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Representing the MAJORITY WORLD famine, photojournalism and the Changing Visual Economy

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REPRESENTING
THE MAJORITY WORLD
Famine, Photojournalism and the Changing Visual Economy

PHD THESIS BY D J CLARK

Contents

Cover Picture: Malike, Moma, and Leila having fun in Mali, West Africa. Years of drought and inter-community conflict have made life extremely hard for the communities here but they have persevered and are now growing food and finding ways to earn a living. Kassambere village, Borem District, Mali, November 2005. Image: D J Clark.

ABSTRACT

Our knowledge of the world is mediated. This means knowledge depends on representations provided to us from a variety of sources. However, we should not limit representation to a concern with language, or suggest that representations produce fictions unconnected to the real world. To avoid these problems we need to understand mediated knowledge and representation in terms of discourse. This thesis examines aspects of a particular discourse, the visual discourse of photojournalism, and explores its role in constructing the imagined geography of Africa.

This thesis investigates how photographic illustrations of Africa play a role in constructing knowledge of the continent for mainstream UK audiences. It undertakes this in terms of the 'Minority World' and the 'Majority World' in order to challenge the assumptions of superiority and inferiority associated with traditional representations of 'First World/Third World' or 'developed/underdeveloped'. Central to the discussion is the notion of a specific photographic point of view based on the author's background as a Minority World photographer who has undertaken extensive work in the Majority World.

The thesis considers how historical photographic representations of African countries that are beyond the personal experience of UK mainstream audiences, and the formation of key compositions in a particular style to represent famine, were repeated through the last century and how these compositions relate to current public understandings of the Majority World as a particular place. Through this discussion the thesis critically analyses public consumption of such images and argues the construction of key events (disasters, famines, etc.) are central to the imaginary construction of the continent of Africa. It argues that colonial relations of power and knowledge, and the production of 'otherness' continue to influence contemporary images of the Majority World. Taking the1984-5 Ethiopian famine as a key event in the formation of geographic visualisations of the African continent, the thesis both considers this event in detail and traces its influence to the formation of contemporary photographic illustrations. Through critical discourse analysis, extensive interviews with photographers, fieldwork, and surveys the thesis examines contemporary photojournalistic coverage of a single event and how it affects UK public understandings of Africa.

The photojournalistic representations of famine in Africa are then considered in terms of the rapidly changing global image economy (in which the move to digital production and distribution is transforming photographic practice), the rise of local photographers, and the influence of the visual discourses on economic stability and growth of the communities in which their subjects live. These arguments come together in the 2003 case of photographic reports from Bob Geldof's return to Ethiopia during another purported food crisis.

The thesis asks if the changes in the image economy and recent examples of new photographic practice, especially that which follows the codes of conduct for imagery put in place after the Ethiopian famine of 1984-5, demonstrate the potential for changing the way 'Africa' is constructed as an imagined geography for UK publics, and, if so, how? It grounds the argument in an extended conclusion, which examines the assignment the author carried out in Mali in November 2005 in conjunction with Oxfam GB. This photographic commission demonstrated the difficulty of finding an alternative visualisation of food insecurity (famine) that meets the demands of non-government organisations' (NGOs) ethical picture policies yet satisfies the requirements of mainstream media in the UK.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In 1989 I boarded a plane in London bound for Tel Aviv to undertake my first international assignment as a photojournalist covering news from Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. I did not return for two years after which time I had established myself as a photographer contributing to a global picture economy. Joining Panos Pictures in London, an agency known for its coverage of Developing World issues, I spent the next ten years working around the globe for publications and NGOs trying, in my understanding, to use the power of photography to effect social change. This thesis is the product of many uncertainties I encountered while working as a photographer, imaging distant lands for the benefit of Western audiences.

Before a lengthy list of acknowledgments it is first necessary to recognise the influence of John Hannavy, the previous Dean of Art and Design at the University of Bolton, who first persuaded me to lecture on an undergraduate photography course and later undertake this PhD. He reasoned that in order for me to develop my practice as a photographer, I first needed to step back and consider the subjects with which I was engaged. This was the motivation for beginning the process of developing this thesis, and I am very grateful to John, particularly for his early guidance.

In the course of completing the thesis I have amassed many debts, which I now finally acknowledge. The first and without doubt the most important is to David Campbell, my supervisor, who has been patient while I undertook a steep learning curve and supported me throughout the process. Through David's supervision I have made a fundamental change in my ability to analyse my practice as a photographer and for this I am extremely thankful. The second is to the University of Bolton and Dalian College of Image Art with whom I am currently employed and who have supported my research for its duration. My third debt is to the individuals and organisations that have helped me with access to the research materials. There are too many to mention individually but I should give special thanks to Shahidul Alam and staff at Drik in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Tafari Wossan in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Chab Touré in Bamako, Mali, Maarten Koets and the education team at World Press Photo, the Oxfam GB Communications Department, and staff at The Guardian Newsroom, all of whom went out their way to assist my research, and to my good friend Graham Bond who undertook a detailed proof read. My final debt goes to my family who supported me through my many frustrations in writing this thesis.

I would also like to thank the 102 photographers, editors, critics, and others who gave me time for interviews (82 of which are referenced in the thesis) and also those who answered email and phone enquiries.

During the first five years (2003-7) of my part-time thesis research, work in progress was presented to audiences around the globe in various research papers as listed below. I am thankful to all those who commented and gave valuable feedback during the process of writing, publishing, and discussing the papers. The papers were as follows:

The Production of a Contemporary Famine Image: The image economy, indigenous photographers and the case of Mekanic Philipos
Published in the *Journal of International Development* 16, (2004), 1-12. The paper was also presented at the Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change conference, University of Sheffield, September 2003. This paper was funded through a Winston Churchill Trust Fellowship, which on completion was presented to Her Majesty the Queen at Buckingham Palace in London, June 2006.

China, Photography and Famine
Research paper presented at The British International Studies Association Conference, December 2004, The Political Studies Association Conference, April 2005 and The Elephant Conference, London College of Communication, May 2005. The paper has been selected for a presentation at the *Humanism in China* symposium at the Tang Center For East Asian Art, Princeton University, October 2009.

Imaging Famine
The *Imaging Famine* exhibition was curated with David Campbell and Kate Manzo and ran at The Guardian Newsroom gallery in August and September 2005. Accompanying the images from the exhibition was a publication dealing with *Famine, Live Aid, and the Politics of Representation*. The catalogue is also a collaboration with David Campbell and Kate Manzo and published by the *Guardian*. As well as the exhibition and publication, I organised a two-day academic conference at The Newsroom, London, and set up a panel at the Development Education Association Conference, Milton Keynes, both in September 2005.

Sourcing Pictures
Development Education, Images and Indigenous Photographers.
Published in *The Development Education Journal*, January 2006 and presented at the Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis conference, December 2005 at The CUNY Graduate Center, New York.

Digitised Image Markets and the Politics of Place: A critical exploration of contemporary changes to the global single image market and the impact on public understandings of the Majority World
Research paper presented at the Global Photographies: Histories, Theories, Practices conference, Institute of Art, Design & Technology, Dun Laoghaire, June 2007 and the Locating Photography: Between the Local, the National and the Universal conference, University of Durham, September 2007.

Thesis related issues were also presented at the following international public lectures:
2003 Ethiopian Press Society, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia - organised by The British Council
2004 The Garden Hotel, Guangzhou, China - organised by The British Council
2006 The Press Association, Zagreb, Croatia - organised by The British Council
2006 Festival Lecture, Dhaka, Bangladesh - organised by the Chobi Mela Festival
2007 Taiwan Photographic Society, Taipei, Taiwan - organised by the National University of Taiwan
2007 Asia Center for Journalism, Manila, Philippines - organised by The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
2007 China Foto Press Offices, Chinese Picture Editors Conference. Beijing & Shanghai - organised by China Foto Press
2008 Felix Meritas, World Press Photo Awards, Amsterdam, The Netherlands - organised by World Press Photo

Referencing
The thesis employs the Imperial College London guide to referencing, available at www.imperial.ac.uk/library).

Page numbers for references in the text are given where available. However, some websites and photography books do not number pages. Interviews are referenced by name and year in the text and with double quotation marks (") to clearly distinguish between an unprepared comment and a considered written comment, which is marked with a single quotation (').

Gender-Specific Pronouns
Although I acknowledge photographers are both male and female, for the sake of brevity the thesis has used only male pronouns when referring to photographers as a whole.

INTRODUCTION

'Starving children with flies around their eyes, too weak to brush them off' (VSO, 2002: p.5). This is the dominant image of the developing world in the United Kingdom (UK) according to a research report based on opinion poll and focus group data. The Voluntary Service Organisation's (VSO) report *The Live Aid Legacy* found that:

> When UK consumers think of the developing world, Africa is their starting point. TV images of famine and Western relief instantly spring to mind. Sixteen years on, *Live Aid*, Band Aid and the Ethiopian famine still have a powerful hold on our views of the developing world.

The result is a 'one-dimensional view of developing countries…primarily driven by images of drought and famine' (VSO, 2002: p.15). While the report acknowledges elements of this understanding are not false, it concludes that what is missing from the 'UK public's' imagination is a more equitable view of political, cultural and economic 'realities.' The report (which is discussed in greater depth in Chapter 1) argues that readjusting popular perception in line with these multiple realities would have benefits in terms of cultural understanding about how engagement between the UK and developing countries could be improved (VSO, 2002: p.15).

The power of imagery is central to the analysis in *The Live Aid Legacy*. Although the report only referred to *Live Aid* the event briefly in the key findings (VSO, 2002: p.3), it is greatly concerned with the way the 'UK public's' negative visual understanding of Africa (and, by extension, the developing world) is the result of sustained exposure to famine imagery, most notably from northern Ethiopia during the 1985 *Live Aid* concert. That event was organised in response to famine reports from Ethiopia and was designed to raise money for direct aid. The concert brought together pop stars from around the world in a sixteen-hour music extravaganza, first from London and then soon after from Philadelphia. Twenty years later the *Live 8* event of 2005 was organised to create a political platform on with which to persuade the G8 leaders, meeting in Scotland during July 2005, to make assistance for Africa a priority in their agenda. During *Live 8* the community in the UK and beyond were once again subject to images of starving Ethiopians intermixed with celebrity performances. This was despite the fact that organisers claimed *Live 8* was about justice rather than charity and concerned with political awareness rather than raising money. Moreover, as Ethiopia had not experienced widespread famine during the intervening years, the images projected in 2005 were all drawn from 1984. However, few questioned this recycled visual representation of a place that was presumed to be in constant need of food security.

Fig 0.1 Screen grab form *Live Aid*, London, UK, 1985. Image: BBC.

Fig 0.2 *Live 8*. Manchester, UK, 2005. Image: D J Clark.

The Live Aid Legacy remains one of the most significant reports on how 'we' view developing countries, and as such it has been an important stimulus to this thesis. But how should we conceive of the media, its role, the news and imagery it produces, and the consumers subject to these stereotypes? As a photojournalist covering development issues around the world since 1989 - and therefore as a person who has played some role in contributing to this particular visualisation of the developing world - this question is of particular importance.

To begin to tackle the many issues prompted by this question, this thesis examines the implications of photographic illustrations of Africa for people in the UK. In contrast to the VSO report, this thesis makes the argument in terms of 'the Minority World' and 'the Majority World'. The Minority World is defined as Europe, North America, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, and the Majority World as all other countries. The Majority World equates to roughly 80% of the world's human population and 90% of all new births (Centeno, 2002: pp.3-5). The terms are borrowed from MajorityWorld.com, a ground-breaking photographic agency based in Dhaka, Bangladesh, that sells and promotes indigenous photographers' work from the region. The terms are preferred to First/Third or Developed/Developing World as they challenge the assumptions of superiority versus inferiority the VSO report found to be prevalent amongst UK consumers (VSO, 2002: p.5).

The thesis considers how historical photographic representations of African countries beyond the personal experience of UK mainstream audiences, as well as the formation of key compositions in a particular style to represent famine, were repeated through the last century and how these compositions relate to current public understandings of the Majority World as a particular place. Through this discussion the thesis critically analyses public consumption of such images and argues the construction of key events (disasters, famines, etc.) are central to the imaginary construction of the continent of Africa. These representations are then considered in terms of a rapidly changing global image economy and their influence on economic stability and growth of the communities in which their subjects live. The thesis asks if the changes in the image economy and recent examples of new photographic practice demonstrate the potential for changing the way Africa is constituted as a place, and, if so, how?

Taking the 1984-5 Ethiopian famine as a key event in the formation of the continent's geographic visualisation, the thesis will both consider this event in detail and then trace its influence to the formation of contemporary photographic illustrations, highlighting the representational lineage. In doing so it will seek to give a critical analysis of the power of contemporary photojournalism to impact UK audiences' understanding of place. Through an extended conclusion, the thesis will use a single photojournalistic assignment carried out in conjunction with Oxfam GB by the author in Mali, November 2005 to demonstrate how an alternative visualisation of food insecurity that follows new NGO guidelines has little impact on a negative visualisations of 'Africa'.

The thesis explores these issues by asking the following research questions:

1. What are the dominant UK public understandings of Africa as a place, how has photography contributed to these imagined geographies, and how do these imagined geographies affect African communities?

2. How can a still photographic image influence the imagined geography of a place, what are the key elements that give these pictures the claim to be truthful, and can photography contribute to alternative geographic visualisations?

3. What is the influence of the contemporary image economy on photographic visualisations of Africa, how do these structural changes affect UK perceptions of place, and is the photographer's national identity a factor in their visual representation of community?

4. Using famine as example, and exploring the situation in the African continent, how does the coverage of an event contribute to the construction of a place? What role does photography play in influencing both dominant UK audiences' short-term responses to contemporary disaster as well as their enduring imagination of place?

