian women nakedness and nudity has a very different meaning from in the West. In citing the examples that they did, they showed how the concept of nudity holds different cultural meanings and that rather than accepting Western notions about African nudity they challenge them with examples about how going nude was an act of defiance which could be used to fight patriarchal dominance.

African women's sexuality

I noted in Chapter Three how black African women, within white supremacist culture, have been constructed as impure, immoral and promiscuous. Using the Hottentot Venus as an example, I illustrated how historically African women's sexuality has been brought into scrutiny. In Chapter Seven, I argued that British news reports of rape and prostitution stories drew strongly from these derogatory discourses. In reading the stories on Aids, the British women suggested that the predominance of Aids stories within news discourses sustains the myth of the strongly sexed and sexually irresponsible African. This is suggested in the following comments made by the dialogue group in Britain.

> A: It paints a picture of dangerous sexual liaison, my speciality is travel medicine and certainly whereas originally the cases of people being HIV positive was limited to homosexual relationships, actually the greater number is heterosexual who travel abroad has sex abroad which may well include Africa but it includes other countries as well. So there is an image of dangerous sex abroad, which includes Africa, alongside other places – yes a dangerous place (Cheltenham, 2 March 2003).

I think the image of Africa, as a 'dangerous place' to engage in sex is predominant in Western people's minds. A white German friend of mine who was going out with a man from Ghana told me that part of the reasons why they stopped seeing each other was because he refused to go for an AIDS test, "for God's sake Kate, he is from Africa!" she said. I told my friend that asking a man, one wants to have sex with, to do have AIDS test is a wise thing to do, but the only reason shouldn't be that the man is from Africa. When I asked her whether she would have asked him to do an AIDS test if he was not from Africa, she said "probably not". She referred to the press reports about Africa, which have shaped her perception. Like my friend, the UK dialogue groups thought of Africa as the bedrock of Aids and African women as most often victims of their husband's infidelity and liaisons with prostitutes.

In reading the Aids and prostitution stories, the Nigerian women adopted the cultural integrationist approach by insisting that any lapses of African women are a result of western influences. Yet, similar stories on Aids and prostitution are also prevalent in Nigerian newspapers. I have, however, suggested in Chapter Seven, that the prevalence of prostitution stories in Nigerian news might be seen to fit certain news values (e.g. highlighting the unusual as African women are expected de facto to be virtuous and consequently, a prostitute meets the news values of the unusual). The Nigerian women interpreted the treatment of prostitutes in the newspapers as reflecting the double standards on sex endemic in Nigerian society (as mostly only females who engage in prostitution are mentioned). They also implied that western civilisation was responsible for the increase in the number of female prostitutes in many African countries. As one of them says:

> P: It has a lot to do with the introduction of western life and all those things. Prostitution came with all those things because prostitution came with

> all those things like western wears which weren't in our system before, they all came with civilization, it is a price we have to pay for the so called civilization (Nigeria, 29 June 2003).

In taking this position, the Nigerian women challenge the dominant position that African women are promiscuous as they see engagement in prostitution as a cultural aberration that could only be blamed on western invasion of African societies.

Enduring representations: cross-cultural myths of African women

Nigerian women, though challenging some of the representations of African women in the news, also shared in and claimed some of them. One of the representations they certainly identified with was that of being strong. This was one of the most recurrent stereotypes about black African women that was encountered in both the British and Nigerian discussions. Below, I will discuss this in relation to Nigerian women's claims, showing how it intersects with the cultural ideologies within the society.

The myth of the strong black African woman

Within western societies, the image of the strong black African woman dates back to the slave period. Wallace (1990), in recounting the story of slave labour, identified four ways a black woman slave might achieve some status. According to her, "the ability to do heavy labour was of paramount importance. Whereas women who were sensitive, delicate and fragile suffered a great deal in slavery, women who were physically strong and robust were highly valued by the slave community" (p. 20). For the African women therefore, to be strong then was not a choice, but an issue of survival. The image of the

strong black African woman has however survived the slave period and has circulated within western discourses (Marshall, 1994).

According to the British dialogue group, the image of the strong African woman comes out quite compellingly in the news. News reports represent African women as being able to cope, as resourceful, as holding the family together. As one of the British women explain:

> M: That is the kind of impression that keeps coming through, that no matter what happens, whether tribal wars, famine, etc, for women, the job doesn't change, it is holding the family together, it is keeping things going. You end up with these images of reliable women and faithless men (Cheltenham, 23 March 2003)

The above view comfortably exists with another, which suggests that African women are victims of all kinds of disasters. Often in photograph with the children, the constant image is that of being there for their family. What comes out is the stereotypical image of the long-suffering, maternal figure whose most endearing characteristic is the self-sacrificing self-denial for those she loves (hooks, 1982). The Nigerian women, however, when reacting to news items during our discussions also seemed to identify and identify with this stereotype/ myth. While British women used words such as: "strength through suffering, strength through victimhood or strength through having to cope with situation", the Nigerian women, conceptualised being strong in a variety of ways. I have identified several layers of the meaning in the way they described themselves in the discussions and I outline these below:

Physical strength

The Nigerians drew on experience to discuss strength, such as: "carrying firewood, tying a baby at the back and with advanced pregnancy". They cite many parts of the country where women do the bulk of the work while the men have their leisure drinking palm wine. For the women also, cultural expectations demand that even when women have had a hard day in the farm, they are still expected to cook for a husband who may have been home all day probably snoring away.

Family centred

For most of the Nigerian women, the strength of the African women lies in her family-centeredness and the extreme sacrifice she makes for her family. This has been a key emphasis of African feminists in order to show the differences between the cultural perspectives of Africans and the Europeans (Hudson-Weems, 1994). As one of the Nigerian women explained:

> B: Even in the face of troubles, African woman is in chain and she doesn't run away because she is facing problems, she carries her family along with her. I admire their courage. They are very courageous. A typical African woman, you can't see her running away from her family or staying away from the family. That is, this modern issue of divorce; the African woman doesn't like that. Her life is glued to her family (Nigeria, 13 July 2003).

What I find very interesting however is the women's choice of words: "in chains" and "glued to her family," which both suggest African women are where they are against their will. There is a show of discontentment with the traditional expectations of African women who often to remain true to the myth of the strong African woman suffer emotional pain in silence. This comes out as the women discuss their views about

marital infidelity. For the British women, it seems that this provides enough grounds to quit a marriage but from a Nigerian perspective, part of the strength of the African woman is reflected in how she deals with this issue:

> C: An African woman would want to cover up, thrash it out with the man, cover up no matter how much it pains her. Suffer in silence because she is incapable of breaking through the chains of culture to really call it quits in marriage for to the African woman, divorce is alien to her. Because of that most women suffer silently, grudgingly in spite of themselves, they carry on (Nigeria, 13 July 2003).

It seems therefore that African women are bound to their culture even when they find it unbearable and detrimental. I notice a similar trend in the claims of the African feminists as they defend African culture. It is such posture that prompted hooks (1982) to remind them that endurance is not to be confused with transformation or being strong in the face of oppression the same as overcoming oppression.

Fecundity

To many of the Nigerian women, the strength of the African woman is in proving her fertility through having numerous, preferably male children. This is tantamount to a cultural expectation, which leaves women empty if they fail to achieve that[18]. Thus, strength is related to passing through the rigours of pregnancies to perpetuate the husband's lineage. To perpetuate the husband's lineage implies giving him male children. Being strong is also living with the knowledge that it is considered a woman's fault if none of these happens. As one of the women said, referring to infertility in marriage "it is never the man's fault; it must be the woman's". Another referred to the stigma of only having daughters:

[18] See Emecheta , B. (1979) The Joys of motherhood. New York, George Braziller.

O: I hear the former president of America Clinton has an only child – a daughter. And he visited Nigeria with her. I know Nigerian men would think him mad. If in Nigeria, you have 12 daughters without a son, then you are gone (Nigeria, 29 June 2003).

What I now find interesting, but had previously barely questioned, is the stoic acceptance of the many African women, who have to live with the endemic patriarchy, sexism, the double standards of morality, the dehumanising widowhood rites, the agony of being blamed for infertility and the harsh economic realities. To the Nigerian women that were in dialogue with me, it is in this ethic of nobility regarding suffering that lies the strength of the African women.

From the above therefore, Nigerian women seem to confirm the image of the strong African woman prevalent in British news discourses. An obvious conclusion could be that this so called myth has been transformed into reality. Yet, we need to recognise how gender and race, racial attitudes and African women's cultural norms reinforce and sustain the image of the strong black African woman. Often both racial and cultural norms leave African women with little option than to live the role history and culture has mapped out for them. The image of the strong black African woman has persisted to contemporary times, and as Marshall (1994) has noted, many black women in Britain have had to contend with the myth of being superwomen. I have also had to contend with this image. To many white people I have met in Britain, I seem to be an epitome of the strong black African woman – leaving a husband and six children at home to come to the UK for a PhD. One of the British women in the questionnaire cited me as an example of the "incredible stamina and strength of mind" of the African women. What I find interesting is the taken-for-granted manner in which they say this, which closes up any form of negotiation. What do they know about the intense loneliness, the sleepless nights, the worries that gnaw my stomach, and the accompanying tears as I struggle to

cope with the absence of my family and living in a culture that is so different from mine? Perhaps that I carry on in spite of this is a form of strength. Most times, it is the mythologized strong African woman whom I call up often for survival when I am at my wits end. I tell myself that I am an African woman *and therefore* a strong woman and shall remain undaunted. It is in a similar manner, that cultural expectations make it difficult for the African women to be nothing but strong. As one of the Nigerian women recounts during our discussion:

> O: We said Nigerian women are strong. Sometimes because of the societal expectations, they would go on to do daring things. I remember a cousin of mine who was pregnant and having some pains and with those pains, she went on the farm. When I asked her why she did that she said it is because people would think she is a lazy woman and she wasn't taking care of her farm and eventually she aborted that baby (Nigeria, 15 June 2003).

I could feel the Nigerian women's discontentment with the expected way of life of the African woman, with this strength that seems to be their yoke, because for many of them also, it is unthinkable to be anything but strong. Being positioned within these two cultures, both making such demands of my African femininity makes it inevitable that I remain strong. As Barthes (1972, p. 156) notes, myth gives things a natural and eternal justification, gives them clarity, which is not that of an explanation, but that of a statement of fact.

Conclusion

In my cross-cultural dialogue with the British and Nigerian women, three important categories of reflection and interrogation emerged: Colonial trajectories/positions,

Feminist integrationist positions and Cultural integrationist positions What was especially interesting was the way that these categories were at times separate and at other times merged. The dialogue groups' discussions seemed to confirm that the most resonant and dominant representation of the African woman that is circulated is that of the strong woman. The strong woman is the spectre of both the British and Nigerian conceptions of the African woman. Strength here, however, equals fortitude and suffering as opposed to the exercise of power.

It is also interesting that both sets of women seemed to collude with the discourses generated by the key news representations even if they reacted to them from different cultural perspectives. For example, the British women accepted that patriarchal oppression is very much a part of their life and the Nigerian women on their own side, agreed to many oppressive forces within their lives, especially the cultural expectations informed by endemic patriarchy within the societies. If this is the situation, then the argument of African feminists that gender should be eschewed from the African women's agenda is deeply faulted. My own role, which was pivotal to the methodology, allowed me to straddle two cultures and convinced me that if avenues for honesty and recognition could be opened up it might be possible to draw on some form of bond between women (whether feminist or non-feminist, whether white and western or black and African) to challenge oppressive representations and structures. I found that irrespective of their locations both sets of women found that newspaper representations of African women allowed them to articulate that they are being exploited by patriarchal societies.

Using the groups allowed me to be in dialogue with a range of different sets of cultural beliefs that I tried my best to pull together as being cross-culturally meaningful when thinking through newspaper representations. While the Nigerian women I talked with did not have to contend with the same racialised existence that I am subject to when in

the UK, they did, however, recognise the racist undertone in some of the representations of African women in the British news. They also recognised that the second-class and inferior position accorded to women in their own societies may have shaped their image as black African women in western newspapers and other media discourses. To draw on the words of one of the Nigerian women, African women have been culturally conditioned to be "childish ...sentimental ...not objective and rational" and this has shaped the lack of voice of African women in both the Nigerian and British news. Thus, dominant images about a group of people found and disseminated throughout the culture have had the power to define and depict that group.

The legitimisation within the Nigerian news of certain feminine identities (wifehood, motherhood, etc) over the others is easily linked to the cultural ideologies of femininity of Nigerian society. In their discussions, the Nigerian women showed the cultural insistence on marriage, fecundity, obedience and strength for most African women; this is reflected in the news, which suggest familial ideologies of domesticity and heterosexual marriage. The repressive patriarchal ideologies fix the women's role in the family. These are reproduced and consolidated in the news to maintain cultural hegemony. Whether in their articulation of black African women as strong, or in their readiness to accept stereotypical constructions (particularly with regard to sexuality), for the British women, the endurance of colonial undercurrents was particularly apparent in their reflections and analyses. Thankfully, there were also instances where this was plainly understood self-reflexively by some of them.

❖ Conclusion

At the end is the beginning….

As this thesis comes to a close, I see the possibilities of new beginnings. I never would have anticipated this when I set out on this research journey. I set out to explore representations of African women in the British and Nigerian press but in the process went on a journey that has had huge implications for me and my future. This research has opened up a cross-cultural dialogic space with me squarely in the middle. It has also provided a new way of interrogating cultural representations and understandings of African women by acknowledging African and British women's perspectives within my analysis. Indeed, Chapter Eight revealed a certain congruence between British and Nigerian women's subjectivities with regard to news representations of African women. They also equally articulated an understanding of patriarchy as an oppressive force in their lives. As I noted in Chapter Eight, this suggested to me that if avenues for honesty could be opened up then women (no matter how different they might at first seem) might find enough commonalities to form bonds to challenge oppressive representations and structures. In writing this thesis and recovering my past in traces and hints (see Stanley, 1993), I reconstruct both who I was and who I am currently. In this I echo Stanley's sentiment that: "time moves on outside of the text, so that the 'self who writes' becomes a part of the 'self who was', a part of the past and its sets of multiple overlapping but not coterminous stages in the assemblage of the 'self who is' currently" (1993, p. 48). As I indicated in Chapter Five, this research represents a journey for me, whose progression is marked by constant shifts in positions and notably

for me, shifts that challenged my earlier notions about gender and race. In addressing these beginnings, I tie together the various aims, which I have set out in this thesis. My self-reflexive methodology is a crucial part of this research and is as, if not more, important than my findings.

One problem that confronted me throughout the process of research was how much of myself to reveal and embed within this research without standing accused of self-indulgence, solipsism and narcissism (see Etherington, 2004). More importantly, the ethical implications of how much to reveal of others also preoccupied me. As I recounted my personal experiences of gendered treatment which related to my family, I hoped that if they read this thesis they would understand that the grouse I have is not with them but with a culture that allows biological differences to be transformed into gendered power structures. Writing myself via my stories into the research has been a step on the way to emerging from the shackles of an enmeshed unselected cultural identity to a more autonomous, self-confident sense of myself. In realising this I also realise that it will have an impact on the future. Part of the outcome of this research has been the unmaking of a colonial subject. My process of decolonisation started as I progressed into this research. I realised that [like me!] white women have had to battle with gender inequality. Being white has not protected them from male brutality and patriarchal oppression. In Chapter Eight, I also saw my earlier conceptions about white women mirrored as Nigerian women articulated their views. I noted this similarity in our thoughts in my research dairy (see p. 314). Most significantly, 'whiteness' seems to have been demystified for me as I realise that contrary to some views I held, 'whiteness' is not equated with *all* that is good. It now seems clear to me that, goodness varies from one individual to the other. Being white simply does not equate with the angels or God as my upbringing had told me.

In a similar way, growing up in a very patriarchal society instilled in me a tacit acceptance of male superiority. As indicated in several parts of this thesis (Chapters Two, Seven and Eight especially) male superiority is taken for granted in Nigerian culture. In Chapter Eight, this was clearly articulated by the Nigerian dialogue groups as they expressed the cultural expectations to produce male children. This was an absolute that I had never questioned. Now I know different. This research has provided me the opportunity to reflect on some of my relationships in Nigeria particularly with other women. I have found my thoughts moving on to the many women in my community whose lives are filled with so much hardship because they are female. My research has made me realise that I will not always choose the path of tacit acceptance when I return and, in particular, I will try to be activist in as many practical ways as possible. For instance, this has led me to nurse the idea of providing borehole in our compound for women who live close to me. In that way not only would there be a source of clean water but it would provide a communal focal point for them and in the day's toil, free up a little time for themselves.

In Chapter Five I discussed the methodology used in this research showing how it draws on various quantitative and qualitative methods. In one instance, I used the word 'poaching' to describe that I had blended the strengths of these methods to maximise the potential of this research. My textual analysis of the news on Africa in the Nigerian and British press provided a valuable resource with which to engage in a more nuanced analysis when subjected to more qualitative reflection when the findings of Chapters Six and Seven are tested out in Chapter Eight using the dialogue/advisory groups. This chapter provided the avenue to 'confirm' my academic interpretations of the news texts as well as provide a negotiating space for African [Nigerian] women to contribute in defining who they are. This method seemed empowering for the African women

involved who hitherto had mostly been the objects rather than the subjects of research. Vitally, it also facilitated a process of conversation/dialogue between African [Nigerian] women and Western [British] women. This made a crucial intervention into the feminist debates explored in Chapter One, where the discordant voices of feminisms produced what I have called a 'dialogue of the deaf'. By opening up this dialogic cross-cultural space focusing on the news arena, women who were the constituencies of Weststream and African feminism were able to articulate views on gender and femininity of African women in a way not previously considered. As seen in Chapter Eight, the dialogues indicated some grounds for cross-cultural unity among women. Part of the richness of this methodology has been the way it has allowed me to use my immersion in the UK academy to explore African women's lives and representations in two disparate cultures, creating new cross-cultural links.

A principal aim of this research was to explore the dominant pattern of representation of black African women in selected Nigerian and British newspapers. In doing this, I found the perspectives of the Nigerian and British women invaluable. From their engagement with the news texts, they identified a recurring motif of the 'strong' African woman. In exploring with them what 'strong' meant in this context, my research suggests that being strong does not equate with power but rather it refers more to fortitude in suffering. The Nigerian women that I talked with used the expression 'grudgingly carrying on' (Chapter Eight, p. 325) indicating their disenchantment with their way of life. This was an important finding in the research as they are culturally expected to remain silent [one of the women said that an African woman "does not want to be thought loud-mouthed" (see chapter seven, p.246 for Nigerian poem that also reflects this view)]. Such cultural expectations about African women are reflected in the news on them in both the Nigerian and British press. They are constructed as

voiceless. As I noted in Chapter Seven however, being voiceless seem to be a universal patriarchal inscription on all women. In the news space of the newspapers that I surveyed, the reporting of women is circumscribed in various ways: by scanty reports of issues of relevance to women, by not using them as spokespersons and by their near absence as news makers (GMMP, 2000). The rendering of women as voiceless is one of the findings of this research. In this, it suggests a continuum of the results from previous research (e.g. Tuchman *et al.*, 1978, Gallagher, 1979, 1981; GMMP, 2000; Gallagher, 2001; Lemish, 2004; Gallego *et al.*, 2004). However, what is clear is that being voiceless is constructed differently in Nigerian and British news discourses. Nigerian news discourses provided a more diverse range of women, but even then the representations are heavily skewed in favour of wives, mothers and mother in laws of men in power. In this case, the tendency to define a woman's success in relation to the men in her life is reaffirmed. Women who are achievers and who featured in the news, have their voices 'muted' by having their achievements glossed over and by reporting them more in social functions than as news relating to their professional roles. British news discourses provided a contrasting view, however, as the British press that I surveyed presented African women as totally incapacitated by various crises in Africa. Their tales are woven together to represent Africa in its entirety rather than to present their own particular stories (Chapters Six and Seven). In this way, African women become shadows and metaphors rather than newsmakers in their own right.

I have suggested that one thing that might possibly account for the absence of the women in the news is the current construction of news values. For example, because politics stand at the top of the news values pecking order and because in most African states; politics is still a man's job, stories about women are not a priority in terms of the nation's news values. Indeed, one of the things that I would like to pursue as a result of

this research when I return home is to raise awareness about the current limitations of Nigerian news values. In the Nigerian press the absence of women became clear in a quantitative sense during my analysis of the photos of newsmakers in the news using the critical events (see Chapter Seven, Table Two, p. 278) Out of 462 photos during this period, women were only 67 [representing 14.5 %] while men represent 92 %. In this, African women's presence in the news in Nigeria differs sharply with those of British news. In Britain while African women were represented more in photographs than African men (women accounting for 48.3% of the photographs compared with 26.7% of men). Put together, women and children represented over 70% of the news photos in my period of study. However, the greater presence of African women in the photos in British newspapers can be explained by the tendency to use African women as 'specimens' for the crises in Africa, symbolically fusing them as 'mother Africa'. This feminisation of Africa, has allowed various inscriptions on Africa. In Nigeria, although fewer women appeared in photos, they were used more as fillers [when the photos had no bearing on the story, but put there to possibly fill space]. This, of course, also indicates women's symbolic nature in Africa and in many ways is as deeply derogatory as the British use of symbolism.

An enduring image of African women that I noted in the news was that of the nurturer/caregiver. This image was both visible in the Nigerian and British press. This is perhaps not so surprising as in many societies the central icon of the nurturer is the mother. In this research, African women were mostly photographed with children in both the British and Nigerian press. Motherhood has been a contentious issue in both Weststream and African feminism and as I have already explained in this thesis, it is clear that the constructions of motherhood applied to African women in both the Nigerian and British press are used differently. In Nigerian press, motherhood is used as

a possible ploy to keep women close to home and hearth (particularly as the changing roles of Nigerian women in society are not really reflected in news discourses). In the British news, African women as mothers were mostly represented in their caring role and often in extreme circumstances in order to draw distanced readers into more general issues about Africa (rather than as mothers per se). In both cultural representations, what seemed to emerge was that African women are used symbolically and iconographically to preserve a static view of both women and Africa.

One interesting finding of this research is that there is a difference in the type of African women appearing in Nigerian and British press. In the British press, it was revealed that African women were mostly presented as destitute while in Nigeria they appeared as high-profile women. News about Africa in Britain (as discussed in Chapter Six) featured a high frequency of disasters, crises and diseases. It was tempting for me to dismiss this too easily as relating explicitly to western news values, which tend to privilege the negative (Braham, 1982). However, in looking at the reports of the stories, which were mostly constructed as human-interest stories, it became clear that although most of these stories were constructed to draw readers more closely into the problems of Africa, the victim-victimisation paradigm within which these stories were framed have a detrimental effect. This tactic adds overtones of voyeuristic pleasure, inviting a distanced and sometimes smug gaze on Africa, perpetuating the sense of Africa as 'the other' and negating the role of the West in many of Africa's woes. Because in both British and Nigerian cultures women fit easily as victims, in using African women for these tales, they become fused with Africa and become signifiers of whatever culture inscribes on them (Chapter Seven). Nigerian women in the Nigerian press do provide a contrast to African women in the British press revealing that the 'other' side of African women exists. Most of the women, as shown in the news and photos are the high

echelons of the society. However, the near absence of the ordinary Nigerian women in the news raises questions about the ideology underpinning the choice of news stories. Most of the women that made news were as wives, mother in laws and mothers of men in power, confirming the societal tendency to define female success in relation to the males and the value attached to marriage and fecundity. The presence of particular types of women as opposed to others in news discourses suggests media tokenism. This female tokenism, can be seen to resonate with other social relations in Nigeria. In arguing about the fluidity of gender in African societies, African feminists (e.g. Amadiume 1987, 1997) have argued that African women are free to adopt masculine roles and often cite female husbands and male daughters (Chapter One) as an indication that gender in Nigeria certainly is not fixed. I had suggested in Chapter One that this invitation into the masculine world is a form of tokenism because becoming proxy males roles rather than challenging patriarchy for the ability to inhabit less rigid notions of gendered identity simply helps to perpetuate it. As I have questioned: why would a woman have to be 'turned' into a male for her to inherit her father's property? I also noted this tokenism when I went home for fieldwork. My 'been-to' status certainly raised my profile. I was invited into 'manhood' by being offered a part of the chicken (gizzard), which in my culture women are not expected to eat. Reflexively, I have wondered how this now places me in Nigerian society. This research reveals the emphasis on individualism rather than collectivism of women as news reports which feature only certain types of women [women in high positions] and not others [the struggling ordinary women who constitute the reality of Nigerian society] works as a strategy of divide and rule which hampers women seeing themselves as a unified group. This situation further compounds women's problems and could possibly explain why

though women have made in roads in many works of life [e.g. journalism], little seem to have changed in terms of women's representation.

In exploring the representations of African women in the news in Nigerian and British press as well as entering into dialogue with groups of women from both cultures I have formed a deeper understanding of African women (and I include myself here). By using a 'bifocal' means (Aidoo, 1998) this research has found that African women do contend with patriarchy more than African feminists care to admit and that race also plays a role in their representation. Both forms of oppression limit African women and it seems irrelevant to place them in hierarchical relations to each other. This study too has provided a peep into the cultures of Africa shedding more light on their cultural values/interpretations of representations of African identity, which are usually excluded by the more common Western ethnocentric perspectives that dominate the media and many academic discourses. For instance, the cultural significance of nudity when articulated by African women is seen to be in complete opposition to the notions circulating in the West about African women and their bodies.

The input of 'ordinary' Nigerian women adds richness to the theories of African feminism. The Nigerian women were apparently dissatisfied with the patriarchal status suggesting that endemic patriarchy cannot just be blamed on colonisation as many African feminists have suggested. For as I also noted in Chapter One, African traditional modes of communication appear equally gendered and the Nigerian women conveyed their experiences of gender inequalities in relation to a lack of voice and power linked to models of African women's femininity that confine women to domestic, caring roles. Even when they seem to break the 'jinx' and go outside the home, their achievements like most things about them are treated as frivolous. African

feminists are therefore being challenged to re-examine and re-discover aspects of African culture, disregarding retrogressive traditions, which disempower women, and embracing aspects that are good and useful. In proposing theories for African feminism, the well-being of the ordinary women should be the primary concern.

The scope of this thesis did not allow me the opportunity to explore every relevant avenue. For instance, it would be interesting to see how western women are represented in Nigerian media and what factors could possibly influence their representations? How would they differ from those of Nigerian [African] women in British press? Nigerian women had hinted that the second-class and inferior position accorded to women in their own societies might have shaped their image as black African women in western newspapers and other media discourses. To draw on the words of one of the Nigerian women, African women have been culturally constructed as "childish ...sentimental ...not objective and rational" and this has shaped the lack of voice of African women in both the Nigerian and British news. In a more in-depth qualitative study I feel this would be worthy of study. One thing that I do now know is that as this chapter of research closes a new one is beginning and the research process is a journey which has stops along the way but does not really end.

Reflexive postscript

Coming to Britain and doing this research has been very empowering for me. Though I do know that there still inhabits within me part of my 'old self' shaped within patriarchal dominant ideologies, I think that in there is an emerging sense of a 'new self' positively different from the old, and better equipped to confidently face the future. Whether this self will go down well in my culture is another matter. My femininity will certainly be suspect but I am ready to deal with such challenges when I meet them. When my

husband came to see me in England a few months ago, it showed me what a daunting task I could possibly face. I know I now feel more passionate about gender equalities [and indeed all forms of structures that emphasise hierarchical relationships] than I did before. Now, rather than feeling trapped as my *reflexive note 1* shows, I have gained the insight to challenge, question and negotiate. I create my own 'voice'. I must have projected this passion to my husband as he commented that I seem changed. For most men in a patriarchal culture, the ability of a woman to define her own voice might be read as an encroachment on their authority and this will not go down with most of them (especially in my homeland). Because patriarchal culture is endemically rooted in Nigeria and being a feminist is considered taboo, I know that my cross-cultural journey means that I will need to re-negotiate how I fit in on my return. In many ways when I return to being a mother, wife and academic, I will tread a line between Weststream feminism and African feminism. I will hold them in dialogue with each other and struggle to find my way in a country and an academic institution that I now think about so differently.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Code of Ethics For Nigerian Journalists

(On March 18-20, 1998, the Nigerian "Press Council" organised the Ilorin Forum, where the Nigerian Press Organisation[1] formally ratified this new Code.)

THE ILORIN DECLARATION

Delegates at the Forum for the implementation of the Code of Ethics, affirm and declare as follows:

That we:

ACCEPT the imperative of a Code of Ethics as a vital pillar of journalism and the necessity for the application of ethics to enhance standards;

AFFIRM that self-regulation through a Code of Ethics and other structures drawn up by professionals would best serve the interest of both the profession and the public;

ENJOIN the Nigeria Union of Journalists, the Nigerian Guild of Editors and the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria to ensure the implementation of the eligibility criteria for entry into and practice of journalism in Nigeria, as contained in the Nigerian Press Council Decree No 85 of 1992;

PLEDGE to abide by the Code of Ethics and to promote the observance of its provisions by all journalists; and

URGE the Nigerian Press Council to collaborate with the Nigerian Press Organisation to publicise the Code of Ethics for the benefit of the press and the public, and ensure compliance with its provisions hereafter.

PREAMBLE

Journalism entails a high degree of public trust. To earn and maintain this trust, it is morally imperative for every journalist and every news medium to observe the highest professional and ethical standards. In the exercise of these duties, a journalist should always have a healthy regard for the public interest.

Truth is the cornerstone of journalism and every journalist should strive diligently to ascertain the truth of every event.

Conscious of the responsibilities and duties of journalists as purveyors of information, we, Nigerian journalists, give to ourselves this Code of Ethics. It is the duty of every journalist to observe its provisions.

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[1] Made up of the NUJ (Nigeria Union of Journalists), the NGE (Nigerian Guild of Editors) and the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria.

1. EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE

Decisions concerning the content of news should be the responsibility of a professional journalist.

2. ACCURACY AND FAIRNESS

i. The public has a right to know. Factual, accurate, balanced and fair reporting is the ultimate objective of good journalism and the basis of earning public trust and confidence.

ii. A journalist should refrain from publishing inaccurate and misleading information. Where such information has been inadvertently published, prompt correction should be made. A journalist must hold the right of reply as a cardinal rule of practice.

iii. In the course of his duties a journalist should strive to separate facts from conjecture and comment.

3. PRIVACY

As a general rule, a journalist should respect the privacy of individuals and their families unless it affects the public interest.

A. Information on the private life of an individual or his family should only be published if it impinges on public interest.

B. Publishing of such information about an individual as mentioned above should be deemed justifiable only if it is directed at:

- i. Exposing crime or serious misdemeanour;
- ii. Exposing anti-social conduct;
- iii. Protecting public health, morality and safety;
- iv. Preventing the public from being misled by some statement or action of the individual concerned.

4. PRIVILEGE / NON-DISCLOSURE

i. A journalist should observe the universally accepted principle of confidentiality and should not disclose the source of information obtained in confidence.

ii. A journalist should not breach an agreement with a source of information obtained as "off-the-record" or as "background in- formation."

5. DECENCY

i. A journalist should dress and comport himself in a manner that conforms with public taste.

ii. A journalist should refrain from using offensive, abusive or vulgar language.

iii. A journalist should not present lurid details, either in words or picture, of violence, sexual acts, abhorrent or horrid scenes.

iv. In cases involving personal grief or shock, enquiries should be carried out and approaches made with sympathy and discretion.

v. Unless it is in the furtherance of the public's right to know, a journalist should generally avoid identifying relatives or friends of persons convicted or accused of crime.

6. DISCRIMINATION

A journalist should refrain form making pejorative reference to a person's ethnic group, religion, sex, or to any physical or mental illness or handicap.

7. REWARD AND GRATIFICATION

i. A journalist should neither solicit nor accept bribes, gratifications or patronage to suppress or publish information.

ii. To demand payment for the publication of news is inimical to the notion of news as a fair, accurate, unbiased and factual re- port of an event.

8. VIOLENCE

A journalist should not present or report acts of violence, armed robberies, terrorist activities or vulgar display of wealth in a manner that glorifies such acts in the eyes of the public.

9. CHILDREN AND MINORS

A journalist should not identify, either by name or picture, or interview children under the age of 16 who are involved in cases concerning sexual offences, crimes and rituals or witchcraft either as victims, witnesses or defendants.

10. ACCESS OF INFORMATION

A journalist should strive to employ open and honest means in the gathering of information. Exceptional methods may be employed only when the public interest is at stake.

11. PUBLIC INTEREST

A journalist should strive to enhance national unity and public good.

12. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

A journalist should promote universal principles of human rights, democracy, justice, equity, peace and international understanding.

13. PLAGIARISM

A journalist should not copy, wholesale or in part, other people's work without attribution and/or consent.

14. COPYRIGHT

i. Where a journalist reproduces a work, be it in print, broadcast, art work or design, proper acknowledgement should be ac- corded the author.

ii. A journalist should abide by all rules of copyright, established by national and international laws and conventions.

15. PRESS FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

A journalist should strive at all times to enhance press freedom and responsibility.

Appendix 2 Table showing Research Journey

- Step	Research plan/ Set up	Method/data gathering techniques	Purpose	Outcome
1	Literature review & familiarisation with British culture/ newspapers	Keeping research diaries and notes	To record initial ideas and be conversant with the pattern of news reports in Britain	Decision to use the quality newspapers to tally with Nigerian press tradition.
2	Review of Nigerian and British press	Consistent trolling of news and photographs, sometimes using critical events as exemplars, etc.	To get an overview of the dominant representation of Africa and African women as well as provide a link between the representations in both countries.	Decision to use symptomatic analysis of data as interest is not on how often Africa and African women feature in the news, but in what capacity they do feature. Recognisable representational pattern, themes and trend emerge.
3	Decoding the overt messages – the representational pattern, themes and trend.	Textual analysis – examining the structures and the language of the texts in relation to the news genres.	To uncover the concealed or hidden meanings in the texts.	Decision to test out my readings with dialogue groups to halt the sliding and polysemic meanings of the news.
4	Dialogue group: initiating contacts	Questionnaires [distributed through local contacts in Nigeria and Britain]	To obtain regular readers of newspapers, provide opportunity for acceptance or not to participate in the discussion, create avenue for the women to give their conceptions of Africa which will be further explored in the discussion	People willing to participate provided addresses and phone numbers for further contact. Decision to explore other means other than relying on my contacts to distribute the questionnaires.

5	Dialogue group: making the contacts	Phone calls and emails provided in questionnaires by women willing to participate. In Nigeria, contact was mostly face-to-face due to poor communication technologies.	For the women to agree on a date for the discussion.	I noted the necessity to provide them with alternative dates so that they could make a choice
6	Pilot study	Discussion in Britain with 7 white British women	To sharpen my interview/listening skills, pre-test interview schedule.	Noted errors in time management and control of discussion situation. Decision to send the newspapers ahead of the discussion day to give them more time to read them, to be careful about choice of dress as my traditional dress, which I wore for the discussion, was more of a distraction. Decision taken that for subsequent discussions, I would meet the participants personally before the discussion day, to create more rapport with them. for subsequent interviews too participants would be given assignment to bring their own newspaper clippings of the news on Africa.
7	Further initiating/making contacts.	More questionnaires distributed, more phone calls/emails/face to face contact. Snowballing technique used to its optimum.	As in 4 & 5 above.	Was able to distribute more questionnaires and get enough willing participants.
8	Going into the field: the dialogue group discussions	Discussions with 3 groups of white British women; discussion with 3 groups of 3 Nigerian women.	To test out my own readings of the news on Africa and African women; to create an opportunity for dialogue between the West and Africa on issues of representation and femininity of African women, to provide avenues for African (Nigerian women) to identify or not with the representation of African women in the news.	Interviews were taped for subsequent transcription.

Appendix 3 Sample of questionnaire used to recruit dialogue groups in Britain

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My name is **Kate Azuka Omenugha**. I am a research student at the University of Gloucestershire, studying for her PhD in Media Studies. You can contact me either by phone (01242 532891) or by email (komenugha@glos.ac.uk) Please kindly fill in this questionnaire. Your answers are used only for research purposes and will be treated with the strictest confidence. Do answer the questions as honestly as you can and disregard any question you do not feel comfortable supplying answers to.

1. How often do you read newspapers?
   (a). Often
   (b) Never
   (c). Daily
   (d). Sometimes
   (e). When I have the time
   (f). Others (Please specify) ______________________________

2. Name your favourite newspaper ______________________________

3. Which section of the newspaper do you read most?
   (a). News
   (b). Features
   (c). Letters
   (d). Advertisements
   (e). Sports
   (f). Others (please specify) ______________________________

4. I often read/ watch/ listen to (Please tick box)
   (a). Newspapers
   (b). Radio
   (c). Magazines
   (d). Television
   (e). Internet
   (f). Others (Please specify) ______________________________

5. Do you remember any stories about Africa you have either heard or read?
   Yes
   No

6. What was your source of such story?
   (a). A friend
   (b). The newspaper
   (c). The radio
   (d). The television
   (e). Others (Please specify)______________________________

7. Do you remember any stories that have featured an African woman /African women?
   (a). Yes
   (b). No

8. What was your source of such story
   (a). A friend
   (b). The newspaper
   (c). The radio
   (d). The television
   (e). Others (Please specify) ____________________

9. Could you list some of the stories about Africa that you can remember? (Please write answers overleaf)→

10. How would you describe the overall image of Africa from such stories?

11. How would you describe the overall image of African women from such stories?

> Please give your name and contact phone number below:
>
> Name of Respondent:
>
> Contact Phone number:
>
> Would you like to participate in a focus group discussion that may be held in March, as part of the research on the issues raised in this questionnaire? [Yes] [No]
>
> If yes, please include your postal address below for future correspondence on this:

Thank you.

____

Kate Azuka Omenugha
(Research Student)

Appendix 4 Interview guide used in the dialogue group discussion

Step I – General Introduction (establishing a rapport)

Introduce self to the participants and let them briefly introduce themselves. Giving them general guide to what is expected of them in the discussion, how long the discussion could last and give them some ground rules (e.g. confidentiality of the discussion which is binding to all involved). **(Estimated time: 10 minutes)**

Step 2: Newspaper reading pattern/ everyday routine

The aim of this is to find out the place of the media in the participants' life, how often they read newspapers and their reading habits. **(Estimated time: 10 minutes)**

Step 3: Social production of news:

The aim of this is to see how the news circulates within the daily lives of the women.
Some possible questions could be whether they discuss the news/messages from the media with people, and whether and how women (black Africans) feature in such discussion.
It is hoped that this would open avenue for exploring the participants' impression of African women from the news media. **(Estimated time: 25 minutes)**

Step 4: Stories on African women

Find out particular stories on African women which they have read or heard and the source of such stories.
Prod them to find out what attracted them to the stories. What do such stories tell about African women?
Refer to some of the answers in the questionnaire and find out if the women share the view expressed by the respondent.
It is expected that this discussion could lead to thoughts about the public and private sphere and where women and men fit into, what they perceive to be the roles of women, their views about marriage and the place of the man or woman in it. **(Estimated time: 30mins)**

Step 6 Exposure to some newspaper clippings

Give out the newspaper clips to the participants with clips. Allow for **about 25 minutes** for them to engage with the clips. (Coffee break)
Find out their impression of the stories.
How do they read the images?
What do the images tell them about the femininity of African women?
Ask for their readings of particular stories.
Take note of the cultural bearings they bring into the interpretation of the news stories. **(Estimated time: 45 minutes)**

Appendix 5 Summary of images from the newspaper cuttings the British women provided as assignment

Image of dependency: One newspaper clipping brought to the discussion by some of the women shows African women and children appearing in charity organisations as desperately in need of help. They look unhealthy and emaciated. According to the women, that is a prevalent image they have come to associate African women with.

Image of violence: One of the women brought stories that appeared over the last six months in *The Economist.* The stories are all about wars in Mozambique, Angola and Sudan. We were all bemoaning the negative trends of the stories on Africa when she argues that she considers those stories as actually positive as they are all about the ending of the wars that have been ravaging the countries. Below are some of the excerpts of the discussion:

M: What I have here are stories that have appeared over the last six months in *The Economist.* And they are all about war ending, there's Congo, Sierra Leone problem, the end of Mozambique war, the end to the Angola war and the end to the Sudanese civil war. Isn't that positive?
J: But it is all about violence. *(General laughter)*
M: Well it depends on how you look at it. After the horror, it is a new beginning that is how the headlines go. It is no longer the worst place on earth to live… *(More laughter)*
S: Did it say anything about women?
M: No they are all stories on Africa but no mention of the women.
K: What are the men in the photographs doing?
M: Most of them are having guns *(more laughter)*
O: Some of them boys and children
J: So the image you have there is violence and war?
M: Yes [Cheltenham, 23 March 2003]

Image of disease: Another clippings brought by the women contain stories of AIDS/HIV. This again gives some authenticity to the news, which I had previously analysed. AIDS/HIV is very prevalent in many of the news I had witnessed about Africa. In response to my question on what she had brought with her to the discussion, the woman says:

C: Yeah, it's all from *The Guardian* and they did a lot of series articles on HIV and Aids. They follow one particular woman called Grace and her husband and child had already died of aids and she was HIV positive, so she is living on borrowed time. And it is a very negative kind of article. In the sense of hopelessness, this is what it is, this is what she has to struggle against, and she is representative of the society. Will it ever change? It is a sort of negative portrayal, she is very much a victim,

passivity and immobility, she is accepting what has come to her. I find it very depressing in a sort of way because she was portrayed so much as a hopeless victim. Well I guess it is with something like Aids irrespective of where you live. [Cheltenham, 23 March 2003]

The rape stories: Rape stories, which featured persistently in my previous discussions, were some of the clippings the women brought to the discussion. Coming from *The Guardian*, they tell the stories about rape of Massai women by the British soldiers. The incident goes about 10 or 20 years but now it has come to light and legal actions are being taken against the Military of Defence.

Appendix 6 Sample letter to the dialogue groups which provides guidelines to the discussion

University of Gloucestershire,
Cornerways,
The Park Campus,
The Park
Cheltenham
21st February 2003.

Dear ***

Thank you very much for volunteering to participate in the focus group discussion to be held on **Sunday March 2, 2003**. As you may probably know, the focus group discussion is part of my PhD research that seeks to explore the pattern of representation of the black African woman in Nigerian and British newspapers and how Nigerian and British female news consumers understand and use these representations within their everyday life. Similar group discussion will be also held in Nigeria in May this year.

I will appreciate it if you could be as honest as possible in a range of issues, which will be taken up with you, and other members of the group. Some of these include:

- The Victoria Climbié case
- The Miss World contest
- The Nigerian woman condemned by the Sharia courts in Nigeria to die for alleged adultery
- The Face off between the Western oil companies in Nigeria and the Nigerian women. The Nigerian women held the workers hostage threatened to go nude if their demands are not met!

And lots and lots more.... What do these stories and many others conjure for you, about Nigeria, Africa and their women? What do the many stories that you often hear, see or read in the media tell you about African women? How do you understand the media reports on these issues? These and so many other issues shall be discussed. I am sure we shall have a very stimulating discussion.

Please, I am enclosing some materials on Nigerian newspapers. Do not be frightened by the size! You are not expected to read everything. And this is not an examination! It is simply meant to familiarise you with Nigerian papers especially on their representation of Nigerian women. I assume you are familiar with the representation of African women in the British newspapers, so the articles will be distributed on that day, **2 March 2003**. So, do not forget your reading glasses at home. And please do take a proper look at the articles that may be marked in the papers I am sending to you.

You would be meeting four or five other women who will be taking part in the discussion. I must emphasise that the discussion is with the members of the group, **not** with me. My role is that of a facilitator/moderator. After all, the research is about your views, not mine. So feel free to talk, argue, discuss, etc with the group members, while allowing others to make their input. I hope you will have a swell time!

As the group discussion is done for research purposes, I wish to remind you that the discussion shall be tape-recorded. You are assured that it shall be treated with strict confidence. The same oath of confidentiality is also expected of you.

We will be meeting at **4 pm** for about 2 – 3 hours at .... If you miss your way, please call my mobile **07940090519.** If you can, do bring any newspaper cutting of what you may consider typical news on African women you may have come across at any time.

NB: Coffee and tea will be liberally served, courtesy of the hostess and host. You will also be treated to a sizzling Nigerian dish! Don't ask for the recipe: you need to come to Nigeria to collect it!!

Looking forward to an exciting discussion.

Yours sincerely,

Kate Azuka Omenugha
(Research student)

Appendix 7 News on Africa in British press during the period of the critical events

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Summary of news stories on Africa

Item 1: *The Daily Telegraph* 24 June 2002, p. 10
Story of death in Malawi. *Headline*: *Crisis in Malawi* – Land where only coffin makers thrive. Neil Darbyshire toured the hardest-hit parts of Malawi and found a country in agony, ravaged by Aids, plague and famine.

Item 2: *The Daily Telegraph* 25 June 2002, p. 14
Zimbabwe farmers fight to grow food. Lead: White farmers made a last-ditch appeal to Zimbabwe's High Court yesterday to overturn a law which criminalizes food farming in a country on the brink of famine.

Item 3: *The Daily Telegraph* 28 June 2002, p. 14
Headline: Leaders 'lack the will to solve world poverty'
Lead: Leaders of the world's richest nations were accused of lacking the will to tackle world poverty yesterday, at the end of a G8 summit that had raised the expectations of a huge relief programme for Africa.

Item 4: *The Daily Telegraph* 28 June 2002, p. 14
Reports on the NEPAD. *Headline*: *Just talk, talk, talk, while we are left to die.* Lead: The much-hyped initiative to rebuild Africa elicited little enthusiasm from Mercy Mugai as she clutched her two underfed children and glanced wistfully at the fast-food café in central Nairobi. "All these people do is talk, talk, talk," she said. If our leaders do get any money from the Wazungu [white men], they steal it for themselves. We have no food, no schools, no future. We are just left to die." New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) requires the West to pump in billions in annual investments in exchange for good political and economic governance. Hundreds of millions of Africans desperately need a plan that will end the vortex of misery, disease and death that daily stalk their lives. Over 340 million Africans, half of sub-Sahara's total population, earn less than 80p a day. Life expectancy is the lowest in the world. War, Aids and malaria kill millions every year.

Item 5: *The Guardian* 25 June 2002, p. 11
Mugabe tells farmers to down tools: order given to abandon wheat crops in hungry Zimbabwe. Lead: President Robert Mugabe ordered 2,900 commercial farmers to stop work yesterday; a Zimbabwe faces its worst food shortage for 60 years. The order is the final step before the government seizes the arms, including the crops in the fields, for redistribution to its black supporters.

Item 6: *The Guardian* 26 June 2002, p. 1
Blair losing struggle to get new G8 deal for Africa. Lead: Leaders of the world's eight most powerful economies were coming under pressure last night to convene an emergency summit on Africa, as hopes faded that rich countries will deliver a big aid boost to the world's poorest continent at their meeting in Canada today.

Item 7: *The Guardian [UK]*26 June 2002, p. 10
G8 summit- as the leaders of the main industrial powers prepare to draw up an aid plan at their Canadian conference, Tony Blair admits that global recession and September 11 mean the continent faces a long haul out of poverty. – Rich states leave Africa in the slow lane.

Item 8: *The Guardian [UK]*26 June 2002, p. 10
G8 summit: Mbeki fights to sell his vision to wary African leaders.

Item 9: *The Guardian [UK]*26 June 2002, p. 10
New legal battle to keep Zimbabwe farming. Two white Zimbabwean farmers took the government to court in their efforts to block the order that they abandon their farms.

Item 10: *The Guardian [UK]*28 June 2002, p. 1
Headline: Africa betrayed: the aid workers' verdict. G8 rescue plan labelled 'recycled peanuts.' Lead: Aid agencies rounded furiously on the world's richest countries last night, describing the G8's much rescued plan for Africa as a squandered opportunity and "recycled peanuts." Africa got far less than they expected like debt cancellation, investment in Africa's infrastructure and trade access. These were not mentioned at all.

Item 11: *The Daily Telegraph* 5 August 2002, p. 12
Story of the Congolese war. *Headline: Glimmer of hope for nation ruined by years of war.* Lead: In the past two years Neema Mushobora has been raped by soldiers from two armies, has watched as her uncle and grandmother were hacked to death and seen her friends die of hunger....

Item 12: *The Daily Telegraph* 5 August 2002, p. 12.
Algerian troops 'kill 40 rebels': "Algerian security forced killed 40 suspected Islamist rebels over the weekend in clashes in a mountainous province about 190 miles west of the capital Algiers local newspapers reported. One report said the guerrillas belonged to a small conservative group known as Humat Adaawa. Other papers said government forces used heavy weapons and air strikes to destroy rebel hideouts in Relizane province. More than 100,000 people have been killed in political violence in Algeria since 1992 when the authorities cancelled general elections that Muslim fundamentalists were poised to win.

Item 13: *The Daily Telegraph* 7 August 2002, p. 11 & *The Guardian [UK]*7 August 2002, p. 12
De Klerk testifies at wife's murder trial. Lead: FW De Klerk, the former south African president gave evidence in court yesterday against a security guard who is accused of murdering De Klerk's wife. Marike de Klerk was found strangled and stabbed in her apartment.

Item 14: *The Daily Telegraph* 7 August 2002, p. 11
"Zimbabwe's white farmers manage one last smile before they leave for good" The white farmers take a photograph before the deadline by Mugabe for them to leave their farms.

Item 15: *The Guardian [UK]*6 August 2002, p. 12
"Malawi charge": a former Malawian culture minister is to be charged for his alleged role in selling off the country's grain reserve, the director of public prosecution said yesterday. Fahad Assani said Leonard Mangulama, now in charge of poverty alleviation would be accused of abuse of office. Around 3.2 Malawians face hunger this year.

Item 16: *The Guardian [UK]*7 August 2002, p. 12
"EU unveils Zimbabwe aid package Lead: The EU unveiled a pounds 23m emergency food aid for Zimbabwe yesterday despite its deep political differences with the president, Robert Mugabe.

Item 17: *The Guardian [UK]*7 August 2002, p. 2
South African Mining giant to give staff free aid drugs. Lead: Anglo American, the London-based mining giant, has become the first multinational corporation to provide its South African staff with free anti-Aids drugs in the bid to tackle the growing pandemic.

Item 18: *The Daily Telegraph* 8 August 2002, p. 13
Headline: Congo peace? We were greeted by guns and threats Adrain Blomfield flies into a hostile reception in Baraka. Lead: As we climbed down on to Baraka's football pitch from our United Nations helicopter, it became clear that the surrounding Rwandan and Burundian soldiers were not to welcome us to this eastern Congolese town with open arms. From ditches around the field, the 100-strong company trained their weapons at our small group.

Item 19: *The Guardian [UK]*8 August 2002, p. 4
Zimbabwe crisis: end of an era: farmers face eviction as land seizure battle reaches bitter climax – Uncertain future for whites who say they will fight on in courts.

Item 20: *The Daily Telegraph* 19 November 2002, p. 3
Aids terror of British tourist raped by gang – told the story of how a British tourist was raped by a gang of South Africans and now fears for her death as South Africa has the world's highest level of HIV infection.

Item 21: *The Daily Telegraph* 19 November 2002, p. 3
Headline: *Deaths and disasters cast a shadow over South African tourism.* The British High commission in Pretoria is reviewing its travel advice after the latest attack on a tourist. Story goes on to give incidents of attacks on tourists saying that no one feels safe in South Africa any more.

Item 22: *The Daily Telegraph* 19 November 2002, p. 18
Headline: Mugabe land grab takes last British estate – A Zimbabwean brigadier has evicted a woman from the farm her family owned for 50 years, writes Peta Thornycroft in Raffingora. Tells of how Mugabe and his men ejected the white farmers.

Item 23: *The Daily Telegraph* 19 November 2002, p. 18
Headline: Thousands pack Nairobi as poll campaign opens. Lead: The election to replace Kenya's president Daniel Arap Moi exploded into life yesterday when the government and opposition supporters flooded Nairobi to mark the official start of the campaign. The story then went on to describe the clash between the two opposing groups, the loss of life, the wounded, the woman that lost both eyes when she was hit by a flying glass, the riot police with batons and tear gas canisters separating the two groups, etc.

Item 24: *The Daily Telegraph* 19 November 2002, p. 18
Headline: Sudan extends ceasefire. The Sudan government and rebel army agreed to extend a ceasefire until peace talks end in Kenya on March 31, but failed to reach a power-sharing agreement.

Item 25: *The Daily Telegraph* 20 November 2002, p. 5
Headline: Rape suspect hunt ends in shoot-out. Story describes the hunt for the men who raped the 29-year-old British on tour in South Africa.

Item 26: *The Daily Telegraph* 20 November 2002, p. 10
Headline: Vaccine shortage puts the world children at risk. Lead: an acute shortage of vaccines is threatening the world's immunization programme and putting the millions of children at risk in the developing world.

Item 27: *The Daily Telegraph* 20 November 2002, p. 10
Headline: Polio 'will be conquered in months'. Lead: Polio could be eliminated throughout the world "within months rather than years", the World Health Organization's head of vaccines said yesterday. Although the disease still poses a threat in India, Pakistan and Nigeria, mass immunization has almost completely eradicated polio from the horn of Africa.

Item 28: *The Daily Telegraph* 20 November 2002, p. 18
Headline: 16 die in cell. Lead: At least 16 prisoners were suffocated after 120 were crammed into a police cell meant to hold 30 in a remote Tanzania village a local newspaper said yesterday.

Item 29: *The Daily Telegraph* 20 November 2002, p. 21
Headline: President's son 'ordered murder of journalist'. Lead: The son of the Mozambican president was implicated yesterday in the murder of a prominent independent journalist when one of the six suspects in the country's most notorious murder gave evidence. The court was told that Nyimpine Chissano, the eldest son of President Joaquim Chissano, ordered the murder of Carlos Cardoso, who was investigating corruption allegations over privatization of a bank in the 1990s.

Item 30: *The Daily Telegraph* 21 November 2002, p. 18
Headline: First the Cattle die, then the goats, then the people – Telegraph writer Stephen Robinson and cartoonist Garland visit the town of Gewane, where they saw the mounting horror of Ethiopia's famine.

Item 31: *The Daily Telegraph* 21 November 2002, p. 19
Headline: Police raid S African bomb factory. Lead: Bombs and bomb-making equipment were discovered on a remote farm in South Africa yesterday by police investigating a plot by white Right-wing terrorists to oust the country's black government.

Item 32: *The Daily Telegraph* 21 November 2002, p. 19
Headline: Miss World arson attack. Lead: Muslims angry at Nigeria's staging of the Miss World contest burned down a newspaper office in the northern city of Kaduna after an article hinted that the Prophet Mohammed would have married one of the contestants.

Item 33: *The Guardian [UK]*18 November 2002, p. 19
Headline: Somalia talks runs into sand. Lead: After a month of peace talks in Kenya between Somalia's feuding clans – described by western observers as the failed state's best chance for peace in more than a decade – half the pounds 6 million funds donated for a six-month process have been spent, and the talks are deadlocked in a dispute about the number of delegates each clan is allowed.

Item 34: *The Guardian [UK]*20 November 2002, p. 18
US embassy worker beaten in Zimbabwe. Lead: The diplomatic dispute between the United States and Zimbabwe has deepened after an employee of the American embassy in Harare was beaten by war veterans loyal to President Robert Mugabe.

Item 35*: The Guardian [UK]*21 November 2002, p. 18
Headline: Mob attack. Lead: A newspaper office in Kaduna, northern Nigeria, was burned down yesterday by a mob angry at the article suggesting that the Prophet Mohammed might have favoured marrying a Miss world entrant. No one was hurt.

News Photos

Pix 1: Nigerian woman kneeling before a soldier. *The Guardian [UK]*7 February 2002, p. 16.
[see fig 34, p. 283]

Pix 2: [see below] The cutline to the photograph reads: "A small girl sits by the side of a road in Malawi, her eyes dulled and her stomach swollen by hunger. Almost two decades after the Ethiopian famine killed thousands and created a new awareness of African vulnerability, a new and fearsome crisis is developing in the south of the continent. Poor rains, then floods, then drought have caused a shortage of flood, adding to already established horrors such as Aids. Neil Darbyshire went to discover what has gone wrong in Malawi. Report: Page 10".

Britain's biggest-selling quality daily

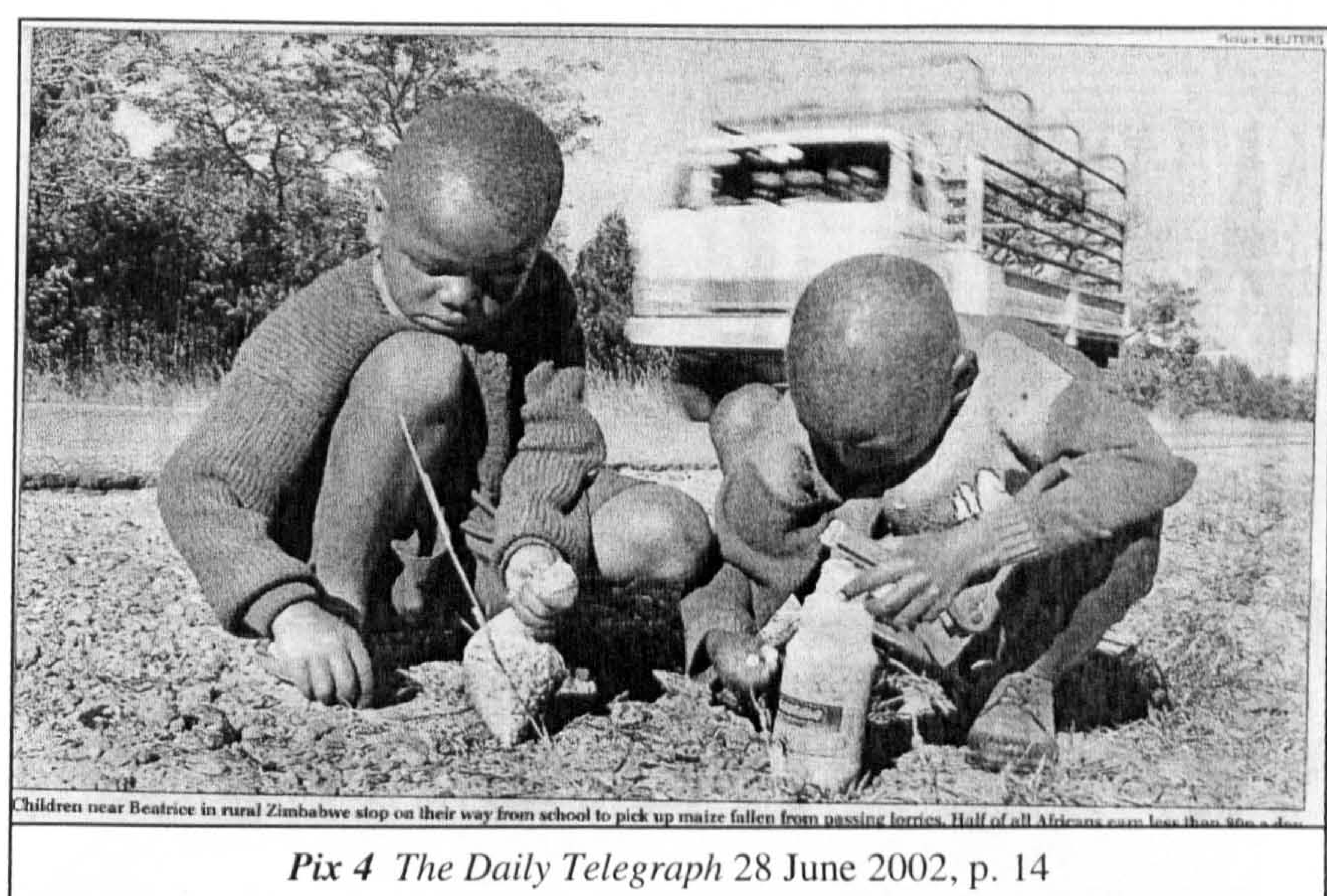
Famine returns to haunt Africa

Report: Page 10

Pix 2 *The Daily Telegraph* 24 June 2002, p. 1

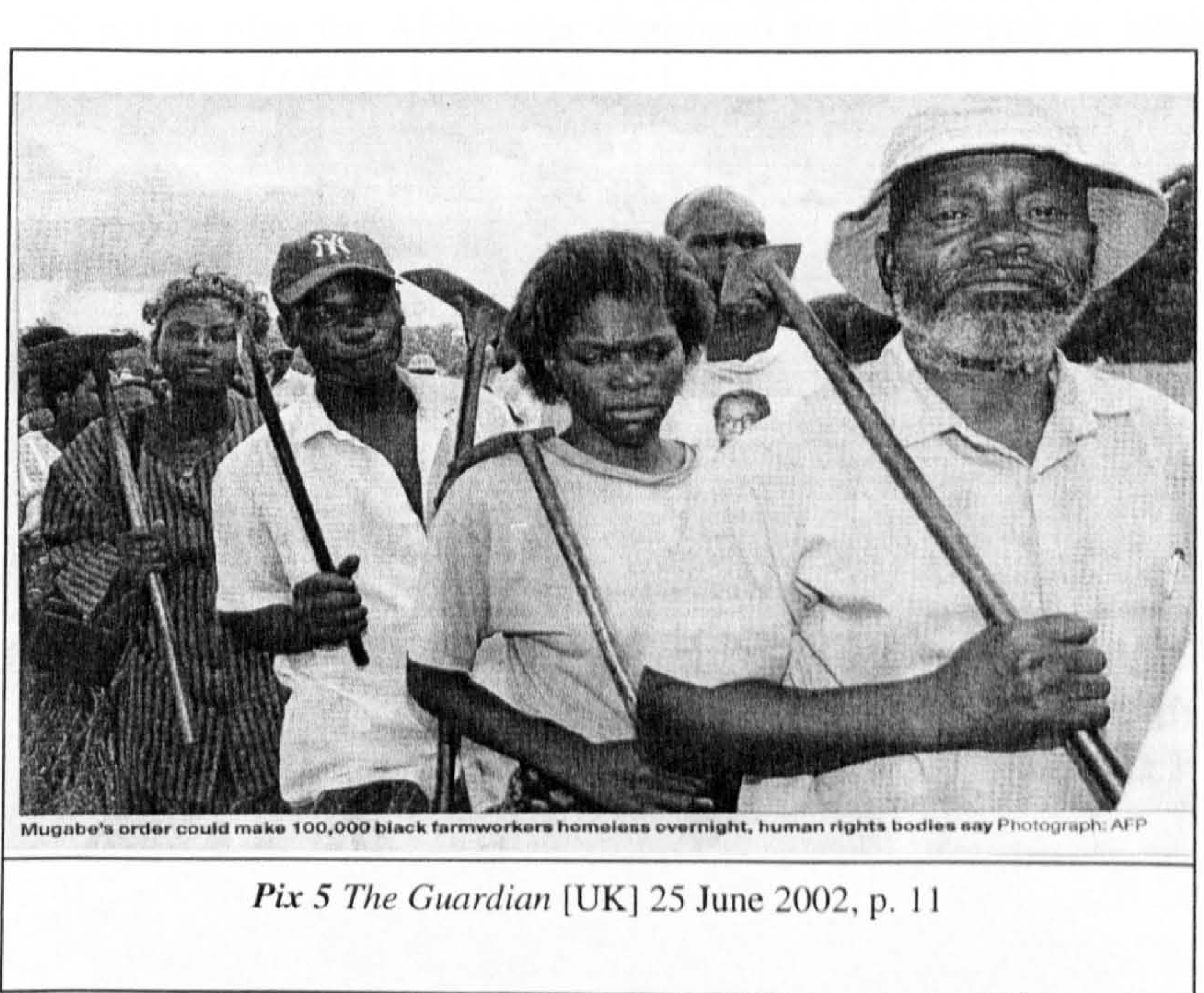
Pix 3*:* A grotesquely ill child held by a woman. The cutline reads: "David Zulu, who is at an advanced stage of Kwashiorkor – an illness related to malnutrition – and can barely stand, awaits treatment at Kasungu district hospital. About five or six children under five die there each week". Another picture shows coffins and some people standing by. The cutline reads: "Death is so common in Kyumba that this coffin workshop never closes, and others have had to be opened". *The Daily Telegraph* 24 June 2002, p. 10. [see Fig 8, p. 199]

Pix 4: Two children picking grains on the road. The cutline reads: "Children near Beatrice in rural Zimbabwe stop on their way to school to pick up maize fallen from passing lorries. Half of all Africans earn less than 80p a day". [see below]



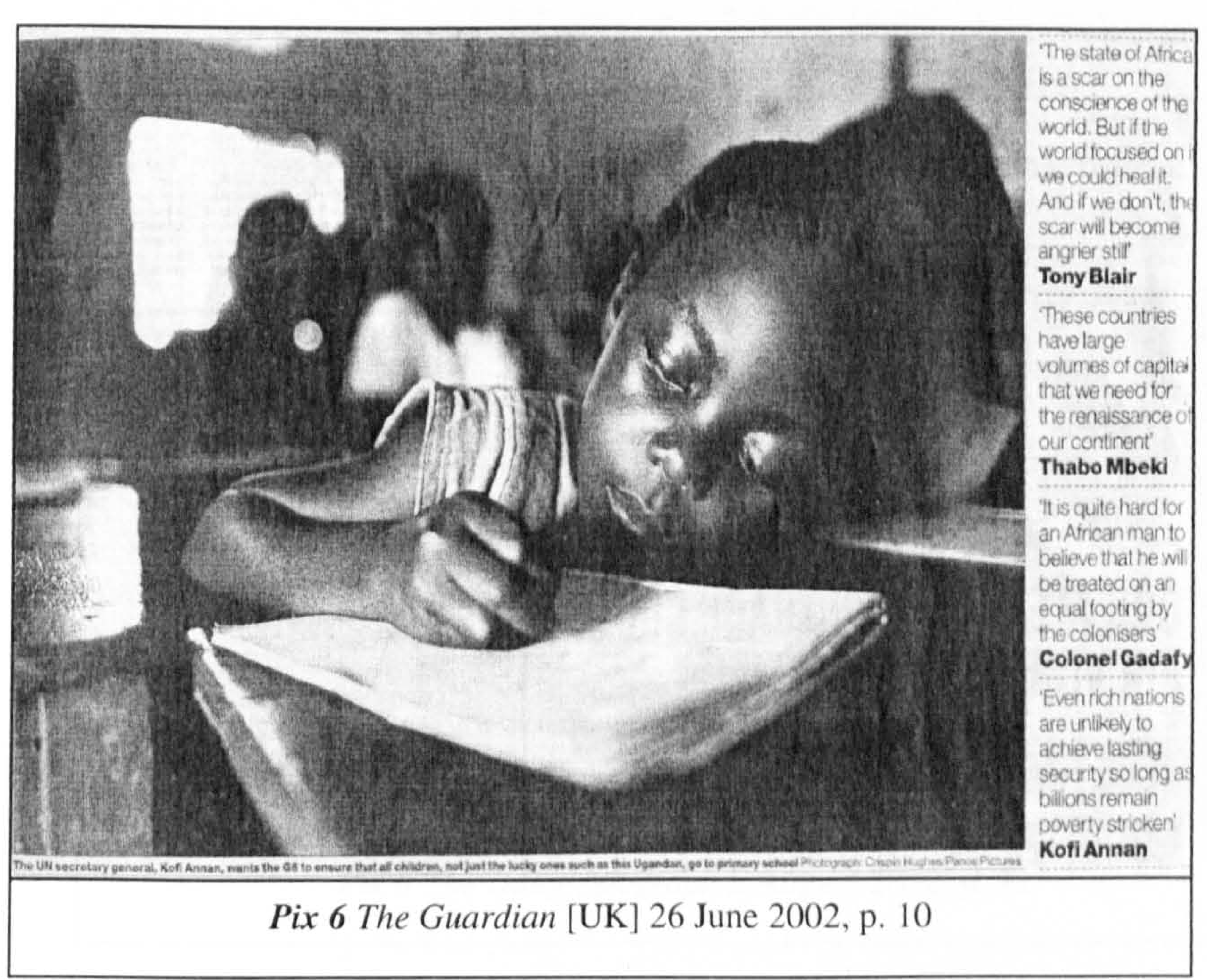
Pix 4 *The Daily Telegraph* 28 June 2002, p. 14

Pix 5: Some Zimbabwean farmers [both men and women]. The accompanying story is the order by Mugabe for farmers to abandon wheat crop. The cutline reads: "Mugabe's order could make 100,000 black farm workers homeless overnight, human rights bodies say". [see below]



Pix 5 *The Guardian* [UK] 25 June 2002, p. 11

Pix 6: An African girl writing on a book. The cutline reads: "The UN secretary general, Kofi Anan wants the G8 to ensure that all children, not just lucky ones such as this Ugandan go to primary school". [see below]



'The state of Africa is a scar on the conscience of the world. But if the world focused on i we could heal it. And if we don't, th scar will become angrier still'
Tony Blair

'These countries have large volumes of capita that we need for the renaissance o our continent'
Thabo Mbeki

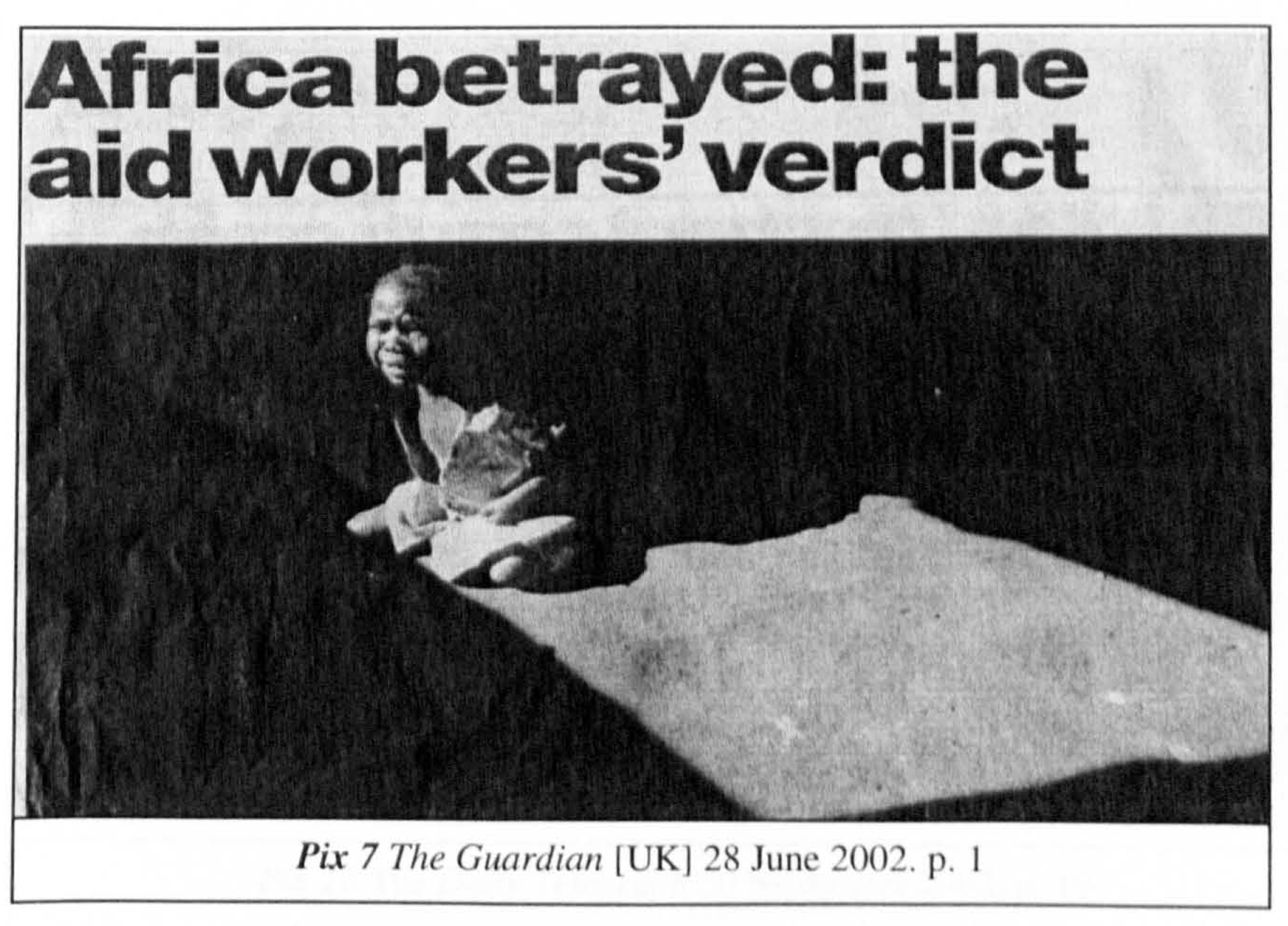
'It is quite hard for an African man to believe that he wil be treated on an equal footing by the colonisers'
Colonel Gadafy

'Even rich nations are unlikely to achieve lasting security so long a billions remain poverty stricken'
Kofi Annan

The UN secretary general, Kofi Annan, wants the G8 to ensure that all children, not just the lucky ones such as this Ugandan, go to primary school Photograph: Crispin Hughes/Panos Pictures

Pix 6 *The Guardian* [UK] 26 June 2002, p. 10

Pix 7: An African child, with tears streaming down her cheeks, amidst darkness. The cutline reads: "A child cries for food in Kuito, Angola, where malnutrition is at crisis levels. A G8 action plan for Africa was dismissed by aid agency as inadequate". [see below]. *The Guardian [UK]*28 June 2002, p. 1.