1. LOCATING THE RESEARCH

News Discourse

Our knowledge of the world is mediated. If we relied on direct experience as the basis of understanding we would necessarily know very little. This means knowledge of the wider world depends on representations provided to us from a variety of sources. As Stuart Hall argues:

> Representation is the production of meaning of the concepts in our minds through language. It is the link between concepts and language, which enables us to refer to either the real world of objects, people or indeed to an imaginary world of fictional objects, people and events.
>
> (1997: p.17)

However, we should not limit representation to a concern with language, or suggest that representations produce fictions unconnected to the real world. To avoid these problems we need to understand mediated knowledge and representation in terms of discourse. As Campbell (2009a) writes, 'instead of seeing the world as independent of ideas about it, with language transparently reflecting a pre-existing reality, theories of discourse understand reality as produced via practices of interpretation deploying different modes of representation.' However, as Campbell stresses, discourse is heterogeneous, regulated, situated, and embedded. That is, discourse is the product of many authors. It does not produce a single interpretation at the expense of all others, it can contain contradictions despite being regulated, and it materializes social life and is sedimented in institutions and practices.

Central to the argument of this thesis is a particular discourse - the discourse of journalism and news. The concept of news as discourse derives from literature that 'views language as having a role in the social construction of reality' (Cross, 2006: p.26). Academics who have developed this view broadly advance five different approaches. The first is the critical approach (Fairclough, 1995, Fowler, 1991, Van Dijk, 1988) in which studies reveal relations of power that seek to engage audiences into a particular response; the second is the stylistic approach which focuses on structure and the language of news discourse (Bell, 1991); the third focuses on the production of news practices (ibid); the fourth juxtaposes the linguistic style of writing with social factors (Bell, 1991); while the fifth, the cognitive approach, contrasts 'cognitive processes, conceptual metaphor, social meaning and discourse' (Bednarek, 2006: p.12 & van Dijk, 1988).

All the above theorists contest the common idea that news presents 'fact' and instead see it as a particular viewpoint constructed through cultural, institutional, economic, and social influences. As Hall (1986: p.9) states, 'it matters profoundly what and who gets represented, what and who regularly and routinely gets left out, and how things, people, events and relationships are represented.' In a similar vein, Fowler (1991: p.4) deconstructs news media as 'symbolic content' that always has 'its reason.' Therefore they argue the deconstruction of news media discourse allows particular insights into social and political values as well as institutional practices, all of which must be taken into account when discerning 'facts' from news media content.

Discourse analysis refers to the methodologies for studying the production and meaning of discourses (Campbell, 2009a). There are many approaches to the construction and interpretation of discursive knowledge and practices, but most important for the argument here is the work of theorists such as Michael Foucault (1972) and Roland Barthes (1966 & 1977) who discuss the creation of power structures that use discourse as a means to assert a particular position. In the case of news discourse this structure is formulated using language (McQuail, 1994: p.244) and images (Barthes, 1967 & 1977) that, when subject to a semiotic critique, reveal a plethora of signs, symbols, codes, and conventions that together represent a particular point of view. To use the example of famine in Ethiopia, the key issue (famine) is associated with the place (Ethiopia). Though the two words only come together in one news story, if the impact on mainstream audiences is great enough (as, will be argued in Chapter 4, was the case in 1984), the place (Ethiopia) comes to represent the issue (famine):

> This is as true of the photographic or televisual image as it is of any other sign. Iconic signs are particularly vulnerable to being 'read' as natural because visual codes of perception are very widely distributed and because this type of sign is less arbitrary than a linguistic sign.
>
> (Hall, 1980: p.132)

Semiotic study of underlying codes, particular image compositions, and forms of language are therefore key to a fuller understanding of news discourse.

Founding work in the field of critical news discourse analysis was carried out by the Glasgow Media Group (Philo et al., 1976, 1980 & 1982) and the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham (Hall et al., 1978). The CCCS first observed news media routinely 'marginalizing, down-grading or de-legitimizing alternative constructions' (ibid: p.67) as a method of providing credibility for a news report. Following on from the pioneers, numerous academics have continued the debate with critical linguistic studies of news texts, including notable work by Norman Fairclough (1992), Teun van Dijk (1988) and Robert Fowler (1991). Fowler (1991: p.20), for example, states social and economic processes are key to understanding media. Any news analysis should therefore take into account the following influences:

> 1. 'News is to be regarded as 'the product of organizational structures and professional practices' (Bell, 1991: p.38). That is, it is the product of multiple processes within a current news structure and not an individual first-hand account. Bell outlines numerous layers in the news creation process stating a byline is 'no guarantee of authorship' (ibid: p.42).
>
> 2. Absence of audiences in the production process creates a one-way dialogue giving the producer more power to persuade audiences without being contested.
>
> 3. By using the institutional voice of the newspaper the journalist is given a platform that carries with it the weight of the publication's prestige rather than that of the individual journalist or story. Photography appearing in the same space also carries with it the authority of the paper. Chapter 2 will discuss this in greater detail.

News discourse analysis therefore provides a greater depth of insight than a traditional content analysis as it takes into account underlying social, cultural, and political messages that are ingrained in the text and image compositions. In fact, as many of the theorists above claim, the codes themselves can often be more revealing than the content itself. As Cross (1992: p.29) observes, 'discourse analysis's interest in the relationship between different parts of the sign-system or message shifts the focus from manifest messages and allows for the study of meaning within a text.'

News Values

The analysis of news discourse has to confront the issue of 'news values' as central to the production of some information as news. Grossberg et al. (1998), McQuail (1987) and Bell (1991) all discuss the factors that make a story newsworthy and therefore what gets covered. Bell (1991) divides these into three classes. The first concerns the content of the news and the events that it reports, more specifically, the impact on the consumers of the news, the timeliness, the perishability of the story, the uniqueness, the negativity of the subject, the proximity to audiences, the prominence of the individuals being discussed, and the profile of audiences. The second concerns the process of production and includes issues of continuity, competition, co-option, predictability, and prefabrication. The third class is that of quality, and concerns clarity, brevity, and colour. In the first section of Chapter 1 these factors will be discussed in relation to news reports from Africa within UK newspapers. Fowler (1991) uses these factors to argue that the product of mass media reflects the values and culture of the consumers to which it is addressed imposing 'a structure of values, social and economic in origin, on whatever is represented' (ibid: p.4).

Although the newspaper is generally regarded as the first form of mass media, (McQuail, 1987: p.203), Grossberg et al. (1998: p.247) argue that it now forms only a part of a complex mix of delivery mechanisms for news. These they divide into five social functions and four individual functions. The social functions are: information about events and issues; correlation of complex stories; continuity in promoting the dominant culture; and entertainment and mobilisation of publics in order to bring about change. All play key roles in the formation of attitudes amongst the communities with which they engage. The individual functions are: education; personal identity; social identity; and entertainment. These functions connect single members of the community in different ways.

The Development of the UK Newspaper

Formal newspapers first came into being in the seventeenth century as a means of distributing information about religious wars in Europe (Smith, 1979). The *London Gazette,* launched in 1665, followed the lead of irregular government propaganda publications that had started in 1621 and was still heavily censored. A second wave of newspapers, including *The Times*, formed in the late eighteenth century in response to the American and French revolutions that were threatening British interests abroad (Conboy, 2002). These were more independent from the government censors but were born in a time of national unity and therefore generally reflected united public opinion (Curran, 1978: p.51). It was not until the twentieth century before UK journalists felt the obligation to be balanced and accurate in their reporting. However, the notion of objectivity in journalism needs to be understood in its historical context as a means to avoid offence to the advertisers who made the news business economically viable (Hallin, 2006).

The UK now has the third biggest newspaper market in the world. Nearly 80% of all British households buy a copy of a newspaper everyday (Bednarek, 2006: p.12), and the UK has more national newspapers than any other country, although the rapid changes in the newspaper economy in the United States suggest that this position of relative strength could change in the foreseeable future[1]. Today the UK national newspapers are divided broadly into two categories, the popular (or tabloids) and the quality (or broadsheets). The quality press commands only around 20% of the market (ABC, 2009) and has more middle class readers (80-90%) as opposed to the popular press (45%) (Bednarek, 2006: p.13). The popular press is limited in vocabulary and concentrates on

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[1] A current debate on the "death of the newspaper" in the US suggests a rapid transformation in the way in which established newspapers will deliver content in the future. These changes are happening at the same time as new technical innovation by the professional camera manufactures that allows for greater versatility of content being produced by news photographers.

human-interest stories. The quality newspapers concentrate more on analysis of politics, economics, and foreign news. Although the newspapers are free from government interference, few are publically regarded as politically neutral due to editors, proprietors, and advertisers all having the right to impose a particular political standpoint. Ownership of the UK national press is concentrated among large media organisations, Rupert Murdoch's *News International* being the biggest, and is regulated by the Communications Act 2003. In its discussions of newspaper representation, this thesis is concerned with both quality and popular newspapers.

Pictures in the News

Discourse is not just linguistic; it is also made up of other representational forms like images. In turn, images comprise a range of forms dispersed across a range of sites, but the discussion in this thesis is concerned primarily with news photographs (photojournalism). Nonetheless, images and text share common news frames, particularly when they run together to illustrate one story. However photographers and writers rarely work together, often leaving space between the two messages. Audiences fill any gap that is left between the image caption and accompanying story and this in part relies on their reading of the image and imagined geography of place and race. In terms of race images, the photographer identifies the subjects without a need for descriptions. Messaris & Abraham (2003) demonstrate how images of African Americans are used to associate when discussing social problems. Key to their conclusion was that it was images, and not words, that framed the social problems as being specifically African American problems:

> Photographs have long been used as aesthetic enhancements for information contained in news stories, but the effects of juxtaposition of photographs and text on readers' perceptions of issues has received little attention. More importantly, little attention has been paid to the potential effect of implicit or incidental information from photographs not supplied by the verbal/written text on interpretation of multi-modal messages.
>
> (Abraham & Appiah, 2006: p.185)

Gibson and Zillman found that when text and images produce different messages from the same story, audiences' 'reactions to featured photographs shift the primary text-based perceptions and evaluation of issues in the direction suggested by the photographs' (2000: p.355).

Abraham and Appiah (2006: p.187) suggest two main theories on how 'verbal and visual resources are cognitively processed' in the newspaper format. Firstly the dual code theory which suggests the images and text are stored in different parts of the memory (though the memory is interconnected and information is brought together for a single interpretation). The second is a single code theory that suggests pictures and words are memorised as one specific reading with an individual translation system that merges the information. Although the two systems seem at odds with each other, Abraham and Appiah suggest they both prove that the combination of text and photographs to represent a story enhances not only the prominence on the page but also the cognitive processing and the likelihood to enhance meaning and memory to a reader. Furthermore pictures can provide a structure within which the textual narrative can take place.

Like text, pictures are constructions as a means of fixing meaning. 'We construct meaning, using representational systems - concepts and signs' (Hall, 1997: p.25). Hall argues the material world is very different from that which is represented through symbols and signs. This concept is discussed in Chapter 2 in relation to process.

Headlines and point of view are also important means of framing news stories. Van Dijk (1991) demonstrates headlines to be the most memorable section of the story. They also represent an opportunity for the editor to impose an ideological standpoint on the writer's story. Point of view is a key tool used to frame meaning for the reader. 'Point

of view can be explained as the physical place, the ideological situation, or the practical life orientation that the narrative events or existents stand in relation to' (Johannessen, 2006, p.67). For the photographer this is achieved through the choice of who to photograph and who to leave out of the frame, who to focus on and who to blur, who to place in the foreground and who to place at the back of an image. All these choices determine the key characters connected to the story. The use of eyewitness accounts as part of the caption is a common ploy, which makes the image more compelling than the dry words of the present independent photographer and, as a result, provides a particular point of view. News framing will de discussed at greater length in the methodology section of this introduction.

Photojournalism also currently exists within a rapidly changing image economy that is described in detail in Chapters 2 and 3. New digital photographic equipment and updated systems of delivering photographs to news publications are changing the process of production, not just in terms of how the images are being produced but also who is producing them. This in turn changes the relationship between the encoder (the photographer) and the decoders (the audiences) (Hall, 1980). These changes are outlined in some detail in order to position the discussion at this particular point in time as the author recognises (in Chapter 2) ongoing changes that will further affect the relationship of photographer to audiences. Photojournalism's rapid change over the past decade has made the research problematic, as it has continually had to be updated to take account of new developments. Chapter 2 also discusses the numerous sites in which photojournalism appears and how the siting is changing the relevance of those sites to how audiences negotiate images. Chapter 4 uses a case study from Ethiopia to explore how all these changes are affecting UK audiences' understandings of one African country.

Imagined Geographies

Over the last 10 years 'spaces and regions - and their meanings - have increasingly been conceptualised as socially constructed in and through cultural practices' (Stüver, 2007: p.682). Empirical and descriptive geographical surveys have been questioned by discussions about how representations that, although imaginative, function as the 'real' in the production of space:

> This produced distance between the real and the imagined has allowed for both a kind of hegemonic power in the production of racial, gendered, and sexualized images that simultaneously 'impose and represent a visual order' either in the absence of direct experience or to frame and rationalize that experience but likewise the distance opens the opportunity for oppositional practices and the development of a transnational community of struggle.
>
> (Rosati, 2007: p.999)

In critical geopolitics the question has shifted from where a region is to how its meaning is produced, and in doing so this has shattered the 'connections of culture to land and territorial borders, and alienated images from the contexts of their production' (ibid). Regions in the Majority World have increasingly been discussed through media and NGO frames that question the power of both practices to shape geographical imaginations and 'within them implicit assumptions about world order' (ibid: p.683). NGOs in particular find themselves in an uneasy situation of having to project an imagination of need in order to raise funds and politically justify their existence (Power, 2003).

The research questions locate this thesis within the literature of imagined geographies and the photographic visualisation of the geographic imagination. There is a body of significant literature within Geography, and the works of Edward Said, Denis Cosgrove, Derek Gregory, David Harvey, James Ryan and Joanne Schwartz have all made major contributions to its development.

David Harvey first introduced the notion of the 'geographical imagination' as a catchall phrase to describe an understanding of place, space, and landscape. This he refers to as encompassing all aspects of a particular social, physical, and cultural makeup (Harvey, 1990: pp.418-434). Schwartz and Ryan use a more focused definition describing the geographical imagination as:

> The mechanism by which people come to know the world and situate themselves in space and time. It consists, in essence, of a chain of practices and processes by which geographical information is gathered, geographical facts are ordered and imaginative geographies are constructed. Photography is one of those practices.
> (Schwartz and Ryan, 2003: p.6)

The invention of photography had a major impact on Victorian visualisations of places beyond the dominant audiences' experience and hence much of the literature concentrates on the advent of photography and its impact on nineteenth century attitudes. Denis Cosgrove, whose work is central to this literature, was concerned with illuminating 'the dynamic interplay between the world's diverse material landscapes and equally diverse modes of imagining and exploring them' (Lowenthal, 2008). He documented how Europeans imagined a growing world through photographs as well as other visual means (maps, charts, paintings, prints, and cartoons) and how those documents led to the establishment of particular power relations between the collectors of such images and the places that were imaged. Cosgove argued that the process of stitching together fragments of a place through an imaginative gaze led to a point of view of ownership and conquest (Cosgrove, 2008).

Photography is of particular relevance to geopolitics because of its function within the media to communicate and construct visually imagined geographies of place:

> Much like cartography, these images contributed to the development of an 'imagined geography' in which the dichotomies of West/East, civilized/barbaric, North/South and developed/underdeveloped have been prominent (Gregory, 1995; Said, 1979). Since the advent of technology for moving images (i.e. film, television, video and, most recently, digital technologies), much 'foreign' news has centered on disaster, with stories about disease, famine, war and death prominent contrasts to the relative stability of the 'domestic' realm they are directed at (Moeller, 1999).
> (Campbell, 2007: p.358)

It is important to appreciate here that the binaries produced by the imagined geography of the colonial period are not natural. They are, however, naturalised. That means they have the appearance of being natural even though they are constructed as part of a complex array of discursive practices in which each side of the dualism is related to the other. In other words, it is because of the need to constitute ones self as civilized/developed that notions of barbaric/underdeveloped are ascribed to the other.

The second section of Chapter 1 offer theories as to how current imaginative constructions of the Majority World continue to be influenced by colonial power and knowledge and the production of 'otherness'. 'Otherness' becomes a key theme throughout the thesis as the second section of Chapter 2 explores gendered disparities and the first three sections of Chapter 3 outline the influence of the global image economy as a contemporary 'othering' force in the dramatisation of the differences between Majority and Minority worlds. Yet studies in Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrate the polarisation of the two worlds is far from clear as photographers, their subjects, and their audiences have a much broader range of experiences and knowledge than the theories recognise. In particular, many of the Majority World photographers interviewed have trained in, or been trained by, Minority World institutions and many of the Minority World photographers (including the author) have lived for extended periods in Majority World countries where they work. The concept of a photographer's 'Western Eye' is explored in the second section of Chapter 3, both as a theory and a practice. Like the process of 'othering', the

notion of a particular gaze is problematic as the studies prove because each photographer brings a specific complex mix of education, cultural upbringing, and personal experience to the production of their images. The expression of social beliefs and meanings is therefore extremely complex. In addition, increasing globalisation of news and transnational circulation of images means any discussions of particular representations are 'fraught with pitfalls' (Rosati, 2007: p.997). The 'Western Eye' can therefore only be defined by its content rather than its creator.

For the purpose of this thesis, the above arguments serve as starting point for an exploration of the relationship between photojournalism and the production of imagined understandings of Africa. Like Gregory (2003), who explored how early images of Egypt displaced 'these ancient monuments from their physical sites in Egypt into 'sights' within a European imagination', the thesis will seek to critically analyse contemporary photojournalism as a vehicle for the creation of specific geographical visualisations of Africa and question how those visualisations impact on the development of the represented societies. Using this understanding, the thesis concentrates on photography as 'a certificate of *possession* issued to the viewer' (Gregory, 2003: p.206), rather than what Barthes refers to as 'a certificate of presence' (Barthes, 2000: p.87) issued by the photographer. However, while images are important it is necessary to note 'they can never form the basis of media politics in and of themselves' (Rosati, 2007: p.1000) but rather should be considered a part of a larger process. The discussion of spatial politics is central to current geographic inquiry and this thesis therefore engages with that contemporary geopolitical discourse. As much of the research to date has focussed on media texts, the thesis's focus on photojournalism explores an important yet understudied area of enquiry. Recognising that images exist within a larger social context and as part of a wider process, the study adds to a growing area of research in the field.

Audiences

The thesis research questions also locate themselves within a tradition of British cultural studies that 'emphasizes a cultural dimension in which media and audience are embedded' (Johannessen, 2006: p.7). The research concentrates on media images in particular as both a product of social and cultural practices and a means to change ways of thinking and attitudes. The theory assumes therefore that the construction of media images is formed somewhere between audiences' expectations and the producers' experience on the ground. The link between images of the Majority World and UK audiences is a central theme running throughout the thesis and the approach to analysis deals with both the production of the images and the production of meaning for the audiences. This dual strategy is often referred to as the social production of meaning (Jenson, 2002: p.135).
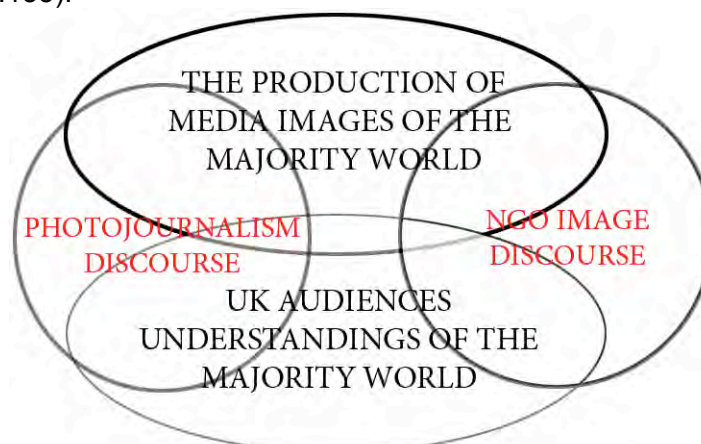

Fig 0.3 Methodology Map. Image: D J Clark.

The diagram above indicates the interplay between the main themes of this study all of which take place within a political, economic, and social geographic framework. The emphasis of the thesis is the production of media images of the Majority World and this

sits at the top of the diagram. The three other areas of discussion, photojournalism discourse (which is situated within media discourse), NGO image discourse, and UK audiences' understandings of the Majority World are predominantly based on secondary resources and serve in principal to give context to the primary research into the production of media images of the Majority World. The diagram's construction also emphasises a distinction and interplay between the production of the images and audiences' responses. The key findings of the thesis are located in the cross-over area where links are established between the four key subjects and this, the thesis contends, gives valuable knowledge about how images of the Majority World are produced and how audiences negotiate and reconcile them with prior understandings. The research strategy is interpretative, relying heavily on a democratic approach that values the viewpoint of the producers and audiences as an equal source of knowledge to that of photojournalism and NGO commentators. The author however retains control of both the research direction and the final presentation.

The thesis recognises that the audience, the 'UK public', is a constructed notion and that it is not singular but rather represents multiple communities, all of which negotiate the images in different ways. This understanding involves a new direction in research:

> An overarching theme of the history of popular geopolitics has been a concern over geopolitical representation and discourse, which is only now beginning to shift towards audience interpretation, consumption and attachment.
>
> (Dittmer & Dodds, 2008: p.437)

The imagined geographies described in the previous section are not limited to individuals but can also be described in a collective sense as the means by which a group of people have the same understanding of a particular region of the world. Studies used in the first section of Chapter 1 all provide macro or collective geographical data derived from audience surveys that define audiences as a 'mediated multitude' (Bratich, 2005: p.244). Although this is consistent with mainstream consumer research, which views consumers and target groups as masses, it can be problematic. Len Ang (1991), who researched audience discourses in television institutions, describes how the media industry generally regard audiences to be simply a market broken down by demographic, spending power, and other factors (ibid: p.60). Such communities are much harder to define in terms of their geopolitical understandings as the individuals included have intersecting, and at times conflicting imaginations of different aspects of the same texts and therefore the concept of a homogeneous audience is problematic. The complex linkage that connects image production and audiences' readings of images is central to the thesis.

This understanding can be detailed by reference to David Morley's (1980) seminal study *The Nationwide Audience.* Morley contends that different social and cultural groups interpret current affairs TV in different ways, moving away from the notion of audiences being conceived as substantially de-contextualised. Subsequent audience studies (for example Silverstone, 1991) have introduced the convergence of video, computer, and other digitised technologies that transform the social and cultural environment in which television is consumed, but Morley's study remains the simplest to define the concept. Showing two episodes of the BBC's *Nationwide* programme to diverse sets of students, Morley set out to discover how particular elements of the programmes were interpreted by specific socio-cultural groups (Morley, 1983: p.106). Morley defines each audience reading of the programmes to be either dominant (or 'hegemonic'), negotiated, or oppositional ('counter hegemonic'). In the dominant reading the viewer shares the presumed preferred reading of the programme makers (though this may not have been articulated), in the negotiated reading audiences accept some of the preferred reading but add to it in a way to reflect their own beliefs and interests, and in the oppositional reading the viewers reject the preferred reading. Morley's (1981b) argument is that different socio-cultural groups will decipher the programmes within the framework of their beliefs and experience.

Of the 26 groups from different social, educational, and cultural backgrounds in London and the Midlands used for Morley's study, 12 gave 'dominant' readings, eight had 'negotiated' readings and six gave 'oppositional' readings. Although Morley points out many flaws in the study (1981b: p.67) he concludes that the reading of the programmes was constructed according to the audiences' social position, prior knowledge of the subject, and other social and cultural factors. Thus for the programme makers to achieve a particular preferred reading they must first consider their audiences' socio-cultural make-up and how the issues outlined compare to other similar media messages their audiences may have encountered. Audiences are not simply watchers of television or readers of newspapers but:

> they are members of families, households, communities and nations: they are gendered, aged and members of social classes: they are skilled and unskilled, educated and uneducated and they watch television while doing other things and in competition with other things, at times and in places, alone and with others, in ways that mark their activity as powerfully mediated by the social, economic, political and technological systems and structures of everyday life.
>
> (Silverstone, 1991: p.137)

Silverstone argues (ibid: p.138) that, today, the family is the key social unit as it is in the family environment that most media consumption takes place and is discussed. Fish (1976) groups audiences who share the same reading of specific images and texts into what he terms 'interpretive communities'. Livingstone (2005), who believes Fish's study was too narrowly focused on intellectuals, takes Fish's principle and applies it more broadly to a public context. He argues that the further away audiences are from the subject (physically, socially, politically, and culturally) the greater the number and range of meanings that are negotiated and therefore the greater the number of interpretive communities. Bratich (2005: p.246) makes an important observation when discussing the notion of interpretive communities, in that the bigger the community, the greater their power to mediate a particular geopolitical imagination. 'Audience power refers to a configuration of humans and communication technologies in which the capacities of production (both semiotic and somatic) are enhanced' (ibid). This is a recurrent theme throughout this thesis - when globally distributed images are mediated in a similar way at the end of the communication chain by large numbers of people, the power of that culture production is difficult to change. Although the notion of 'mainstream' audiences as a defined concept to represent the mediated multitude is problematic because of its infinite variability, its power to produce meaning is considerable, particularly with increased networked technologies.

This leads to a definition of audience closer to 'postmodern understandings of the subject as composed of multiple intersecting identities, or in this case multiple intersecting interpretive communities' (Dittmer & Dodds, 2008: p.446). With a much greater physical, social, political, and cultural distance between African and UK communities than is demonstrated in Morley and Livingstone's UK-only case studies, the numbers and complexity of the interpretative communities increases. Although in this thesis these are simply referred to as 'UK audiences' or, when referring to mainstream audience readings (identified through the audience surveys outlined in Chapter 1), 'dominant UK audiences', these terms pay heed to the constructed and multiple nature of the audience.

Here, too, it is important to distinguish between Morley's (1983) use of the term 'dominant audiences' and Hall's (1980: p.134) understanding, which describes a 'preferred' or majority reading by multiple audiences. It is Hall's use of the word 'dominant' that the author is referring to when using the term 'dominant audiences'. However the author acknowledges the extent to which these audiences 'occupy material or metaphorical spaces' (Livingstone, 2005: p.395) and their role in the production of geographical meaning, which is neither 'univocal nor uncontested' (Hall, 1980: p.134). A possible future study will compare differently located audiences to understand how geopolitical imaginative image interpretations vary due to physical, social, political, and cultural positioning.

2. METHODOLOGY

Point of View

Before outlining the formal methodologies employed in this research, it is necessary to acknowledge my positionality and standpoint as author. As a Minority World photographer who has spent a significant part of his professional career imaging Majority World subjects for Minority World audiences, my upbringing and immersion in various audiences inevitably influence the argument in the thesis. Between 1989 and 1991 I worked as a wire photographer covering breaking news from Israel and Palestine for a predominantly European and American market. Returning to the UK, I worked for the following 10 years as a features photographer represented by Panos Pictures in London. This work was considerably varied but included assignments throughout the Majority World for both mainstream UK media and the major UK-based overseas development NGOs. My early work with the major wire services very much represented a conventional Minority World perspective, but after returning from the Middle East in 1991 I increasingly sought to challenge the accepted norms of conflict coverage

An example of this was a two-year project undertaken in 1992-3 with the Consortium for Street Children (an umbrella group consisting of 37 UK based NGOs that work with street and working children) in which I was assigned to challenge images of helplessness. The consortium knew that many street children with whom they worked 'enjoyed' their lives on the street and wanted to try and explain the issue was not simply resolved by providing safe homes, which many of the children did not want to go to. The final exhibition toured 26 venues including the World Health Organisation and United Nations headquarters and was presented as an album to the then Prime Minister, John Major, at 10 Downing Street. The project was particularly well received by the NGO community who continued to commission me to provide alternative visualisations of their work. This led to work both as a photographic trainer of UK-based NGO staff and as a consultant in the production of NGO image guidelines designed to prevent the reproduction of stereotypes.

Fig 0.4 Street children play helicopter game with broken cans, from *Street and Working Children* exhibition. Korche, Albania, August 1993. Image: D J Clark.