Africa betrayed: the aid workers' verdict

Pix 7 *The Guardian* [UK] 28 June 2002. p. 1

Pix 8: Child soldier - A boy carrying a gun. The cutline reads: "A boy soldier in a Ugandan-supported Congolese rebel group in the north-east of the country." [see below]

Glimmer of hope for nation ruined by years of war

Adrian Blomfield reports from Panzi as a peace plan is agreed

IN THE past two years Neema Mushobora has been raped by soldiers from two armies, has watched as her uncle and grandmother were hacked to death and seen her friends die of hunger.

She is almost certain that a bloodthirsty militia murdered her husband. But she considers herself lucky because she and her three children have survived.

Neema is a victim of the Congolese war. Since rebels launched a campaign in 1998 to oust Laurent Kabila, the late president of the Democratic Republic of Congo, up to three million people have died from violence or war-related famine and disease.

In the east of this vast country at least 2,600 people are dying a day as a result of the war.

Early last year Neema's village in the Bunyakiri district of South Kivu was attacked by the Rwandan army, bent on revenge. The soldiers accused the villagers of giving support to the Mayi Mayi, a group of loosely linked tribal militias fighting Rwanda's occupation of eastern Congo.

The Rwandan soldiers burned down their houses and killed any men who tried to resist. Corralled with the other women of the village, Neema was repeatedly raped.

'She was raped by troops from rival groups and saw her family hacked to death'

and the Interahamwe, the extremist Hutus who carried out Rwanda's 1994 genocide, killing up to a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus in 100 days.

The two militia groups killed six of Neema's companions. In the last attack the Mayi Mayi captured Neema. For two-and-a-half months she was a sex slave.

"Every day I would be

to unleash unimaginable brutality on its people. The country is totally bankrupt. The infrastructure has collapsed. Roads linking the main towns gave up their battle with the jungle long ago.

The vast majority of the Congolese people are reliant on subsistence agriculture. But because of the militia groups ravaging the countryside few are able to cultivate their farms.

What little food is left is often stolen by soldiers. Millions of people who have fled their homes are putting additional strain on areas where limited sustenance is available. As a result aid agencies estimate that 18 million people are at risk of starvation. It is too dangerous for the aid workers to reach many of them.

Donor nations have given only 20 per cent of what the United Nations needs to carry out its operations in Congo this year.

In the bed next to Rebecca's at the overcrowded hospital in Panzi is another baby girl, Chance – French for luck. Her mother, Heshima Tupatie, was only 13 years old when she was raped during a Mayi Mayi attack on her village last year.

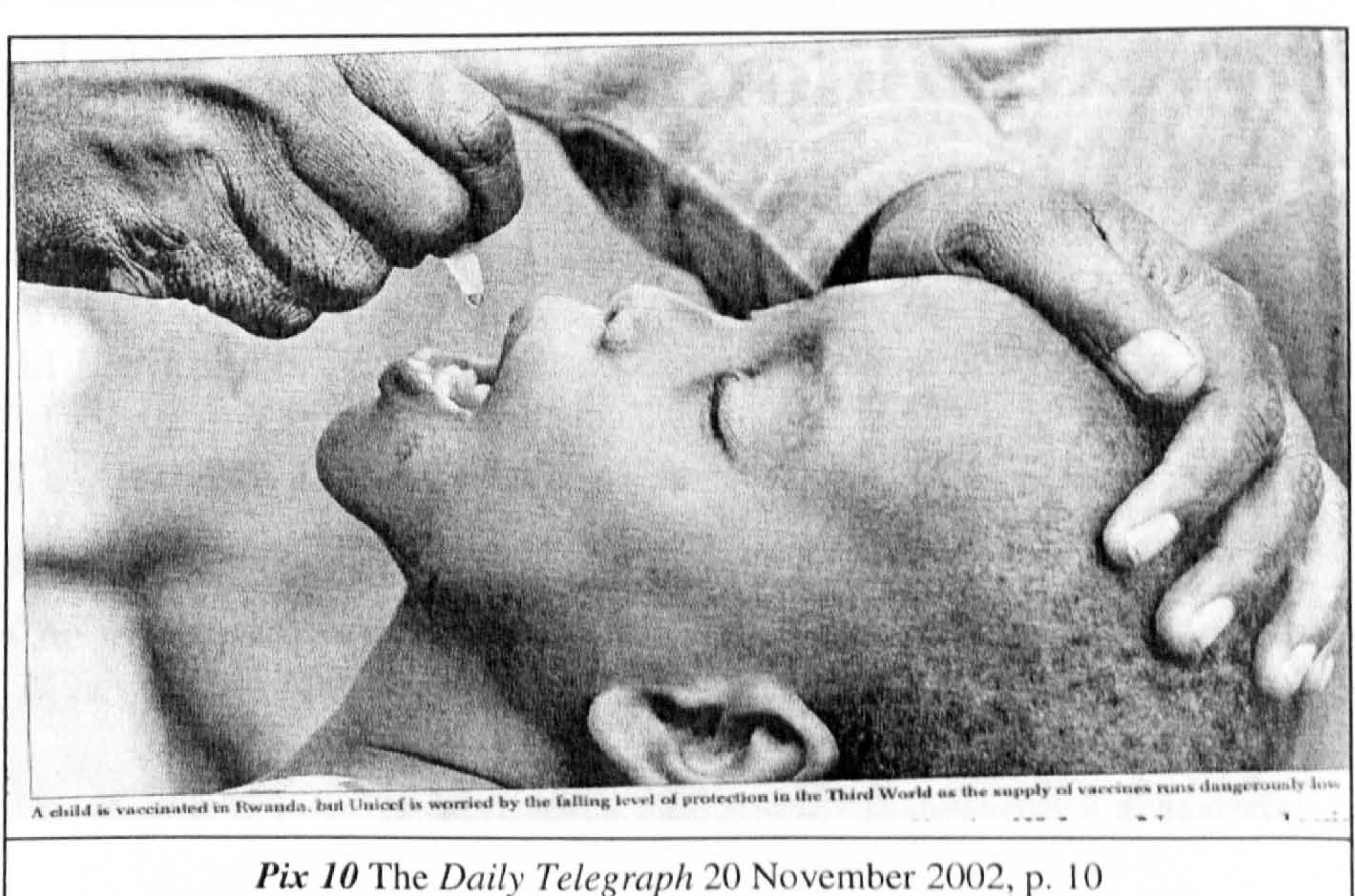
"Two Mayi Mayi took me into the bush," she said. "One said I was too small and so he

A boy soldier in a Ugandan-supported Congolese rebel group in the north-east of the country

Pix 8 *The Daily Telegraph* 5 August 2002, p. 12

Pix 9: On Congo. Cutline: Making a point rebel leader Laurent Kunda talks to Kisangani governor Jean-Pierre Bilusa. *The Daily Telegraph* 8 August 2002, p. 13.

Pix 10: A child being vaccinated in Rwanda, but Unicef is worried by the falling level of protection in the Third world as the supply of vaccines runs dangerously low. [see below]



A child is vaccinated in Rwanda, but Unicef is worried by the falling level of protection in the Third World as the supply of vaccines runs dangerously low

Pix 10 The *Daily Telegraph* 20 November 2002, p. 10

African women in the news

Item 1: *The Guardian [UK]*4 February 2002, p. 11
Annatjie Minnie killed by a hippopotamus in South Africa.

Item 2: *The Daily Telegraph* 4 February 2002, p. 12
Winnie Mandela challenges order to quit home. She fights the court order that she quits the home she shared with her ex- husband, Nelson Mandela.

Item 3: *The Guardian [UK]*5 February 2002, p. 11
The Climbié case. The parents of the child abuse victim, **Berthe Climbié** condemns the behaviour of the council.

Item 4: *The Daily Telegraph* 24 June 2002, p. 10
Lucia Zulu mentioned in the story of death in Malawi. She has brought her two children to the hospital – David, aged five and Sorigina, two. David is in the advanced stage of kwashiorkor and can barely stand. Dr Phiri hopes we will recover with patient care but he fears for the life of Sorigina, who has acute marasmus, caused by protein deficiency, leading to stunting and painfully thin limbs.

Item 5: *The Daily Telegraph* 28 June 2002, p. 14
Mercy Mugai mentioned as expressing cynicism over NEPAD. As she clutched her two underfed children and glanced wistfully at the fast-food café in central Nairobi, she said, "All these people do is talk, talk, talk".

Item 6: *The Daily Telegraph* 5 August 2002, p. 12
Neema Mushobora, a victim of Congolese war. She was raped by soldiers.

Item 7: *The Daily Telegraph* 5 August 2002, p. 12
Heshima Tupatie, raped at the age of 13 years by the Mayi Mayi, a group of 'loosely linked tribal militia fighting Rwanda's occupation of eastern Congo'.

Item 8: *The Daily Telegraph* 5 August 2002, p. 12
Mazambi Bazikomole – watched as soldiers on a vengeance mission killed more than 300 in her village in Congo.

Item 9: *The Daily Telegraph* 7 August 2002, p. 11
Marike de Klerk wife of former South African President was found strangled and stabbed in her apartment.

Item 10: *The Daily Telegraph* 19 November 2002, p. 18

Story of Zimbabwe: **Musaida Mtetwa** fears for her husband's loss of job as the white farmers are ejected, as the new owners would not employ them or allow them to plant some crops.

Appendix 8 Full text of Land where only coffin makers thrive Neil Darbyshire toured the hardest-hit parts of Malawi and found a country in agony, ravaged by Aids, plague and famine [see fig 8, p. 199]

The Daily Telegraph 24 June 2002, p. 10

AT THE Kyumba 24-hour coffin workshop, business has never been so brisk. Knocked up on the side of the main road into Salima, the plain wood coffins are expensive by Malawian standards, ranging from pounds 11 for a baby to pounds 60 for the bespoke adult version, complete with fretwork and varnish.

This is in a country where the GDP per capita is under pounds 120 a year and 65 per cent of the population lives on less than 70p per day. But a pernicious combination of factors - some natural, some man-made - have generated a seller's market in this particular industry.

As we approach, Billiat Kambalane and his two carpenters are taking an enforced break while they wait to be resupplied with materials. They are playing a form of chequers, using upturned bottle caps on an improvised board, surrounded by small children, who examine the part- completed coffins with awed curiosity.

Traditionally, children are shielded from funerals and their trappings, but premature death is now so commonplace that such niceties have been dispensed with.

"There is so much more business this year that we have had to open two more workshops in the Salima area to keep up," Mr Kambalane said. "Most people used to have their coffins made in Lilongwe [the capital] and sent here but now that is too expensive, and there is no time."

Already the llth poorest country in the world, Malawi is at the epicentre of sub-Saharan Africa's Aids epidemic, with more than a third of new mothers and a quarter of their babies carrying the HIV virus.

An abnormally virulent strain of malaria, resistant to the usual therapeutic drugs, has wrought havoc this season and the population has been further weakened by recent outbreaks of cholera and bubonic plague. Now the country is stalked by famine.

Malawi, known as Nyasaland until independence from Britain in 1964, is overwhelmingly reliant on maize as its staple food, grown by subsistence farmers. There is little collectivisation and barely any concept of the food co-operative. In the rural heartland it is every man for himself.

Although landlocked, Malawi benefits from a 350-mile long lake along its spine and is fairly fertile by African standards.

However, poor rain after the planting season last November followed by floods in February, which washed away much of the crop, and then drought, which led to late-planted maize simply withering on the stem, has created a food crisis not seen in the country since the great hunger of 1949. There are shades of the Irish potato famine of the mid-19th century and the reasons are not dissimilar.

Harvest season across Malawi fails in April and May, making this time of year normally a period of plenty. But already some people are starving to death and the situation is worsening by the day. Between now and the next harvest the grain deficit is estimated at up to 700,000 tons and, without relief, the prognosis for autumn is dire.

In the villages around Salima, 65 miles east of Lilongwe and close to the shores of Lake Malawi, the signs of malnutrition are all too evident in the swollen bellies and limbs of the children. These are symptoms of kwashiorkor, caused by a general calorie and mineral deficiency and leading to water retention in the tissue. Untreated, it is often fatal in young children.

At Ndebvu village, two of Imani Gawani's six children - Kondeni, aged six, and Manasa, four - are clearly suffering from kwashiorkor. His five-year-old daughter, Georgina, is showing worrying symptoms of the potentially more dangerous starvation-related illness, marasmus. He explains that the family has eaten once that day, a meagre offering of maize porridge donated by his married daughter but that she too is short of food so cannot be relied on to help.

His small rnaize crop was washed away in the flooding and he is making small strips of rush matting in the hope of selling them at the market. Apart from foraging for wild vegetables and banana roots, he does not know how he will feed his family tomorrow. Asked what the future holds, he replies: "We can only look to God."

NINETY miles to the north-west, around the town of Kasungu, the situation is the same, if not worse. At the district hospital, Dr Henry Phiri does what he can to alleviate the problems, but he is desperately under-resourced and inundated with new cases every day. He is the only doctor for 400 patients and instead of his establishment of 51 nurses, he has just 15. He is paid under pounds 60 per month and his nurses receive between a third and a half of that.

"Hunger contributes to all sorts of illnesses and as the crisis gets worse we are seeing greater and greater numbers of cases. Someone with HIV/Aids or malaria or cholera [he dealt with 2,160 cases of cholera between February and April] is much more likely to die quickly if they are also weakened by hunger. We lose an average of five or six under-fives each week."

He introduces Lucia Zulu, who has brought her two children, David, aged five, and Sorigina, two. David is at an advanced stage of kwashiorkor and can barely stand. Dr Phiri hopes he will recover with patient care but he fears for the life of Sorigina, who has acute rnarasmus, caused by protein deficiency, leading to stunting and painfully thin limbs.

The children had been abandoned by their father, who had moved on to look for work, leaving the family in the care of his brother, a worker on a local tobacco estate. But as the price of maize rocketed due to a shortage across southern Africa and the price of tobacco tumbled, the estate owner said he could no longer afford to provide food for his workers.

REALISING that Kasungu hospital was their only refuge, Lucia walked with them for 20 miles to reach it. It is unimaginable how painful this must have been for David, whose legs and feet are swollen to twice their normal size.

The national mortality rate for under-fives is almost 20 per cent and rising rapidly in areas like Kasungu and Salima, which have been hard-hit by the food shortage. "People

will eat and drink anything during difficult times. Hygiene is ignored and disease spreads," says Dr Phiri. "It is a terrible circle."

The most profound effect of the HIV/Aids epidemic is that it is cutting a swath through the sexually active and, by extension, economically active section of the population. It is not uncommon for an Aids orphan of 12 or 13 to be head of a large family. Grandparents may be still in the home but they can be as much a burden as a help where physical work is all-

Life expectancy in Malawi is down to 39 and in the sexually active population it is significantly lower. A telling statistic which illustrates how Aids is skewing the demographic shape of the country is that 55 per cent of the population is 18 or under.

A consequence of this shift is that children in many areas are no longer attending school because they are needed in the fields, which is storing up more social and economic problems for the future. Illiteracy is 42 per cent and going up instead of down. The spectre of Aids also haunts the schools system. A quarter of the education budget last year was spent on funeral expenses of teachers, the vast majority of whom died from the disease.

Figures published in the Progress of Nations Statistical Review suggest that Malawi is still some way from its Aids peak. They say that an average of 139 people are dying per day in Malawi and predict that half of all teachers, nurses and police officers will die in the next 10 years. Without education and an understanding of the risks, few doubt that that prediction will be realised.

Norman Ling, the British High Commissioner to Malawi, said Britain was helping as much as it could with the education crisis and that British money built the equivalent of a school every week and trained 30,000 new primary teachers.

That Malawi is in such a grievous state may seem puzzling, given that it has had none of the wars or civil strife associated with the region. Its people are hardworking, hospitable and politically rather passive, showing more of a resignation to their plight rather than an impatience for change.

This peasant economy, based on a single food crop, was positively encouraged in the days of Kamuzu Hastings Banda, the eccentric despot who ruled Malawi from independence until 1994 and regarded his people as children to be led and to be given instructions rather than consulted.

Banda held that if the people were so busy working individually in order to eat, they would be too busy to organise politically and to offer any form of collective opposition. However, he was able to feed his people and one can even sense nostalgia for his tenure, if for that reason alone.

Along with the single food crop, there is essentially a single cash crop for export. Unfortunately, that crop is tobacco. As the price of maize has trebled, the price of tobacco has plummeted by a factor of five.

Since free elections were held in 1994, the country has been governed by President Bakiii Muiuzi and the United Democratic Front. Some efforts have been made to liberalise and diversify the economy but progress is slow and foreign donors still provide 40 per cent of the national budget. Britain is the biggest single donor but

withheld pounds 12.5 million in budgetary support last year because the High Commission was unhappy with the government's accounts.

It singled out excessive spending on the upkeep of presidential palaces (equivalent to half the national budget for the health service), ministerial cars, travel expenses and general political activity undertaken at the expense of land reform and economic regeneration.

With elections due in 2004, the UDF is also moving to change the constitution to allow Mr Muluzi to serve a third term in office. The maximum allowed under the constitution is two terms. This change is being opposed vociferously by the Catholic Church and Mr Ling has cautioned publicly against it being effected without full national debate.

There is a further question mark over the sale last year of 167,000 tons of surplus grain from government stocks - stored precisely in case of famine - leaving only 4,000 tons in reserve. The government claims that it was instructed to sell the grain by the International Monetary Fund in order to service debts. The IMF says it advised that only a fraction should be sold. In any case, the fund says it has not seen any of the proceeds from the sale and there is an inquiry into where the money went.

While these are worrying trends, Malawi is nothing like its neighbour Zimbabwe or Kenya, or indeed the Malawi of Dr Banda, where institutional corruption and political oppression are and were facts of everyday life. Nor is the government spending large sums on expanding the army or police, in order to bolster its position. This is a small nation of 11 million people emerging into democracy from decades of dictatorship. And whatever its political shortcomings, they are not the fault of the children currently starving in the villages.

DAVID BULL, the executive director of Unicef, which is launching an emergency appeal to provide therapeutic and supplementary feeding to the children of Malawi, believes the schools could be one key area. By setting up a widespread School Feeding programme, he hopes both to combat malnutrition and to promote education of the next generation, who may then be better prepared to help the development of their country.

"I can understand why children have abandoned their schooling but while they may be helping the present, they are damaging the future. If we can offer them a good meal when they come to school we can continue our development work and, at the same time, respond to the immediate crisis.

"Although this is only one of many aspects of our efforts on behalf of the children of Malawi, it is a vital one."

Such efforts cannot come quickly enough for women like Kelinisi Issa, who sits on the mud floor of her hut in Ndebvu in utter despair. Through the premature deaths of several members of her extended family and desertion by others, she has been left in sole charge of eight grandchildren under the age of 12 and the only food she has to give them is a gruel made from a poor flour of maize husks, stems and banana root.

"Even the little we have will soon be gone, and what then for us? Why should we have hope?" she asked.

Appendix 9 Full text of Congo: an everyday story of horror and grief: Tentative talk of peace matters means little to victims who have lost everything [see Fig 9, p. 199]

By James Astill *The Guardian* [UK] 24 July 2002, p. 15

Glinting orange through the green creepers, the Kombi family's mud-hut is barely visible now. Alphonse Kombi was murdered by militiamen in February. His wife, Bimosa, watched them eat his heart before they raped her, neighbours say. The trauma drove her insane.

Two of the Kombis' four children had already died of malnutrition. Then, a fortnight ago, a distant relative came to collect the two survivors - an emaciated eight-year-old and four-year- old.

"It's hard to say where they went," said Kinjonsole Kiyana, the Kornbis' neighbour in the town of Shabunda, in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. "Anyway, they're all gone now."

This is not an unusual story in eastern Congo, the last battlefield of the world's biggest war. Of nearly 100 people interviewed in Shabunda and the towns of Bunyakiri, Walungu and Uvira, virtually all had seen at least one close relative murdered in the past two years.

Last year, the International Rescue Committee, an American aid agency, estimated that 2.5 million people had died because of the war in eastern Congo alone. In September, it will officially update the figure; but already it is predicting a death toll well above three million.

On Monday, Rwanda reignited a flickering hope for peace by agreeing to withdraw from eastern Congo once its prime enemy, the interahamwe, was disarmed. Several similar agreements have already failed, with the Congolese government proving unable or unwilling to disarm the militiamen, and Rwanda proving unwilling to assist them. Meanwhile, the war in eastern Congo is escalating.

The killers come from all the factions locked in an unwinnable war over eastern Congo's mineral riches. In the towns, Rwanda's occupying army and its Congolese rebel allies maintain brutal control. But in the rainforests and hills outside, militiamen are fighting them - and each other - for the spoils. They include the interahamwe - which led the 1994 Rwandan genocide - Burundian insurgents, the Mayi-Mayi resistance movement, and other, nameless, bandit gangs.

"This is the most desperate humanitarian situation in the world," said Claude Jibidar, the UN's humanitarian coordinator in eastern Congo. "And there seems to be no prospect of any improvement."

Shabunda, a remote gold-mining town surrounded by jungle, illustrates both points. It has been held by Rwandans and rebels for most of the war, despite being heavily besieged by the Mayi- Mayi militia, a patriotic movement gone bad. When they can, the Mayi-Mayi steal the townswor,nen to use as sex slaves. Up to 2,000 of Shabunda's women are still missing.

Isolated and vulnerable, Shabunda has little food and no medicine. More than a quarter of its children are malnourished, says Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF). And, meanwhile, its only doctor, Lambert Kawaiya, is still writing out prescriptions in the town's shell-wrecked clinic. "We will get the drugs when the fighting stops, if it isn't too late," he said.

It certainly will not be soon. Three weeks ago, the Mayi-Mayi briefly swamped the town, then fled, leaving behind a trail of corpses, their genitals slashed off. Earlier this month, an MSF expeditionary team was put to flight by a barrage of mortars. from the jungle.

Jean Kiyana and his two surviving children recently arrived in Shabunda from the outlying village of Matili, where Mayi-Mayi and rebels are fighting over a gold mine. His wife had been abducted. "She's a Mayi-Mayi wife now," he said blankly.

His two other children had died of malnutrition. "I have come to try to prevent these ones from dying," said Mr Kiyana, pointing to the two boney forms slumped on the ward's concrete floor. With their skin drawn tight over fragile bones, the children's ages and their sexes were almost impossible to guess.

General Joseph Padiri, the Mayi-Mayi commander laying siege to Shabunda, denies his men are committing atrocities. Speaking by satellite phone from the forest, he said. "Our objective is simple: we will fight until the last Rwandan invader is killed or expelled from our country."

But with military alliances constantly shifting in eastern Congo, there are no such clear objectives. Sometimes, for example, Gen Padiri fights against the Rwandan interahamwe; sometimes he fights alongside them.

In Ramba Chitanga, near Bunyakiri, villagers have trouble telling the local factions apart. Last year, the rebels looted their homes. Then the interahamwe moved in and shot several people after accusing them of feeding their enemies. Then the Mayi-Mayi attacked. In the mayhem, the interahamwe hacked off 29-year-old Janet Vurnilia's hands.

Now, with her skittle-like stumps, she ticks off the relatives killed in the fight - her pregnant sister, parents-in-law, brother-in-law and niece.

Other scars are less visible. Every evening, Adele Buhendwa, 32, slaps on a blonde wig, daubs on bright pink lipstick, and sells herself in Bukavu's bars. Before the war, she taught sewing in a nearby village school. But, after rebel soldiers killed her husband and looted her house, she fled to the border town with her two young daughters in tow.

"My children don't know what 1 do," says Ms Buhendwa, her wig slipping to reveal a close- cropped scalp. "It's a terrible job; so many risks, so much disease." Rebel soldiers are often her only clients.

With communities beggared and families displaced, eastern Congolese society is disintegrating. In remote Sankuru district, it took one Red Cross worker an hour to greet five elders because they had only one set of rags between them, and refused to appear naked to shake his hand.

ARMED MEN

On the high plains above Bukavu, cattle are scarce, but prices have plummeted because no one wants to buy a cow for fear of attracting armed men. Last month, in Burinyi village, a child was killed by the Mayi-Mayi for trying to hide his pet guinea pig, according to a Polish nun working there.

"They have taken all the cows and goats; now they are fighting over chickens and rabbits," said Sister Stanislas. "God forgive them."
Congo's best chance of an end to the violence came in March, when the government in Kinshasa offered to share power with the country's numerous rebel groups. Most accepted, bringing **70%** of the country under President Joseph Kabila's shaky control. But, in the east, Rwanda refused to let its rebels negotiate any settlement which would force an end to its occupation.

Besides protecting its border from the interahamwe, Rwanda claims to be occupying Congo in order to protect its ethnic Tutsi population, the foot-soldiers of the rebel army, from the militia.

But early this year, a Congolese Tutsi officer, Patrick Musunzu, mutinied against his Rwandan controllers. More than 1,000 Tutsi rebels have since deserted to join him in their tribal homeland above Lake Tanganyika. To prevent sympathetic locals supplying them there, Rwanda has herded around 40.000 civilians into barren camps, UN sources say.

"We fought for Rwanda, and now they are fighting us," said Marie Nambibi, 34, a Congolese Tutsi in Bukavu. Ms Nambibi's husband was killed fighting for the Rwandan army in 1998. "What has war brought us?" she asked.

If there is scant hope for an end to the suffering, neither is there much aid to alleviate it. Throughout Congo, the UN estimates that 16m people do not know where their next meal is coming from. But, with donors generally showing little interest in what many consider a hopeless cause, at most two million people can be fed with aid.

In the east hunger is widespread. But, because of the extreme danger of travelling on the ground, only 30% of the population was reachable, the UN coordinator Mr libidar said. "There are horrors out there that we don't even know about - that maybe we will never know about," he said. "You know, Congo is so green, you don't even see the graves."

Appendix 10 Press Complaints Commission Code of Practice

The Press Complaints Commission is charged with enforcing the following Code of Practice which was framed by the newspaper and periodical industry and ratified by the Press Complaints Commission, 5th March 2003.

All members of the press have a duty to maintain the highest professional and ethical standards. This code sets the benchmark for those standards. It both protects the rights of the individual and upholds the public's right to know.

The Code is the cornerstone of the system of self-regulation to which the industry has made a binding commitment. Editors and publishers must ensure that the Code is observed rigorously not only by their staff but also by anyone who contributes to their publications.

It is essential to the workings of an agreed code that it be honoured not only to the letter but in the full spirit. The Code should not be interpreted so narrowly as to compromise its commitment to respect the rights of the individual, nor so broadly that it prevents publication in the public interest.

It is the responsibility of editors to co-operate with the PCC as swiftly as possible in the resolution of complaints.

Any publication which is criticised by the PCC under on of the following clauses must print the adjudication which follows in full and with due prominence.

1 Accuracy

i) Newspapers and periodicals must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted material including pictures.

ii) Whenever it is recognised that a significant inaccuracy, misleading statement or distorted report has been published, it must be corrected promptly and with due prominence.
iii) An apology must be published whenever appropriate.

iv) Newspapers, whilst free to be partisan, must distinguish clearly between comment, conjecture and fact
v) A newspaper or periodical must report fairly and accurately the outcome of an action for defamation to which it has been a party.

2 Opportunity to reply

A fair opportunity for reply to inaccuracies must be given to individuals or organisations when reasonably called for.

3 *Privacy

i) Everyone is entitled to respect for his or her private and family life, home, health and correspondence. A publication will be expected to justify intrusions into any individual's private life without consent
ii) The use of long lens photography to take pictures of people in private places without their consent is unacceptable.

Note - Private places are public or private property where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.

4. *Harassment

i) Journalists and photographers must neither obtain nor seek to obtain information or pictures through intimidation, harassment or persistent pursuit
ii) They must not photograph individuals in private places (as defined by the note to clause 3) without their consent; must not persist in telephoning, questioning, pursuing or photographing individuals after having been asked to desist; must not remain on their property after having been asked to leave and must not follow them.
iii) Editors must ensure that those working for them comply with these requirements and must not publish material from other sources which does not meet these requirements.

5. Intrusion into grief or shock

In cases involving personal grief or shock, enquiries must be carried out and approaches made with sympathy and discretion. Publication must be handled sensitively at such times but this should not be interpreted as restricting the right to report judicial proceedings.

6. *Children

i) Young people should be free to complete their time at school without unnecessary intrusion.

ii) Journalists must not interview or photograph a child under the age of 16 on subjects involving the welfare of the child or any other child in the absence of or without the consent of a parent or other adult who is responsible for the children.
iii) Pupils must not be approached or photographed while at school without the permission of the school authorities.
iv) There must be no payment to minors for material involving the welfare of children nor payments to parents or guardians for material about their children or wards unless it is demonstrably in the child's interest.

v) Where material about the private life of a child is published, there must be justification for publication other than the fame, notoriety or position of his or her parents or guardian.

7. *Children in sex cases

1. The press must not, even where the law does not prohibit it, identify children under the age of 16 who are involved in cases concerning sexual offences, whether as victims or as witnesses.
2. In any press report of a case involving a sexual offence against a child –
i) The child must not be identified.
ii) The adult may be identified.
iii) The word "incest" must not be used where a child victim might be identified.
iv) Care must be taken that nothing in the report implies the relationship between the accused and the child.

8 *Listening Devices

Journalists must not obtain or publish material obtained by using clandestine listening devices or by intercepting private telephone conversations.

9 *Hospitals

i) Journalists or photographers making enquiries at hospitals or similar institutions must identify themselves to a responsible executive and obtain permission before entering non-public areas.

ii) The restrictions on intruding into privacy are particularly relevant to enquiries about individuals in hospitals or similar institutions.

10 *Reporting of crime

(i) The press must avoid identifying relatives or friends of persons convicted or accused of crime without their consent.

(ii) Particular regard should be paid to the potentially vulnerable position of children who are witnesses to, or victims of, crime. This should not be interpreted as restricting the right to report judicial proceedings.

11 *Misrepresentation

i) Journalists must not generally obtain or seek to obtain information or pictures through misrepresentation or subterfuge.

ii) Documents or photographs should be removed only with the consent of the owner.
iii) Subterfuge can be justified only in the public interest and only when material cannot be obtained by any other means.

12 Victims of sexual assault
The press must not identify victims of sexual assault or publish material likely to contribute to such identification unless there is adequate justification and, by law, they are free to do so.

13 Discrimination

i) The press must avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to a person's race, colour, religion, sex or sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or disability.

ii) It must avoid publishing details of a person's race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, physical or mental illness or disability unless these are directly relevant to the story.

14 Financial journalism

i) Even where the law does not prohibit it, journalists must not use for their own profit financial information they receive in advance of its general publication, nor should they pass such information to others.

ii) They must not write about shares or securities in whose performance they know that they or their close families have a significant financial interest without disclosing the interest to the editor or financial editor.
iii) They must not buy or sell, either directly or through nominees or agents, shares or securities about which they have written recently or about which they intend to write in the near future.

15 Confidential sources
Journalists have a moral obligation to protect confidential sources of information.

16 Witness payments in criminal trials

i) No payment or offer of payment to a witness - or any person who may reasonably be expected to be called as a witness - should be made in any case once proceedings are active as defined by the Contempt of Court Act 1981.
This prohibition lasts until the suspect has been freed unconditionally by police without charge or ball or the proceedings are otherwise discontinued; or has entered a guilty plea to the court; or, in the event of a not guilty plea, the court has announced its verdict.

*ii) Where proceedings are not yet active but are likely and foreseeable, editors must not make or offer payment to any person who may reasonably be expected to be called as a witness, unless the information concerned ought demonstrably to be published in the public interest and there is an over-riding need to make or promise payment for this to be done; and all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure no financial dealings influence the evidence those witnesses give. In no circumstances should such payment be conditional on the outcome of a trial.

*iii) Any payment or offer of payment made to a person later cited to give evidence in proceedings must be disclosed to the prosecution and defence. The witness must be advised of this requirement.

17 Payment to criminals

* Payment or offers of payment for stories, pictures or information, must not be made directly or through agents to convicted or confessed criminals or to their associates - who may include family, friends and colleagues - except where the material concerned ought to be published in the public interest and payment is necessary for this to be done.

The public interest

There may be exceptions to the clauses marked * where they can be demonstrated to be in the public interest.

1. The **public** interest includes:
i) Detecting or exposing crime or a serious misdemeanour.
ii) Protecting public health and safety.
iii) Preventing the public from being misled by some statement or action of an individual or organisation.

2. In any case where the public interest is invoked, the Press Complaints Commission will require a full explanation by the editor demonstrating how the public interest was served.

3. There is a public interest in freedom of expression itself. The Commission will therefore have regard to the extent to which material has, or is about to, become available to the public.

4. In cases involving children editors must demonstrate an exceptional public interest to over-ride the normally paramount interest of the child

Appendix 11 Summary of news items in Nigerian press where women are central focus during the period of critical events

I have divided these news items into two: individual women newsmakers and other issues, which relate to women as a group, and do not mention specific women.