Therefore, from an early stage in my photographic practice, I have been on the margins, actively questioning dominant ways of imaging the Majority World. At the same time, I have to recognise that both my practice and attitudes are still grounded within a predominantly Minority World perspective, and this combination of purpose and position has been behind my formulation of this doctoral research. Indeed, challenging dominant representations of Majority World subjects, albeit from my position as a white, middle-class, Minority World, but reflective male, has been the raison d'être of my photographic and academic practice for the last two decades. Accordingly, the methodology pursues a flexible and sensitive approach to research in order to take into consideration this complex but particular viewpoint. This is most evident in the position I have taken during interviews, photographic assignments, and the discussion of library-based research conducted and written in the Minority World.

The process of interviewing subjects has many comparisons to that of photographing subjects and therefore is a process the author is well practiced at and feels comfortable undertaking. The author's presence as the photographer invariably influences the outcome of an image and this is an issue dealt with in its own right in Chapters 2 and 3. The interviewer's presence is also discussed later in the methodology. The vast majority of interviews conducted for the thesis are with photographers, photo editors, and academics. In most of these cases, as a practicing photographer and academic, the author believes his presence was unthreatening. Interviews with photographers and photo editors from the Majority World however cannot be classed in the same way and to counter this, the author increased the number of interviews and repeated questions across a broader range of interviewees to strengthen the validity of the claims. Validity in this case is defined as repeated arguments that engage with the main research questions of the thesis.

Analysis

The analytical design of the thesis has employed six principle research methodologies: library-based research, news framing and content analysis, surveys, case studies, interviews, and original practice.

Library Based Research

All chapters are based around extensive reading of secondary sources, in particular the main arguments found in Chapter 1. The library research for the first section of this chapter uses six reports as its primary sources. These were selected simply because they were the most relevant recent studies the author could access that provided analytical data on UK media coverage of Africa and UK dominant audiences' attitudes to Africa. The data on media coverage, which constituted two independent reports and one government report, provided the most reliable data, whereas the audience surveys, two of which were commissioned by NGOs with specific agendas and one independent report by Chatham House, provides less robust evidence. However all the reports for the second section concluded similar findings to each other, which fitted an expected outcome from the first section reports. From these sources the author was able to identify key geographic imaginations of Africa that set the themes for the rest of the discussion.

In the second section of Chapter 2, the *National Geographic Magazine* was selected as an example publication with which to trace histories of photographic 'othering'. Although the *National Geographic Magazine* is an American publication and still sells 60% of its issues in the US (National Geographic, 2009) it remains the biggest selling geographic news magazine in the UK. In 2008 the publication had the twentieth largest half-yearly magazine circulation in the UK market, selling 336,878 copies (ABC, 2009). By comparison, if you disregard celebrity magazines, the next biggest selling news title was *The Economist* at sixty-eighth with a circulation of 148,241 (ibid). It therefore

made the most obvious choice as a sample publication that regularly publishes stories from the Majority World to use for the broadest representation to dominant UK audiences.

Texts for the rest of the research were first selected during the initial preparation for the thesis. Key academic texts in the fields of NGO communication and photojournalism were identified to start the library-based research, to which further texts were added as they were published or picked up though preliminary reading. Texts on geopolitical imaginations and media audiences were added at a later stage to give the thesis more contextual balance. As explained in the preface, the bulk of the research was divided into a series of research papers, an exhibition/conference/website and conference papers that were brought together in the final year of writing. This methodology concentrated the author on particular texts for each of the smaller projects.

News Framing and Content Analysis

Image analysis plays a key role in the field of photojournalism discourse and this study considers a number of particular photographs that are relevant to the research. Where appropriate, the author seeks to combine physical and aesthetic image descriptions with discussions on negotiated audience readings. In order to do this, the images cannot be analysed in isolation as they are interpreted as they appear in the media, alongside text, headlines and other images. There are a number of different theoretical frameworks with which to analyse news (outlined in full in McQuail, 1994), all of which agree that the workflows, which are routinely used by journalists and photographers to process news quickly, are subject to different interpretations by a variety of publics. 'Variously called a theory, paradigm, model, or perspective, the concept of framing is growing in its appeal as a means of understanding the power of the media' (Arthur, 2007: p.29). The core of this process is to clarify the frame in which the image is made available by the producer to his audiences and the frame in which audiences might interpret its meaning. Entman (1993) describes the process of framing as a mixture of selection and significance:

> To frame is to *select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation* for the item described.
>
> (original italics, p.52)

This is a progression from mass communication research, dominant in studies from the 1930s to 1960s, that saw communication as a one-way process of bringing a message from the sender to the receiver (Shannon & Weaver, 1948; Laswell, 1948).

As this thesis deals with the relationship between the meaning of news images and their production, research on the framing of news was originally undertaken utilizing critical discourse analysis (CDA) developed by Fairclough (1995a). The CDA uses three dimensions of enquiry. The first is linguistic and examines choices of words and grammar (in this case in the captions and associated text), the second looks at the production of meaning through the relationship between consumption and construction, and the third considers news as a practice that forms social ideologies (Fairclough, 1995b). News texts and images alike were analysed using all three questions to establish underlying influences and meanings connected with the stories. The author's own background is also not exempt from the enquiries, and recognising Hall's (1982) critical cultural analysis, the CDA is undertaken with an emphasis on the photographer and audiences' reading/decoding of the media messages rather than the author's. However, in the final analysis the author recognises his position as a specific audience using his own knowledge and social framework, which is unavoidable, and acknowledges other perspectives may be different. This said the CDA framework is inclusive and reduces excessive interference by the author.

Although Fairclough's methodology is based on text analysis, his CDA provides a

useful means of deconstructing how news images within a framework of media discourse are embedded with particular interests that benefit specific social groups - the audiences, the journalists, and the media group shareholders, for example (van Dijk, 1988). That is, media practitioners construct news narratives based on their social, professional, and personal principles, business interests, and company templates (ibid: p.91). News images and stories are often representations/descriptions of isolated single events that do not form part of a sequence of connected discourse. As outlined earlier in the introduction, news images form part of a template of information that uses text size (headlines), image placement, and image size as a means to highlight the most important points the editor wishes audiences to engage with (van Dijk, 1991: pp.113-114). The template typically uses a top-down structure that first uses the picture and headline to grab the viewer's interest, then provides details of the main event in the text, followed by the context in which the event occurred (commonly known in journalistic theory as the inverted pyramid). This structure is designed for audiences to be able to drop out of the story at various points but also provides the editor the opportunity to provide a point of view by deciding which elements of the story are most important and which elements can be sent to the bottom or left out. Language and style of writing within the text and caption can also give the writer and photographer the opportunity to assert ideological beliefs and for example the use of lexical items such as 'terrorist,' 'insurgent' or 'freedom fighter' (van Dijk, 1998: p.81). Using the CDA it is possible to identify prejudice by drawing out particular worldviews, stereotypes, and racism:

> There are many structures that are used to deny, mitigate, excuse or otherwise conceal prejudice, discrimination, or racism, to blame the victims, and to accuse the left, anti-racists, or other opponents.
>
> (van Dijk, 1991: p.198)

Fowler (1991) contends the media uses a cultural code that is subconsciously translated by audiences so that 'stereotypes are the currency of negotiation' (p.17). By using the words, 'we', 'us', 'ours' etc., media producers presume that the readers share the same ethnic and social background and in doing so produce a distance between the subjects of the news and audiences (Fowler, 1991; van Dijk, 1991).

While the CDA gives a good overall analysis of the images on the conceptual level, it fails to reach a full understanding of spatial representations and spaces as representations to particular audiences. Stüver concludes that critical geopolitics 'does not provide a consistent methodical framework that corresponds with its epistemological premises' (2007: p.685). The CDA presumes a particular 'audience' or 'public', which, as discussed earlier in the introduction, is no longer considered a singular notion but is plural. A CDA analysis, although useful for establishing a particular position of the production, does not provide a clear understanding of how that position is constructed as a space in audiences' imaginations. As indicated earlier in the introduction, these can vary widely.

Cultural references needed for the CDA are also hard to define, as perceived Minority World behaviour can quickly become indigenised. Take, for example, the use of cellular technology that is now as much a part of African society as it is in other parts of the world. Is the use of cellular technology innately African? Who decides what is African and what is not?

The CDA was also developed for the study of how text and not images are produced, decoded, and consumed. Yet images have their own spatialities of production and consumption with particular visual codes and symbols that can provide other cultural, historical, and political insights (Rosati, 2007: p.996). Such questions cause problems to the CDA as a methodology for image analysis.

Semiotics - the study of signs or codes and their use or reading - provides an alternative methodology for revealing particular meanings and messages that images can create for their audiences. The CDA methodology can be conceptualised to compliment a

semiotic analysis by 'analysing the effects which these meanings have in day-today life' (Stüver, 2007: p.687). This dual approach can both deconstruct the image in terms of its process of production/distribution as well as question how geographical meaning is created. Early semiotic theory was based on empirical studies of the act of representation, but more recently scholars such as Hall have moved the discussion away from the producer (the encoder) to the receiver (the decoder). Hall (1980) argues audiences play an equal role in the process of creating meaning and therefore should be regarded as 'co-authors' of any representation. As with the CDA, any attempt at semiotic analysis of images of the Majority World therefore must not only consider the process of production, but also the role of audiences and how they 'make sense of what they see, hear, read, what they make out of it and how they come to believe' (Stüver, 2007: p.688). This can be problematic as audiences can be constrained by their social location and the cultural meanings available to them in that location. There may also be penalties for those who choose to interpret an image in a socially unacceptable way.

Gillian Rose (2001) suggests an alternative image analysis methodology by dividing meaning into three sites - the production of the representation, the representation itself, and its audiences - and then investigating each of these through the technology by which the photograph was created, the composition, and the social. Yet of these three modalities, audiences are the most undefined and in the case of this thesis where a whole country is conceptualised as 'dominant UK audiences', its study is extremely complex.

Through the process of writing this thesis, the author has been unable to find an image analysis methodology that provides a way out of the 'methodological cul-de-sac' (Dittmer & Dodds, 2008: p.453) of deconstructing image representations across a broad set of audiences. As described in the introduction, 'audience' is a contested term, but without which it is impossible to derive shared social meaning from photographs. Hartley (1992: p.105) refers to audiences as 'invisible fictions' and Grossberg et al. (1998: p.208) argues they exist only as an 'idealization'. In this thesis, a CDA and semiotic analysis has been applied to image enquiries (in particular the Ethiopian case study in Chapter 4) but with the caveat that the author understands these cannot be definitive in their representation of all the complexities of multiple audiences throughout the UK.

Photographers' Biographies

As a photographer arrives at a scene he must make immediate choices as to what to include and what to miss out of a frame. Images and text share Fairclough's (1995a: pp.101-124) argument of presence and absence being a key tool to create a specific meaning from any given news story. Fairclough divides this into four stages of presence:

1. Completely missed or absent
2. Presupposed in that the creator presumes audiences already know this information and therefore there is no need to include it
3. Referenced but not presented as being important
4. Foregrounded

Fairclough's argument is that the absent information is as useful as the foregreounded information in any deconstruction of the story, an argument backed up by studies of news content by the Glasgow Media Group (1976 & 1980), which identified patterns in news studies of missing information. Although the discussion only refers to text, this is a useful structure with which to analyse the photographer's influence on construction of meaning through their images. In cases where photographs are discussed in depth, photographer's biographies are supplied, as well as other information pertaining to the image, as a means to critically evaluate a point of view.

Surveys

In 1993 the author conducted the *New Openings* survey that analysed UK-based overseas development NGOs' use and sourcing of photography. The author updated

these findings in 2003 as part of the thesis research with the *New Openings II* survey 10 years on. These surveys used both quantitative and qualitative methods. The 1993 survey was a paper-based questionnaire sent to over 200 UK NGOs, of which 63 were completed and returned. The 2003 survey was a web-based questionnaire sent to 270 NGOs. The second survey received exactly 50 responses between December 2002 and January 2003. The 2003 web-based survey repeated questions from the earlier survey and participants were also asked to comment on two points: (i) how their image use had changed over the past 10 years, and (ii) if they had any issues that currently affect the way they source and use photography. The results of these surveys have been published online at www.picturesforchange.org. The research started with an empirical study (Clark, 2003) from which the research for this thesis could engage. Although the thesis makes little mention of this study it was an important starting point as it produced missing statistics indicating the way in which UK NGOs were using photography of the Majority World at the start of the research period. It could also be compared to an earlier study (Clark, 1994) through which the author was able to gauge the way in which image use was changing. The early research was characterized by comparisons of the survey findings and library-based study that enabled the author an overall understanding of reasoning behind the publication of images of the Majority World in NGO publications and the broader press. The survey also provided valuable contacts of picture editors in UK-based NGOs with whom the author stayed in contact with throughout the research period.

Case Studies

Chapter 4 uses a single case study of photographic representations of Ethiopia as a means to discuss issues raised in the first three chapters. The process of choosing the study was threefold. Firstly, the reports discussed in Chapter 1 that outline dominant imaginations of Africa were scrutinised for key issues. Famine was identified as the issue most often discussed. Secondly, a chronological chart was created of African famines along with estimates of the numbers who died. Ethiopia was identified as the country most prone to famine. Thirdly, a media study was carried out as part of the *Imaging Famine* project in 2005 where again Ethiopia was identified as the country most associated with famine in the UK press.

Interviews

Key to the development of the thesis was the collection of 82 semi-structured interviews that used snowballing techniques to develop questions into areas brought up by the interviewee. During the research period for the thesis, the author visited the World Press Photo awards in Amsterdam to conduct interviews on four separate occasions (2003, 2005, 2007, 2008), visited and conducted fieldwork with photographers in Ethiopia (2003), Bangladesh (2003 & 2006), France (2005), Mali (2005), China (2004, 2006-8), as well as travelling extensively in the UK to meet photographers, editors, and academics. Chapters 3 and 4 investigate areas that, so far, have had little in-depth research and therefore rely heavily on primary research, mainly in the form of interviews. The interviews help to connect the theories discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 with contemporary international practice. The research questions at the heart of the thesis were also constantly changing during the research period as the international image economy moved through a phase of rapid development. As a result, the research design at the start of the process was set up to be flexible to allow for unexpected changes in the industry, of which there were many. The research questions outlined above were broadly set at the start of the research but without a comprehensive understanding of the outcomes. As the research developed so the questions became more defined and the author was able to focus on the emerging central themes.

The Interview Selection Process:

A list of people required for interviews was created in the planning process of each of the

chapters. The interviewees initially identified were then contacted during the research period and funding was sought where travel was necessary. The author also targeted meetings of photographers, such as festivals and awards ceremonies, where interviewees could be sought on the spot. In these instances the author travelled to these events with a specific list of issues he wished to engage with and, where possible, a list of people he sought to find and interview. There were also occasions when interviewees suggested a better person to answer specific questions, or where the author was given the opportunity to interview someone who was not on the list but who was determined by the author to offer a valuable point of view.

The Interview Structure:

Where possible the author sought to conduct the interviews face-to-face. However, of the 82 interviews conducted, five had to be carried out over the phone. All the face-to-face interviews were conducted either at the work place of the interviewee or in a neutral space, such as a café. Both the face-to-face and phone interviews used the same structure and analysis described below. Only one interview required a translator, Bezunesh Abraham (2003), the transcript of which is published, in part, in Chapter 4 with the translator's name and a description of the meeting. This interview was translated as it happened, and also recorded. When reviewing the tape it was stressed to the translator that the author needed a full, unedited translation of the interview.

Each interview lasted around 30 minutes (all appointments were scheduled for 30 minutes) and were semi-structured with the author beginning with a series of open-ended questions. When setting up the interviews the respondents were informed as to the nature of the discussion but not given a list of specific questions. The questions always started with a request for descriptions of working practice and progressed to more focused reflective and critical enquiries. Snowballing techniques were also used to allow the author to explore subjects brought up during the session. As a practicing journalist with many years experience, the process was familiar at the start and therefore did not vary greatly (improve or change) for the duration of the research period. Notes were taken at each interview and kept for later review. The interviews conducted in 2005 for the *Imaging Famine* project were also video taped and edited for the project website, www.imaging-famine.org.

Analysis and Presentation of Interviews:

The notes taken during the interviews in a notepad were written up at the end of each day with comments and reflections by the author. Extracts of the interviews are used to help illustrate, support, and engage with arguments throughout the thesis and have been particularly useful in giving detailed accounts of the process of image production in Chapters 3 and 4. Typically, the insertion of a personal testimony is backed up by a secondary similar statement followed by a discussion of the implications. Where applicable the interview notes were also subjected to analysis using the second dimension of Fairclough's CDA (1995b). In Chapters 3 and 4 where, in parts, there are few theoretical texts with which to engage, the interview quotes are used systematically to connect with each other. Analysis by some of the interviewees also helped in the construction of arguments. The most extensive use of personal interviews occurs in the second section of Chapter 4 and in the Mali experiment (in the Conclusion) where they serve to outline examples that illustrate previous arguments. These cases rely almost entirely on interviews to provide a physical description of the circumstances in which the event occurred.

The interview notes were treated with equal importance to the notes on the texts and were highlighted and used as evidence for the constructed arguments. However, in recognition of the fact the quotes come from unprepared statements (the interviewees did not know what the questions would be in advance), in the bibliography they are listed in a separate section and referenced throughout the thesis with the preface 'interview with'. Also, all interview quotes are punctuated with a double quotation mark (") to distinguish

them from written quotes which use the single quotation make ('). In doing so, the reader is clear about the nature of the situation in which the quote was sourced without having to refer to the bibliography.

Original Practice

The author continued to work periodically on professional photojournalistic assignments throughout the process of developing the thesis in order to critically reflect on the theories that were developed and to help fund the travel for the research. In particular, the extended Conclusion benefits from a structured food security assignment undertaken in Mali in 2005 for Oxfam GB that was conceived as a means of investigation. During research for the *Imaging Famine* exhibition, publication, and conference (2005) the author worked closely with the Oxfam GB communication and education departments. Soon after the exhibition the author was invited to the Oxfam GB headquarters to discuss the developments of a new Oxfam GB picture policy during which time the assignment in Mali was prepared. It served both as a means for Oxfam GB to experiment with their new policy and for the author to critically evaluate his research during a real-life assignment. Before leaving for Mali the author was given a picture contract from Oxfam GB along with dummy copies of the new style book the NGO was working on introducing. Following the assignment both the author and Oxfam GB produced analytical reports on both the images produced and the process of creating them.

3. ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

In order to establish an overview of dominant UK imagined geographies of Africa, the first chapter begins with an analytical discussion of a series of recent reports that detail public interpretations of the Majority World. Most, but not all, of the reports deal with UK audiences and can generally be divided into two groups. The first set of reports demonstrates how the media reports/represents issues from the Majority World to Minority World audiences. These help delineate broad media motivations in the way they deal with issues outside the experience of their audiences. The second set of reports are concerned primarily with gathering evidence of dominant UK understandings of the Majority World and, in three cases, specifically Africa. Through evidence gained from these reports and other key sources, the opening chapter gives a broad description of UK media reporting on Africa and dominant UK imagined geographies of Africa.

The chapter then steps back to consider whether these imaginations stem solely from recent representations, as claimed by the *Live Aid Legacy* report, or from a perpetuation of image compositions that have developed since the beginnings of photography. Contrary to *The Live Aid Legacy* claim, the chapter argues these particular representations started before the invention of photography with the formation of the idea of Africa as a 'dark continent' and the way constructs of 'otherness' furthered colonial power relations. The chapter then considers these Victorian representations in relation to other practices of photographic documentary at the time in order to demonstrate the complexity of the process of 'othering'. The chapter goes on to discuss the perpetuation of established visual compositions through a historical study of the *National Geographic Magazine*.

The third and final discussion of the chapter is concerned with a key question that arises from the discourse that precedes it: how do dominant negative imagined geographies in the Minority World affect the Majority World communities that are represented? The question looks beyond a simplistic critique of subject dignity and towards practical effects of the visualisation that influence a community's economic development. The chapter uses three examples of these effects to demonstrate the issue. The first effect derives from the power of dominant imagined needs overseas to influence UK governmental decisions on how to deal politically with Majority World countries and also how to spend overseas aid budgets. How do dominant imagined needs affect

politicians' decisions that concentrate on public understandings of need, rather than an actual need? If UK publics imagine the needs of Ethiopia revolve around chronic food shortages, then are politicians pressured to concentrate their policy on food security even if the reports from the ground suggest there are greater needs in other areas? The second is the development of tourism, which within the African context is reliant on public imaginations that affect choice of holiday destination. This question highlights a juxtaposition of NGO fundraisers that rely on UK public visualisations of dire need to engender donations. Such representations counter efforts by national tourist boards and sometimes the NGOs themselves to promote African destinations to Minority World holiday markets. The last question, and the hardest to quantify, represents the greatest challenge to countries with negative public imaginations. Are choices made by economic investors and businesses considering growing into markets overseas affected by public visualisations of the places in which they consider investing? This is not just a matter of a company deciding whether to invest in a power plant or to build a new factory. It also has implications for how making profit in a country with a dominant negative imagined geography will affect other markets for their business. Will companies growing more concerned with ethical profiles avoid investing in African countries that are presumed to be impoverished for fear of being accused of exploitative practices? These three questions are discussed in turn as a means of assessing the impact of negative UK visualisations on African societies.

The second chapter moves away from considering dominant imagined geographies and concentrates on the function of the still image as part of a process of creating visual understandings of place. The chapter opens with a critical analysis of the power of the still image to influence public understandings of place in relation to television and other public visual descriptors. The argument concludes with a discussion of the siting of the image as this can affect both the size and attitude of audiences. Following the opening discourse, the chapter continues with a theoretical discussion on a photographer's claim to represent truth. The open question is discussed both in relation to historical artistic claims and contemporary aesthetic theory. At the heart of the argument is the concept of aestheticising poverty in the pursuit of representing a claim of truth. There is an interlude at this point with a discussion based on the use of women and children to represent need/injustice, which concludes with a consideration as to whether the continuation of graphic imagery has a numbing effect on dominant audiences in terms of creating responses, an effect loosely described as 'compassion fatigue'.

The second chapter finishes by revisiting a popular photojournalistic discourse on publically siting photography as a means to social change. This discussion focuses on the apparent mismatch between contemporary reward in the form of recognised competitions, grants, and being published in industry publications, and the stated aims of the photographers. The chapter argues that the accepted rewards to photographers are based on their images' aesthetic qualities rather than their ability to affect social change. As a result few photographers consider the weight of their stated convictions when imaging African issues as they are primarily driven by artistic and not developmental concerns. The chapter moves on to consider two single images from Africa that created an international reaction. The images are analysed in terms of the photographers' motives, the aesthetics and the short and long-term effects on UK geographical imaginations.

After primarily theoretical considerations in the first two chapters, the third chapter addresses the contemporary global picture market and considers whether the historical practice of 'othering' a 'dark continent' (Chapter 1) and an over reliance on aestheticising suffering (Chapter 2) is prevalent in this rapidly changing image economy. The chapter is focused on how market pressures influence the construction of news images and how this in turn affects UK imaginations of Africa.

The chapter begins with an introduction to the international image economy by considering its change over the last two decades. The discussion analyses the transformation from an analogue to a digital economy while recognising the timing of the thesis at a mid-way point in the progress, and therefore goes onto an examination of

possible future developments. Reflecting on the influence of the international economy on image construction, the chapter considers in detail how the market is structured and who controls the context, style, and power of the indigenous voice. It considers the manipulative power of the photographer as compared to that of the Minority World editor and policy maker. Key to this discussion is the concept of the 'Western Eye', a term often referred to in photojournalism to represent a particular Minority World point of view. This is discussed in some depth from both the perspective of the Minority World editors and the Majority World photographers working in the contemporary global image economy. The chapter ultimately questions whether such a constructed notion exists or has relevance in a globalised market.

The chapter then continues with a comparison of Hall's (1980) ecoding/decoding theory in what the author terms 'chains of understanding'. This relates to the transfer of 'meaningful discourse' (ibid: p.130) from subject to audiences with the photographer playing the key role of communicator. Can a local photographer imaging a Majority World issue necessarily communicate that issue more accurately to distant audiences than a visiting Minority World photographer who knows little about the subject but understands their dominant audiences well?

Using studies, experiments, and discussions, the chapter then tests how these changes have benefited and alienated local African photographers, which in turn has potentially changed the balance of the influence of local photographic culture. Have the increased use of local African photographers changed dominant UK geographic imaginations of the communities they seek to represent? In answering this question the author considers one specific example from Ethiopia and compares this to a further example from Bangladesh, a Majority World country that has been very successful in producing world-renowned photojournalists. Considering the development of local photography and its ability to engage in a wider international market, the chapter discusses the key factors that allow local photographers to influence outside visualisations of place. The discussion concludes with two questions. Firstly, is there is an ethical model for photographers to represent their own communities, and, secondly, can fairly-traded photography combat the digital domination of photography markets by the Minority World?

The fourth chapter relates to a single question that brings the thesis to a head. What role does the photography of an event play in the development of dominant UK imaginations of a Majority World place and how is this related to both the short and long term development of that place? This enquiry questions Schwartz and Ryan's definition of imaginative geographies being a 'chain of practices and processes by which geographical information is gathered' (Schwartz and Ryan, 2003: p.6, outlined in Chapter 1) and argues particular imaginations can also be formed by single events. The chapter is divided into two sections and concentrates on the photography of famine. The first section critically analyses the imaging of the 1984-5 Ethiopian famine as an event and the second section considers the impact of the resulting imaginations from 1984 on the imaging of a contemporary event. Using the arguments set out in the first three chapters, both historic and recent events are critically discussed.

The chapter considers Ethiopia with an in-depth discussion of the BBC news reports from October 1984 that led to the *Live Aid* event of the following year. The famine as an event is first described in context to pre-existing dominant UK imaginations of Ethiopia followed by a deconstruction of the news footage that caused the impact. The chapter continues with a discussion of the impact of the popular response and how the sustained recycling of famine images from northern Ethiopia impacted on dominant UK geographic imaginations of the whole continent in which the event took place. The event is further analysed through the discussion of a single image depicting pop star and *Live Aid* organiser Bob Geldof on a visit to Ethiopia in 2003. Here the image is deconstructed in terms of the global image economy's compositional influence and its relationship to the pictorial representation of the event of 1984. The chapter also considers the power of the audiences' imagination of place over image construction (rather than the presumed

inverse), the local photographer's alternative representation, and the influence of the long-term implications on the communities visualised.

The extended Conclusion begins with a consideration of a contemporary response, 'the positive other'. Here photographers are encouraged to break away from a tradition of imaging negative subjects and issues and concentrate on positive aspects of Majority World societies. Educationalists at international NGOs based in the UK have strongly advocated such constructions since the fallout from 1984 (highlighted in the *Images of Africa* reports discussed in Chapter 1). The process of 'positive othering' is discussed in relation to previous arguments in the thesis, in particular the photographer's 'truth' claim.

The Conclusion then uses a single commission undertaken in November 2005 with Oxfam GB to discuss the four research questions raised at the start of this introduction in relation to the NGO response. Here the author travelled to Mali to meet with African photographers at the Bamako International Photography Festival and then undertook a short commission to photograph issues of food security in order to explore the questions first hand and to experiment in the production of an alternative perspective that would counter the dominant UK visual understanding of Africa. Following the assignment, the author worked with Oxfam GB to analyse the images produced both in terms of the specific conditions in which they were produced (the photographer's experience) and the representation they offered to UK audiences (the audiences' experience). In conducting the experiment and then analysing the results, the author was able to test theories discussed in the earlier chapters in a live situation and critically reflect on the practicalities of changes to established processes that may produce alternative imagined geographies.

The Conclusion finishes by returning to the four research questions outlined earlier in the introduction, using arguments from the four chapters to make assertions and discussing these assertions in light of the practical experiment in Mali.