Summary of individual women that are major newsmakers during the period of the critical events

S/N	Newsmaker	Occupation	News description	News category/frame	Newspaper source
1	Rose Ukeje	Chief judge of the Federal High Court	Thanksgiving on her appointment Headline: *Cleric scores politicians, judiciary low*	Soft news	*The Guardian* [N] 4 Feb. 2002 p. 4
2	Cathleen Ebele Okafor	Not stated	Book presentation Headline: *Ojukwu lists commercial Law's relevance to society*	Soft news	*The Guardian* [N] 6 Feb. 2002 p. 4
3	Mrs Chika Onyeukwu	Imo State Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Welfare	Flagged off the exercise for the resettlement of lunatics in Owerri metropolis.	Official capacity	*The Guardian* [N] 6 Feb. 2002 p. 7
4	Olatoun Williams	Not stated	Book presentation Headline: *Menace of the area boys in Lagos: the rich also cry*	Soft	*The Guardian* [N] 7 Feb. 2002 p. 14
5	Safiya Hussien	Not stated	Condemned to death by a Sharia Court in Sokoto for an alleged adultery.	Victim	Item 7: *The Punch* 5 Feb. 2002 p. 6
6	Dr Bolere Ketebu-Nwokeafor	President of National Council of women Society [NCWS]	Signs memorandum of understanding with its Malian counterpart	Official	*New Nigerian* Feb. 5 2002 p. 19
7	Annatjie Minnie	Not stated	Killed by an 'enraged mother hippo'	Victim	*The Guardian [N]*4 Feb 2002 p. 10 [News from South Africa

S/N	Newsmaker	Occupation	News description	News category/frame	Newspaper source
8	Winnie Mandela	The ex-wife of the former South African president, Nelson Mandela	Ordered to vacate a house where the couple lived, now a museum.	Soft news	*The Punch* 4 Feb. 2002 p. 13 [News from south Africa]
9	Mrs Maria Amoni Oghiadomhe	The mother of the Edo state deputy governor, chief Mike Oghiadomhe	Deceased	Soft news/ satellite newsmaker	*Daily Champion* 24 June 2002 p. 6
10	Mrs Onari Duke	Cross River State first lady	Has alerted the risk of the world having 40 million orphans this year if the HIV/AIDS scourge was not fought to a standstill.	Satellite news maker	Daily Champion 24 June 2002 p. 9
11	Miss Fumilayo	Robbery suspect	College refutes her claim that she did her NYSC assignment at the college in 1993.	Crime	*The Punch* 24 June 2002 p. 7
12	Chikwe	Aviation Minister	Launches PDP voters' club: for women and youths with a million Naira.	Soft and unrelated to ministerial job	*The Punch* 24 June 2002 p. 5
13	Chikwe	Aviation Minister	Explains purge in Aviation	Official	*The Punch* 24 June 2002 p. 8
14	Hadiza Musa	Not stated [67 years]	Raped and died as result	Victim	*New Nigerian* 24 June 2002 p. 1
15	Mrs Mary Akiode	The general manager of National Electric Power Authority [NEPA]	Tours the zone and assures customers of fresh measures being taken by the authority to improve power supply in the area.	Official	*Daily Champion* 25 June 2002 p. 6
16	Lady (Mrs) Uzoamaka Nwizu	The comptroller General of Nigeria Immigration service (NIS)	Went on a thanksgiving service to mark her recovery from sickness that took her abroad.	Soft news	*Daily Champion* 25 June 2002 p. 3

S/N	Newsmaker	Occupation	News description	News category/frame	Newspaper source
17	Chief (Mrs) Kemi Nelson	Commissioner for women affairs and poverty alleviation	Alerted the nation on the bleakness facing it given the presence of special problems being created for children in the	Official	*Daily Champion* 25 June 2002 p. 6
18	Mrs Titi Abubakar	Wife of the Vice President	Guest of honour for fund raising walk in aid of the underprivileged	Soft news/ satellite newsmaker	*The Punch* 25 June 2002 p. 3
19	Mrs Onari Duke	The wife of the Cross River state Governor	Has advised religious leaders to evolve programmes aimed at reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS	Soft news/ satellite newsmaker	*New Nigerian* 25 June 2002 p. 18
20	Mrs Abiola Odunbaku	A member of the Oyo state House of Assembly	Threatened that women will walk naked in the streets in protest if the killing of innocent people by the police persists	Soft news	*The Punch* 26 June 2002 p. 6 & *New Nigerian* 26 June 2002 p. 25
21	Florence Ita Giwa	Senator	Defected to PDP from APP	Soft news	*The Punch* 26 June 2002 p. 8
22	Onyeka Onwenu	"Chairmanship" aspirant for Ideato North LGA	Explains why she is in the race	Soft news	*The Punch* 26 June 2002 p. 11
23	Beere Aderinsola Osoba	Wife of the Ogun State governor	Has called on parents to always de-worm their children	Soft news/ satellite news maker	*The Guardian* [N] 27 June 2002 *p. 14*
24	Husssaina Haruna	'Polio stricken female' broadcast journalist with the Sokoto State Television (STV)	Was among 31 civil servants rewarded by the state government for dedication and productivity	Soft news	*New Nigerian* 26 June 2002 p. 18

S/N	Newsmaker	Occupation	News description	News category/frame	Newspaper source
25	Mrs Titi Atiku Abubakar	Wife of the Vice President	Declared that the war against violation of children rights and privileges would last long.	Soft news/ satellite	*New Nigerian* 26 June 2002 p. 25
26	Miss Chidimma Dike	Beauty contest winner	'Smiled' home with a brand new Opel Omega saloon car as the winner of the Imo Beauty contest 2002	Soft news	*Daily Champion* 27 June 2002 p. 3
27	Mrs Bolere Ketebu-Nwokeafor	National President of NCWS	Called on more women participation in politics in order to change their situation in the society.	Official	*The Guardian* [N] 27 June 2002 p. 6
28	Mrs Wumi Babalola Okocha	A 'female' senatorial aspirant under the PDP in Ekiti state	Has charged women in the state to join their male counterparts and contest election.	Soft news	*Daily Champion* 27 June 2002 p. 6
29	Lady Gesiere Brisibe-dorgu	Bayelsa state gubernatorial aspirant	Has called for a cease fie in the current rift between the national assembly and the presidency	Soft news	*Daily Champion* 27 June 2002 p. 16 [Champion woman]
30	Chief (Mrs) Ogunleye Bisinuola	President Country Women association of Nigeria	Said that women need to play a vital role in the maintenance of peace during the forthcoming 2003 election.	Soft news	*Daily Champion* 27 June 2002 p. 16 [Champion woman]
31	Mrs Muibat Kelani	Oyo state Commissioner for women Affairs	Called on women advocacy groups to effect changes in the condition of women	Official	*The Punch* 27 June 2002 p. 6
32	Mrs Bisi Olateru-Olagbegi,	Women rights activist and director, Women's Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON),	Advocated concession of 30 per cent of the entire decision making positions to women.	Official	*The Punch* 28 June 2002 p. 6

S/N	Newsmaker	Occupation	News description	News category/frame	Newspaper source
33	Mrs Titilayo Ajanaku	Special adviser to the president on women affairs	Has called on the electorate to participate actively in the registration of voters	Unrelated to position	*The Punch* 28 June 2002 p. 6
34	Jummai	Not stated	Stabbed by husband for alleged promiscuity	Victim	*Daily Champion* 28 June 2002 p. 15 & *New Nigerian* 27 June 2002 p. 19
35	Farere Akintola	Akintola's widow [Akintola is the premier of the defunct Western region]	Deceased	Soft news/ satellite news maker	*The Guardian* [N] 5 August 2002 p. 1 & *The Punch* 5 August 2002 p. 1
36	Stella Obasanjo	Wife of the President	Receives #190.5m wheel chairs from an American philanthropist	Soft news/satellite newsmaker	The Guardian [N]5 August 2002 p. 4
37	Debbie Modupe Ariyo	Coordinator of a London – based charity – Africans Unite Against Child Abuse (AFRUCA)	Worried about the trafficking of kids to the UK.	Official	*The Guardian* [N] 5 August 2002 p. 7 [African women in diaspora]
38	Olagbaju's wife [As used in the news, no other name provided]	Wife of the slain member of Osun state house of Assembly	Has rejected her appointment as a member of Ife Central local government Management Committee	Satellite news maker	*The Punch* 5 August 2002 p. 7
39	Stella Obasanjo	Wife of the President	In Lagos for book launch	Soft news news/satellite news maker	*The Punch* 6 August 2002 p. 3
40	Mrs. Sally Adikwu	'Woman aspirant' for for the Igboeze North/Udenu Federal Constituency	Vowed to fight poverty if elected	Soft news	*The Punch* 6 August 2002 p. 11

S/N	Newsmaker	Occupation	News description	News category/frame	Newspaper source
41	Mrs Titi Abubakar	The wife of the Vice President of Nigeria	Advised UNILAG students against sexual promiscuity.	Soft news/satellite news maker	*The Punch* 6 August 2002 p. 45
42	Madam Rachael Omore-Ofoneden Oki	Mother-in-law Director of NNPC, Mr. Jackson Gaius Obaseki	Deceased	Soft news/satellite news maker	*Daily Champion* 6 August 2002 p. 39
43	Stella Obasanjo	Wife of the President	As part of the activities marking breastfeeding week, Stella Obasanjo, the first lady is to preside over book launch –	Soft news/satellite news maker	*The Guardian [N]*6 August 2002 p. 3
43	Marike de Klerk's	Murdered estranged wife of former South African president F. W. de Klerk	Marike de Klerk's murder trial begins	Victim/satellite	*The Guardian* [N] 6 August 2002 p. 10 [South African news
44	Hajiya Zaynab Kare	The wife of the Niger state governor	Decries youths' involvement in thuggery	Soft news/Satellite news maker	*The Punch* 7 August 2002 p. 12
45	Mrs. Ifeyinwa Obegolu	National Commissioner, (legal) of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)	Has denied involvement in the financial scandal rocking the commission, saying she is a victim of grand conspiracy.	Corruption/soft news	*Daily Champion* 7 August 2002 p. 1
45	Asset Mohammed	Not stated	Abandoned her three-month-old baby in a mosque	Victim/ Soft news	*The Guardian* [N] 9 August 2002 p. 5
46	Ibiene and her mother Leticia Abili	Not stated	Killed in the US by Ibiene's husband	Victims	*The Punch* 9 August 2002 p. 3

S/N	Newsmaker	Occupation	News description	News category/frame	Newspaper source
47	Mrs Kemi Nelson	Lagos State Commissioner for women and poverty alleviation	Has urged women to seek legislative rather than executive positions in the forthcoming elections	Official	*The Punch* 9 August 2002 p. 5
48	Funmi Balogun-Alexander	Executive director of UN Fund for women (UNIFEM	Called for sustained lobbying and advocacy to increase the number of women in politics.	Official	*The Punch* 9 August 2002 p. 5
49	Mrs Omore-Ofoneden Oki	Mother in law to Gaius-Obaseki.	Deceased: 'Gaius-Obaseki loses mother-in-law'	Soft news/satellite news maker	*The Punch* 9 August 2002 p. 10
50	Mrs Uzoma Uhiara	Chief medical officer, federal medical center, Umuahia	Attributed the low intelligent quotient among youths to inadequate breastfeeding week.	Official/ soft news	Item 22: *The Punch* 9 August 2002 p. 11
51	Chief (Mrs) H.I.D Awolowo	The wife of late Obafemi Awolowo	Has offered to assist the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in mobilising people of Ogun State for the forthcoming voters registration exercise.	Soft news/satellite	Item 24 *New Nigerian* 6 August 2002 p. 25
52	Stella Obasanjo	First lady and wife of the President	Challenged Nigerian elite and corporate to show commitment towards better lives for the less privileged in the country.	Soft news/satellite newsmaker	*New Nigerian*, 8 August, 2002 p. 26
53	Mrs Gauis Obaseki	Wife of the group managing director of NNPC	Said that NNPC would continue to improve the standard of education in the country	Soft news/ satellite newsmaker	*New Nigerian* 7August, 2002. p. 26

S/N	Newsmaker	Occupation	News description	News category/frame	Newspaper source
54	Dr Dora Akunyili	Director-General of the National Agency for Foods and drugs Administration and Control	Has raised an alarm on threats to her life by drug barons	Victim	*The Guardian [N]*18 November 2002 p. 96
55	Ms Boma Bromillow-Jack	The Minister of Tourism and culture	Condemns plan by the British media not to broadcast the Miss World beauty pageant in the country	Official/soft news	*The Guardian* [N] 19 November 2002 p. 96
56	Margaret Omoyibo	Woman protester	Seriously injured when one of the policemen sent to keep peace hit her with the butt of his gun	Victim	*The Guardian* [N] 20 November 2002 p. 80
57	Hajia Laraba Daggash	A former secretary of state for health	Has appealed to parent to take care of their children.	Soft news	Item 8 *Daily Champion* 18 November 2002 p. 24
58	Hadizat Mala Kachallah	The wife of the Borno state governor	Called upon youths to be law abiding.	Soft news/satellite newsmaker	*Daily Champion* 18 November 2002 p. 24
59	Mrs Eunice Ukamake Egwu	Wife of Ebonyi State governor	Urged Nigerian women to redouble efforts towards self-actualisation by ensuring active and adequate participation in politics.	Soft news/satellite newsmaker	*Daily Champion* 18 November 2002 p.Miii – [Champion extra]
60	Mrs Fatima Balla Abubakar	'Female' aspirant contesting the Adamawa central senatorial district	Received by the state chairman of PDP	Soft news	*Daily Champion* 21 November 2002 p.MVII [Champion extra]

S/N	Newsmaker	Occupation	News description	News category/frame	Newspaper source
61	Mrs Florence Aya	'Chairman' of the House Committee on Women	Assures that the bill on women's rights previously thrown out of the house Assembly shall be revisited	Official	*New Nigerian* 19 November 2002 p. 2
62	Dr. Dere Awosika	The National Coordinator of National programme on Immunisation	Says Federal government is committed to eradicate the wild poliovirus from the country under the National Immunisation programme.	Official	*New Nigerian* 19 November 2002 p. 25
63	Grace Ebun Delano	Executive Director of the Association for the Reproductive and family Health (ARFH)	Speaks on AIDS	Official	*New Nigerian* 20 November 2002 p. 18
64	Chinwe Anya	Not stated	Arraigned for alleged impersonation, criminal breach of trust and cheating	Crime	*New Nigerian* 20 November 2002 p. 19
65	Ms Boma Bromillow-Jack	Minister of Tourism and Culture	Berates British Media's blackout of Miss World	Official/soft news	
66	Florence Ita	Senator	Welcomed the start of UN-brokered talks between Nigeria and Cameroon on the disputed Bakassi Penisula	Soft news/official	*The Punch* 19 November 2002 p. 3
67	Chantal Compaore	Burkina Faso First lady	Home looted over the weekend	Soft news/satellite newsmaker	*The Punch* 19 November 2002 p. 51
68	Mrs Noyo Ibori	Wife of the Delta State Governor	Has called for more awareness campaign for HIV/AIDS.	Soft news/satellite newsmaker	*The Punch* 21 November 2002 p. 7

Other news of interest to women [but not based on particular women]

S/N	News theme	Headline	News source
1.	Regional conference on "African women and the new partnership of African Development"	*Obasanjo lists leader's steps to transform Africa; Dream to reduce poverty in Africa dims; Change focus Obasanjo tells African leaders*	*The Guardian* [N] 5 February. 2002 p. 56; *Daily Champion*, 6 February 2002, p.15; *The Punch*, 6 February 2002, p. 7.
2	Rape: Increasing incidents of rape in Abuja is a source of worry to women	*High incidence of rape worries women group*	*The Punch* 4 February 2002 p. 7
3	Seminar: Following spates of killings of African youths in London, the representatives of the African community in London gathered at a seminar to map out strategies to ensure better security for African youths.	*Africans in UK unite against bullying*	*The Guardian* [N] 5 February 2002 (Back page)
4	Prostitution: the special Adviser to the President on Human trafficking and child labour, Mr Mike Mku reports the high number of Nigerian female prostitutes in Europe.	*Ninety percent of prostitutes in Italy are Nigerians - MKU*	
5	Seminar: Shell Petroleum organised a special oil and gas seminar for women opinion leaders	*"Women are agents of social change"- Udofia*	*Daily Champion* 25 June 2002 p. 6

S/N	News theme	Headline	News source
6	Prostitution: minister of state for justice, Mr Musa Elayo disclosed that no fewer than 50 Nigerian girls, who travel abroad for prostitution, are deported back home every week.	*"50 Girls deported weekly for prostitution".*	The Punch 25 *June* 2002 p. 3; Daily Champion *26 June 2002 p. 5 & 28 June p.15*
7	Canvassing: A women group with the responsibility of marketing Kano Governor, Engr. Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso for 2003 election has been formed.	*Women solidarity forum formed*	*New Nigerian* 28 June 2002 p. 18
8	Rape: Two sisters reported raped	*Robbers rape two sisters during operation*	*The Punch* 5 August 2002 p. 5
9	Elections: The NCWS has resolved not to cote for politicians who engage in thuggery	*Women warn violent politicians*	*The Guardian* [N] 8 August 2002 p. 5
10	Women's supportive role in the society: The vice chancellor of University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (UNAAB) Prof. Israel Adu, stated that there is no way the role women play in society can be downplayed. He called on women leaders to continually play supportive roles in the society, not only among women, but also among the men.	*V-C explains women's role in development*	*The Punch* 8 August 2002 p. 7
11	Protest/demonstration: One of the women that laid siege to oil companies facilities in Warri was shot dead by a soldier in an anti-riot team sent to dislodge the woman from the firm's crisis.	*One dies as women protesters lay siege to Shell, Chevron in Warri*	*The Guardian* [N] 9 August 2002 p. 4

S/N	New s theme	Headline	News source
12	Protest/demonstration: for neglect of their communities by oil firms about 2, 0000 women in Delta State brought the operations of the oil companies to a halt.	*Protesting women, security agents clash in Delta state*	*The Punch* 9 August 2002 p. 1
13	Protest/demonstration: A protest by women in front of major multinational oil companies in Warri, Delta state yesterday turned sour as security agents reportedly shot and killed one of the women	*Siege to oil firms, female protester shot dead*	Item 23 *Daily Champion* 9 August 2002 p. 1
14	Rape: A middle-aged man Mallam Aminu Ruwa of Lamta area, Bida, Niger state has been given 100 lashes in a market place for raping a six-year- old girl.	*Man receives 100 lashes for rape*	*The Guardian* [N] 20 November 2002 p. 16
15	Riot/ beauty contest: For alleged blasphemy of Prophet Mohammed in a recent publication, Muslims have torched *This Day* office passing a fatwa on the publisher and editor	*Moslems protest Miss world contest, torch This Day Office, Newspaper's Management apologises*	*The Guardian* [N] 21 November 2002 p. 3
16	Violence/ beauty contest: A 24-hour curfew was yesterday imposed on Kaduna State, following violence by Moslems who are protesting the hosting of Miss world beauty contest in Nigeria and the alleged blasphemy of Prophet Mohammed by a national newspaper	*Kaduna imposes2 4 hour curfew as violence persists*	*The Guardian* [N] 22 November 2002 p. 1
17	Beauty contest: Contestants described as misleading the foreign media reports of Nigeria as unsafe.	*Miss world contestants relive experience, say Nigeria is safe*	*The Guardian* [N] 22 November 2002 p. 1

S/N	News theme	Headlines	News source
18	Human trafficking: New sources of human trafficking discovered	*Immigration uncovers human trafficking route, source*	*Daily Champion* 18 November 2002 p.3
19	Beauty contest	*Beauty queen praise Nigeria culture*	*Daily Champion* 20 November 2002 p.MIV [Champion extra]
20	Rape: A middle-aged man, Mallam Aminu Ruwa of Lante area, Bida Niger state has been given 100 lashes in market place for raping a six-year old girl. Ruwa was also asked by a Bida Upper Area Court to pay 3, 500 naira to the parents of the girl to settle her medical bill for the injuries she sustained during the intercourse.	*Man gets 100 lashes for raping a 6- year-old girl*	*Daily Champion* 22 November 2002 p. 5
21	Women political participation: Deputy governor of Adamawa state has made a call for all Nigerians to encourage women to vie for elective posts	*Encourage women to vie for elective posts, Tukur says*	*New Nigerian* 20 November 2002 p. 26
22	Beauty contest: Rivers state Governor, Dr Peter Odili says the world beauty queens due to arrive the state tomorrow would have a wonderful time.	*Odili assures beauty queens of wonderful time*	*New Nigerian* 20 November 2002 p. 10
23	Prostitution: Three girls whose ages range between 15 and 16, on Sunday gave sordid details of how they were tricked from their villages in Calabar to Lagos to engage in prostitution	*"How we were lured into prostitution"* – victims	*The Punch* 18 November 2002 p. 5

S/N	News theme	Headlines	News source
24	Fertility	*Pregnancy rates from IVH still low*	*The Punch* 18 November 2002 p. 1
25	Beauty contest/security	*Miss world: 3,000 security men guard beauty queens.*	*The Punch* 19 November 2002 p. 1
26	Rape: A 17 year old man has been arraigned before an Ibadan Magistrate Court for allegedly raping a girl, aged four years	*Man arraigned for rape*	*The Punch* 19 November 2002 p. 7

Appendix 12 Full text of Glimmer of hope for nation ruined by years of war Adrian Blomfield reports from Panzi as a peace plan is agreed [see fig 10 p. 216] *The Daily Telegraph* 5 August 2002, p. 12

IN THE past two years Neema Mushobora has been raped by soldiers from two armies, has watched as her uncle and grandmother were hacked to death and seen her friends die of hunger. She is almost certain that a bloodthirsty militia murdered her husband. But she considers herself lucky because she and her three children have survived.
Neema is a victim of the Congolese war. Since rebels launched a campaign in 1998 to oust Laurent Kabila, the late president of the Democratic Republic of Congo, up to three-million people have died from violence or war-related famine and disease.
In the east of this vast country at least 2,600 people are dying a day as a result of the war.
Early last year Neema's village in the Bunyakiri district of South Kivu was attacked by the Rwandan army, bent on revenge. The soldiers accused the villagers of giving support to the Mayi Mayi, a group of loosely linked tribal militias fighting Rwanda's occupation of eastern Congo.

The Rwandan soldiers burned down their houses and killed any men who tried to resist. Corralled with the other women of the village, Neema was repeatedly raped.
A few weeks later the Mayi Mayi attacked, marauding through the village hacking to death and shooting people who got in their way. Neema said: "They came into our house and just used their machetes on my uncle and my grandmother."
"My husband and 1 managed to get away and we ran while the Mayi Mayi chased us. By the time 1 got out of the village 1 had lost my husband. They must have caught him."
For seven months Neema and her two young sons hid in a nearby forest with 30 fellow villagers, surviving on a meagre diet of cassava leaves. Three of the group died of hunger.
They were attacked three more times by the Mayi Mayi and the Interahamwe, the extremist Hutus who carried out Rwanda's 1994 genocide, killing up to a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus in 100 days. The two militia groups killed six of Neema's companions. In the last attack the Mayi Mayi captured Neema. For two-and-a-half months she was a sex slave.

"Every day 1 would be raped, sometimes by many men," she said. "Some of the other women were raped 20 or 30 times, one soldier after the other. Then they just bled to death."

Neema escaped in October when the Mayi Mayi went on another pillaging spree. She fled to an ill-equipped hospital in Panzi, outside the town of Bukavu. In May she gave birth to a baby girl, Rebecca, the product of rape.

Neema's story is the story of Congo. The cripplingly corrupt government in Kinshasa, Congo's avaricious neighbours and foreign and internal militias whose ranks are full of killers and rapists, all competing for a slice of the country's huge mineral wealth, have

taken it in turns to unleash unimaginable brutality on its people. The country is totally bankrupt. The infrastructure has collapsed. Roads linking the main towns gave up their battle with the jungle long ago.
The vast majority of the Congolese people are reliant on subsistence agriculture. But because of the militia groups ravaging the countryside few are able to cultivate their farms. What little food is left is often stolen by soldiers. Millions of people who have fled their homes are putting additional strain on areas where limited sustenance is available. As a result aid agencies estimate that 16 million people are at risk of starvation. It is too dangerous for the aid workers to reach many of them.
Donor nations have given only 20 per cent of what the United Nations needs to carry out its operations in Congo this year.

In the bed next to Rebecca's at the overcrowded hospital in Panzi is another baby girl, Chance - French for luck. Her mother, Heshima Tupatie, was only 13 years old when she was raped during a Mayi Mayi attack on her village last year.
"Two Mayi Mayi took me into the bush," she said. "One said 1 was too small and so he ran away but the other raped me. When 1 got back to my house 1 found the bodies of my brothers and my uncle. They had been chopped to death."
Rebecca and Chance are the Congo's future. Born from an act of unparalleled cruelty carried out by men high on hatred and drugs, somehow they will have to sow the seeds of reconciliation in a shattered and emotionally scarred nation.
While Rwanda's motives may have been justifiable to start with, they have undoubtedly committed atrocities just as bad as the Mayi Mayi and the Interahamwe.
In 1998, the Rwandan army was instrumental in the massacre of tens of thousands of Hutu refugees. Since then, there have been many other cases of brutality.
Mazambi Bazikomole watched as soldiers on a vengeance mission killed more than 300 people in her village, Kilungutu, three years ago - among them her brother and husband - after the Mayi Mayi had killed 10 senior Rwandan commanders. "They came with machetes and guns," she said. "They moved from house to house, killing everyone they found - men, women, children, babies."
Despite the accusations of mass killings levelled at Rwanda, Britain has been among the country's strongest supporters, mainly from a sense of guilt about western inactivity during the 1994 genocide, a fact that has angered many Congolese.
Last week, for the first time in many years, there was a glimmer of hope for Congo. President Paul Kagame of Rwanda and President Joseph Kabila of the Democratic Republic of Congo, who took over from his assassinated father in January last year, signed a deal in Pretoria that could end the war.

Rwanda agreed to pull its forces out of Congo within 90 days and the Kinshasa government pledged over the same period to disarm and repatriate the Interahamwe and other Hutu groups it is accused of supporting.
Rwanda's official reason for its military presence in the Congo is that it is in pursuit of the perpetrators of the 1994 genocide. Along with Burundi and Uganda, Rwanda has sent thousands of troops into the country to back rebels fighting the government in Kinshasa, which has been given military support by Zimbabwe and Angola.

But analysts, UN officials and many Congolese say the Pretoria proposals are unrealistic. Locating the Interahamwe is going to be hard enough. Disarming them may well be impossible.
Persuading the Rwandans to leave the diamond mines, the more plausible explanation for their continued presence in Congo, is asking for a miracle.
But a miracle is what the country needs.

Appendix 13 Seventy participating countries in GMMP 2000

	Television	Radio	Newspapers	Total
Africa				
Benin	72	35	258	365
Botswana*	-	24	28	52
Cameroon*	85	420	102	607
Chad	24	36	49	109
Ghana*	66	105	137	308
Kenya	51	147	40	238
Namibia	25	24	29	78
Nigeria*	84	200	375	659
South Africa*	147	95	231	473
Sudan	72	54	74	200
Zimbabwe*	-	-	80	80
Asia				
Cambodia	223	53	166	442
China*	446	389	335	1,170
India*	383	82	790	1,255
Indonesia*	124	403	503	1,030
Japan*	1,923	34	132	2,089
Korea*	463	332	168	963
Malaysia*	67	38	148	253
Nepal*	86	70	150	306
Pakistan*	121	54	886	1,061
Philippines*	156	192	184	532
Sri Lanka*	273	44	192	509
Taiwan*	1,600	385	118	2,103
Thailand*	624	406	467	1,497
Vietnam	75	29	20	124
Caribbean				
Barbados*	18	-	-	18
Cuba	128	107	97	332
Jamaica*	216	586	220	1,022
Puerto Rico	563	62	532	1,157
Suriname	76	29	77	182
Trinidad & Tobago*	326	134	260	720
Europe				
Belgium*	567	140	234	941
Croatia*	242	154	198	594
Czech Republic*	48	-	-	48
Estonia	71	69	186	326
Finland*	148	74	291	513
France*	234	153	692	1,079
Germany*	986	736	1,424	3,146
Hungary*	144	125	124	393
Iceland*	96	161	106	363
Italy*	55	204	268	527
Macedonia	-	-	125	125

Malta	113	111	144	368
Netherlands*	38	24	315	377
Norway	109	91	625	825
Romania*	129	195	99	423
Russia*	204	-	-	204
Slovenia*	363	417	182	962
Spain*	59	114	192	365
Sweden	258	59	250	567
Switzerland*	105	18	262	385
United Kingdom*	731	624	1,423	2,778
Latin America				
Bolivia*	317	579	219	1,115
Chile*	165	113	135	413
Ecuador*	22	20	93	135
El Salvador	13	37	51	101
Guatemala*	110	130	378	618
Mexico*	286	104	515	905
Peru*	352	45	596	993
Uruguay*	148	121	103	372
Middle East				
Egypt	13	11	21	45
Israel*	187	241	296	724
Lebanon*	82	26	156	264
Turkey*	1,793	921	297	3,011
North America				
Canada*	878	240	532	1,650
USA*	461	29	2,296	2,786
Oceania				
Australia*	400	134	312	846
Fiji*	152	198	271	621
New Zealand*	140	109	222	471
Papua New Guinea	-	-	55	55
Transnational satellite news	485	-	-	485
Total	19,221	11,096	20,536	50,853

* Country participated in both 1995 and 2000 projects
Note: Table entries are the unweighted number of returns from each country

Appendix 14: Full text of Africa's ugly sisters leave trail of death: A summit next week will explore new ways to fight the twin evils of Aids and famine [see fig 16, p.252] By Rory Carroll *The Guardian* [UK] 30 October 2002, p. 20

In the bleached shantytowns of southern Africa they call them the ugly sisters - a twin force of such devastation that from the wreckage it is seldom possible to distinguish one sibling's impact from the other: Aids and hunger have become inseparable.
Relief agencies and governments will meet in South Africa next week to call for a new approach to a humanitarian crisis on a scale no one has quite seen before. Plague and famine have intertwined into a self-perpetuating phenomenon which could last for decades.
The Johannesburg meeting will bring together UN agencies, the 14-member Southern African Development Community and non-governmental organisations to discuss new ways of tackling the economic, social and cultural nexus that is the result of the ugly sisters.
A shack dustier than most in Lwangwe, a sprawling shantytown in northern Zambia, illustrated the challenge facing policymakers. Not so long ago it was a prosperous household. Although Derek Mubanga lost his job when the copper mines closed he found another with a relief agency and his wife, Agnes, sold vegetables in the market. Providing for the six children was not a problem.
Derek, however, was HIV positive and he became too sick to work. Nursing him for 16 months prevented Agnes growing vegetables so they sold their possessions until there was nothing left to sell. Two weeks ago Derek died and the last of the food was used up at his wake.
Stretched on a mat cradling her youngest son, a three-year-old also called Derek, it was obvious from her wan, skeletal figure that Agnes, 38, had full-blown Aids. The family had not eaten that day, there was no food in the house and the next monthly ration of relief food - a 1 kg pack of fortified maize - would not arrive for two weeks.

"Derek cries from the hunger but 1 tell him God will provide and eventually he fails asleep," said Agnes. Sheepishly, she admitted not taking vitamin tablets. "I know they are good for the health but the tablets make me hungry."

The tablets stimulate appetite, making doctors despair that a vicious circle spins ever faster. People with HIV/Aids are supposed to eat 50% more protein than usual, supplemented by foods rich in micronutrients, otherwise the immune system collapses and vulnerability to opportunistic infections such as tuberculosis and meningitis rises.

"Forget anti-retrovirals, the medicine these people need is food. Food, food, food," said Sister Joan Walsh, an Irish nun who runs a care organisation in Lwangwe.

Her colleague Eileen Keane, a doctor, was frustrated by governments and aid groups which focused on anti-retrovirals. "They end up in the hands of the elite and those who can afford bribes. For the poor the priority is nourishment."

The traditional reliance on wild berries and nuts in lean times was not an option for those with enfeebled digestion, she added. Between 13% and 33% of the adult populations of Zambia, Lesotho, Swaziland, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe are HIV positive. Up to 28 million people are infected in sub-Saharan Africa, which is too poor to distribute anti-retroviral drugs effectively.

According to the UN's World Food Programme (WFP), 14.4 million people in those countries also face starvation because drought and mismanagement have shrivelled their crops. The region had a food crisis in 1992 but this one is different.

"The crisis within the crisis - the HIV/Aids crisis - is enormous," said James Morris, the head of the WFP. "This is a catastrophe in the world that in some respects is unprecedented."

That the countries worst hit by famine are among those worst hit by Aids is no coincidence. Hunger breeds HIV and HIV breeds hunger. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation the disease is ravaging farmers.

Mozambique, for example, lost 2.3% of its farmers in 2000 and can expect to lose 20% by 2020. No one can estimate the impact that will have on output.

Scarcity inflates prices but families exhaust savings caring for sick members - often the breadwinners - and abandon work in order to be by their bedsides. Penury is deepened by funeral costs.

Justina Nalungwe, 31, would earn 45p every day selling fritters - enough to feed her two children - but since entering an Aids hospice near the Zambian town of Ndola the children have stayed with their impoverished grandmother. "They have nothing to eat," said Justina.

Admissions to the hospice had almost doubled in the past three months because hunger was accelerating the onset of full-blown Aids, said Sophie Chifokola, an administrator. It was also accelerating its spread.

Less than two miles from Justina's bed a beer hall geared up for another night. Wearing short skirts and wide smiles, the widows and abandoned wives lined a bench, waiting in turn to pick up men.

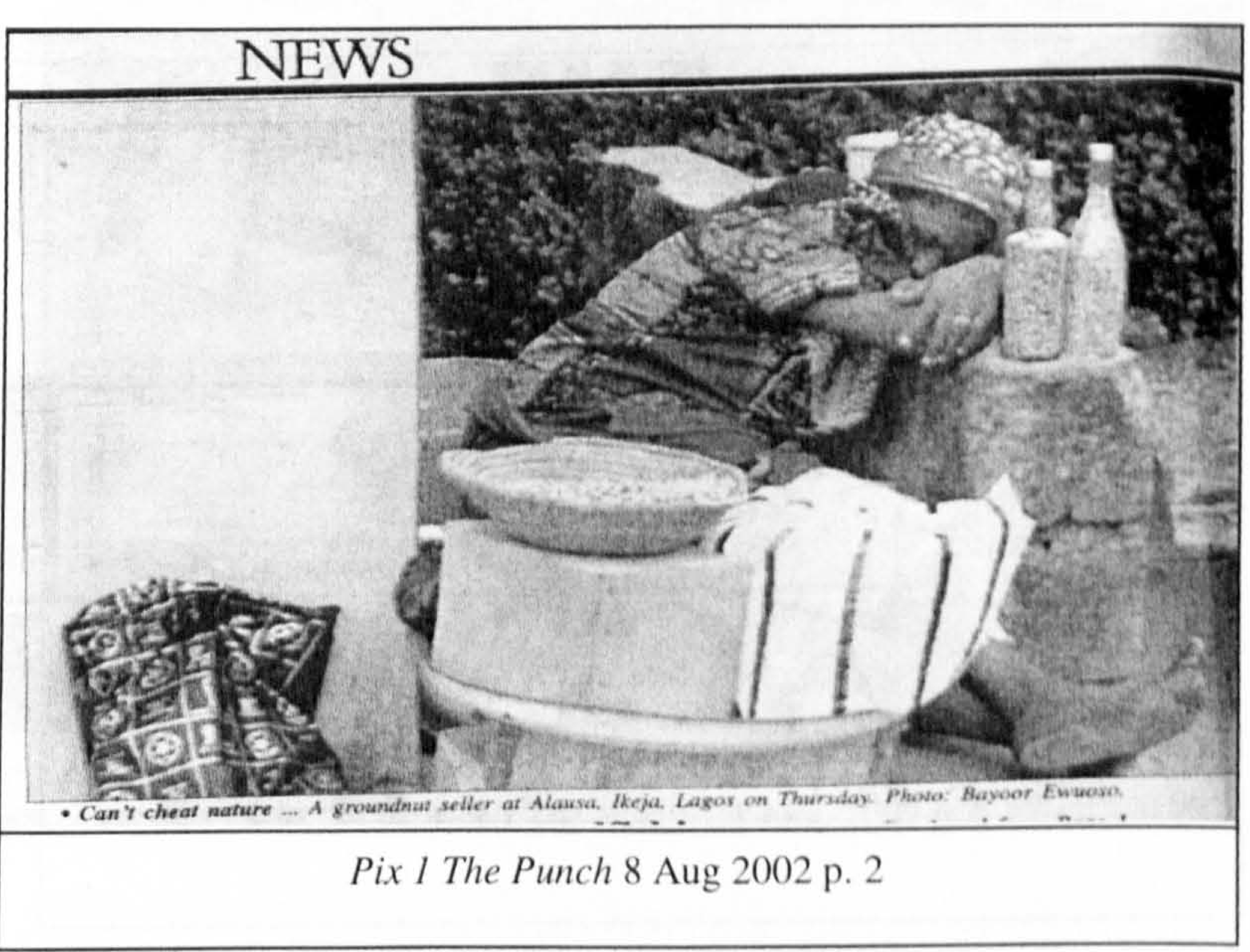
Full sex cost around Dollars 2, double that if the man did not want to use a condom, said Richard Kasonde, a medical officer who dealt with the consequences.

"These ladies have children and with Dollars 2 you can feed three mouths for one day. They are educated about the virus but say they would rather die of Aids than hunger."

As pregnancies have soared so have the deaths of babies infected with HIV. The drug nevirapine can greatly reduce mother-to-child transmission if formula rather than breast milk is used. In the absence of formula milk some doctors tell mothers to breastfeed, calculating that malnutrition is a bigger risk than HIV.

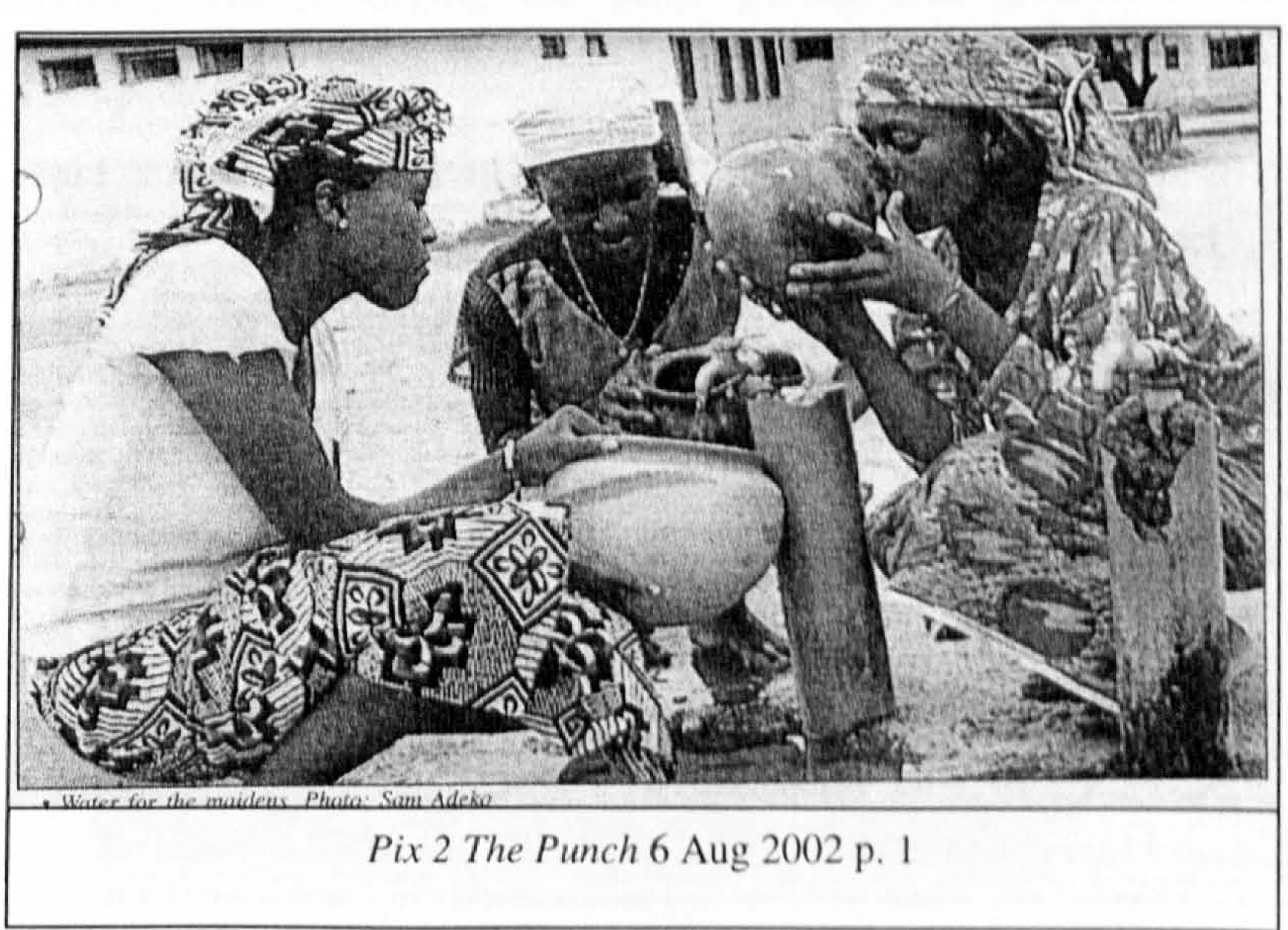
Appendix 15 New photos of African women in Nigerian newspapers during the period of the crititcal event

1. A groundnut seller caught taking a nap. (Filler). [see below]



Pix 1 The Punch 8 Aug 2002 p. 2

2. Three women squatting and fetching water from a tap. (Filler). [see below]

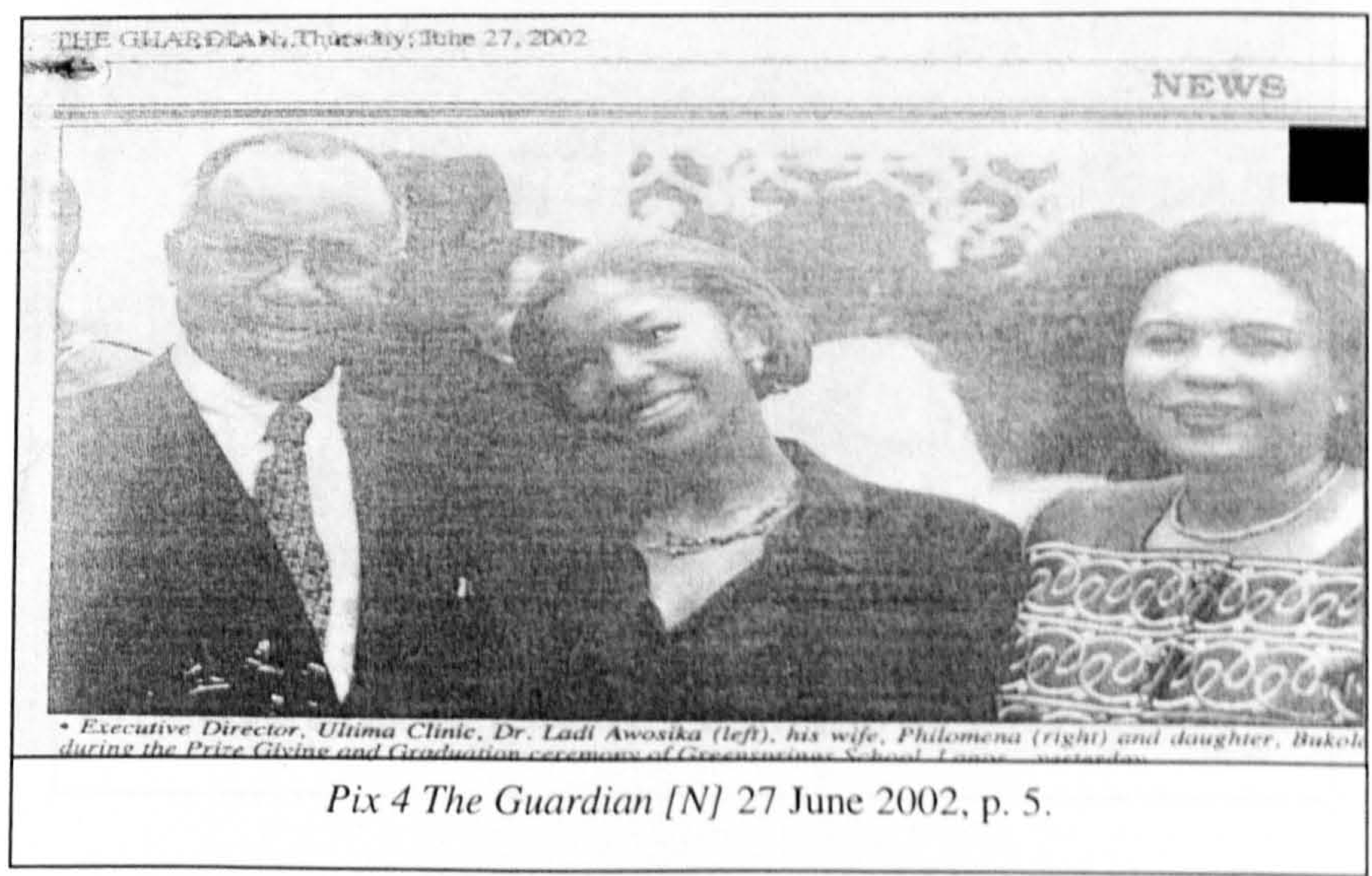


Pix 2 The Punch 6 Aug 2002 p. 1

3. Managing director Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria, Alhaji Ibrahim Mamman, Minister for Aviation, **Dr Kema Chikwe** and director, National Youth Service Corps, Lagos state, Mrs Funke Aina, during the inauguration of a sign post at the Murtala Mohammed Airport Ikeja, Lagos. *The Punch* 24 June 2002, p. 3.

Pix 3 The Punch 24 June 2002 p. 5

4. Executive director, Ultima Clinic, Dr Ladi Awosika, his wife Philomina and daughter, Bukola during the prize giving and graduation ceremony of Greensprings School, Lagos. *The Guardian* [N] 27 June 2002, p. 5.



Pix 4 The Guardian [N] 27 June 2002, p. 5.

5. Chief (Mrs.) Stella Obasanjo accompanying the wife of Lagos state governor, Chief (Mrs) Oluremi Tinubu during a visit by Mrs Obasanjo to the scene of the bomb blasts in Lagos. *Daily Champion* 5 February 2002, p. 13.

Pix 5 Daily Champion 5 February 2002 p. 13

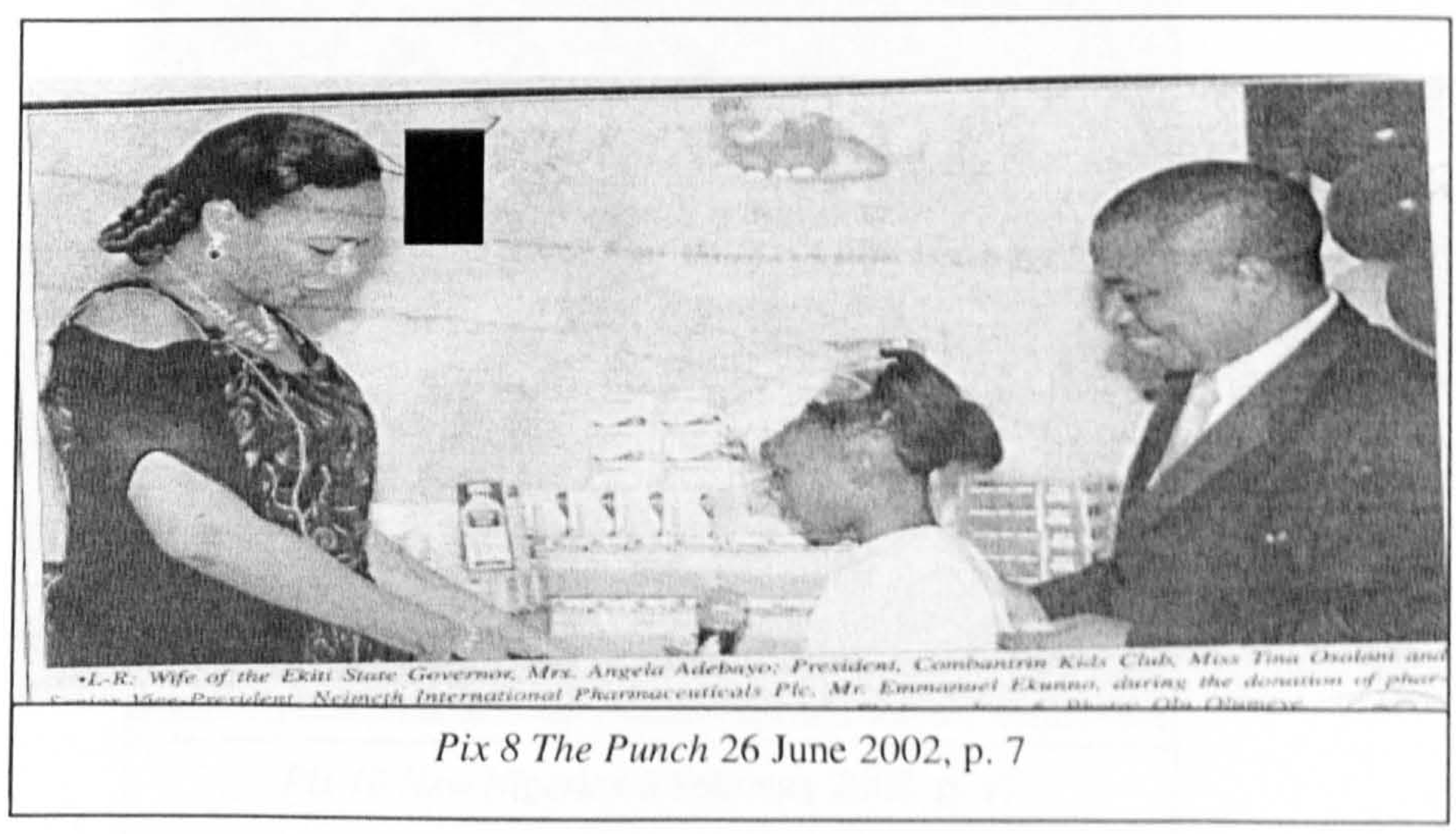
6. Group product manager, Nestle Nigeria plc, Mrs Scholastica Ilechukwu with the corporate relations manager, Dr Samuel Adenekan, at a press briefing on this year's nutrition media award. *The Punch* 26 June 2002, p. 1

Pix 6 The Punch 26 June 2002 p. 1

7 Director, primary health care, Lagos State, Dr Tosin Olomolehin with Project Director StopAIDS organisation, Mrs Pearl Nwashili, at the opening of StopAIDS new health stand and the presentation of certificates to the newly trained peer health educators and community-based distributors, in Lagos. *The Punch* 24 June 2002, p. 3.

Pix 7 The Punch 24 June 2002, p. 3

8 Wife of the Ekiti state governor, Mrs Angela Adebayo; president combantrin kids club Miss Tina Osaloni and senior vice president Neimeth International Pharmaceuticals Plc Mr Emmanuel Ekunno, during the donation of pharmaceutical products to the Erelu Adebayo Foundation Home at Iyin-Ekiti. *The Punch* 26 June 2002, p. 7.



Pix 8 The Punch 26 June 2002, p. 7

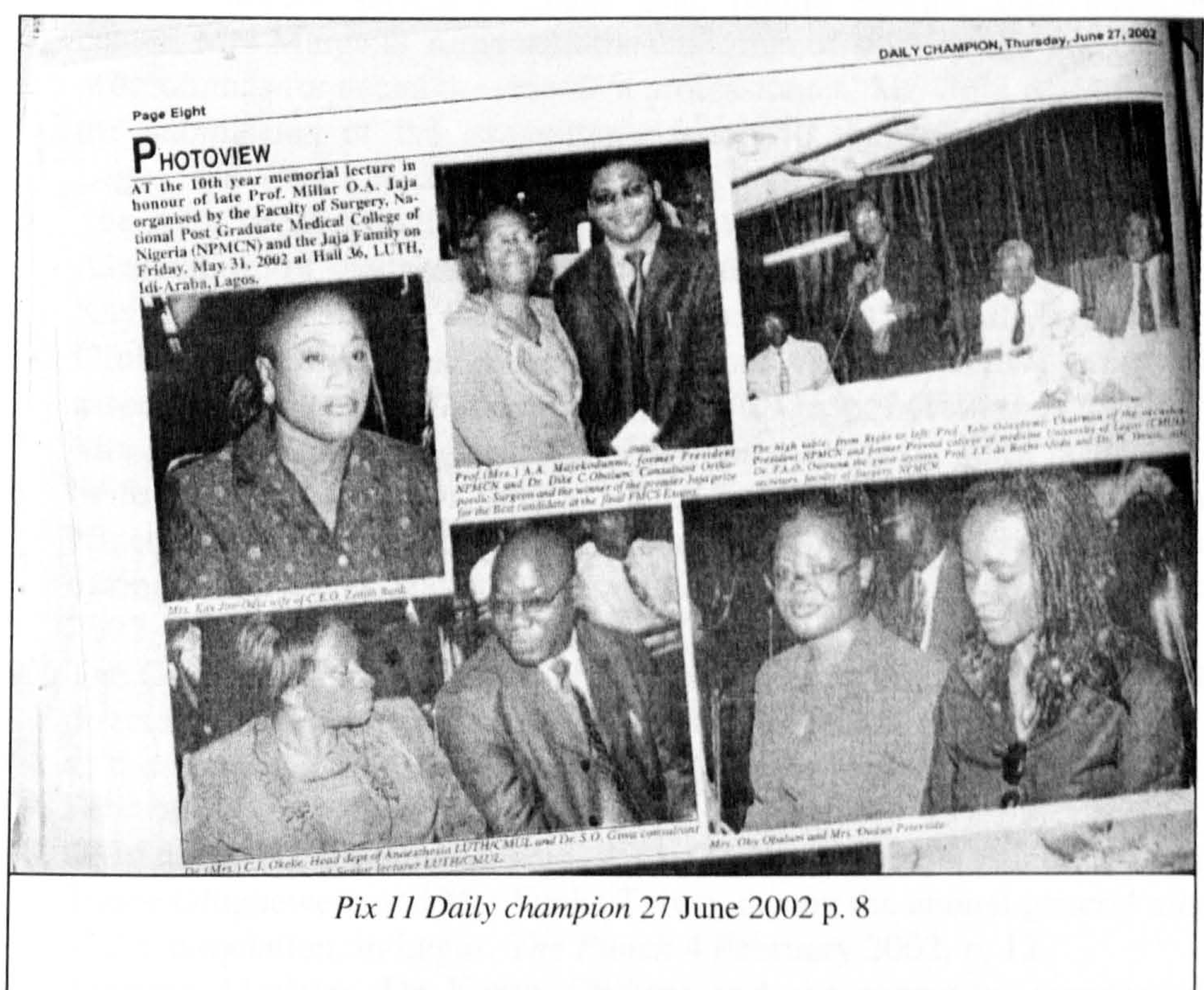
9 Ogun state first lady, Beere Aderinsola Osoba receives a gift from a girl during the 3rd year of accountable governance and children's day celebration of the state held at MKO Abiola's Stadium Abeokuta. *Daily Champion* 26 June 2002, p. 6.

Pix 9 Daily Champion 26 June 2002, p. 6

10 President of Kaduna Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (KACCIMA) Alhaji Mohammed Manir Ja'afaru with the permanent secretary in the ministry of commerce **Hajiya Amina Ali** during he opening of 23rd Kaduna international trade fair at the weekend *New Nigerian* 5 February 2002, p. 17

Pix 10 New Nigerian 5 Febraury 2002, p. 17

11. Photoview: usually used in Nigerian newspapers as filler and to add colour to the newspapers as often the photographs are those of the the cream of the society. My own personal experience also indicates that these photos could be canned advertisements because some journalists could receive money from some participants in a event so that their photos be included in the photview.



DAILY CHAMPION, Thursday, June 27, 2002

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PHOTOVIEW

AT the 10th year memorial lecture in honour of late Prof. Millar O.A. Jaja organised by the Faculty of Surgery, National Post Graduate Medical College of Nigeria (NPMCN) and the Jaja Family on Friday, May 31, 2002 at Hall 36, LUTH, Idi-Araba, Lagos.

Prof (Mrs.) A.A. Majekodunmi, former President NPMCN and Dr Dike C.Obalum: Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon and the winner of the premier Jaja prize for the Best candidate at the final FMCS Exams

Pix 11 *Daily champion* 27 June 2002 p. 8

Summary of the newsphotos of African women in Nigerian newspapers [as writien in the cutlines that accompany the photos].

Most of the newspapers describe women in marital terms. Where there is an exception to the rule and there may be doubts about the female in the photos, I indicate the female's name in bold.

The Punch

1. Victor Akintola; with Mrs Ani Elias during condolence visit by sympathisers following the death of the wife of the late premier of defunct Western region, Mrs Faderera Akintola. *The Punch* 6 August 2002, p. 2.
2. Lagos state commissioner for women affairs and poverty alleviation, Mrs Kemi Nelson; commissioner for health, Dr Leke Pitan; and chief nutrition

officer, ministry of health, **Dr Abimbola Ajayi**, during a community drama programme on breast feeding to mark the world breast-feeding week in Lagos. *The Punch* 6 August 2002, p. 3.

3. Former managing director of *Daily Times* Nigeria plc, Alhaji Babatunde Jose; with Bimbo, daughter of the late former premier of the defunct western region, Chief Ladoke Akintola, during a condolence visit to the Akintolas on the death of Mrs Faderera Akintola. *The Punch* 7 August 2002, p. 1.
4. Three women breastfeeding their babies at the launching of the breast-feeding project. *The Punch* 7 August 2002, p. 2 [see fig 22 p. 264]
5. The permanent secretary, Lagos state public service staff development center, Mrs Margaret Ajaja with the chairman of state committee on training programmes for social development professionals, Mr. Sola Apalowo, during the submission of the committee's report to the permanent secretary in Lagos. *The Punch* 7 August 2002, p. 6.
6. The guest speaker on the occasion, Prof Mark Wahiquist; the president of the Association of Nutritional Science Students, University of Ibadan, Mr Kayode Kazeem and the head of department of human nutrition, **Prof Olukemi Keshinro**, at a lecture to mark the 17th annual week of the association in Ibadan. *The Punch* 7 August 2002, p. 7 (Filler).
7. Mrs Faderera Akintola – deceased. *The Punch* 5 August 2002, p. 1.
8. Wife of district governor, 2002 – 2003, Lions Club International District 404 Nigeria, Mrs Funmi Sodipo; Mrs Folunke Akinbi; and Mrs Tawa Runsewe, during Chief Femi Sodipo's presentation in Lagos. *The Punch* 5 August 2002, p. 3. [see fig 36, p. 288]
9. The Catholic bishop of Lagos, Most Rev. Anthony Olubumi Okogie with the director, Lagos Resource Centre, Mrs Bridget Itsueli and her husband, Imo, at the commissioning of the center in Victoria Island Lagos. *The Punch* 4 February 2002, p. 8.
10. Old Students of Egbado College, Ilaro, Ogun state, Capt. Adewole Isola; Mr Tunde Olugbewesa and Mrs Funke Taiwo, during the annual general meeting of the association, in Lagos. *The Punch* 4 February 2002, p. 12.
11. Aviation Minister, **Dr Kema Chikwe** and the executive director of the African Leadership Forum, Mr Ayo Aderinwale, at the regional conference on African women and the New Partnership for African's Development (NEPAD) in Ota, Ogun State. *The Punch* 6 February 2002, p. 7.
12. Executive director corporate services, Nigerian Ports Authority; Prince Victor Agu; flag officer commanding western naval command, Rear Admiral Anthony Okanlawon representing the chief of naval staff and director, operations, Nigerian sippers council, Mrs Grace Obiozor, during a seminar on the survival strategies in the Nigerian maritime industry in Lagos. *The Punch* 25 June 2002, p. 8.
13. Minister for aviation, Mrs Kema Chikwe with the woman leader of the Lagos state chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Mrs Onikckpo Oshodi at the launch of the Voters' Club for women and youths in Lagos. *The Punch* 25 June 2002, p. 52.
14. Deputy managing director, National Oil and Chemical Marketing Plc Mr Vijay Kumar; director of the company, Mrs Busola Talabi; and executive director retails, Mr Srinivasalu Thangapandian, at the presentation of the company's annual report and accounts of 2001, at the Premier Hotel, Ibadan. *The Punch* 26 June 2002, p. 3.

15. Ondo state commissioner for commerce and industry, Mr Olu Adegboro; director finance and administration, Lagos state ministry of commerce and industry, Mrs Adetinuke Balogun and representative of the minister of commerce and industry, Hajia Amuna Lawan, at a seminar on export procedures, documentation and E-commerce organized by Nigerian Export Promotion Council in Lagos. *The Punch* 26 June 2002, p. 5.
16. National coordinator, Care Organisation Publicity Enlightenment (COPE), Mrs Ebunoa Anozie; chief medical director, Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), Prof. Onatolu Odukoya; and head of LUTH Radiodiagnosis department, Dr Gbadebo Awosanya, at a forum in Lagos. *The Punch* 26 June 2002, p. 8.
17. Head women's programme, Shell Petroleum Development Company, Dr Anthonia Adindu and the technical committee member, National Women Peace Group (NAWOPEG) Dr. Sarah Jibril at a press briefing on conflict resolution in Nigeria in Ota, Ogun State. *The Punch* 26 June 2002, p. 42.
18. Managing director and chief executive Gulf Bank plc Mr Babatunde Rogers; general manager business development, Mrs Mosunmola Olawoye and deputy general manager, commercial banking, Mrs Biodun Dada, during a press conference by the bank in Lagos. *The Punch* 28 June 2002, p. 5.
19. New chairman of Ikeja district society of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), Mrs Comfort Olujumoke Eyitayo with her predecessor, Mr Tayo Phillip, at her investiture in Lagos. *The Punch* 28 June 2002, p. 56.
20. Managing director TotalFinaElf Nigeria Plc, Mr Jean Dennis Royere, and chief executive officer, Oceanic Bank, Mrs Cecilia Ibru, during the 24th annual general meeting of TotalFinaElf Nigeria Plc at Lagos. *The Punch* 27 June 2002, p. 3.
21. President, women's organisation (Anglican communion) Province 1 of Nigeria, Mrs Oluranti Ademowo, chairman of the occasion, Chief Olabode Ogunlana and Mrs Sola Dalmida, during the launch of a book *Bedtime Stories for Children* in Lagos. *The Punch* 27 June 2002, p. 5.
22. Ondo state governor Chief Adebayo Adefarati, commissioner for women affairs, Mrs Lydia Olafunmiloye and president women for peace movement, Mrs Fadeke Komolafe, during a call on the governor in Akure. *The Punch* 28 June 2002, p. 6.

The Guardian [N]

23. Lagos state governor Bola Ahmed Tinubu, his wife, Oluremi, house affairs and culture commissioner, Musiliu Obanikoro and women affairs and poverty alleviation commissioner, Kemi Nelson at a special prayer session for victims of penultimate Sunday's bomb explosion in the state. *The Guardian* [N] 4 February 2002, p. 1.[see fig 35 p. 287]

24. Captain Elendu Ukeje, Commondores Emeka Omeruah, Gbolahan Mudashiru (rtd), chief judge of the Federal High Court, Justice Rose Ukeje, Maj.-Gen Ike Nwachukwu (rtd) and Col. Tunde Akagun (rtd), at the thanksgiving services in honour of Justice Ukeje held at our Saviours Church, Lagos. *The Guardian* [N] 4 February 2002, p. 4.
25. Assistant business manager of *The Guardian*, Mrs Nse Okunola receiving some of the gifts on behalf of the victims from Mr Babasanya and Mrs Tani Alfa, Head of Sales Depart. Hotel support. *The Guardian* [N] 4 February 2002, p. 13.
26. Attorney general of Abia State, Awa Kalu, Prince Bola Ajibola, chairman (executive) IGI Group, Mr Remi Oluwude; executive director, IGI, Mrs Shade Adetiba and the Attorney-General, Lagos state, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, at the reception in honour of Ajibola at the Golden Gate Ikoyi, Lagos. *The Guardian* [N] 5 February 2002, p. 96.
27. A girl, who, according to the Lagos state governor, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, lost her power of speech and hearing to the explosion yesterday. *The Guardian* [N] 6 February 2002, p. 1.
28. The late Damilola's parents, Richard and Gloria Taylor, arrive in Old Bailey London for the trial of four youths over the murder. *The Guardian* [N] 6 February 2002, p. 5.
29. Executive consultant advert *The Guardian* [N], Dr Jide Oluwajuyitan, his daughter Oluwatoyin and her husband Sola Ajileye and Mrs Funke Oluwajuyitan at the wedding reception of Oluwajuyitan's daughter held at ACME Road, Ogba Ikeja. *The Guardian* [N] 6 February 2002, p. 7
30. Captain Elendu Ukeje (left), Commondores Emeka Omeruah, Gbolahan Mudashiru (rtd), Chief Judge of the Federal High Court, Justice Rose Ukeje, Maj.-Gen Ike Nwachukwu (rtd) and Col. Tunde Akagun (rtd), at the thanksgiving services in honour of Justice Ukeje held at our Saviours Church, Lagos. *The Guardian* [N] 6 February 2002, p. 6.
31. Lagos state chief judge **Justice Tola Shotiminu** and a professor of commercial and industrial law, **Chioma Agomo** at the opening of a two-day workshop on civil society held at the University of Lagos. *The Guardian* [N] 7 February 2002, p. 6 [Filler].
32. Ecobank executive directors, Mr Patrick Akinwutan, Raymond Tayo, head, of delegation, Red Cross International, Mr Storey and head of bank's customer care, Miss Gomez at the bank's presentation of relief materials to bomb explosion victims in Lagos. *The Guardian* [N] 7 February 2002, p. 14.
33. Chief Okoya-Thomas, Alhaji Rasaq Okoya, **Olotorun Williams** and Dr Gaby Williams at the presentation of the book last week, *The Guardian* [N] 7 February 2002, p. 14.
34. The late Morakinyo, his mother Mrs Modupe Akerele and her brother, Keji during the celebration marking his mother's 50th birthday in May. *The Guardian* [N] 25 June 2002, p. 19.
35. Cross Rivers state governor Donald Duke, the minister of state for science and technology Mrs Pauline Tallen and the state deputy governor Chief John Okpa during the commissioning of a granulated limestone processing plant in Calabar. *The Guardian* [N] 27 June 2002, p. 6.

36. Late Mrs Faderera Akintola .*The Guardian* [N] 5 August 2002, p. 1.
37. Lagos state commissioner for women affairs, Mrs Kemi Nelson, her health counterpart, Dr Leke Pitan, the chief nutrition officer state ministry of health, **Dr Abimbola Ajayi** and the senior programme officer, communication and behaviour change, Mrs Mimi Soyoola during the world breast-feeding week celebration. *The Guardian* [N] 6 August 2002, p. 3.
38. Programme officer, Dr Auwolu Kawu, Mrs Bisi Somefun, lawyer and Dr (Ms) Keziah Awosika, director/coordinator, Women Lawyer and Development Centre at a two day workshop on legal reform held in Lagos. *The Guardian* [N] 7 August 2002, p.13.

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39. Presentation: President National Council of Women Societies (NCWS) Dr Bolere Elizabeth Ketebu Nwokeafor presents the seal of democracy to FCT permanent secretary, Dr Babangida Aliyu, who represented the minister at an occasion recently. *Daily Champion* 6 August 2002, p. 36.
40. Chief (Mrs) Oluremi Tinubu, wife of Lagos state governor, D-G NAFDAC, Dr (Mrs) Dora Akunyili and Chief (Mrs) Opral Benson during a workshop on cosmetic safety for manufacturers, importers and users organised by NAFDAC in Lagos recently. *Daily Champion* 6 August 2002, p. 39. [see fig 39, p. 288]
41. Vice president Atiku Abubakar with Ms Rejoice Mabudafhasi, South African deputy minister of environmental affairs and tourism at the final meeting of the Super Prepcom Committee in Abuja. *Daily Champion* 27 June 2002, p. 5
42. Acting director, public relations ministry of information and national orientation, Mrs Gladys Russel and Chief Olu Falomo, chairman Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) at a one day symposium organised by APCON at Abuja. *Daily Champion* 27 June 2002, p. 6.
43. **Prof. Adebimpe Ike** after being honoured with the title of Ezinne at St Margaret's Church Ndike. With her are Prof Chukwuemeka Ike, Dr Amaeze Ike, Prince Sunday Mbonu and Prince Osita Ike. *Daily Champion* 27 June 2002, p. 16.
44. Mrs Ijeoma Ekeocha of Diamond Bank with Miss Njide Okafor also of Diamond Bank at the dedication of Chukwuzuom Osita, son of Chief Osita Izunaso, executive assistance to Imo state governor on publicity and strategy at Owerri recently. *Daily Champion* 27 June 2002, p. 16 [filler].
45. Mrs Damola Akram, perm-secretary, ministry of youth and social development, Prof (Mrs) Sarah Oloko, director, distance learning institute and Mrs Omolara Osibodu, permanent secretary women affairs at the children's summit to mark 2002, day of the African child organised by Lagos state government recently. *Daily Champion* 27 June 2002, p. 16.
46. Aviation minister Dr (Mrs) Kema Chikwe cuddles little Miss Thelma Asagwara who presented her with flowers on arrival for a workshop on

liberating rural families from ignorance and agricultural training yesterday in Owerri, Imo State. *Daily Champion* 28 June 2002, p. 1. [see fig 37, p. 289]

47. Lagos state deputy governor Mrs Koforola Bucknor-Akerele, Mrs Tilayo Ajanuka, special adviser to the president on women affairs and Prof Grace Alele Williams, former vice chancellor UNIBEN at the third annual lecture of Leaven Club International held in Lagos. *Daily Champion* 28 June 2002, p. 6.
48. Director, National Youth Service Corps, Colonel Water Oki with Chief Mrs Kemi Nelson, Lagos state commissioner for women affairs & poverty alleviation during the launching of NYSC cooperation ventures in Lagos. *Daily Champion* 7 August 2002, p. 8.
49. Wife of the vice-president/founder Women Trafficking and Child labour eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF), Chief Mrs Titi abubakar presents a WOTCLEF banner to Miss Ndueso Soloman UNILAG student to flag off the launching of the campaign against girls' trafficking and female commercials sex workers in campus. With her is the vice chancellor UNILAG, Prof Oye Ibidapo-Obe and Chief Mrs Oluremi Tinubu, wife of Lagos sate governor. *Daily Champion* 7 August 2002, p. 34. [see fig 38, p. 289]
50. Imo first lady, Lolo Theresa Udenwa with her Ebonyi state counterpart, Lady Eunice Egwu during the inauguration of children's parliament and say 'Yes' for children UNICEF A zone organised by the heart-land childcare foundation and UNICEF Nigeria at the multi-purpose hall Owerri. *Daily Champion* 7 August 2002, p. 41.
51. Owerri elders' forum yesterday paid a condolence visit to the widow and family of late Navy captain Anthony Onyearuebulem at his country home. Chief Innocent Nwoga, chairman of the forum consoles Mrs Grace Onyearugbulem on the death of her husband. *Daily Champion* 8 August 2002, p 1.

New Nigerian

52. Lagos state commissioner for education Prof Idowu Shobawale presenting 1st prize award of 1,000 Naira to Miss Otiti Jasmine Ovuewhome of Lagos State Model College, Badore at year 2002, grand finale "Spelling Bee" competition held at Alausa, Ikeja. The 1st prizewinner will become Lagos state governor for a day. Right is Chief Oluremi Tinubu, Lagos state first lady. *New Nigerian* 5 February 2002, p. 19.
53. Director general of Nigeria stock exchange, Dr Ndi Okereke-Onyinke receiving a gift from Acting general manager New Nigeria Development Company (NNDC) Mrs Edna Iyorshe during the director general's visit to the company in Kaduna recently. *New Nigerian* 24 June 2002, p. 12.

54. Mothers waiting for doctor to attend to their children. *New Nigerian* 24 June 2002, p. 2.
55. From right, FCT Minister Engineer Muhammed Abb-Gana, permanent secretary in FCT Ministry Dr Babangida Aliyu and special assistant to the president on FCT matters, Chief (Mrs) Otajumoke Akinjide Balogun at the recent media summit by the ministry in Abuja. *New Nigerian* 24 June 2002, p. 30.
56. Vice-president Atiku Abubakar with South African deputy minister of environmental affairs and tourism Ms Rejoice Mabudafhasi at final meeting of the "Super Prepcom" committee in Abuja *New Nigerian* 27 June 2002, p. 30.

Appendix 16: Full text of Wine, women and taxis for tribesmen with £4m windfall [see fig 33, p. 282]. By Adrian Blomfield *The Daily Telegraph* 28 November 2002, p. 21

KENYAN tribesmen maimed or bereaved by British Army explosives celebrated the arrival of millions of pounds in compensation from the British Government yesterday by going on an enormous binge.

Clad in traditional red blankets, swords strapped to their waists, hundreds of Samburu tribesmen, women and children - some of them missing arms or legs - travelled from their isolated rural homes, walked through the streets of Nanyuki town and crowded into the Standard Chartered Bank.

There staff worked frantically to distribute up to pounds 4.5 million, the amount the Ministry of Defence agreed to pay 228 tribesmen in July after admitting limited liability for the deaths of 76 people killed when they trod on unexploded munitions in a military training zone shared by the British, Kenyan and American armies.
Individual compensation ranged from pounds 8,000 to pounds 270,000. The money is a huge windfall for the Samburus, who usually measure their wealth in cattle.
In a country where 60 per cent of the population earn less than 70p a day, the cattle herders have joined the cream of Kenya's elite. As they emerged from the bank they held one of the biggest parties Nanyuki has ever seen.

The rather staid town, which straddles the Equator, is one of the last bastions of Kenya's dwindling white farmers and is also home to a hotchpotch of British soldiers, tour operators and up and coming black Kenyans.
The arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi and the actors John Hurt and Stephanie Powers have lived in the town. Prominent among Nanyuki's visitors in the past 10 years have been Prince William and Osama bin laden.

But yesterday belonged to the Samburu. First they went shopping, swapping their rubber-tyre sandals for the best footwear Nanyuki had to offer and buying up vast quantities of clothes. The young men hit the bars, drinking heavily and eating copious quantities of goat meat from ten in the morning.
Many of them handed over large quantities of cash for clapped-out vehicles, saying they planned to start transport businesses. They did not seem to care that few, if any, possessed a driving licence.

Battery-powered radios and bedding were also in high demand and prostitutes descended from miles around. There were fears that the huge influx of money would cause local inflation.

Some of those who received compensation had attended a two-week course sponsored by Standard Chartered to teach them to use the money wisely. Most had not.
"The town was full of Samburus and prostitutes," a white resident said. "They ate all the meat, drank all the beer, slept with all the women then buggered off, singing, in 30 clapped-out old taxis."

Appendix 17 Sample of part of a UK dialogue group transcript

K: Thank you very much for coming. [Explained the purpose of the discussion. Women introduced themselves and discussed their general media pattern]

P. Even though I get most of my information from the media, there is also this suspicion that it is not rounded enough, there is always this bias, I feel their perspective are often so politically slanted. We don't report things if it doesn't suit the political mood of today. So I am always searching for the other side of the story, which is not available to me. I discovered that through my travels in all my conversations that the other side is not always available to me at all.