CHAPTER 1
'ME, ME, ME'- SELFISH, DARK AND IMAGINED VISUAL GEOGRAPHIES

This chapter is concerned with a primary research question: What are the UK publics' understandings of Africa as a place, how has photography contributed to these imagined geographies, and how do these imagined geographies affect African communities? The introduction has stated the findings of the VSO *Live Aid Legacy* report (2001) were a key motivation for beginning the thesis, and this chapter commences with a broader and and more critical than the *Live Aid Legacy* report discussion of UK audiences' understandings of Africa. The chapter examines a number of reports akin to the *Live Aid Legacy* and is divided into three main sections, each dealing with one part of the above research question. In reading these reports it is vital to bear in mind that both the attitudes they reveal and the reports themselves are part of the process by which a contingent and dualistic understanding of Minority/Majority, civilised/barbaric and developed/underdeveloped is naturalised as unproblematic. They also solidify the idea of a single audience contrary to the construction of reception discussed in the Introduction. As such, although much of the discussion below has to proceed in terms of the binary understanding recorded and used in these reports in relation to a fixed audience, these representations need to be appreciated as central to the complex process of 'othering' that is discussed later in this chapter.

In the first section, 'Geographies of Death and Disaster', the chapter will consider the findings of six recent studies concerned with the representation of the Majority World through a wide range of media. As the reports all have different agendas, the section is divided into two questions upon which the findings are compared and discussed. The first considers representations of the Majority World in Minority World media, not only in terms of what those representations are, but also what the motivations behind the companies/NGOs/governments responsible for them are. The second question then considers the impact of these representations on the way UK audiences visualise Africa.

The second section of the chapter, 'Imagination, Otherness and Geography', questions the role of photography, both historically and through contemporary practice, in the formation of these imaginations. The section considers the development of photography in Europe in relation to colonial interests, anthropology, geography, and the construction of the 'other'. Having considered a historical lineage of photographic practice, the section moves onto a discussion of contemporary practice, in particular considering the repetition of particular photographic constructions of Africa through geographic publications.

The final section of the first chapter concentrates on the effect of dominant negative Minority World imagined geographies on the African communities they represent. The purpose of this section is not to provide a detailed analysis of the overreaching effects of negative imagined geographies on the Majority World (this is likely the subject of future research) but rather highlight some of the issues that arise and in turn give an indication of the purpose and motivation for this thesis. In this section the chapter seeks to question why these visualisations are important to the continent's development and therefore why the study of UK imagined geographies has relevance to African lives. Returning to the study of reports and using interviews with key stakeholders, the section discusses three examples of negative imagined geographies affecting African economic development by way of indicating the relevance of the issue. The first critically evaluates the relationship between perceived needs and actual needs, and asks if Minority World governments overseas aid policies are based more on the audiences'

understandings of what should be provided rather than credible sources on the ground. The second example discusses the development of tourism in countries where UK NGO fundraisers are dependent on an imagined food insecurity to ensure public donations. The third and final example considers the issue of business investments by international companies in countries that are imagined to be unstable and in need. Here the section considers both the impact of negative visualisations on the managers making the decision to invest and also the problems successful international enterprises face in making profit in countries imagined by a wider (and more influential) consumer base to be extremely poor.

1. GEOGRAPHIES OF DEATH AND DISASTER

This section will consider the findings of six recent studies concerned with the portrayal of the Majority World through a wide range of media: The Department for International Development (DFID) report *Viewing the World;* the Glasgow Media Group article *Media Coverage of the Developing World: Audience Understanding and Interest*; the CARMA International report on *Western Media Coverage of Humanitarian Disasters*; Nikki van der Gaag and Cathy Nash's much-quoted *Images of Africa* report; the VSO's *The Live Aid Legacy: The Developing World Through British Eyes - A Research Report*; and Eva Kaplan's report for Chatham House on *British Attitudes to Africa*. As outlined in the introduction, the inclusion of NGO reports in this list is problematic, in that both reports were commissioned with a specific goal related to the NGO's work. However, the results are in keeping with independent reports and help to further strengthen the discussion. It is also important to recognise at the start of this section that the author (as outlined in the introduction) understands that references to a generic 'UK public' in these reports is problematic. The author accepts the findings are representative of a majority of UK publics (dominant audiences) but that there are audiences who negotiate the images discussed in ways that are contrary to that point of view.

As the reports all have different priorities, the section is divided into two questions upon which the findings are compared and discussed. The first considers representations of the Majority World in Minority World media, not only in terms of what those representations are, but also in terms of what motivates the companies/NGOs/governments responsible for them. The second question then considers the impact of these representations on dominant UK audience visualisations of Africa.

Representations of the Majority World in Minority World Media

In January 2006 the American global media analysis group CARMA International reported on Minority World media coverage of humanitarian disasters concluding, 'Western self-interest is the precondition for significant coverage of a humanitarian crisis' (CARMA, 2006: p.5). After analysing coverage of six recent major disasters, and using the heading 'Me, Me, Me', the report sums up Minority World media motivations to be directly related to 'self-absorption', aid money in return for political votes, Olympic bids, and self-congratulation for the generosity of the readers in giving to alleviate the suffering caused by the disaster (CARMA, 2006: p.7). The CARMA International report is not unique in its disclosures of Minority World reporting on the Majority World. It comes as one of a series of similar research papers that call into question the motivations of journalistic reporting on issues outside Minority World interests. The reports vary in covering broad and specific media types, none of which consider the relevance of each media type in relation to another. From the reports it is therefore not possible to gauge the proportional impact of photojournalism versus television, for example, but they do sum up a generic media portrayal of place.

Before a discussion of specific themes that emerge from the reports, a description of the three reports, and the main findings that relate to media representations of the

Majority World, is outlined. The section then goes on to discuss issues of location, political and financial links, self-interests and the compactness and complexity of the 'event'.

Reports

The DFID report *Viewing the World* (2000) is focused on television coverage of the Majority World in the UK and is divided into three sections: a content study of programmes based in or about the Majority World and news items broadcast on network television over the first three months of 1999; an audience study to identify patterns of understanding and how media products can compel, entertain, and leave lasting images; and a production study of how British television decision-makers consider the importance of providing audiences with a contextual understanding of the Majority World. The content study revealed that most countries from the Majority World were not mentioned at all in the study and many of those that were, 'were mentioned only in the context of visits by westerners, sports events, wildlife, or bizarre/exotic stories' (DFID, 2000: p.3). Disasters and terrorism were the main categories of news items, which were generally not well contextualised. Surprisingly, children's TV had the most well explained and positive coverage whereas holiday programmes were the least informative concentrating in the main on the value of cheap commodities in the Majority World and 'exotic' culture. The audience survey demonstrated a predominantly negative understanding of the Majority World with media images cited as the reference for this view. There was a problem identified in the report in relation to audiences' understandings of development issues, particularly through short news segments. The focus groups found that the presenter made a key difference to their understanding which, in turn, was presumably linked to the presenter's own understanding of the issues (in relation to this, the photographer's knowledge of an event will be discussed in depth in Chapter 3). Other problems quoted included bad scheduling and 'force-feeding' to young people through school charity events. The production study found that all the interviewees strongly believed that television 'had a role to play in informing people about the developing world' (DFID, 2000: p.3) but most believed the viewers were generally not interested in the issues. This view was based on ratings, which made the programming 'risky' and 'difficult'. The majority of those interviewed agreed that the portrayal of the Majority World was imbalanced and that more should be done to change this. The broadcasters' response was that problems existed in finding engaging content at a price that was realistic to the market. The report notes that developing content in the Majority World is expensive and generally discouraged by advertisers.

The Glasgow Media Group article, *Media Coverage of the Developing World: Audience Understanding and Interest* (GMG, 2000), responds to the DFID report from the audiences' perspectives by outlining three key issues:

1. That the decision made by broadcasters (on commercial criteria) about what viewers would desire to watch have in the long run produced very negative responses in TV audiences towards the developing world.

2. That audiences are misinformed about the developing world because of the low level of explanations and context given in television reporting, and because some explanations which are present are partial and informed by what might be termed 'post-colonial beliefs'.

3. That a change in the quality of explanation which is given can radically alter both attitudes to the developing world and the level of audience interest in the subject.

(GMG, 2000)

The report concluded that there was a direct link between audiences' understandings of the issues and their interest in the stories. The more an audience

understood of an issue, the greater the interest. In short, the 'actions and practices' of the broadcasters themselves (GMG, 2000) in showing short clips of Majority World issues without the time to explain them properly was in fact the main reason for the lack of audience understandings and, more importantly, interest in the issues.

The CARMA International report on *Western Media Coverage of Humanitarian Disasters* (CARMA, 2006) studies six major recent disasters: the earthquake in Pakistani Kashmir (8 October 2005); Hurricane Stanley (1 October 2005 in Guatemala); Hurricane Katrina (23 August 2005 in southeast Louisiana, USA); the Indian Ocean earthquake a.k.a. Tsunami (26 December 2004); the earthquake in Bam, Iran (26 December 2003); and the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, Sudan (since February 2003). It analyzed newspaper coverage of almost 2,000 articles in 64 daily and weekly publications in seven European districts, one American, and one Australian from two days before the incident to 10 weeks after (with the exception of Darfur which had no specific event date). Articles were rated on emotive response, negativeness, placement on the page, size, and their perceived bias in the portrayal of the situation. Although this study does not deal in the same media as the first two reports (newspapers rather than TV) it offers a comparative look at how the same subject (disaster) is reported from different regions. The report once again refers to location as being a key factor in the amount of coverage a story received; the further away an event occurs, the less coverage it receives.

Location

In all three reports, the location of the event is highlighted as a key factor in the amount of media coverage a country receives. In its simplest form, location refers to the distance from audiences. Susan Moeller agrees that 'Location, Location, Location' (1999: p.21) is the key to media coverage, and quotes Bernard Gwertzman, picture editor from the *New York Times,* saying "one dead fireman in Brooklyn is worth five English bobbies, who are worth 50 Arabs, who are worth 500 Africans" (quoted in Moeller 1999: p.22). This view was rephrased (and corrected given the physical distance from New York to central Arabia is longer than to central Africa) in a quote from *Guardian* journalist David Adam's article on the CARMA report:

> One death in your street is worth ten in the next town, 100 in a European country and 10,000 a long way away. I still think that's true despite globalization and more interest in overseas countries.
>
> (Steven Barnett quoted in Adam, 2006)

Politics, Culture, and Finance

Although the three reports, CARMA, DFID and GMG all agree that location plays a key role in the amount of media coverage an issue gets, they take different approaches in their explanation. CARMA makes direct links to national and political interests whereas DFID and GMG both blame cost, public demand, and pressures from advertisers - in effect, the workings of the media industry. Asgede Hagos (2000) agrees with the CARMA findings in their linkage to political and national interest. Similar in approach to CARMA, Hagos takes an empirical survey counting and analyzing text from editorials in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* on one specific issue, the national liberation movement, in three specific geographical areas, South Africa, Western Sahara and Eritrea. He compares these with the official publication of the United States foreign policy department, *The United States Department of State Bulletin* over an eight year period, 1977-1984. The study explores and describes 'the interplay between the United States press and the American State in the foreign policy making arena, with a special focus on Africa' (Hagos, 2000: p.xii) and concludes with six unrelated, but relevant findings. He argues that there is a direct link between the elite press and the State foreign policy, describing the press as an 'active participant in the foreign policy making process' (Hagos, 2000: p.161). He goes on to argue that the press can effectively decide which

issues are important to both the public and government by concentrating on a particular issue; that agendas are not set only by journalists but can also be set by politicians with close allies in the press; that there is a close relationship between government policy and press coverage and press coverage is generally positive of government action in regard to Africa; and that most of the press coverage is based on political positioning rather than humanistic concern. Apartheid in South Africa, it is noted, receives 89% of coverage in the second half of the study period, while the conflict in the Western Sahara receives no coverage at all (Hagos, 2000: p.109). This, he claims, was a direct result of government policy of the period. The study's Conclusion draws comparisons between the aims and objectives of the three national liberation movements covered, and argues that, although they were almost identical in political ideology, the American press treated them very differently. This, Hagos argues, was directly related to American government policy in relation to each conflict.

Although location is sited as a factor in the CARMA report, Adam's article on the findings points out 'the results showed no link between the scale of a disaster and resulting media coverage' and that location is only relative alongside other factors. Cyclone Katrina received far more coverage than any of the other disasters despite one of the lowest death rates and was an equal or further distance to UK audiences than some of the other events. This may be unsurprising given the interest in a world superpower struggling to avert a natural disaster but the report also reveals the Bam earthquake received almost the same coverage as the Kashmir earthquake despite the fact the latter had a 3.5 times higher death rate. Like Hagos, Adam suggests that location is not the only factor, and that politics, culture, and financial links are also important.

Moeller (1999: p.20) supports the DFID and GMG claim that 'money is essential', both in terms of the cost of coverage, the distance from audiences, and the revenue from advertisers. Images of disaster, poverty, and war do not put audiences in the right frame of mind for considering the purchase of expensive goods and therefore do not command high advertising slots. In this respect, 'newspapers do a better job than television at representing global diversity' (Moeller, 1999: p.21) as their costs of reporting news from the Majority World are far less dependent on advertising revenue. In an online TED talk, Alisa Miller (2008), head of Public Radio International, used a US news coverage survey and a global news map (Fig 1.1) from February 2007 to demonstrate the dominance of domestic over international news and an emphasis on US interests outside its borders (in particular Iraq). "The combined coverage of India, China, and Russia for example reached just 1%," she explains, indicating that these countries have little connection to the readers' interests. In her explanation as to why there is little coverage of the rest of the world, she claims:

> One reason is that news networks have reduced the numbers of their foreign bureaus by half. Aside from one person in ABC mini-bureaus in Nairobi, New Delhi, and Mumbai there are no network news bureaus in all of Africa, India, or South America, places that are home to more than 2 billion people. The reality is that covering Britney is cheaper.

(Miller, 2008)

Fig 1.1 Screen grab taken from Miller (2008).