L: My perception of the media is quite selective because a lot of what we are presented, we have been given various perspectives and slants and I think if you want to gather a true picture of things you have to look elsewhere besides the media for true picture of what's going on in the world. My image of the media is one of being slanted and selective as well in issues.

K: Have you ever had the opportunities of discussing what you read from the newspapers with friends, among colleague, or whoever?

H: I think Mugabe does quite a lot, where I work at the moment; there is a white Zimbabwean there. I think people question a bit but they just eat out what the media dish out to them.

K: And what does the media dish out?

L: A very violent society, oppressed people and dying of Aids and yet refusing to accept it.

K: And is that the views you have about other African countries or just Zimbabwe?

H: Well most of the African countries are presented as having problems with governance and in drought and famine.

P: There is this relationship between sports and politics, between politics and the media, look at the cricket issue should they go or shouldn't they and why and why not, it is very complex. if we start talking you would see how much we don't really know, well it is quite easy to say, he is a monster, he is a tyrant, we are not going to play there and we had the same about S. Africa at the time of apartheid, boycott the sports...

K: Have you ever discussed African women?

P: Well personally I do not see African women as particularly different from any other women. I think the relationship between the African women and the men in Africa and the political system in Africa is quite interesting. But in many ways from my perspective, no more different than the Saudi Arabian relationship with the men in their lives, the interest of what makes that society tick is all customs and norms especially Africa. Look at this poor woman who is accused of adultery under the sharia law, you know such a thing in a secular country just makes us wonder.

K: What would consider the relationship between African women and their men?

P: Well I did know one Senegalese African woman quite well, and she was a very strong woman and she was my first real sitting round the table- have a cup of tea, spend the weekend friend. I was very surprised within myself that she was as open and strong, as politically minded as well informed, I thought she was wonderful and then of course in her tribe the hierarchy allowed the female to lead the tribe. Which I think is quite different here as the women in this country had to fight for a share of a say in the world. Well this is only one part of Africa and I believe there could be varied customs from one tribe to another in Africa. I mean we get media sensationalism here, female circumcision, Aids, famine, drought...(*Others concurring*)

L: We get a lot of negative image from the media. I must say that my snippets of information about Africa and African women are maybe short sighted. Again, I would dispute the veracity of the material that I am being provided with as well. ...Source of information is really snippets here and there and I do not know how accurate if you put all that together, my understanding of African woman is.

K: It is that understanding that I want to know. If you think of an African woman what comes to your mind?

E: Very strong. Quite strong.

L: I'll say that myself. Very very strong.

P: Beautiful. When I think of the massai women, with all their beautiful decorated robes and the bead

K: Where do such images come from?

P: From the magazines and newspapers for example. I grew up with images of painted tribal men and women of the statuesque proud royalty, because they were wonderful images and photographs.

E: It doesn't mean that they have anything to do with the everyday life but they are just there. Indeed more of the horrendous things I have read show they have no representation of everyday life at all. So I grew with these images through my teens etcetera.

K: When you talk about the word tribe, what do you mean by that?

P: The idea of a tribe is maybe a group of people who were perhaps dynastically related, have common great grand father, etc a close community of people, who has some kind of cooperation existing in a particular space of mind.

H: To me tribe tribal you get a very traditional point of view. A kind of feudal society, thatched houses, you don't equate it with modern society.

P: You talk about media images, very recently on the TV there is this clips of this woman with a great sense of tribal identity, and she was asked whether she was prepared to die for her beliefs, she is neither young nor old, she is proud and she said, I will die for my culture my country and my tribe. She was in a kind of rural setting and she said it very strongly and she was just standing there in very poor clothes, but the fact that she spoke such English in such setting make you think, and I thought 'what a woman' strong and proud and articulate.

L: One of the things I was thinking about when I looked at the clippings you gave us, I am a bit concerned about polarising images as well and I think

that is what we get from our newspapers here, but when you look at the newspaper in Nigeria there is a polarizing there. They emphasised the dichotomy between the western negative views and possibly a kind of over romantisation of the homeland as well. And I think there is the danger of doing that and I think possibly in the middle somewhere is the truth of that, the reality of the African woman.

H: The Nigerian papers are like the local papers, but like any kind of image, I think it is subjective. Perhaps constructed to make a good photograph.

K: So what would you consider the dominant images portrayed of the African woman in the newspapers in Britain?

E: It is negative. I must say the overall image is that of negativity. - HIV, poverty, deprivation, oppression, patriarchal rule and of very oppressive regimes and judiciary system that penalises women for something like adultery for example, I mean all those things come together and present an overall negative image. I think that we look at the dichotomy between that and the women presented in the Nigerian newspapers, somewhere in between is the real African woman.

P: As a family woman not just a mother, someone that look at the family values...

K: What would you call the African family values?

P: I think that I don't know, but when we see the images of famine and starvation, whom do we see with the children? I have never seen the man with any child of any age, I see the woman. I don't know whether that is because the man is trying to do something else or having a good time, but again that may be just a media thing. I see her trying to pick up the pieces here, trying to look after her children in the conflict, trying to protect her family from starvation, I do see the African woman as a strong woman but there is that sense of family that whatever happens, she is the one who's going to bring up the children, trying to do the right thing.

L: Wouldn't you say that is true with women in all societies and all cultures actually?

P: That may be true, but when for example you think of an American woman, would you see her as a family woman? You see her as a career woman or something like that.

L: I was actually looking at the similarities and the differences in those images we are presented with. If I were to use a Marxist frame analysis, then there are striking similarities between if you like between pre capitalist society and also African society as was portrayed in the fighting of the women against the great multinationals. It echoed what was or still happening in this country as well. They are the similarity and it is greatly economic similarities

P: From what I read there I think it is really daring for thousands of women to come together and to actually say hey stop this, or we are going to remove our clothes, I thought that was extraordinary (*laughter*).

L: It was wonderful and I thought of the cultural difference, here I don't think it will make any impart.

H: If you wonna remove your clothes here, everybody will clap and say carry on, they call the press for you, but in the end, you do not achieve anything. But in Nigeria, it would be absolutely so much for the men to see the nakedness of the women, here they would say ok fine.

K: Why the difference?

H: I think in Nigeria there is so much respect for mothers and women and grand mothers. People in the community would be upset to see the nakedness of these mothers and grand mothers.

K: And here?

L: Even if it offends some people, you'd find people arguing for the right to be nude, if you want to. They would see it not as a taboo or a weapon, but that it makes the women comfortable to do so, so let them.

E: But how does this reconcile with that image of the African woman that is always bare breasted, scantily clad with a spear in her hand. I am confused actually.

A: Me too, I have always thought African women do not mind being naked.

P: I have become accustomed to this image of the African woman walking bare-breasted; it is really liberating having to do that.

L: They have such lovely breasts; I wouldn't dare to do that after having four children! (*general laughter*).

P: It is the liberation that intrigues me. But in other pictures I have seen other African women who obviously have very little money wearing old bras and nasty second hand clothes covering themselves, so why are they doing that? Maybe they have realised that it is obviously not acceptable not to cover yourself.

H: May be in different areas it is acceptable and in others it is not, but when I was in Nigeria and I and Ugo were going around I didn't see any naked women. I think we are presented some of the photographs we see in the press out of context.

A: How you dress would depend on what you are doing doesn't it?

H: You wouldn't go to Africa and just take your clothes off would you? And to think that some of the African countries are Islamic! (*general laughter*).

E: Yet, there are so many of them in the media. I think it is something to do with women being seen as used for reproduction. They are shown breastfeeding the children.

K: Why are such images not then used for all women for example the western woman is hardly shown while breastfeeding the child.

L: It is really contradiction and the dichotomy within the western woman, there is the Madonna and the whore, and never should the two meet. There is the one of the body as nurturing and that of the sexually objectified being

P: It is very hard to breastfeed a child in the restaurant when the man across over is looking at the page three girl in *The Sun*. It is an impossible situation.

H: It is just not an acceptable image, you don't get that image for a western woman breastfeeding her baby.

K: That is exactly what I want to know. I want to know why.

E: I think it shows the poverty; there is famine in African and each time it is shown with images of the women sitting in poor environment, breastfeeding the babies with breasts that you see that is obviously far from healthy.

L: It is a kind of negative image isn't it?

E: Yeah obviously to show they cannot afford any other form of food for their children except the breast that contains so little.

L: My personal views on that is that the women are being made commodities. When I see such images, I feel like a commodity. Always reminds me of the page three girl.

K: So what do you think of the women in the Nigerian newspapers?

L: I thought them to be high profile women but what is very significant is that they are almost always next to a man, a situation that makes me wonder whether they make the news because of the powerful men they are next to who have high political profile. It was interesting and intriguing because I didn't know how true that was because I have not lived in that culture. Again it is a representation and the image we are fed with. So I don't know how true that representation is. Part of my training is to be analytical, to analyse not to take images on face value.

P: I came to the same conclusion myself because there is a totally lack of faith in people who are trying to give you information.

K: Does the images of African women you have mentioned e.g. aids, HIV, tell you any thing about them?

H: I think the way they are portrayed is more like victims; victims of say another person's sexual promiscuity.

K: Another person?

H: Their husbands

E: Yes there is that image of promiscuity. All the photographs of Aids seem to suggest that Africa is a promiscuous society.

P: I see those images too, but certainly, I haven't believed it. It is reported in the press of the rampart of Aids in S. Africa and a government that obviously doesn't care about it or is it a question of not having the money to fight the disease. Recently there is the idea that perhaps Aids is being spread by poor medical practice. Needles for example, but again showing a very unhygienic society, or do we come back to poverty again. Or do we turn back and say, there isn't enough to go round and that is why they have to reuse needle, for example? Or is it poor medical practice?

K: You made this comment about Nigerian women in the photographs always beside some men in some exalted positions, why did that come to your mind?

L: Well because I think I see ourselves as having more choice than the Nigerian woman on whether to be married or not, to be Mrs or not. But it doesn't seem to be the case for the Nigerian woman. I may be wrong, but the society seem to place more emphasis on the title of Mrs. it may not

be how it is necessarily, but I got the kind of impression form the newspapers.

K: Are there women here who are not married but who are genuinely yearning to be married.

All: Absolutely.

A: There are many such women, women who want to be married, have children and have a career as well. But it is simply not happening like that. There are more and more single people. We are overpopulated by single people.

E: And this is a bit of crisis.

L: I think legally, we are discriminating less against single people. We are much more aware of the different kinds of families and the different kinds of units and we are changing our legislation in this country to accommodate these differences. I think we have a long way to go in terms of conceptualising homosexual couples and legitimising that through legal change.

P: I think the last men's club has changed to women are welcome as well. The last male dominated bastion of society. In last 10 or 20 years, yes there was obvious discrimination, but not now.

K: But you can still feel it thick in the air?

H: Actually there are some of my friends, they have a partner or something and when they say they are not able to have children, I feel quite sorry for them. Not have that security or that richness in their lives, many because out of their choice. You may feel that they do not have the good life you think they should have but it might be the way they choose to live.

L: I think what we have is the idea that we are left to our choices. Unfortunately, I think it is quite an illusion that we have such choices particularly for women who think that, who bought the idea that we could have children and we could also have careers.

P: The super woman!

H: I mean it is too much (*laughter*).

L: We didn't realise that. We wouldn't have ended up having it all actually.

P: There was this research on the three hundred top professional women in America, and all but two of them had lost something along the way.

K: May be the ones they lost are the things they were ready to relinquish. It is a matter of choice?

P: That is quite a hard one because you are coming to the perception of the man of his woman as her role changes before his very eyes. I mean you have some wonderful men I mean somebody like Dennis Thatcher who was a wonderful consort. He never got in the way. And many men may ridicule his role but I think he was wonderful, for not interfering. But that was a very unusual man. [There followed a discussion of how men feel their masculinity threatened when they are to do some kind of jobs and especially when they are not working and the woman is working]

H: I think when you say the woman working and the man not, I was just thinking the other day of the amount of couples I know now when say

the woman is probably the major breadwinner and the man, he works but not there is a slight disparity when the woman is slightly pulling ahead and the man is not doing much, pennywise.

E: Some people call it househusband.

L That is different thing you know. That is a different thing entirely because when you talk of a woman being economically more advanced than her husband, has better prospects, earning more money and her husband is still working, he is not necessarily going to be a good househusband, he is actually hanging on to what he sees as his dignity.

K: What do you call a househusband?

L: A househusband would be actually a husband who is prepared to stay at home doing the chores of looking after the children.

K: Do you think it is a comfortable arrangement?

L: I have actually lived that.

K: How did you find it?

L: It came with its conflicts and tensions basically and I think in addition to class issue, there are different notions of masculinity and it becomes a little more complicated than just a role reversal.

K: Were you comfortable with it yourself?

L: I was and I wasn't. It was conflictual for me. I mean it was wonderful and I didn't recognise the obstacles that would be there and the tensions. And I sort of worked out the framework theoretically, but living it was completely different. And my partner is from a middle class background and ideally he would have no problem as well as his masculinity would not be threatened and because he came from a sensitive and artistic background, he was threatened. His masculinity was threatened. And my femininity was threatened as well. For example, I would be jealous when I came home and they were having a great time and he was managing it very very successfully. I never imagined that I would have those feelings but I would feel like the outsider. And undermined as well. And I do feel sometimes that he was too full like a woman. Too feminine.

P: It is a real dichotomy, that we want men to do that but we want them also to remain in our eyes very masculine.

H: We complain that they don't do enough to help but if they did and did it well, it will be like I am cooking the dinner, you know, sorry I am doing it.

P: I am in the business world and most of the successful men I have ever come across have had wonderful wives.

K: what do you consider, a wonderful wife?

P: In that context, supportive, non competitive, and I think he needed to do this and she supported him.

H: She keeps out, not challenging him.

P: Yes non competitive, and who perhaps worked but in a different environment. Very good in charities and things like that. I mean both of them are not threatening. I mean they are both busy.

K: You have both looked at Nigerian and British newspapers. Is there any particular difference you notice in them in their presentation of women?

L: Well to reiterate what I had said about the polarity that is represented, I felt there was a preponderance of either this very positive images of women or this very very negative of women. Somewhere between there is possibly the truth about the ordinary woman, the ordinary Nigerian woman. I couldn't obviously because I am not an African woman to anyway identify to a very large extent, with these images that are presented to me. Except I guess the women who are uprising who were picketing and who are fighting for their families. I could identify with that issue. But they were political. Those are political economic things and I felt there was a universalism in that. They weren't very different from my history for example. And the western history of womanhood. And that made me aware that I am looking for similarities as well as differences as well. The work that I do, I come from a very woman focused perspective and I am always looking for the commonalities between women, even there may be differences in their experiences, differences in their class, their education, and there are cultural differences as well. And there are commonalities and there are obviously differences that need to be catered for as well. The main commonality was this woman, that ordinary woman what is her experiences, who is she? And of course we are all women and as long as we are women our experiences are often not good and I could imagine that is to be a similar experience because in yours I see again this polar images.

H: But are we news worthy? We are news worthy only when something happens to us or we are thrust into the news because they want to make a point. And I suppose if there is a murder in the family, they will simply point to certain kind of economic factors, social factors, class factors and they will kind of build up some kind of stereotype picture and you'd become one of the stereotype anyway.

P: If we move into the Victoria Climbié case, I mean there was an insight there into the culture that I would long for as a person, where your child belongs not just to you but also to the world.

H: It is very common for children in Africa to be placed in families as houseboy or house girls and they are there to do the numerous chores like sweeping the compound, washing up may be even looking after the small children. And in exchange for that, the family looks after her child, pays school fees for the child because his family couldn't afford it. By and large, that is a system that works absolutely fine

L: But it didn't on this occasion. And I ask what went wrong? And I think that what went wrong, well I don't really know but superficially I think we had a clash of culture. One culture misconceiving the intention of somebody else who was supposed to be a relative but has been indoctrinated and pressurised, I am assuming, because of the pressures of that specific western society, into having a particular perspective and you had that clash there and obviously that child was lost amongst that clash of culture.

P: I would have thought though that in a different culture, in a more African culture anyway, that there would have been a greater tendency for the

good Samaritan in a community, in other words, something is going wrong someone says something and not to wait for the red tape, some ridiculous long process.

L: That is what we do in this country. We have been systemised, haven't we? It has become a system-operated process so we all have handed over the process to the professionals.

A: But we have to help the professionals.

L: Of course we do, the individuals have to.

P: We know we should, but we don't. We turn a blind eye; we think it is not our business.

L: This goes to the heart of what happens in a capitalist society where we've moved away from the community and belonging to a group and we become more individualised. And at the end of these individual units we are only responsible for our small little worlds and ourselves. At our costs.

P: We don't care for our parents anymore. We keep them in homes. It is an abdication of our responsibility to our parents. It is an extraordinary society in which we live. And the clash of culture must be marked in that way.

K: How do you think the press presented the story? What is your perception about it?

L: I think there were interesting kinds of clashes about how you would deal with these perpetrators of the crime. And we lie to ourselves in the west as being kind of quite lenient, yet it is interesting that we talk of harsh statements to other people like the woman who committed adultery and we were saying here that there isn't anybody who has read the story of Victoria that wouldn't want to hang these people too. So there is a contradiction in our attitude

A: Perhaps that reaction was because of the way the stories were presented in the press.

H: I think the major thing was that it is the responsibility of the parents. I mean it was like you sent your daughter, didn't you ever check up on her, didn't you ever ring her? Didn't you ever contact her?

E: Yes blaming the parents, asking how can they give her to somebody they do not know very well.

L: This again is cultural difference. We are not going to do that and we are not doing that.

H: There was one question I remembered they asked, they said, "do you feel responsible (they were asking the parents) do you feel responsible for what happened to your daughter and they said no. And to western society, that would be wao, sorry you are responsible for your children. So there is the general reaction that we are not that responsible, because the parents got the responsibility, which they were not upholding.

L: What made it more interesting was because of the cultural differences.

P: I think again it was partly because of the professional neglect and the problems within our system have been highlighted. I know it has definitely been put on my desk to look at so that we learn the lessons

from this particular case. And I know that all practitioners in childcare and protection will see this as a case in which we have to learn a lesson from it. So I think it was highlighted obviously because of the cultural differences and also because of our values and how it is viewed in the western, we are highly individualised and we don't take responsibility.

P: But that's where I think lots of lessons have to be learned. You can just leave it to the system when the person next-door cannot even tell you, or isn't interested in what is going on.

L: I think it had the high profile because she was from Africa. And people were intrigued about the cultural dimension.

P: Well I think the parents said something like, I gave her over to you and it is your system. When she went over there that was your responsibility.

L: I think that Victoria's parents were under the misapprehension that she would get a better education, she would have a better life and that is what I think is what we say, what capitalism sends to other countries. It sends the notion that you'd be better educated, you'd have the opportunity in order to thrive as a person in our society and they bought that and they are not responsible for that, they were sold that, that was the image and representation that they were given of the west.

H: Exactly.

L: That the child would benefit. And as good parents that wanted the children's interests at heart, if one child could have the opportunity of bettering her life, would have a better life, a better opportunity. They bought that and we let them down, all of us. All of us in this society did.

P: And that includes our media. We need to take responsibility of that as well.

A: Of course how can wash off our hands, when we are part of it, sometimes we see a paper and say this is the telegraph, this is the guardian so everything must be true and everything must be just.

H: But I think it takes a lot, it takes a lot, a lot is driven by money. Selling papers, getting stories. It doesn't matter what it is any more, we need to sell. We need to tell people what they already know and we need to reinforce it. So that they feel that what they are reading is true, because o yes, we already know this about Africa and we are glad to see that they have hardly changed, their children are all pot bellied.

L: The media are quite manipulative to distort people's perception of reality and we still fall for that. The whole issue of Miss World for example is all part of that, distorting part of the reality.

H: Basically just looking at these images now, all it does is reinforce our feelings and makes us feel safe, because we feel we are superior.

P: That they are actually potbellied - is that what you are saying, I mean I don't actually believe that but I can see what you are saying.

H: But from these images, they reinforce our main thinking that Africa is ruled mainly by military people, they haven't got the brain to think, they just lie up in rooms and this African girl came over here because she was so thrilled by the way we live. We are superior and we are superior, well not that we are superior but that is what it is telling us.

L: Yes, yes and we need to believe that don't we because that is part of individualism, part of the capitalist thing.
H: We are just made to feel so superior.
K: I want to know what you think particularly about the scenario created by those pictures.
P: I think one of the disturbing images is the child with the gun.
K: How do you read that?
P: Well I read that image as betrayal of childhood, a culture that is ruled by violence or the need to have an upper hand in a potentially violent situation and the culture that allows it; there must be something fundamentally wrong with a culture that allows the children to walk around with a gun. We had it a lot in Columbia. There is something fundamentally wrong with the cultures and norms that allow it. What allows these things to happen is the educational system. There can't be a very good one that allows this to happen.
E: Of course if there were the children should be in school, we would say.
P: There is something terribly wrong in training innocent young youths to use such violent weapons of destruction.
A: It tells you African society is a very violent society
P: It makes me very worried. Just as an aside, my older children have travelled out quite a bit and they were talking about going to Africa and I asked them, do you still think of Africa as the Dark Continent? Yes, I said that because that is what we have conditioned to believe that Africa is a dark continent. It is I think about understanding the many cultures that are there. But I think we are a little bit afraid.
E: Yes we are.
H: I mean, I remember someone said to me once, Africa is such a violent place and I said to him, no wait a minute, London is far more violent than any place I have been in Africa so far as far as I knew.
P: But I have a friend who has been to Africa and he says you see a body in the morning and in the evening, it is still there, I mean that is a little disturbing when you are not used to such things.
K: Where did he see the body?
P: In Zimbabwe. I haven't been there; well this is going back to the 60s. This perception I am afraid has stuck with me.
H: I think that if you see such a body in Africa that would be unusual because people are far more connected family wise and may not allow the body to be there for long, even if there is no one's responsible to remove the corpse.
L: You are probably right. That is the kind of feelings I have that the images we get in the media are far more sensationalised.
E: They are. They are.
L: They are obviously being blown out of proportion. The work I do if I tell you how many figures I get the case I have to do and yet they are downplayed in the media.
K: If your husband batters you how do you take it, what do you do?
P: Most women would just put up with it actually.

K: They will?

L: They have a lot of reasons why they do, well they feel the law would not protect them and it hasn't protected them. Because of being seen as private and domestic. There are probably as many reasons to put up with it as many women who are battered. Usually few women have the financial independence. It's complicated.

E: Sometimes it is to protect her family.

H: Yes it is it is.

L: What do you do about it in Africa?

K: That is part of what I'd find out with the groups in Nigeria.

L: I have this African Caribbean woman, she is my co-worker and we work with many Somalian women as well, there is a universality that no woman would have to live her life around the fear of being beaten up. That is just not acceptable. What they do about it is quite different often what they do is they try to protect their family.

L: You want to protect the children from going to the courts, by being cross-examined by strangers. There aren't many mothers who would opt to do that.

P: But they need to do that because statistically what we know is that the protection women get is through the criminal justice system.

L: Often women put up with a lot especially when there are children involved. We know there are the long term and short-term implication for children where there are domestic violence.

K: Do you think a woman who is economically empowered could take bolder steps to leave the husband?

ALL: Absolutely.

P: I experienced domestic violence myself and I developed a strategy to become economically independent over a period of time. That was my way of dealing with it, because I wasn't going to put up with it, but I had to put up with it because I had no money at the time. And I was prepared to do that. But I am a strategist and I just built one that I know would take me to where I would be. (Went on about some of the coping strategies women use to cope with domestic violence. And how the threat to leave makes the men more violent.)

P: His only weapon, which is the weapon that has kept him on top, is power, is being taken to another level, because men like these are not very strong really. Therefore, the only weapon they have is violence really. When it goes to another level, you may be killed.

K: But I thought women here have more rights.

P: No. You are still dealing with a predominantly patriarchal system.

H: I mean I have been told several times, that you can't leave, if you leave, you have lost everything.

K: I was under the impression that if you have a separation or a divorce, that the man leaves the house.

H: That is if you can get him to leave.

P: You really can't get a man to leave the house who doesn't really want to.

L: This country hasn't actually protected women and children from the perpetrators of domestic violence. There have been some changes in policy; they are actually treating domestic violence as a crime. If it is seen as a crime, it will be treated very strongly. (Went on the say some of the structures only put in place in places like Cardiff to protect the women)

K: So would you consider a good husband?

E: A man who doesn't raise his hands to hit his wife, a man that provides for his family, equal and common interest and able to laugh together, I am afraid that I won't want a man that I'd provide for.

ALL: You are perfectly right.

K: What would you consider a perfect wife?

H: An ideal wife has no intelligence has no sense of achievement. Because anything else is gonna be such a conflict in your own life and in your family life for it is very difficult when you combine the two especially in the eyes of a man. You need to be completely compliant.

K: How do you see an African woman in relation to her partner, to her husband, you know.

E: I actually see the African woman as being quite dominant in her relationships.

K: What gave you that impression?

E: Because African women always seem to appear so strong.

K: Is there any particular image you've seen that makes you think so?

E: The black mama (others concurred)

P: The matriarch.

K: That's a slave image you know.

L: Yeah but it is still here. We still think African women are still so strong.

H: It is still very dominant.

P: Actually if you looked at another film like The Colour purple, then you can see another aspect of life as a black woman. It is an excellent film, quite old now, because it shows another aspect of life as a black woman who was incestuously involved with her father, had a child by her father. It is a wonderful story. I saw it as very deeply moving.

K: What does it tell you about the African woman?

L: Well all those things all those connotations, if you put all these together, they are the discourses of dysfunction.

K: What's dysfunction?

E: Very primitive.

L Yes, primitive society. They need the western order to come in, just like Victoria Climbié did. I can imagine to some extent that the Nigerian woman, the ordinary woman doesn't know who she is because we don't hear about her, we don't hear her voice, we don't see her represented. She would be looking at this just as we are and she will be wondering who am I, looking at it just as we are and she hears the voice of the west calling you and you send your child like Victoria was sent.

H: Of course she will be confused. Because we are confused really, I mean that's what all of it shows, who is the ordinary African woman. Both the British and Nigerian media present what we think is an extreme versions.

L: Wouldn't you say though that the material state is not a natural human state, our emphasis on material belongings, isn't it natural state of humanity, isn't it nature that we much more aspire, we see this lovely picture in the village with a thatched hut and you say to yourself whoa, this is gorgeous. Because when you see nature and naturalistic as well, well to be that conjures some connotations as well. I want to deconstruct everything. (*General laughter*)

K: Are you saying that Africans are in tune with nature?

L: Yea that is a dominant conception.

K: And you are uncomfortable with that?

L: Yes because again to me it means backwardness, primitiveness.

P: Well the happiest part of my life is when I am in the garden, when I make jam

K: Could I please hear your comments on the new scripts I gave you?

E: I like this one very much (Showing the pix of the Sambure girls from Kenya **[fig. 33 in thesis]**

K: Why?

E: Because they are smiling. I mean in all these pictures here, the women looked sad and unhappy. This is the only picture where they seem happy.

K: Did you read the cutline and some of the story?

E: (She takes a look at them and "she reads out the cutline "sambure girls in traditional dress. ...wild celebration"

K: What do you make of the term?

E: It creates an impression of dancing and singing, and prostituting.

L: But I do like their clothes. They are gorgeous.

E: Do the clothes call to mind a notion of tribe you have?

P: Well they are in their party clothes having fun, it would be suitable for them there but not here.

L: It will be too cold *(general laughter)*

K: When pictures like these appear most of the time, do the media give you the context?

P: No, we get the impression that that is the way African women dress and look like, but I think I am a bit cleverer than that! (*Laughter*). There is this picture here where she is wearing more of western type of clothing that is the woman suffering from aids. She cannot provide for her children. That is a family image.

K: How do the pictures portray the African women?

P: Always with her children, like I said, the family image

E: In hardship – very hard conditions.

L: They are a whole wide of negative images, poverty, famine, drought,

H: There are too many kind of white eyes looking at her like this which is a very stereotypical image especially of black people in general because that was also an image that was used from slavery, this sort of black but

white eye and the white eye is always seen as sort of innocence, appealing, very cunning image.

L: This is always a wonderful photograph, the woman with the wrinkles. **[Fig 30 in thesis]** The image I see here is that which for long has been considered a classic. And she is waiting for food as the UN predicts famine. Well it is awful to say we have seen a lot of these images of old women just trying to make their way, going to where the food might be because that is all they can do. And I think it is terribly sad but I think is becoming stereotyped. And we've seen so many of these images over the years for us to truly understand what's going on. We don't live that kind of life and we have no concept of starvation. We have no idea of what it is like not to eat when you are hungry.

E: We don't even know whether this is a reality, that's the other thing.

P: In this particular case we don't know but there has been famine and we have given out of guilt and that we feel that we should, that as Christians that we should but we have no idea what it is like, we do not want to experience even a day of famine. We have no concept of these people are going through. And so when we look at the Nigerian newspapers, we like the healthy gorgeously dressed women because they do not threaten us in any way.

H: I am particularly irked by the picture that is supposedly an award-winning picture, showing the Gabon boy, [Appendix 21 **Fig 8**] which they termed a typical Gabon boy. And I wonder giving such pictures an award, isn't that forming our views? I mean these are children obviously playing in old clothes and they showed it to us as how typical of them, I mean Africans.

L: And this photo of a boy with gun is particularly disturbing. [see Appendix 7 **Pix 8**] This is a betrayal of childhood and a culture ruled by violence or to have an upper hand in a potentially violent situation – a culture that allows that is fundamentally wrong and it questions the educational system of such a society. What is that boy doing out of school?

Appendix 18: Sample of part of a Nigerian dialogue group transcript

K: Thank you very much for coming and being part of this research. [Explained what the discussion is all about and the women introduced themselves. Th y also discussed thie rmedia use pattern].

K: Do you get to discuss news about what happens in the country or anywhere else with people?

ALL: Yes. We do.

B: Especially the breaking ones happening.

K: Have you ever discussed news about women?

ALL: Of course.

K: What exactly do you talk about?

M: For me, what I notice about these media especially the electronic media, most of the advertisements are usually dwell more on the women and sort of degrades the women. Even when the advertisements have nothing to do with women, she is brought in nude, half naked. Even for a male wristwatch to be on a male hand a nude lady is brought in. The ways they are making these things are so degrading to women.

K: Have you ever discussed news about women that you have come across?

A: There was this story about a woman that led a group, a gang of armed robbers. The way it was portrayed, the group of ladies that were part of it. And we were then saying that if it was a man, the press wouldn't have carried it the way they did. In the case of the lady, they kind of were asking, how can a lady allow herself to be used to lead the group of armed robbers? How can she? She should be damned. You know the kind of language that was used was very degrading to the women folk. Unlike if you read about men, which is always there on the pages of the newspapers, they don't use that kind of language.

B: For me I have come across stories on women that maltreat their maids. I have read the story about a woman that poured hot water on the maid because she offended her one way or the other. I think it is trying to warn women that do such things to desist.

C: The issue is that when the men are part of the maltreatment, they always portray women as the daredevils.

B: The one I read, the husband was not around when the woman poured hot water on the maid.

K: What was done to the woman.

B: At the time I read it the woman was arrested. I didn't follow it up to find out what eventually happened.

C: I wanted to come in because most of the time, they portray women as daredevils like I rightly said but then, I equally read a similar thing about men, but the women are excessively portrayed in bad light. Negative things, which are done by both sexes, attract more attention when it is a woman that is involved.

K: From what you have been saying, most of the stories you hear or read of women are negative. Have you ever tried to look at the cultural implications of that? For example, what does it tell you about what the society thinks of their women?

B: Yes.

K: So from the news what do you think Nigerian society thinks about their women?

B: In Nigeria, women assume and are given a second position. And kind of serve the men. They are inferior that is why they are given a second position when compared to the men. And culturally that is how a woman is placed in the core African society. A woman is not supposed to come out and say anything and that is why you have the adage, which says that a woman is normally seen not heard. This is because she is always kept in the background where culturally they are said to belong.

C: Sometimes they are neither seen nor heard.

B: Yes sometimes they are neither seen nor heard. They are there at the background; they are not expected to air their views. And our men, they see our women as being childish in their ideas. Because I have come across men say that a woman's talk is always sentimental, that most of the time she talks from the heart rather than from her head. That is, that a woman is not objective in her decision-making or in her ideas, that she would always be sentimental when bringing up her ideas. And that is why in the core African society, a woman is not called up to discuss any general issues, unless it is an issue that concerns women folk. That is where the women would gather and talk. That is how culture made it. And you know it is very difficult for we African women to break ourselves from that cultural bondage. I call it bondage, because the situation is not supposed to be so.

M: Just like the example someone gave about the woman who leads the gang of robbers

A: Yes the way the media presented her is not the way they presented her male counterpart.

M: Because they feel that a woman should be different. It is only the men who have rights to be truants and a woman like Caesar's wife should be above board. There are different standards for both men and women.

A: Look at the issue of prostitution. When they write about prostitution in our papers, the way they portray women, sometimes you begin to wonder whether it doesn't take two to tango.

B: I think why it is so, is that in African societies, a woman is expected to uphold morals.

C: And what about the men, they don't uphold morals?

M: They keep saying we are in a man's society.

K: Are we?

ALL: But of course.

A: I think in our society, men are to say what's to be done and women simply do what they are asked.

C: I think our African society portray the virtuous woman like in the bible. So a woman is supposed to comport herself very well knowing that posterity is on her. And this is drilled into her from the nuclear family into the society. So whatever she does is seen to affect the whole society.

A: So what you are saying is that like in the celebrated cases of Amina Lawal and Safiya, that because they were women, that is why it follows that they are the ones to be killed.

C: I followed that story with keen interest. I think our Moslem sister would be able to enlighten us more on that. I was too touched how a woman should be paraded like that as if she committed so grievous an offence when a man impregnated her and she has a child to show for it. And how would you stone her and stuffs like that when you haven't brought the man to book.

M: Actually the man she accused of being responsible said that he was not the one; that he didn't have anything to do with her.

C: And that is enough to exonerate him?

M: Do you know that during our time, things are not really supposed to be practiced the way the are supposed. Because during the prophet's time, all the cases of adultery, the people took themselves to him and confessed, and even then, you just don't hasten to carry out the punishment.

K: How many people were killed during Mohammed's time?

M: The one I can remember was the one that confessed she committed adultery. I think she came up to four times. Even then, it was ascertained whether she is insane. In this case, it was people that took her. But in Mohammed's time all the cases were self- confession.

C: Are you saying that in the sharia court that there is no punishment for the man?

M: Had it been the man agreed that he is guilty....

C: Then it could have been dismissed as an immaculate conception! So how could she have carried a baby without a man being responsible?

M: But was she stoned?

ALL: Because of the international and public outcry.

M: Had it been that the man accepted, it would have been both of them.

S: One thing I do know is that in our society, the woman's biology is her destiny. A woman gets pregnant and not a man and she cannot hide that pregnancy and like a popular saying goes, every dog eats shit, but it is one that eats and carries in the mouth that becomes called a eater of shit. So for a woman, the evidence is always there.

K: What I am just wondering is why we keep having similar stories – if we begin to count on our fingers – they are just negative. Could you recount the positive things about women you remember in the media?

M: Like the case of the Niger Delta women from Ijaw that attacked the oil company – I can see the boldness of these women. Most of the activities of these companies are really causing disasters in those areas. It affects the crops, land, I think these companies, and they don't have social responsibilities. When you are getting something from the land, you are supposed to give something back. So it is courageous for the women to take it upon themselves to remind the companies to do their duties to the society.

A: There is the story I read from the Guardian newspapers – about one of the directors of Zenith bank, they portrayed her as a lady that has integrity, she is hardworking and helped in developing their human resources.

C: The present chairman of NAFDAC. She is the best woman of the nation. I consider her more important. Her role is more important in the country than all her male counterparts. She has had so many international awards.

S: There are some women organizations that contribute to help women and the children in African countries.

K: How often do you see such positive stories?

S: I'd say that there are mostly negative stories than positive ones. In case of widowhood, I learnt how widows are treated in other countries. There is this story I read about women in India, their widowhood. They say that whenever a woman loses her husband, she is regarded as an outcast. Customs demand that the woman should go in white, shed all her jewelleries and cosmetics so that she would no longer be attractive.

K: How are widows treated in your part of the country?

M: The sharia also takes care of widows. When the man dies, the wife takes some percentage of his property; the children take their own percentage. If the parents are still alive, they have their percentage. So the woman is taken care of and given her entitlement.

K: So what is percentage in relation to the others?

C: Sharia law gives 60% to the woman while the others share out the remaining 40%.

S: In some parts of Nigeria, the relatives of the man would take away forcefully everything belonging to the man.

C: In Igboland, it is prevalent. It sparked off the riot in Nanka. So they do it.

S: The widow is not supposed to see the husband's corpse.

K: Does it still happen till now?

ALL: Of course.

C: That is because of greed. If they bar the woman from seeing the corpse and probably from getting up from where she is seated, that means they'd get access to the man's property, banknotes and have their own way. At the end of the day, you find out that the woman is left with nothing to bring up her children.

B: I think it is the culture of the town.

C: It has nothing to do with the culture of the town if I must intervene because I have seen it done in most places.

B: But some are more severe than the others. In some towns, the treatment is more severe on the widows than in others.

K: Do you get to read about such things that are detrimental to women in the newspapers?

A: That was how I got the information, how she was made to drink the water from the body of the husband after being washed.

C: A friend of mine specifically told me that when her husband died at Ndike.. They got her to be going to the grave every morning, stand by the grave and say good morning to the husband.

S: In most cases, it is when they are suspecting that the woman killed the husband. If they are not suspecting anything, they wouldn't ask her to do that.

C: And when they gave her that concoction to drink on three occasions, she started having running stomach with her children, they were forced to flee home and they ran to Lagos.

K: Even when the husband dies naturally, she must be suspected?

C: Like in this case, the husband was shot at a filling station. They suspected him to have done a 419 on his colleagues and they shot him. I mean I could see no rationale behind how they treated the woman.

K: Can you remember any other stories about women, which you read in the papers?

A: The issue of genital mutilation is being talked about in the newspapers. Creating awareness so that they stop it.

K: Which part of the country still practices that?

M: The one I read about is in the cross river.

A: Again this issue that mostly happens in the north. The north forcing their daughters to get married at the age of 13, 14 and when they get pregnant they have problems during delivery.

K: Do you get to read these from the newspapers frequently?

A: Not often. It happens often but only gets reported sparingly.

K: How would you describe the African woman in relation to their men?

C: We all know they play second fiddle.

B: They are unassuming

K: What do you mean by unassuming?

B: They don't like to come out without the man supporting them.

S: Just that they need the support of the men. An African woman or Nigerian woman would not want to come out just like that without permission from their men.

A: I think it is within our culture that they need to be encouraged to come out.

K: When you talk about African culture, what do you understand by that. What would you consider an African culture?

M: It is the culture for the woman to be at home, take care of the children, should be obedient.

A: Be relegated to the background.

B: African culture is harsh on the women. You know the women are dependent on the men in that the men are strong, the African society is a macho society, and is ruled by men.

A: These days because of education, enlightenment, women are now coming out. There was a woman in Enugu state that vied for the post of a governor. I really believe that the women are now coming out and they now have the support of the men.

B: The women are now coming out, but slowly.

K: When you say the African man is strong. What do you mean by that?

B: Physically they are strong.

C: This is relative.

K: Do you think the African man is stronger than the women?
B: Yes physically.
K: Would you describe the African woman as strong?
B: In relation to the men, I'd say they are weak.
K: Weak in what sense?
C: How can you say they are weak?
K I want to know in what sense they are weak.
C: Is it in the wrestling arena? (General laughter)
B: You know the men always use their strength to subdue.
K: Are you talking about being domineering?
B: Yes they are domineering. The idea has been built in them. Culture is backing them. You know the men, they are being backed by the culture of the society. They use it to subdue the women, make them weak whether they like it or not.
K: When you talk about weakness what do you mean by that?
B: Weakness in the sense that the women cannot do certain things in the society,
K: Like what?
S: They are dependent on the men?
K: For what?
S: Financially and otherwise.
C: Are you dependent on your husband?
B: We are talking about women in general, not the elites.
A: When you talk about the African woman being weak or the men being strong, I picture these women who carry heavy logs of wood on the head, ties a baby on the back, and they are pregnant and they move on and the man just comes behind with a machete.
B: Does it make them stronger than the man?
Others: How then do you measure strength?
B: The men are stronger because they are united in terms of things that concern them. They discuss on an issue...
C: I think you are derailing. Because we are talking about strength in the character, strength that is in the character of the woman or a man that makes you ..... We are not talking about the village settings where the men have their meetings and lord it over the women. Like she rightly pointed out, carrying firewood, tying a baby at the back and with advanced pregnancy as well. No man can do it, and the men folk don't have that kind of strength. They are lazy come to think of it. They lie down in the house you come back together in the farm you still have to go and cook and serve it. While he snores away.
A: The Yoruba it is their women that do the bulk of the work. Their men don't do anything.
M: Look at the Igalas. Their women do all the work, while their men just stay and drink ogogoro. Women go to the farm, and do the bulk of the work.
B: It doesn't mean that the man is weak. He just doesn't want to do it.

S: When it becomes the majority of men, it then becomes a trait in their character.

K: I spoke with British women; I simply want to know whether you share their views. They have described the African woman as strong.

B: If you compare the strength of the African women in relation to their counterparts oversees, African women are stronger, because they face harsh conditions and they still struggle and survive. If you bring a white woman to face the same condition of living, I don't think she would stand it. She would run away.

K: Within their society, do you think you can stand what they do?

B: Life is better for them the condition of living is better there.

S: At childbearing age abroad, they are not allowed to work. But here you see a woman pregnant and working.

K: So where does this happen?

S: In Holland.

K: You read this from the papers or somebody told you?

S: I read it from the papers and also somebody who visited there told me. And my cousin there told me too.

K: Are you saying that they are not allowed to work or that they are paid some money.

S: they are not allowed to work and they are paid some money.

C: I know they must have their welfare scheme but that doesn't mean that they don't work.

S: They are not allowed to work. At child bearing age.

C: Do you mean maternity leave?

S: No they don't work. My cousin there told me. In Holland.

C: Do you share the same view about British women?

K: I don't know what I share, but I just want to know you views (general laughter).

C: I have never had any where in the world where women of childbearing age should go and sit down somewhere, if she has a good job and she is contributing so much to her family.

A: What I have even heard is that women there because some do have nannies, that it is easier for them to cope.

C: Exactly, when our women go overseas and come back, they say we are very lucky. They would be working with no relations to take care of the children. They combine housework with childrearing.

S: They just want to make money.

K: Who wants to make money?

S: the women there and the government still provides for them and the children.

C: does the same treatment apply to foreigners?

S: of course. Because this cousin of mine, she is Nigerian. She was paid some allowances.

K: what do you consider a typical African woman? How would you describe her?

C: A typical African woman is very very conscious of her family. She wakes up very early in the morning before her man, she wakes up her children; if she means to cook their meals she does so and runs off to her farm, to her shop or where she trades. Before she knows it, she runs back and cooks again for lunch and put her house in order and the process repeats itself the next day. If she is a farmer for instance, she cultivates. I know women who handle hoes, they make mounds, they farm, they do all sorts of things even what they call men crops. We have what we call men crops like yams and we have what we call women crops like cocoyams. But our African women even go to lengths to cultivate male crops and women crops and at the end of the day they still come home and still take care of the homes. In fact, we describe the African women especially in my own setting as very very industrious. Those of them who are businesswomen, take the Yorubas for instance, they feed their men. While their men sit down and almost do nothing. I am not talking about the present day Nigerian men who may be conscious of the white collar jobs and makes money but then, on the average women make more money than the men. I wouldn't speak for the north, I don't know much about their men. But for the Igbo setting, their women are very industrious. For instance in a polygamous home, the man makes it clear that the woman has to take care of her own children. She does that. He may do his own work, but then on the average, the woman takes care of her own children, the other woman takes care of her own and so on. At the end of the day, you begin to wonder what the men do. For he would tell you woman see your own children, feed them, educate them, clothe them, my hand is not there.

B: African woman are very strong, hardworking, and you see their lives revolving round their family, they don't joke with their family. Very obedient when it comes to family life and persevering. Even in the face of troubles, African woman is in chain and she doesn't run away because she is facing problems, she carries her family along with her. I admire their courage. They are very courageous. A typical African woman, you can't see her running away from her family or staying away from the family. That is this modern issue of divorce, the African woman doesn't like that. Her life is glued to her family.

M: African woman is a woman that is very obedient to husband, parents. She always takes it as her responsibility to take care of her family, which she does diligently. She doesn't mind going out of her way to provide for her family. She takes care of her kids and makes sure that things are always in order. It is always her joy to see that there is joy in the home. African woman always takes her family to be the most important and puts her family before herself. She satisfies her husband and children before she really thinks of herself. Very hardworking. The sky is the limit as far as the family is concerned. She is a typical family woman. Like in Hausa, even the men want to take care of the women and feel they should be at home to take care of the kids, even if she is educated.

He would prefer her to go out and teach because he knows that by 2pm she is already home with the kids.

K: Are you saying that the Hausa men don't like their wives to work for fear that they would stress out themselves or is it because they need to make the woman subservient to them?

M: Well may be some of them, that may be their reason but I feel from what we have been made to understand, for as the Koran writes, the place of the woman is at home and it is the sole and absolute responsibility of the man to provide for his family.

C: Their religion is a way of life and I mean they cover their women and often they are in the purdah, so we don't expect them to come out and work even when they have the education to do so, they have the backing of their religion.

M: Though women don't go out, they still work at home and do such jobs like plaiting, and take care of the children.

A: I would like to add that one particular thing the African woman does is that she goes out of her way to cover her husband, even when her husband is weak, she covers. She doesn't like to taint the image of the husband. She wouldn't want the next ear to hear that her husband is incapable of taking care of the family. She carries everybody along, both the extended and the nuclear family.

C: That makes her work more strenuous.

S: An African woman tries to keep her marriage even when she is not happy there.

K: thank you very much. When you were speaking, I may be wrong, but what seems to occur to me is that the African woman is overworked and I don't know how many of you would want to be just housewives.

B: No I wouldn't want to be just a housewife.

K: Why not?

B: I want to work and support my family.

K: But your husband is supposed to support you.

B: Even at that, I want to work, I enjoy my work – o out of my house, meet other people, and interact with them.

K: But you have the children to take care of, it is a big job.

B: It is a big job, but it is not enough. You could get bored just staying in the house, shouting on your children – stay here and stay there etc. not every woman, would like that. Personally I don't.

K: So you don't mind the work?

B: No I don't.

A: I like to be a housewife but the economy doesn't allow that (general laughter). If I am in the house I can do so many things with my life – like writing a novel. I like being in the house – staying indoors. But the economy won't allow it – so you have to go out and augment.

K: I gave you some stories, which I asked you to look at. May I have your overall impression about the stories you looked at?

B: My impression is that in the western world, they have a very good rule of laws guiding them, but not so in Nigeria.

K: Why do you say that?

B: From the pages I read, I came across the situation where the husband and wife maltreated their own child who later dies and they were brought to book. I think I read that the welfare – a good neighbour called them even though the child later died. But such things don't happen in Nigeria – it doesn't – especially when it has to do with the person's child. If it is another person's child - maybe people would bother, but if it is the person's own child, I have not seen where it has happened – that is phoning the police – telling them that such and such woman was maltreating her child.

C: I don't think you are right. I know a programme I watched in Igede – on maltreatment of children, that one the child was theirs.

B: I mean law enforcement agencies.

C: They would only come in if the case is reported.

B: I am still saying that the rule of law is not efficient in Nigeria. It is better there - the western world - the rule of law and they brought them to book in Nigeria, one or two things might happen and the case is closed.

A: The one I have here in the British newspapers, even though they knew about the child that is being maltreated, they didn't do anything until the child dies.

B: I think that the social workers were also indicted.

S: I don't think they did their work well in Britain. They did nothing until the child died.

A: What I want to say based on the question earlier asked is that the impression that the media over there portray about the African woman – I don't like it. They are shown more as suffering, starvation, I didn't even see any where they are shown in any positive role like you'd get in Nigerian newspapers. At least you see women being portrayed in positive light, at the same time negative light. But there, I didn't see any.

C: Are they racists? Maybe it's all racism.

S: It is the whole set of suffering for the Africans.

B: It depends on the topic – about what is being shown in the papers.

A: but then you should have seen one.

B: If they are talking about war, famine and things like that, they will show these pix they are talking about.

K: Do you wonder why these are the dominant images you always see? – famine, starvation.

B: Well they think Africa as a whole is very poor, that we cannot even feed, that is what they think but it is not like that.

S: They portray us as very poor and under developed.

C: We wallow in abject poverty. We may not have good leadership – but we have women of substance – able women, amazons.

A: Like the cases of child abuse, the way they portrayed the white lady and there is another way they portrayed the African woman, the kind of language used is very appalling – Victoria Climbié – the way they portrayed the great aunt – killer, murderess, when you look at both cases,

they are the same thing. But when it came to the issue of the white lady, they used mild words, soft words, describing her in 'glowing' terms.

S: Her own should be treated more seriously – imagine someone killing one's own child. And a mother killing her stepdaughter. But they gave excuses for her.

C: No African woman would do this. We cherish our family.

K: So you think the stories on Africa are quite negative?

ALL: Of course.

A: When it is the BBC news to report the news of this Safiya, the way it sounded to my ears was degrading. Unlike the way our reporters here report in the electronic media and the print. A kind of we are trying to encourage people to come out and fight for this particular woman – but there it is Africa has done something again that is negative.

M: I think they always watch out negative things.

A: That is why the representations are all about suffering, starvation, illness and all the rest.

K: Do you notice the difference between how African women are portrayed in British newspapers and the way African men are portrayed in the British newspapers? How do you describe the dominant images of the African man in the British newspapers?

A: Some of them were almost like the same suffering, but some of them are mild. They seem to show also like you have in African culture that a man is superior to the woman.

M: Like the one of the children, they show them living in abject poverty.

K: Is there any particular story that struck you there which you want us to talk about?

A: This issue of Mugabe taking the land and giving it to the whites and giving it to the blacks, the way it is being publicized, I believe that the whites have an interest and that is why they are taking it up against Zimbabwe. It seems to be in every paper.

S: Look at this one: "Africa's ugly sisters leave trails of deaths". The ugly sisters are famine and AIDS.

A: Let's look at this, ugly sisters. Why would they use a feminine word to qualify Aids and famine? Why not ugly brothers?

B: So famine and AIDS go with women. Is that what they mean?

A: All the pictures show that women are symbols of famine, starvation, sickness and what have you. That is the major thing I could see here and that is why they can use feminine words to qualify these.

B: They represent Africa so negatively especially African women.

K: What you see in British newspapers is it so dissimilar from what you see about women in Nigerian newspapers? I am wondering whether it is not similar since a while ago you were saying that most of the things you see about African woman in the Nigerian newspapers are negative?

A: We are saying that side-by-side, negative and positive come along, but the negative stories dominate. But in British newspapers, I have not seen any positive story on women.

C: Look at this one too: Starving Zambia spurns GM food. A woman here picking grains, showing that they are starving and yet refuse the maize.
A: Why would they accept it, do they know the content?
M: Look at this a woman is shown carrying American rice or cornmeal. To me it shows that Africa simply rely on foreign Aid.
A: There is a comment I also wish to make. When you look at Nigerian newspapers, the way they bring out features of women feeding their babies. Though they could argue that it connotes African culture, but to me I see it as embarrassing.
C: What is embarrassing about one feeding one's babies?
B: Have you ever seen a European woman breastfeeding her baby
S: Does it mean they don't breastfeed their babies?
K: They do.
C: I thought they introduced this idea of exclusive breastfeeding and baby friendliness and sold it to Africans, or Nigeria in particular and do they practice it too?
A: They do breastfeed their babies in secluded places, not as we do, in the buses, everywhere.
C: What I want to know is if they breastfeed their babies exclusively on breast milk for six months?
K: I don't know. But I want to put a question to you: how many of us here would want our breasts to be exposed on the pages of the newspapers like those women we see here breastfeeding their babies?
C: Maybe they go and beg samples of women who are very timid and would be excited to come out in the newspapers, no matter in whatever form. They are certainly not women like you and I.
B: Because I do not think an enlightened woman would want her breast exposed like that.
A: The only picture of women breastfeeding that appeared in the British newspapers is that of Amina Lawal who was breastfeeding her baby.
K: If again you could let me know your impression generally, I think we could be rounding off. Somebody mentioned women who went to fight the oil company. They threatened to go nude and according to the news stories, that is what made the men to stop work and I was just wondering, what is the significance.
B: It is highly significant in a typical Nigerian culture. That is I don't know about the Yoruba and Hausa culture but I do know that when it has to do with the old women going nude for an issue, or if they are fighting a very important issue they want to address, and maybe the fight becomes very difficult because if they threatened to go nude, that issue is normally resolved, because that going nude, it just doesn't end in that, because it has a cultural backing.
K: What does it mean culturally?
B: If an old woman goes or old women go nude for a particular issue, it means curse upon those people that are dragging the issues with them.
S: It is an abomination to see the nudity of another man's wife.
C: Or his own mother's nakedness.

A: Perhaps it has something to do more with motherhood.

ALL: yes.

B: It goes with our mothers.

C: I remember one incidence that happened in Ekwulobia. A particular man was maltreating his mother. They kept warning him, the umuadas kept warning him and he didn't heed to their warnings and one day like that they had to demonstrate. They went to his house. He didn't know what they were planning. Very early in the morning, he was still in bed when they came. So opening the door he say all of the. So one by one they started removing their clothes. They were stark naked – old women – older than his own mothers, some of them his mother's age mate. They said "now, you can as well beat all of us". Something like that. The man continued begging them and they were thrusting their naked body on him. He ran here, this person grabbed him and he ran there, and that person held him. He didn't have a route of escape until he wept and asked for their forgiveness and promised not to touch his mother. In another setting, this man was making his wife always pregnant – up to 13th issue and it became out of place and they went to the man and say 'today, you'd pregnant all of us, even your own mother' and he had to stop. And I mean it has a very strong meaning for our culture.

B: Women use such weapon when they are fighting a very important war.

S: It is a taboo because these women are mothers – very old women.

S: The issue is not the age but the motherhood status. As long as you are married.

K: In Britain, the women thought such a threat would be considered fun and no body would take it serious. (Asking the Hausa). How is it in your place? Do women use nudity to fight?

M: They won't even think of it. We can use other weapon to fight but not nudity. I think it would be a shame on their part.

K: How do you think your people would see it – the men? If the women would threaten to go nude?

M: I am sure that would make the men to do whatever the women say. It would be a shame for them too.

C: I am sure it would frighten them, because in their part of the world, nakedness is almost something you cannot contemplate.

K: The Miss world contest is part of what caused the riot in Kaduna, Abuja, etc and I was just wondering whether a beauty contest is worth all that mayhem.

A: Well I don't I don't think it is the beauty contest that caused it but what Isioma Daniel wrote.

M: The Moslems kicked against the beauty contest, but they didn't demonstrate, not until she made that statement.

C: I think she just played into their hands.

M: Everywhere was already charged before she compounded the problem by writing that.

K: what are your views about beauty pageants.

C: It is worthwhile.

K: Is it?

C: Because as origin, women are portrayed as beauties. You see they make themselves beautiful for their men for the admiration of their men. So, the beauty contest more or less is a way of bringing out the beauty in a woman trans-culturally.

K: Who defines beauty?

C: Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder.

K: So what do you use to measure who is beautiful?

C: Well there are criteria, set by a panel.

A: That is predominantly male.

C: if they are predominantly male, that supports my earlier assertion that women are made beautiful for the admiration of men.

A: How many men have come out for women to assess them and tell them how to look beautiful?

S: Men are not regarded as being beautiful.

B: women generally are sorts of entertainment and relaxation for men. And that is how men see women. But what I don't like in the beauty pageant show is parading them nude, wearing only pants and bras. Why is it that we don't get to watch beauty pageants for men?

M: It is so immoral – why should female be made to be a sort of entertainment.

B: That is how they are made.

M: If you want to show that you are beautiful, we have a way of doing that especially for your man, you mustn't parade yourself to the public.

K: I just want to ask, how would you react to infidelity in marriage? If your husband were to be unfaithful to you, how would you react to it?

S: I'll feel very bad.

K: Is it enough to break your marriage?

S: No.

B: No it is not enough.

C: An African would want to cover up, thrash it out with the man, cover up no matter how much it pains her. Suffer in silence because she is incapable of breaking through the chains of culture to really call it quits in marriage for to the African woman, divorce is alien to her. Because of that most woman suffer silently, grudgingly in spite of themselves, they carry on.

S: African man is polygamous by nature. If you tend to be too forward, the man might even bring in the woman into the house and she becomes a second wife.

K: What happens in your culture.

M: It is allowed

K: To be unfaithful?

M: The issue of polygamy is not forbidden. The sharia is more of a preventive measure so that you won't even think of it – because of the punishment that comes with it, awaiting you. The man is allowed more than one wife so the question of being unfaithful wouldn't arise.

K: But if a woman were to be unfaithful, what would happen?

C: I know of a man who told the wife that I can do whatever I want but you do it you go.

B: Of course when a woman is unfaithful, she goes. It is considered abominable.

K: When you were introducing yourself, I noticed the people who were giving themselves tags of Mrs. and Miss. Why do you do that?

A: That is my status. In this country, you are either married or single.

S: When you are married in our culture it is a plus for you.

C: It is a status symbol with your ring and you are dangling it everywhere, so that people know you belong to some man.

K: What I could read there is a culture that makes marriage of primmest importance.

B: But of course.

S: Yeah. The institution of marriage is highly regarded.

K: Must every woman marry?

A: In our culture every woman should marry, though you may argue that it is not supposed to be so. They feel if you are not married, then something is wrong with you. It goes with respect.

S: If you are not married, they'd think you have a sickness or your family is bad or that your character is bad,

K: Thank you very much for you time.

Appendix 19 List of news items mentioned in the responses to the questionnaire of what British women could recall about Africa

1. AIDS/HIV
2. White farmers being replaced by native black farmers (Mugabe)
3. Tutu rebellion/massacre
4. Nelson Mandela as president and his marriage problems.
5. Tribal violent conflicts
6. Starving in Ethiopia
7. Floods
8. Documentary about African children who were married as young as eight and got pregnant and couldn't give birth without major physical problems.
9. Stoning of adulterous woman
10. Rape of women in Congo
11. Famine potential in South Africa (famines in the past)
12. Desmond Tutu role in peace making
13. Female circumcision.
14. The row over whether England cricket team would play in Zimbabwe
15. English couple attacked in S. Africa – wife killed
16. Miss World fiasco
17. The ritualised killing of 'Adam' an African boy found in the Thames.
18. Animal deaths in Africa always capture my attention
19. Extremely poor living conditions
20. Riots
21. Rape of Kenyan women by British soldiers
22. Mothers dying of Aids and passing HIV onto children because they can't afford the medicine.
23. Drought, war, evacuation
24. Wildlife
25. Floods in Mozambique – memorable story of a young woman who had to give birth in a tree.
26. Civil war
27. Fundamentalist terrorism in Egypt
28. Poorest African countries crippled by debts.
29. Volcano/earthquake
30. Zimbabwe – black/white tensions and attacks –elections, Mugabe difficult!
31. Woman whose daughter was abducted for the local chief
32. Immorality of the government.
33. Young women trying to feed their children in times of famine
34. Al queda bombing in Kenya
35. Crime in South Africa
36. Victoria Climbié child abuse

Appendix 20 Summary of the images of Africa/African women created from the news, which the British women provided in their responses to the questionnaire

1. African people have a difficult time, although some news items also show a lot of joyful dancing and of people wearing colourful clothes. Women appear to be oppressed by African culture, second-class citizens, having to work very hard for very little reward, at the beck and call of the men. However they are the backbone of family life and there seems to be the neighbourliness and support between women.
2. The image of Africa is fairly negative with persistent political instability, religious intransigence, intolerance, and widespread corruption. However, Africans are individually described as much better educated and generally more 'sophisticated' (by Western standards) than 30 years ago. Women are put upon and made victims by all forms of disasters. However, there are more many educated African women and their reputation for wisdom and for achieving daily miracles among disasters continues unabated.
3. Africa is a fascinating and challenging country – so beautiful and so cruel. Their women are patient, long-suffering, hardworking and devoted to their children.
4. The overall mage of Africa I get is that for Africans it is a hard and difficult life – not a place for opportunities. African women work under oppression and duress. They do not have the opportunity to have their own life or their own career. They have a hard life that is hard to escape from.
5. The overall image of Africa I have is that it is beautiful, huge, wild, remote, hot, troubled and poverty-stricken. African women are strong, practical, peaceful, and resilient, flamboyant and dignified.
6. The image of Africa I have is traditional tribal images. Their women are strong/traditional, always maternal, involving children in some way. They are in desperate poverty.
7. I have seen many pictures over the last 20 years of Africa, especially of people in war and starvation situations. I am sure that the impression is not good or typical, as the country must have an enormous and diverse population. I see African women as being quite powerless politically but women of incredible stamina and strength of mind. I am afraid I do not have a rounded view of African people in general, as we see on television or hear on radio people who are starving or at war, and not settled and peaceful communities. CAFOD always tells us of individuals who are 'in need' and we see only one side of Africa. Only by meeting recently people like yourself, and Deliwe and Mildred – I see women who have astonishing lives and who make sacrifices of leaving their children and travelling thousands of miles in order to provide for their whole families and better their education. I feel humble in the presence of such amazing women.

Appendix 21 More samples of some of the photos of African women and African children encountered during the one year survey of the British press

Zena Mahlangu, 18, said to have been selected as a potential wife for the king

Fig 1 *The Daily Telegraph* 23 October 2002
p. 18

Blair fires salvo against US over Kyoto

Fig 2 *The Daily Telegraph* 2 September 2002 p.12

International news

No light show Total eclipse throws a path of darkness across the southern hemisphere

From Africa to Australia, the curious turn out to see the first total eclipse in the region for 20 years. In South Africa's Kruger national park, above, women protect their eyes, and, right, tourists in the Australian outback enjoy the spectacle

Rory Carroll in Johannesburg

A total solar eclipse extinguished the southern hemisphere's summer sunshine yesterday as the lunar shadow raced across the Atlantic ocean and southern Africa before vanishing over Australia.

Astronomers and the curious occupied vantage points in several countries to observe the moon blot out the sun, briefly turning day into night and chilling the balmy warmth.

Ikenga Bakari, 15, watching from Musina, in South Africa, said: "For a moment I thought our lives were going to be endangered."

The eclipse reached Africa in the early morning, heading eastward over Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa before heading out to the Indian ocean at Xai-Xai in Mozambique. Southern Africa's last total solar eclipse was 20 years ago.

At its peak yesterday's eclipse blocked the sun for two minutes.

Peering from behind mirrored sunglasses, Ben, a self-professed raver from Cape Town, had partied all night in preparation for a moment which would change everything. He said: "Life is never going to be the same after this."

South Africa's tourist authorities were less effusive but hoped the event would compensate for headlines about attacks on tourists and lighten the heart of darkness.

Armed rangers patrolled viewing sites just to be safe and hotels, game lodges and national parks arranged festivals. Some complained that business did not match the hype.

After travelling to the Kruger National Park, Gavin Hochfelden, an investment banker and amateur astronomer, did not bother using his telescope because of the clouds.

Wildlife experts had said the darkness would prompt some animals to bed down for the night but its short duration and the presence of thousands of humans persuaded most animals to stay awake.

The response in Zimbabwe was reportedly muted, with farmers in fields pausing only briefly to gaze upwards.

Astronomers and new age worshippers shared a beach at Ceduna on the south Australian coast to watch the eclipse. Its totality was the cue for applause and some claimed the ocean calmed. Sydney's dozens of bushfires wreathed the sun as the moon crept across its face.

Fig3 *The Guardian* [UK] 5 December 2002 p. 20

Mugabe hands poll to army

New fears of election fix as military put in charge

Chris McGreal in Harare

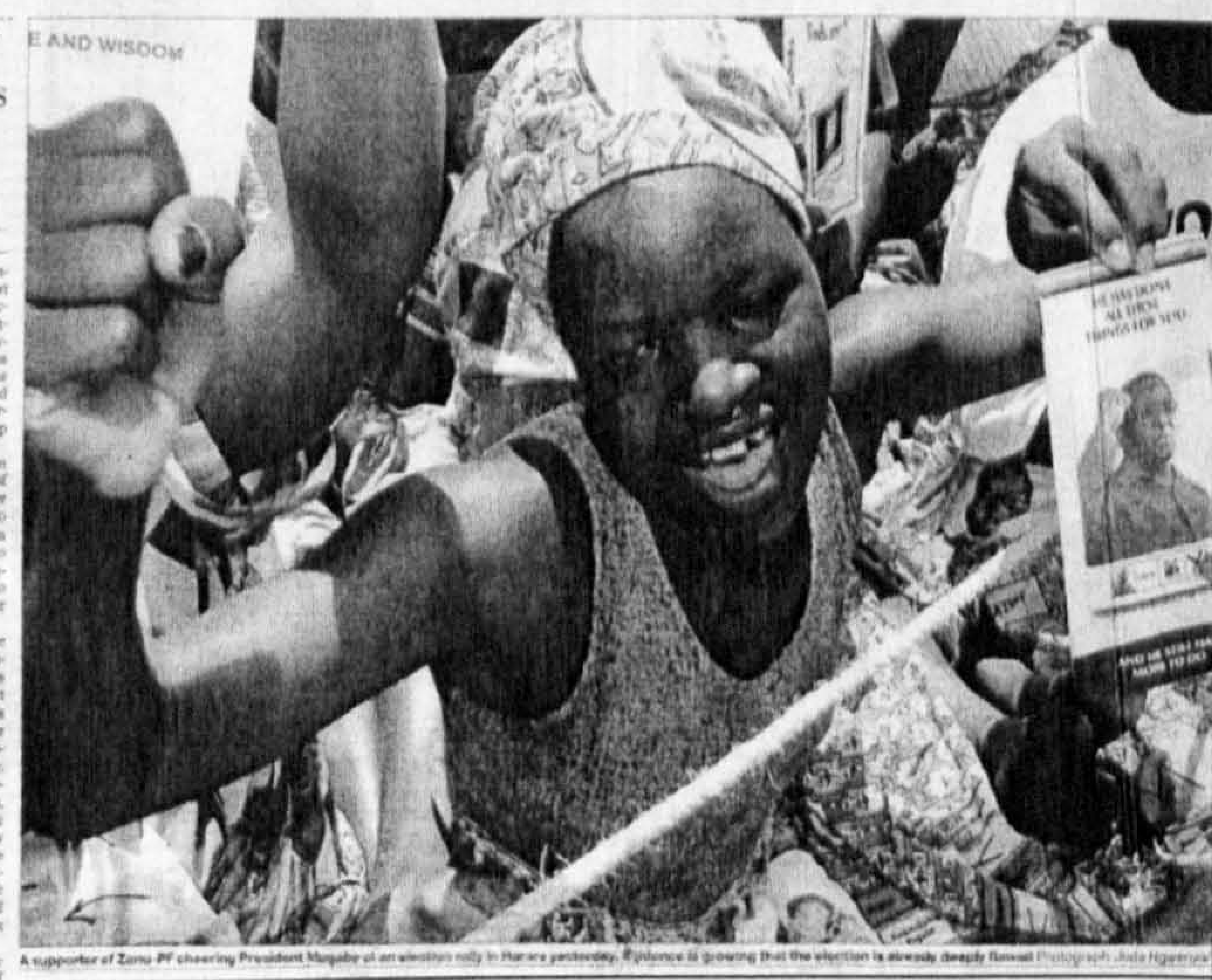
Robert Mugabe has put Zimbabwe's army in charge of next weekend's presidential election and vote count, compounding fears that his government's campaign of mass intimidation will continue right up to the ballot box and that widespread vote tampering will be used to try to keep him in power.

Revelations that the election has fallen under the control of the military, just weeks after army chiefs threatened to stage a coup in the case of an opposition victory, will add to the pressure on the Commonwealth summit in Australia to take a firm stand against Mr Mugabe.

Commonwealth leaders are deeply divided over the Zimbabwe crisis and ministers were locked in discussion last night in an attempt to find a compromise after Tony Blair failed to win agreement to suspend Zimbabwe immediately.

With just five days to go before the polling stations open, the growing body of evidence that the election is already deeply flawed will reinforce British pressure on Zimbabwe's neighbours to declare the results null and void should Mr Mugabe claim victory.