The CARMA report also found 'a clear correlation between the perceived economic impact of a disaster on Minority World markets and the quantity of media coverage' (CARMA, 2006: p.6) and also the political capital of a story in terms of the news desks' agendas. This is best demonstrated through the substantial gap in coverage between hurricanes Katrina and Stanley. Of Katrina's coverage, 17% was on the economic impact yet Stanley, which only had a fraction of the coverage had none on the economic impact. Katrina was also a useful angle to criticize the Bush administration and therefore was used to this effect by newspapers that sought to undermine the government, contradicting Hagos's findings. Stanley, however, did not affect a politically sensitive region of the world and therefore received little political comment. In the early stage of the Darfur crisis the issue had very little coverage, as there was not much to be gained politically from the story. Only after it became an issue with which politicians could see a way of winning votes, did it start to enter the Minority World media. The report is most damning in its assertion of instances where Minority World media coverage of disasters is used solely for promotion of national interests. Within this category the report points to two particular instances of using disaster coverage in other parts of the world for home interests. The first is the case of Spanish and French Olympic committees offering to donate funds in return for bids for hosting the games in 2012. The second is the reporting on the act of donating to the cause as a means of congratulating the donor country. In this instance the disaster itself becomes a background item to the main story of a nation's generosity.

The Event

The CARMA report makes a useful distinction between event disasters and longer lasting conflicts/issues by the inclusion of the Darfur crisis:

> Even during 'slower' disaster seasons, there is always a long laundry list of countries and peoples in upheaval. Many and perhaps most of the problems are not of the quick-fix variety, the send-in-the-blankets-and-vaccination-supplies-and-all-will-be-well emergencies. Most global problems are entrenched and long lasting, rarely yielding to easy solutions available to individuals or even NGO and governmental authorities.
>
> (Moeller, 1999: p.11)

The CARMA report proves that long-term issues are less reported and DFID and GMG make the case that when audiences do not understand the complexities of an issue they are less interested. Explaining an earthquake, monsoon, or tidal wave and then showing the devastation/suffering it has caused is a much easier story to report and understand than trying to explain a long-term conflict rooted in foreign history and culture. However, as CARMA also proves, this is not the only determining factor as demonstrated by the case of Hurricane Stanley and the equal coverage of the earthquakes in Kashmir and Bam, despite the vastly differing death tolls. Public connections to the issues are also important. 'Lucky are the people in Yugoslavia and Somalia, for the world is with them' (quoted in Moeller, 1999: p.111) wrote a missionary in southern Sudan during the Sudanese famine, referring to the fact that Bosnian and Somali suffering was being shown to the world but the famine in Sudan went unreported. He goes on to suggest 'it may be a blessing to die or get killed in front of the camera because the world will know.' Hagos argues the connections are more related to foreign policy than simply audiences' prior understandings. Moeller agrees, using the US intervention in Somalia to make the point that 'the media followed the flag' (Moeller, 1999: p.136) and once the US withdrew, so did the media coverage:

> The departure of the international diplomatic corps, forced out by Somalia's bloody civil war, marked with finality the point at which Somalia ceased to matter to the outside world. Over the next 18 months, the situation in Somalia grew increasingly desperate. But there were no diplomats to file reports back to their capitals on the growing food shortages, there were no politicians fretting about which side would

prevail in the bloody civil war and there were no 'national interests' being threatened by the chaos.

<div align="right">(Moeller, 1999: p.130)</div>

Although the three reports, and Hagos's book, cover a range of media, they all concur that representations of the Majority World are dependent on issues of location, finance, and political ties, as well as the complexity, scale, and timescale of the event/issue. Sudden, uncomplicated natural disasters that occur in Majority World countries with close cultural, financial, and economic connections to the UK will receive much greater coverage than issues that are not easily explained and that take place over a longer period. The result impacts directly on geographic descriptions of places beyond the UK's direct influence or interest, with an emphasis on disaster and short conflict reporting with simplistic story lines and political/cultural analysis.

The Impact of Media Representations of Africa on UK Publics

The start of this chapter discussed motivations of the Minority World media and in two of the three featured reports concentrated solely on UK media representations of the Majority World. Here it argued that three major factors influence the media coverage: proximity to audiences; financial, cultural, and political links; and the depth of complexity of the story. In the case of representations of Africa, all three factors rate poorly and therefore media coverage of the continent is weak and, in turn, public visual imaginations are based on very little information. The next part of the section discusses three reports, van der Gaag and Nash's *Images of Africa* (1987), the VSO's *The Live Aid Legacy: The Developing World Through British Eyes - A Research Report* (2001), and Kaplan's report for Chatham House on *British Attitudes to Africa* (2005) that explore specific UK imaginations of Africa. As with the first three reports discussed, a description of the report and its major findings will preface a discussion on the issues raised.

Reports

In 1985 the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) proposed a joint project between themselves and European and African NGOs to critically examine information material dealing with all communications related to Africa. The participating NGOs, including the UK report conducted by Oxfam and published in 1987, undertook research throughout 1986-87. The UK report, written by Nikki van der Gaag and Cathy Nash, responded directly to the *Live Aid* event of 1985 and was directed at young people who were thought to 'have responded more actively to the Ethiopian famine appeal than had traditionally been the case' (van der Gaag & Nash, 1987: p.5). The findings were perhaps unsurprising given the enormous impact on British youth culture. Young people across the country were put through a series of visualisation exercises about Africa:

> The predominant images were overwhelmingly of 'Africa starving' or 'Africa primitive'. For instance, in the 'mental maps' exercise undertaken for this research, the idea of 'primitive' peoples, of shields and spears and slavery, competed for space with images of poverty and famine splashed in big letters or drawn large across the whole of Africa. Wild animals were another important feature. These concepts were also found in other research, for example, one group of primary school children were asked for the images that came to mind when the word 'Africa' was mentioned. They came up with: deserts, food sacks, sand, Band Aid, Ethiopians, poverty, hungry, no houses, crying, fields, insects, vultures.
>
> <div align="right">(van der Gaag & Nash, 1987: p.11)</div>

In brainstorming exercises discussing Ethiopia, the workshop participants spoke of hungry children covered in flies living in squalid, smelly conditions. When drawing pictures about Africa as a continent, 92% of participants drew a man with a spear and shield. There was

little expression of Africa being a continent made up of individual countries and no understanding of political complexity, echoing the concept of uncivilized peoples.

The report later goes on to evaluate newspaper reports during the period 23 October to 31 December 1984. It notes that up to 80% of pictures used in UK publications were of mothers and children. 'The photos seemed mainly to be taken from a high angle with no eye-contact, thus reinforcing the viewer's sense of power compared with their apathy and helplessness' (van der Gaag & Nash, 1987: p.41). It also evaluated 55 NGO advertisements between 1984 and 1986, of which most were images of women and children. Only one was of a man, and all showed Africans as passive, pitiful, and in most cases emaciated. Of those appearing in the advertisements 70% appeared to be unaware the picture was being taken. The issue of this specific representation will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

The VSO report gives a similar outlook. This more recent quantitative and qualitative research report commissioned by the UK's leading overseas voluntary organisation in 2001 gives the starkest assessment of UK audiences' imaginations of the Majority World. 'Eighty per cent of the British public strongly associate the developing world with doom-laden images of famine, disaster and Western aid. Sixteen years on from *Live Aid*, these images are still top of mind and maintain a powerful grip on the British psyche' (VSO, 2001: p.3) is the first of its 11 key findings. It goes on to report a quantifiable sense of Minority World superiority amongst those who were involved in the study. The relationship of power is outlined as a 'powerful giver and a grateful receiver' and it is not a view that is being questioned by the giver.

The second section of the survey looks at audiences' responses to a more rounded contextual representation of the Majority World. The results demonstrate a frustration by those involved, followed by a realisation of being misinformed by the media and a will, in 55% of cases, to know more. The final section calls on journalists and the media as a whole to act with greater responsibility and links the misinformation to the UK's national security.

The most recent report, conducted by Eva Kaplan for Chatham House in five regions around the UK in 2005, was commissioned to determine both the opinions of British publics on Africa and how they perceived support for UK involvement in Africa. When compared to the issue of climate change, most people rated the UK involvement in Africa on a similar level. The survey concluded that the majority of UK audiences were in support of the government's emphasis on Africa. However, when asked which issues they felt were most important in Africa, health (in particular HIV/AIDS) and poverty alleviation garnered the highest scores (22% and 15% respectively) whereas government priorities of debt/aid and fair trade were relatively low (6% and 5% respectively).

Although the report does not set out to enquire about UK audiences' understandings of Africa, the results give a clear indication of audiences' understandings of the continent's needs. In the survey, eradication of civil war, long-term stability, good governance, and education were all stated as perceived priorities whereas issues such as the environment and labour migration were seen as insignificant.

The Majority World Looks Back

In a lecture at the *Imaging Famine* conference (London, September 2005), Bangladeshi photographer and critic Shahidul Alam questioned dominant UK public imaginations of his home country. "Floods, cyclones, famines and not the birthplace of Nobel Laureates Amartya Sen and Tagore, not the location of the first residential university in the world, and not a representation of a nation of poets and artists." Although the three reports used in this study all concentrate on Africa, Alam argues the image extends to the entire Majority World. Binyavanga Wainaina echoes Alam's frustrations with UK imaginations of his homeland and hits back with an article attacking the Minority World media for simplifying and degrading Majority World culture in the way they report it

in the UK. A sarcastic list of do's and don'ts to news writers is set out when composing articles about Africa:

> Always use the word 'Africa' or 'Darkness' or 'Safari' in your title….Never have a picture of a well-adjusted African on the cover of your book, or in it, unless that African has won a Nobel Prize. An AK-47, prominent ribs, naked breasts: use these. If you must include an African, make sure you get one in Masai or Zulu or Dogon dress.
>
> (Wainaina, 2006)

Wainaina's long, ironic criticism articulates an assumption of a lack of understanding Minority World journalists have of the stories they cover from the continent and, in doing so, points to the reasons why UK publics have such skewed geographical imaginations of the people and places therein. The evidence from the three reports on Africa is uncontested and accords with Wainaina. UK dominant audiences have clear negative imagined understandings of the geography of the continent that has changed little in the past twenty years, and Majority World critics blame the media.

Other Factors

Although Alam believes Asia to be imagined in the same way as Africa under one umbrella of the Majority World, a UNICEF report by Vulmiri Ramalingaswami, Urban Jonsson, and Jon Rohde, entitled *The Asian Enigma*, gives an indication that within the Majority World there are further levels of negative imaginations. The paper is not concerned with media reports or issues of representation but rather an 'attempt to explore some of the roots of malnutrition in South Asia and to suggest some of the principal approaches which, we believe, could better protect the normal development of the region's children' (Ramalingaswami et al., 2007). The paper takes a radically different approach to the issue of misinformed public imaginations by concentrating on one issue, proving through statistics that what is actually understood by audiences is wrong, and then questioning why:

> In the public imagination, the home of the malnourished child is sub-Saharan Africa. But the league tables clearly show that the worst affected region is not Africa but South Asia. Just over 30% of Africa's children are underweight, but the corresponding figure for South Asia is over 50%. And in Bangladesh and India, the proportion of children malnourished is significantly higher than in even the poorest countries of the sub-Sahara.
>
> (Ramalingaswami et al., 2007)

The report is not concerned with the media's role in the process of public imaginations and argues the misunderstandings are based on social factors. Birth weight, food and disease, breast feeding, timing in the consumption of other foods, and child care are discussed as underlying factors behind the issue which, the report claims, allow the problem to go undetected. In Africa, mothers have a more open life with more opportunities for social and public interaction and therefore are more visible, according to the report. Although the report does not discuss photographic representations, it details how the lack of freedom of women in the poor communities of South Asia leaves them isolated. It can be assumed from this that they would also be harder to image. This brings up the issue of photographic access and its relationship with imagined geography, a theme that will run throughout the following chapters.

Summary

The first section has considered the findings of six recent studies concerned with the portrayal of the Majority World through a wide range of media. The reports have been divided into two sets of findings, the first considering media representations of the Majority

World and the second, audiences' imagined geographies of place. The section proves an unsurprising link between the portrayal of place through the press and dominant public visualisations. The reports found that location, finance, and political ties were the driving factors that governed how the UK media portrayed an event in the Majority World. The further away, the smaller the financial impact on a global market, and the fewer cultural or political ties a country had, the simpler and less in-depth the coverage. This in turn reflected on dominant public understandings of those places, which are only reported if disasters, wars, or diseases occur, and therefore are understood by these references.

2. HISTORIES OF INFERIORITY AND THE DARK CONTINENT

The first section of this chapter discussed two specific issues, representations of the Majority World in Minority World media, and the impact of these representations on UK public visualisations of Africa. The section used six reports and additional texts to outline the key factors in how contemporary media affects UK visual understandings of Africa and what those understandings were. The uncontested conclusion was that UK audiences have a majority one-dimensional imagination of the continent based on famine, war, and disease. In the introduction, the thesis has acknowledged that there are many publics and therefore innumerable UK imaginations of Africa. Nevertheless, the reports serve to highlight the dominant points of view. This section seeks to discuss Moeller's claim that "famine in Africa is not just a routine disaster. It is one of the central historical events of our time" (unnamed development worker quoted in Moeller, 1999: p.111). Moeller contends that this particular imagination is not based entirely on recent events but is central to the history of imagining the continent. It is not a '*Live Aid* legacy', but a legacy of European power relations with Africa that started before the invention of photography.

James Ryan (1997, and later writing with Joan Schwartz, 2003) uses a series of discussions to explore the place of photography in the British Empire at the height of its rise to power. Ryan and Schwartz argue photography and empire building went hand in hand as photographers travelled through the colonies recording big game hunting, surveying the conquered land and potential new lands to be colonized, counting and classifying local populations, recording and publicizing tourist destinations, exploring new markets, and creating albums to educate the homeland youth about distant lands of the empire. Showing photographs as opposed to geographic locations marked on a map was a far more powerful means of expressing ownership that went beyond economic gain and military victory. The process of imaging a place and population rested in the direct control of the colonizers and, in doing so, the photographers were able to impose a notion of power and dignity.

Susan Sontag describes this process as going out to 'collect the world' (Sontag, 1977: p.17) and makes reference to the procedure through a story from Jean-Luc Godard's *Les Carabiniers* (1963):

> Two sluggish lumpen-peasants are lured into joining the King's Army by the promise that they will be able to loot, rape, kill, or do whatever else they please to the enemy, and get rich. But the suitcase of booty that Michel-Ange and Ulysse triumphantly bring home, years later, to their wives turns out to contain only picture postcards, hundreds of them, of Monuments, Department Stores, Mammals, Wonders of Nature, Methods of Transport, Works of Art, and other classified treasures from around the globe.
>
> (Sontag, 1977: p.3)

Ryan claims that photography became an intrinsic tool in the process of empire, articulating the 'ideologies of imperialism' (Ryan, 1997: p.13) and providing an unquestioned record of its existence.