Almost every aspect of the vote, including the handling of

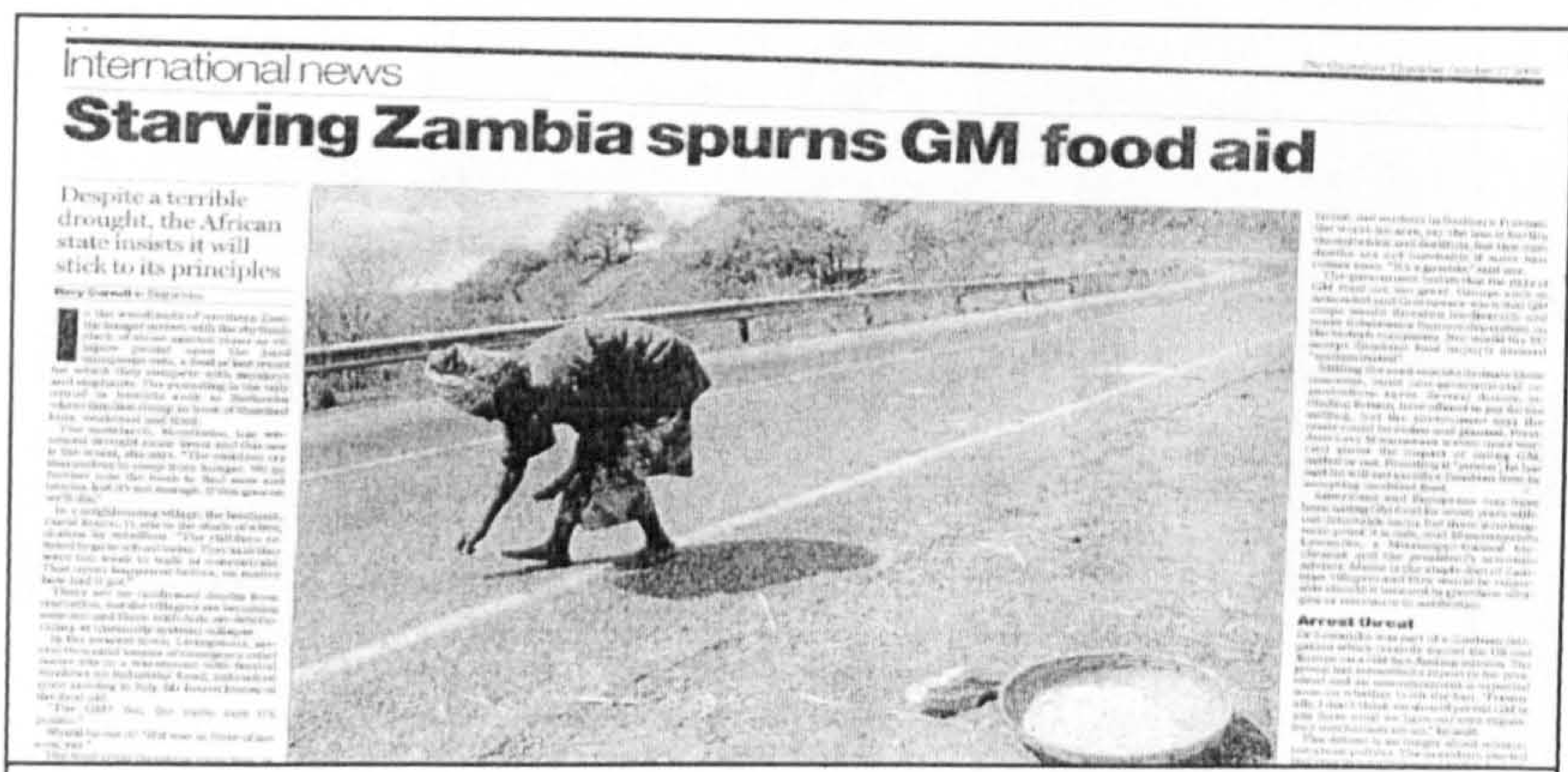


A supporter of Zanu-PF cheering President Mugabe at an election rally in Harare yesterday. Evidence is growing that the election is already deeply flawed Photograph: Jude Hgwenya

Fig 4 *The Guardian* [UK] 4 March 2002 p. 1

Supporters of Zanu-PF celebrating President Mugabe's victory. Many were confident they would be given land and life would improve Photograph: Jude Hgwenya/Reuters

Fig 5 *The Guardian* 14 March 2002 p. 14



International news

Starving Zambia spurns GM food aid

Despite a terrible drought, the African state insists it will stick to its principles

A Zambian woman carefully collects maize from the the road after a truck carrying the grain spilled some of its load in an accident

Fig 6 *The Guardian* [UK] 17 October 2002 p. 19

Kenyan women wait to cast their vote at a polling station in Othaya, 120 miles north of Nairobi yesterday. Opinion polls put Mwai Kibaki in the lead

Fig 7 *The Daily Telegraph* 22 December 2002 p. 18

International news

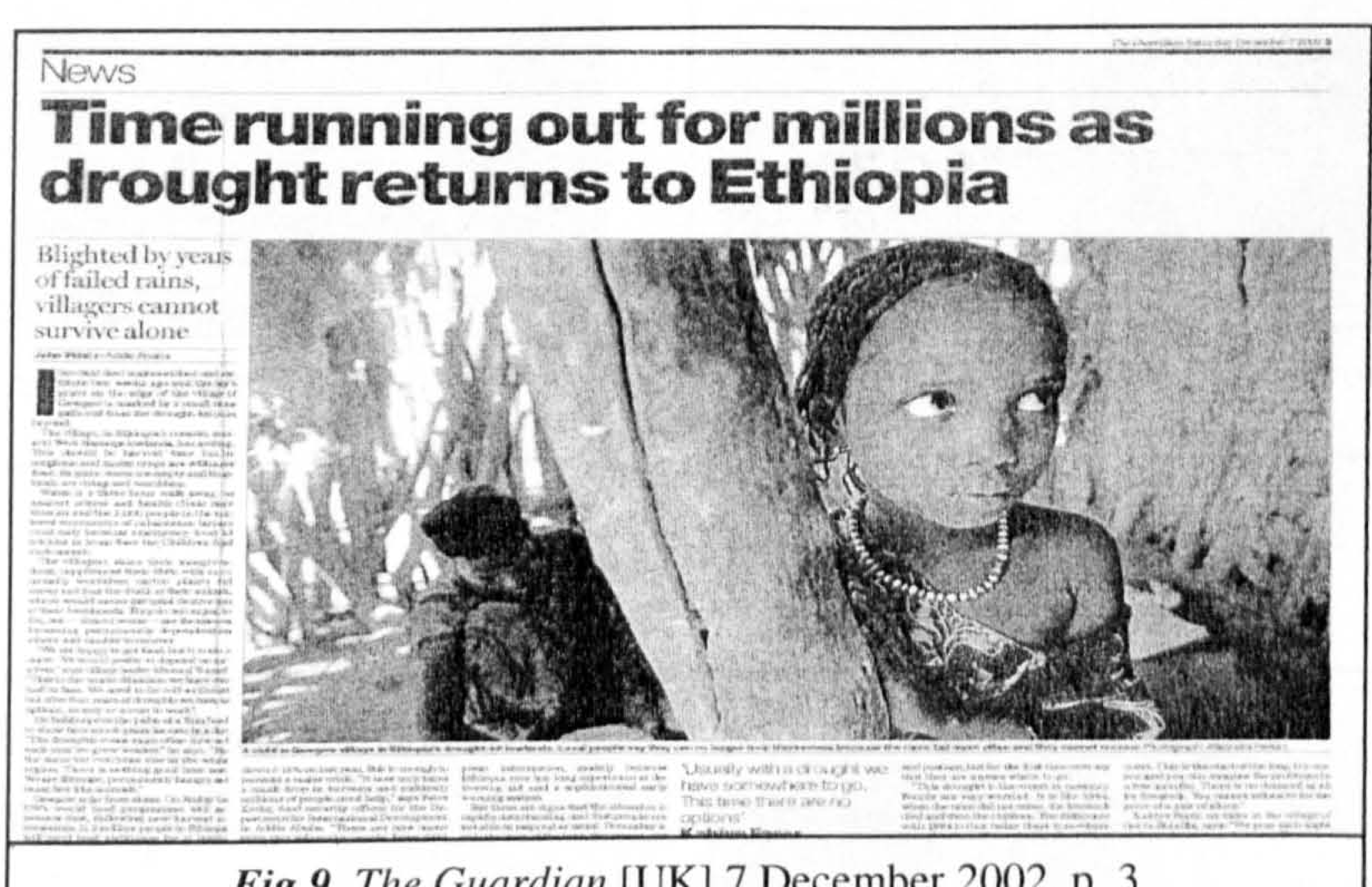
Key African arms dealer arrested

Brussels holds Kenyan wanted by UN and UK for fuelling civil war

Picture perfect Image of a young boy in Gabon wins top award

Michael Sheil won first prize in the Daily Life singles category of the World Press photo 2002 competition for this picture of a water seller in Gabon

Fig 8 *The Guardian* [UK] 16 February 2002, p. 20



News

Time running out for millions as drought returns to Ethiopia

Blighted by years of failed rains, villagers cannot survive alone

'Usually with a drought we have somewhere to go. This time there are no options'

Fig 9 *The Guardian* [UK] 7 December 2002, p. 3

The Guardian Saturday February 23 2002 17

Winning image Top award for photographer

Michael Sheil, the Irish photographer, was placed first in the Daily Life Singles category of the World Press Photo 2002 contest for his picture of a young girl selling water in Gabon

Fig 10 *The Guardian* [UK] 23 February 2002, p. 17

Appendix 22 **Sample photos of African men in British press**

The three leaders who decided on Zimbabwe's suspension — Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, John Howard of Australia, Thabo Mbeki of South Africa — with the Commonwealth secretary-general Don McKinnon after the announcement yesterday Photograph: Martin Argles

Fig 1 The Guardian 20 March 2002 p. 16

Zimbabwe election

Observers disagree over Mugabe's 'flawed' poll

Some countries, such as South Africa and Nigeria, sent two groups and they differ on their verdicts

Fig 2 *The Guardian* [UK] 15 March 2002 p. 19

Thousands pack Nairobi as poll campaign opens

By Adrian Blomfield in Nairobi

THE election to replace Kenya's president, Daniel arap Moi, exploded into life yesterday when government and opposition supporters flooded Nairobi to mark the official start of the campaign.

Business in the capital was halted as the two groups, estimated to be 100,000 strong and waving banners and palms, chanted and danced through the streets. One person was killed and 10 were injured in isolated clashes.

Riot police with batons and tear-gas canisters separated the two groups as Uhuru Kenyatta, the ruling Kanu party candidate hand-picked by Mr Moi, and then the opposition's Mwai Kibaki presented their nomination papers.

Despite taunts and jeers, the nominations passed off peacefully, but elsewhere there was isolated violence when splinter groups clashed.

Car windscreens were smashed and several people were injured, including one woman who lost both eyes when she was hit by flying glass.

The candidates later addressed rallies within a mile of each other. Mr Kenyatta was accompanied by Mr Moi, who is obliged to stand down after running Kenya for 24 years, 14 of them at the helm of a one-party dictatorship. Critics say he intends to rule by proxy through Mr Kenyatta.

Up to 50,000 attended the ruling party rally, many of them brought in by bus from across the country. The opposition say Mr Kenyatta has bought the support of the matatus, the small minibuses that make up the bulk of the country's public transport.

Opposition supporters say they were offered £2 to board the matatus and join the government rally.

Hundreds left the venue as soon as Mr Moi began speaking. "We were promised money and we have been given nothing," said James Kamande as he was leaving. "This old man [Mr Moi] has cheated us for too long."

Up to 70,000 people packed into the national stadium for the opposition rally, singing "All is possible without Moi" and "We don't want money, we want change".

In Kenya's two previous elections since multi-party democracy was restored in 1991 Kanu distributed millions of pounds as an inducement to vote for Mr Moi

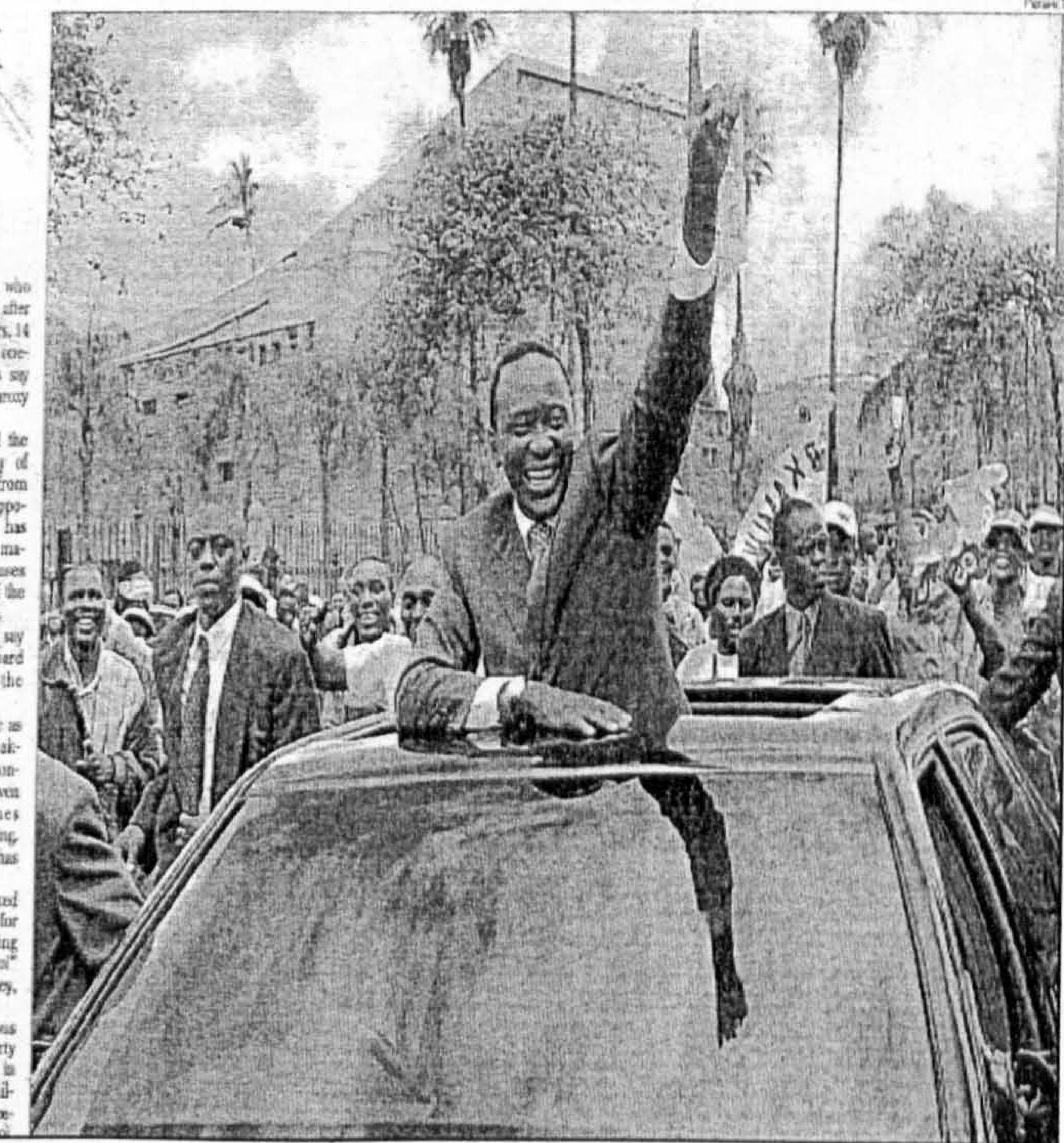
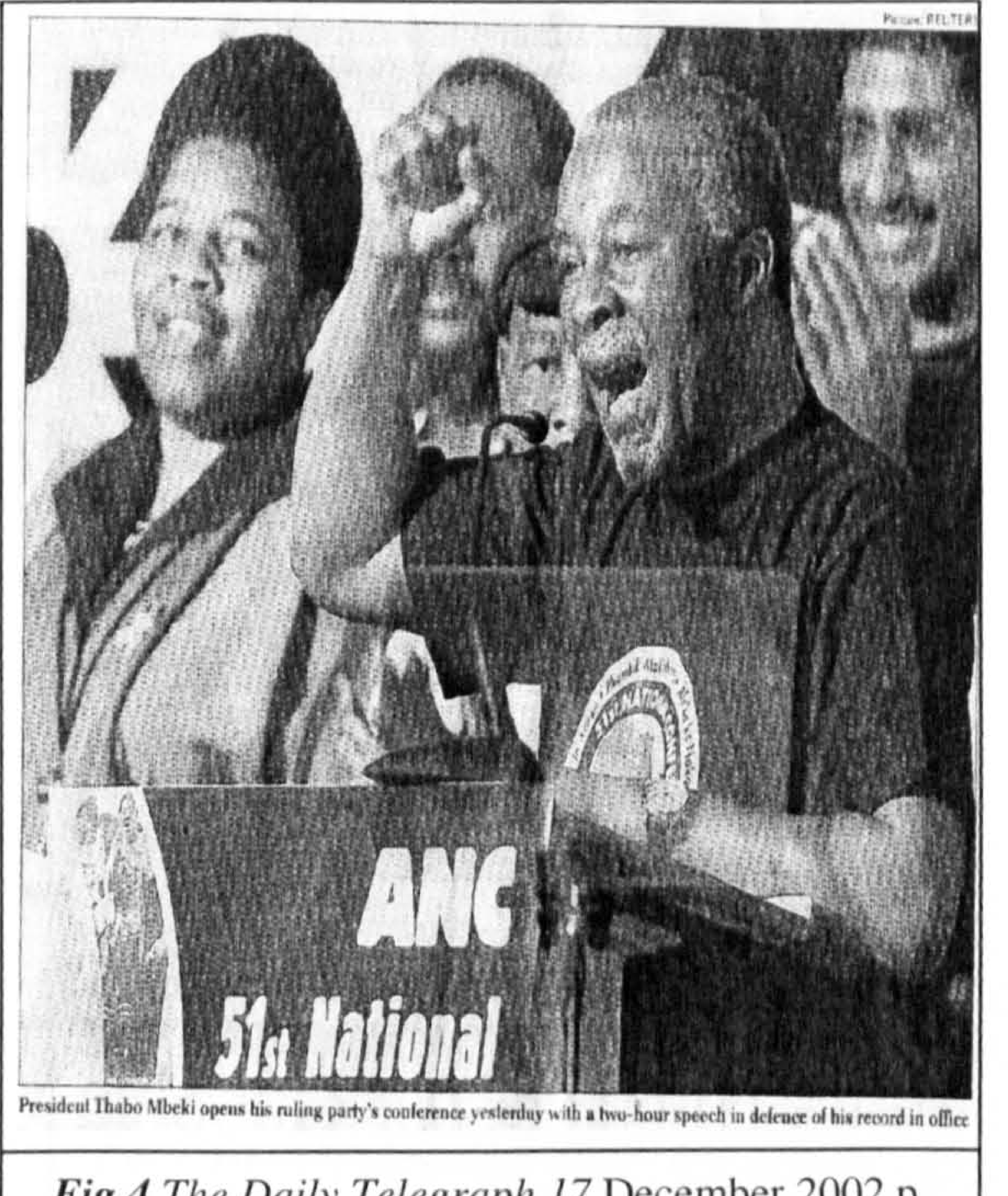
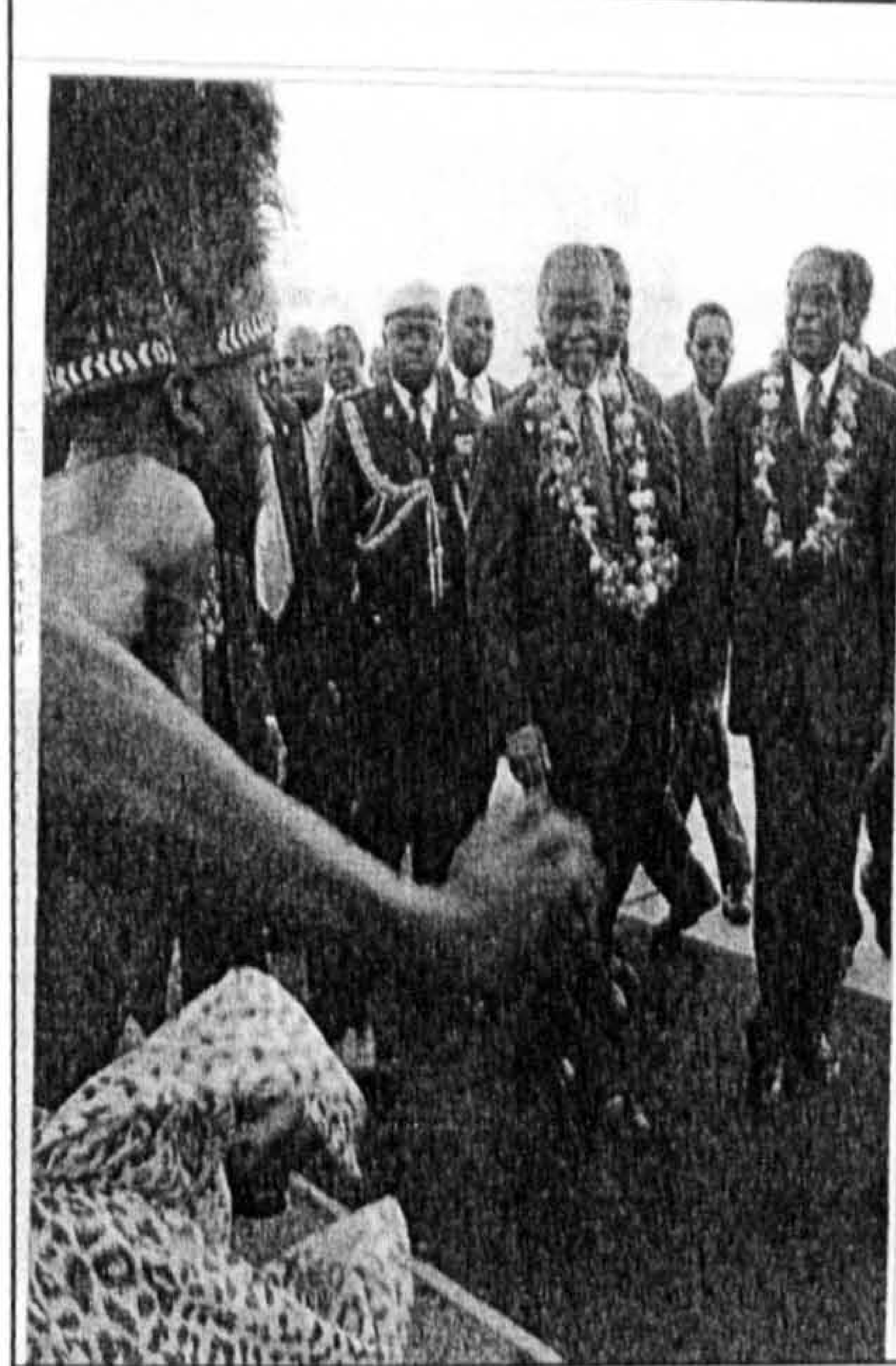


Fig. 3 *The Daily Telegraph* 19 November 2002 p. 18



President Thabo Mbeki opens his ruling party's conference yesterday with a two-hour speech in defence of his record in office

Fig 4 *The Daily Telegraph 17* December 2002 p.



Arap Moi lines up Kenyatta junior for president

James Astill in Nairobi

Kenya's ruling party yesterday merged with a leading opposition party in a bid to shake up President Daniel arap Moi's unpopular regime ahead of an election that will end his 24-year rule.

With inter-tribal wrangling for top jobs in the new party, widespread allegations of vote-rigging, and reports of endemic [illegible] among the assembled 6,000 delegates, the merger bore all the hallmarks of Mr Moi's political philosophy.

Mr Moi is obliged to stand down at the next election, which must be this year though a date has not been set. He was yesterday named chairman of the reborn Kenya African National Union (Kanu), with virtually unlimited powers.

Analysts saw this as Mr Moi's bid to retain power over the next government, and so safeguard his wealth.

Raila Odinga, former leader of the dissolved National Development Party, and now secretary general of "New" Kanu meanwhile promised "to democratise this party by giving it the influence of our own values".

Mr Odinga was imprisoned without trial by Mr Moi for eight years following an attempted coup in 1982.

With Kenyan politics defined by ethnicity, New Kanu amounts to a coalition

Fig 5 *The Guardian* [UK]19 March 2002 p. 15

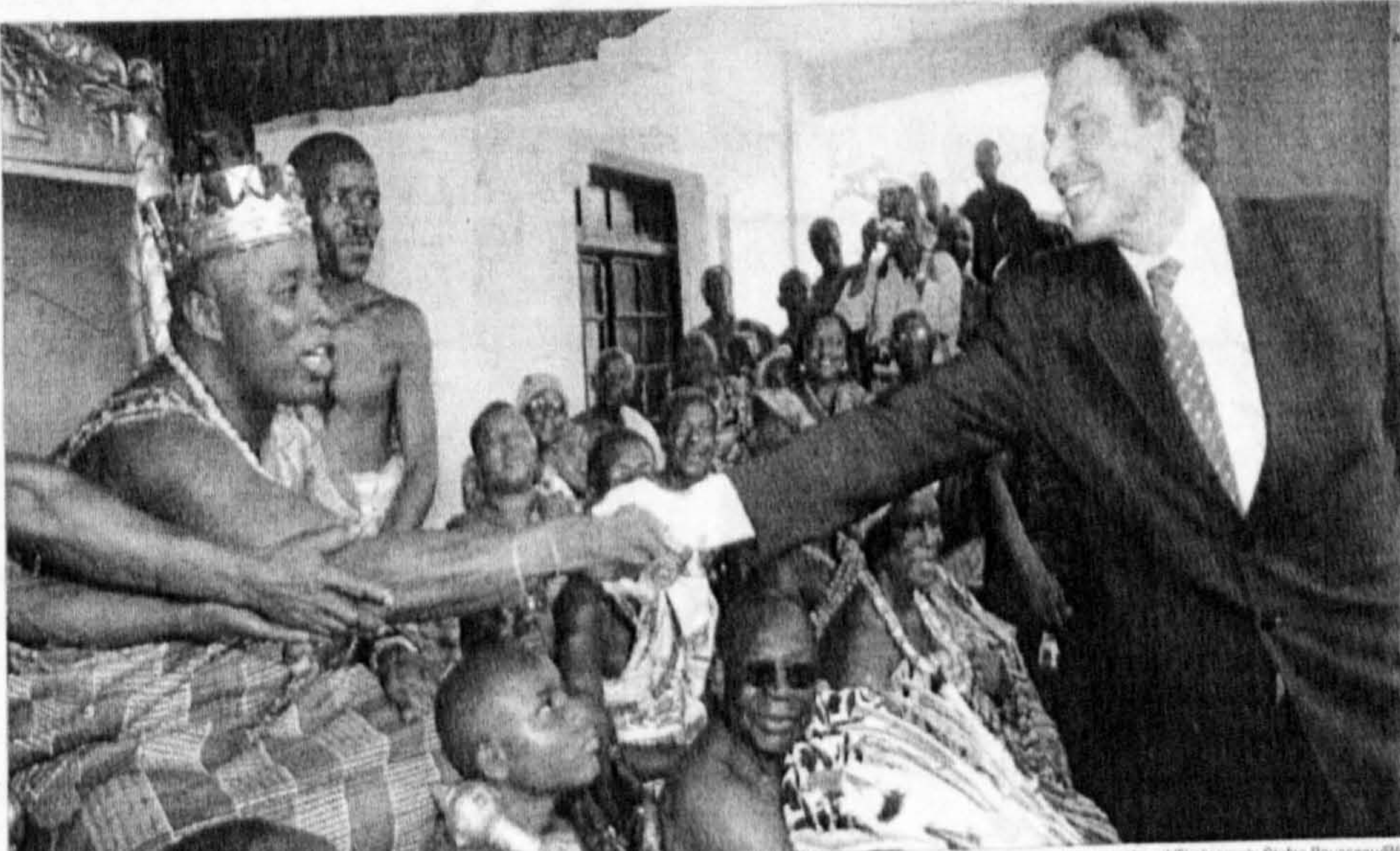
Blair gets first sight of African poverty

wen MacAskill in Accra

ony Blair saw rural Africa, here the bulk of the continent's population live, for the rst time yesterday. Although e has made many speeches ver the past year about frica, he has seen little of its overty at first hand.

He stayed overnight at the ve-star Labadi hotel, on the eachfront near the Ghanaian apital, Accra. And then he left is European lifestyle behind nd was bumping over a rough, usty, overcrowded road on the ay to Nankasi village, two ours' drive from the capital. It as a revelation for him.

On the road to Nankasi, a village in a clearing in the equa-



In his first taste of rural Africa, Tony Blair is greeted by Paramount Chief Osagyefuo Panin on a trip through Ghana as part of a four-day tour of the continent Photograph: Stefan Rousseau/PA

Fig 6 The Guardian [UK] 9 February 2002 p. 13

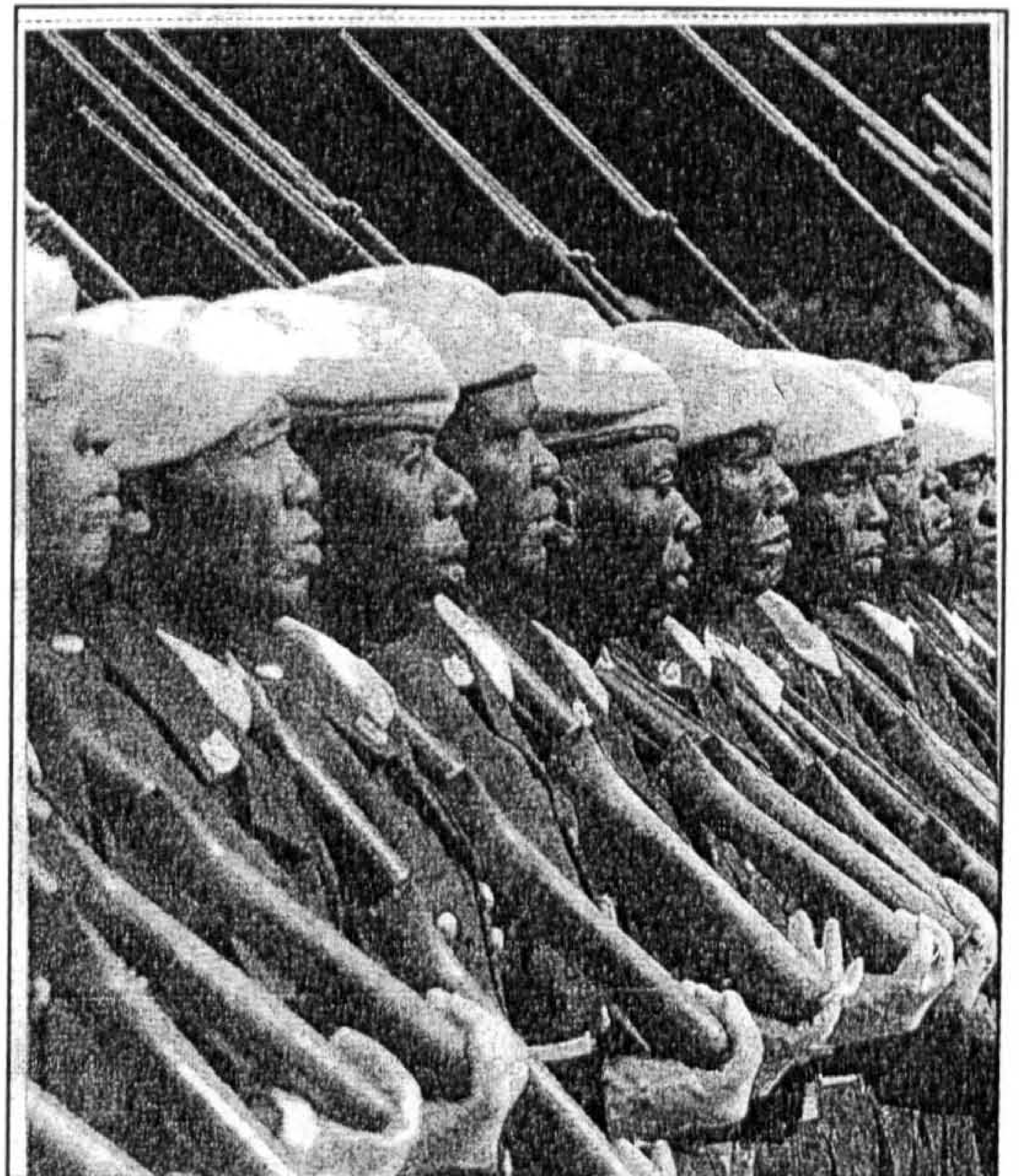


Fig 7 The Guardian [UK]18 March 2002 p. 14

55 killed in Nigerian ethnic rioting

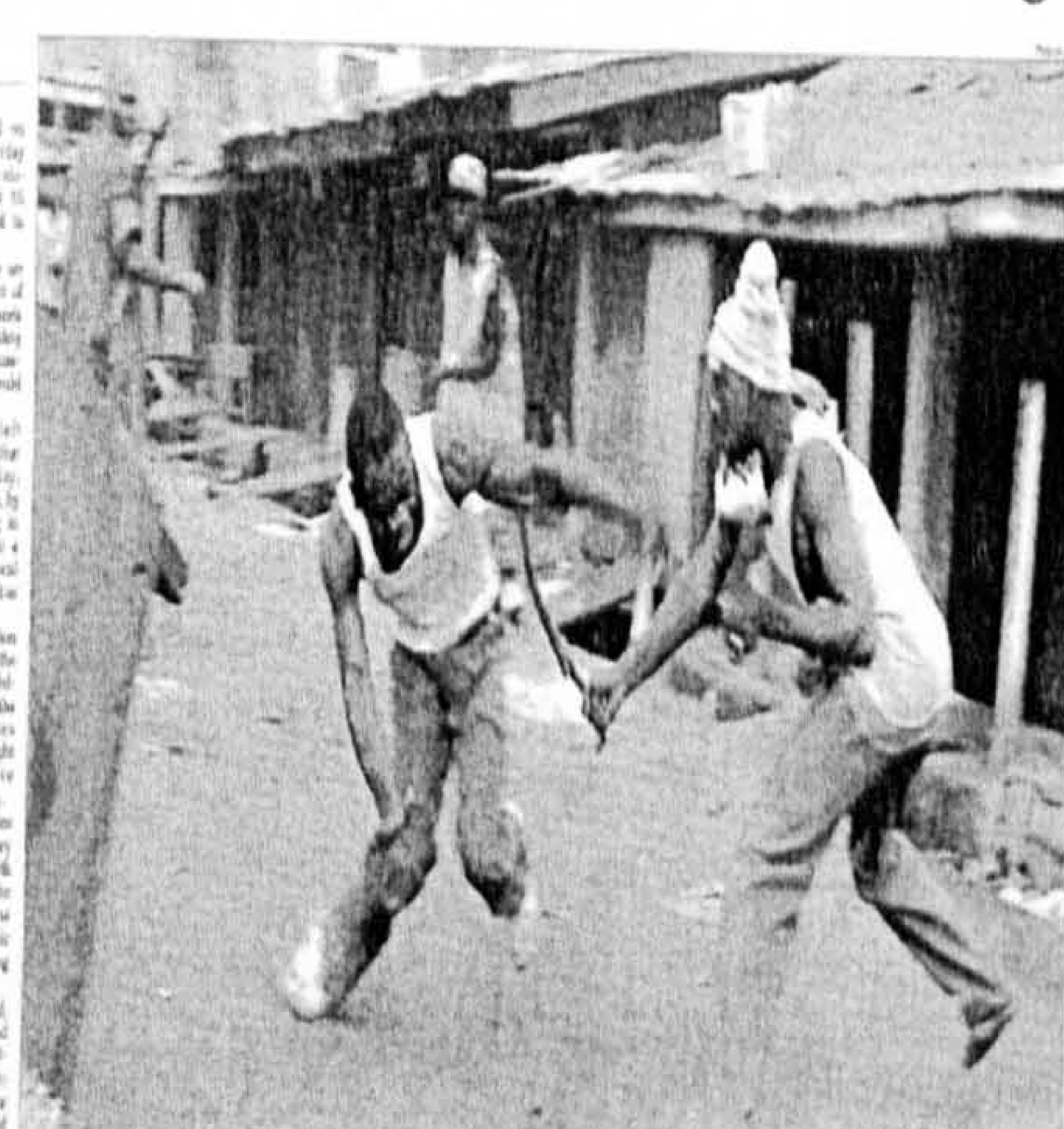
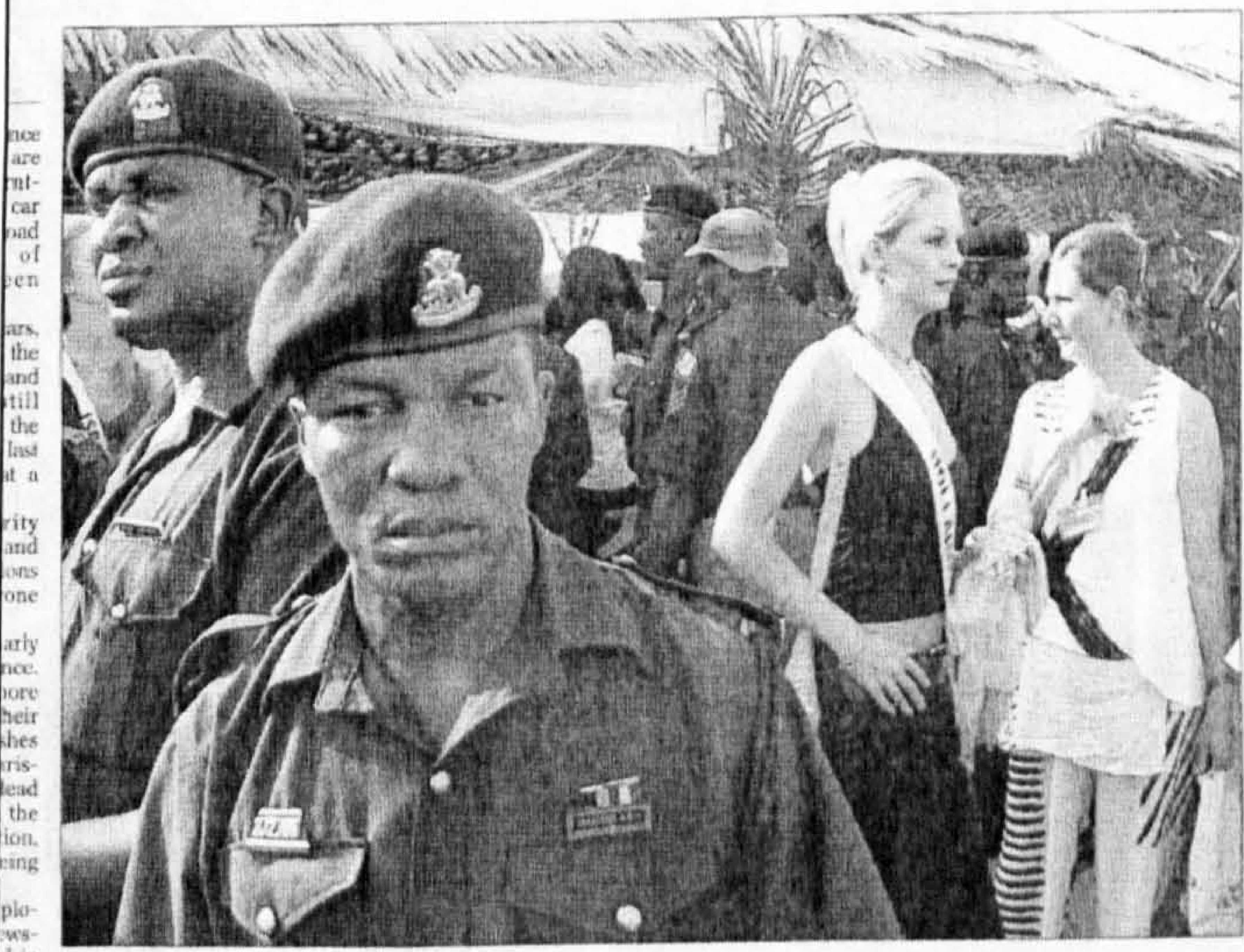


Fig 8 The Daily Telegraph 5 Feb. 2002 p. 15

Saturday, November 23, 2002

Miss World 'blasphemy' led to carnage



Miss England, Daniella Luan, and Miss Belgium, Sylvie Doclot

Fig 9 The Daily Telegraph 23 November 2002 p. 9