This section will investigate the development of photography in tandem with European colonial expansion, geographic publications, and the legacy of the travelogue. Central to the discourse is one key question: how has photography contributed to imagined geographies of Africa? The section sets out with an enquiry into the beginnings of photography and its employment in colonial constructions. Stepping aside from the central discussion, it will then consider photography and the process of 'othering' and ask if this process was unique to distant geographic subjects? The final part of the section traces the development of photography through to contemporary practice in order to demonstrate the compositional lineage. The link will serve as an argument for current dominant UK geographic imaginations of the Majority World (described in the first section of this chapter) being a result not just of recent disasters recorded by contemporary photojournalists but through the historical development of the process of documentary photography, which, the section argues, is directly linked with the formation of Victorian relations of power. Using one case study from Congo to conclude the discourse, the section will critically analyse the relationship between historical popular imaginations of Africa and contemporary photojournalist practice.

Photography and Empire

Starting soon after the announcement of the invention of photography in 1839[2], British explorers began carrying cameras on expeditions. Their function, as Samuel Bourne writes, was to penetrate and search the unknown but in doing so photographers had to image the distant in a way that was understood by home audiences, to transform 'unknown spaces into familiar scenes' (Ryan, 1997: p.72), and to make distant colonies appealing to potential investors and traders (ibid: p.65). Ryan argues a focus was placed on colonial architecture where evidence of European civilisation amongst the 'barbarians' was used to emphasise 'beacons of light in an otherwise dark moral landscape' (ibid: p.67). The pictures also served to capture a nation's quintessence with symbols and metaphors used to sum up character and morality. In his second book, Ryan acknowledges that the main issue with the selectiveness of these images was the failure of both the photographer and the viewer to accept that any form of human decision-making was taking place. This, as Ryan and Schwartz note, allowed 'photographs to enter seamlessly into the relationship between observer and material reality' (Schwartz & Ryan, 2003: p.3).

Tourism

One of the results of expedition photography was the increase in tourism. Photographs of exotic distant lands spurred public imaginations and inspired them to follow. Susan Sontag notes:

> Photography develops in tandem with one of the most characteristic of modern activities: tourism. For the first time in history, large numbers of people regularly travel out of their habitual environments for short periods of time. It seems positively unnatural to travel for pleasure without taking a camera along.
>
> (Sontag, 1977: p.9)

Using a timely contrast, Derek Gregory makes a comparison between geographical descriptions created through diaries and sketches by Florence Nightingale, and the pictures created by Gustave Flaubert as they travelled up and down the Nile in 1849 and 1850. Through this comparison, Gregory demonstrates the transfer of recreating tourist imaginations from pen to film and makes the argument that early photographers were simply recreating romantic notions of place created by travel writers and artists who had

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[2] For the purpose of this thesis, I will use Daguerre's announcement to the public on 19 August 1839 at a meeting of the French Academy of Sciences in Paris as the start date for photography, though I understand some scholars may argue an earlier date.

travelled before them. In a later article, Gregory states 'the search for the picturesque was a leitmotif of Oriental tourism long before Kodakers started to track their exotic prey' (2003: p.212). He goes onto to argue that it took a long time for tourists to stop sketching and painting on their travels mainly due to the cost of photography and the increasingly available picture post cards.

The development of established tourist paths through Europe, such as the 'Grand Tour' (Pelizzari, 2003: p.59), began a process of what Pelizzari refers to as 'acts of confirmation' (ibid: p.63). Tourists familiar with particular places made famous through the act of selective photography by the early pioneers of photography were ceremoniously re-photographed by tourists on the aristocratic tour. Photographs became the forerunner to the guidebook, which orientated tourists and pointed them to the landscapes and architecture that they should photograph. Nye (2003), in an essay exploring the visual construction of the Grand Canyon, argues that, by the early twentieth century, the seamless relationship between 'observer and material reality' (Schwartz & Ryan, 2003: p.3) had changed as those seeking to bring tourists to the Grand Canyon had begun to understand the power of the constructed image to market geographic locations. 'The Santé Fe gave selected painters and photographers free passage on their trains and free accommodation once they arrived' (Nye, 2003: p.85). The resulting images went on to become iconic symbols of the landscape and have brought tourists ever since to confirm their presence by re-photographing the same scenes.

Gregory discusses the position taken by the early photographer as one that Timothy Mitchell describes as the 'ideal point of view' for the colonizing gaze. By hiding under the cameras black cloth, or locating himself in a high commanding viewpoint, the photographer avoided direct eye contact with his subject and, as a result, conveyed a sense of distance. This, Gregory argues, 'typified the kind of presence desired by the European in the Middle East, whether as tourist, writer, or indeed colonial power' (Gregory, 2003: p.213). The arrival of hand-held cameras made this position much harder to achieve but in turn made the buying of souvenir postcards more acceptable to tourists. The photographers, on the other hand, who now could photograph much more freely, enjoyed a tenser and, at times, more confrontational relationship with their subjects. The issue of privacy from prying cameras was raised as early as 1902 when 'the *New York Times* complained of the enormous invasion of privacy caused by Kodakers lying in wait to photograph the unsuspecting public' (Gregory, 2003: p.215).

As public annoyance grew in the USA and Europe after the turn of the twentieth century, photographers found working in the colonies much easier as the subjects were less inclined to object. 'It is a great advantage that the poor Egyptian should not mind being kodaked,' Victorian photographer Douglas Sladen observed (quoted in Gregory, 2003: p.223). Here began a process of choosing weaker subjects due to reasons of accessibility rather than strength of image. This, in turn, led to a new relation of power between the colonisers, where the public had privacy rights, and the Majority World, where an ignorance of the imaging process allowed tourists to photograph whomever they liked. This issue continues through to contemporary practice and mirrors the accessibility issues discussed by Ramalingaswami, Jonsson and Rohde (2007) in the previous section. With ever more stringent privacy laws in the Minority World, photojournalists are pushed into the Majority World where they could work in less challenging environments. Sladen however also observes the Egyptians were quick to understand the value of a photograph and started demanding payment for their modelling services.

National Identity and Collecting Dislocated Geographies

Ryan and Schwartz (2003) expand the discussion of early colonial photography by suggesting the issue of picturing foreign geographies was as much about the distant places as it was the coloniser's own national visual identity. Christine Boyer (2003) and Jens Jäger (2003) discuss an early belief that a national identity could be contained in an album of pictures. Central to this theme is the notion of photography being non-

manipulative. In essence, as British Prime Minister Robert Cecil wrote in 1885, photographs 'are free, so far as their outlines are concerned, from the deceptive and therefore vitiating element of human agency' (quoted in Jäger, 2003: p.119). Mérimee, the director of the La Mission Héliographique, an early project to document the heritage sites of France, had a similar belief:

> Obviously the daguerreotype, Arago suggested, would greatly aid the national work of the Commission des Monuments Historiques. By making available great collections of images for study after the fact, it would thus render a great service to the arts. Although untested, he believed it to be a practical invention: 'Daguerreotype calls for no manipulation, which anyone cannot perform. It presumes no knowledge of the art of drawing and demands no special dexterity. When, step by step, a few simple prescribed rules are followed, there is no one who cannot succeed as certainly and as well as can M. Daguerre himself.
>
> (Boyer, 2003: p.36)

However the choice of soft-hued collotype allowed the Mission photographers to be far more experimental than Mérimee's original commission intended as artists-turned-photographers pushed the discipline's creative limits in the way they applied it.

Jäger argues (2003) that travel photography came first as 'evidence of the supremacy of Western civilization', after which people in Britain then demanded documentary photography of their own country with which to compare. Brian Osbourne (2003) considers the use of photography to document a changing Canadian demographic in a later period (1925-30). By then, the state had expanded the folio of photographers' duties to 'reveal three important gazes: the bureaucrat's, the publics' and the immigrant's' (Osbourne, 2003: p.179). The Canadian commission was not created for public consumption but rather used as a state archive for policymakers to review an evolving national identity or, probably more relevantly, the potential threat to an established national identity.

Orlando Figes (2007) characterises Gorskii's early colour photography as 'Russia discovering itself'. St Petersburg, the then Russian capital and residence of the Tsar, was on the far western edge of the vast imperial kingdom and photography became a key tool of mass communication used to discover and unite it. However, unlike his European counterparts, Gorskii had to fit into a unique pictorial tradition of representing Russia:

> Historically, Russia had a special way of looking at the world. The Orthodox Church was at the heart of the church that (Tsar) Nicolas revered. The Church had its own unique pictorial tradition of the icon. It symbolises a divine truth, not meant to look real but supernatural.
>
> (Figes, 2007)

Gorskii was aware of a need to link his photography to this tradition and therefore his pictures were symbols of the ideal. Through his journeys across Russia in a special train fitted out with dedicated coach for his darkroom, he wanted to create an imperial identity in order to rationalize the empire's unity, with the Tsar as the divine leader. After uprisings at the start of the twentieth century this need became all the greater. 'The camera was an instant means of imperial appropriation' (Figes, 2007).

As the British Empire grew so did a sense of disorder, and photography became a means of bringing it together in a systematic arrangement that could be easily understood. The displacement of families, spread across various colonies for work and settlement, meant the collection of picture albums by a family matriarch came to 'represent feminine motivations to reunite generations and geographies of isolated and dislocated familial units' (Chambers, 2003: p.114). Images of the world were also used as 'vehicles of Victorian education and self-improvement' (Schwartz, 1996: p.18), reflecting Minority World ideologies. In this process of collecting a fragmented empire into books and stereoscopic views (aimed primarily at school education for the privileged throughout

the empire), the photographic editors were not only able to bring together a united understanding of the empire but also impose a specific set of ideologies:

> Like travel writers, photographers dramatized distance and difference, and in their work can be found tropes of Western colonial and Orientalist discourse. No less than Flaubert, Maxime Du Camp, and the procession of photographers who travelled up and down the Nile in the 1850s 'inscribed' Egypt and carried home visual records of an imaginative geography. The compelling visualisations, which they produced, whether government-sponsored, commercially motivated, or scholarly inspired, were sites-defined by Western needs, beliefs and expectations-where distant facts were transformed into Western fictions.
>
> (Schwartz, 1996: p.29)

Again, key to the understanding of these books is the way in which they were consumed. In the years between 1839 and 1859, photographs 'were believed to communicate unmediated truth' (Schwartz, 1996: p.35) and therefore gave the photographer far greater power than is afforded today in communicating notions of time and space.

Military Conquest

Taking the Royal Engineers mapping exercise of the Holy Land as case study, Howe (2003) discusses the use of photography as evidence of Edward Said's assertion that 'imperialism is an act of geographical violence through which virtually every space in the world is explored, charted and finally brought under control' (Said, 1990: p.77). She argues that the process of detailed photographic survey, conducted through Minority World colonial objectives, in effect represented a handing over of ownership of place and, hence, the completion of the process of military conquest.

India was also introduced to photography through the military, as it was British officers who first brought cameras there. Later they became standard issue to all officers from which the first major national documentary project was launched. *The People of India,* which after the 1857 rebellion came under the control of the governing power, was designed as a document of the period but later became a key tool in the propaganda war of suppressing a rebellion. The defence of Lucknow, the attack on Delhi, and the severe punishments dished out to the rebels (including Kuka rebels being tied to the mouth of a canon and then being blown to bits) were all photographed and distributed throughout India as well as back in Britain telling a clear narrative of good versus evil and enforcing a common belief of the power of the overlords. Samuel Bourne, working in India in 1863, commented on the power of photography in inflicting terror on the local population:

> From the earliest days of the collotype, the curious tripod, with its mysterious chamber and mouth of brass, taught the natives of this country that their conquerors were the inventors of other instruments besides the formidable guns of their artillery, which, though as suspicious perhaps in appearance, attained their object with less noise and smoke.
>
> (quoted in Ryan, 1997: p.75)

In contrast to the military use of photography in India around the time of the rebellion, Indian photographer Ahmad Ali Khan provides an early indigenous perspective. Alison Blunt (2003) argues that Indians had also caught the 'same fever' of photography and were setting up in business to photograph British and Indian subjects alike. She quotes Judith Mara Gutman's descriptions of the Indian production:

> [Indians] produced a different imagery; different, at least, to Western Eyes; the patterns and compositions of Indian photographs had been part of Indian painting for centuries. Such compositions, she continues, were likely to include 'gigantic' or 'ugly' foreground features and diverse content rather than a single, often isolated, object of the gaze. But just as a singular imperial gaze needs to be destabilized,

so too does a singular 'Indian' gaze that is defined purely in terms of its difference from a totalizing Western view. Rather than attempt to substitute an imperial gaze with an Indian gaze, it is important to contextualize the photographer and the subjects and settings of their photographs in time and place specific ways.

(Blunt, 2003: p.231)

The issue of a different local view is one that the thesis will return to in Chapter 3 when considering contemporary photographic representations of the Majority World. What is interesting about Blunt's analysis of Khan's imagery is that it comes before a history of photography could be formed. Khan's references to local painting tradition are rarely replicated in the history of photography.

Science and Anthropology

From its first picture, photography was considered a tool of science and its ability to render an 'uncontested truth' also made it an ideal instrument for the study of other cultures. Many writers have debated the potential for objective photographic truth. Clifford and Marcus (1986) argue that all representations are, at best, partial truths and, at worst, persuasive fictions. Sekula claims 'the...[only]...'objective' truth that photographs offer is the assertion that somebody or something - in this case an automated camera - was somewhere and took a picture. Everything else, everything beyond the imprinting of a trace, is up for grabs' (Sekula, 1984: p.57).

The case of the Tasmanian Aborigines is a useful starting point for a discussion of the relationship between science, anthropology, and photographic truth claims. Decimated up to the point where there were only a few communities left, a small group of Tasmanian Aborigines were driven to a settlement near Hobart in 1856 where they were held in captivity (Lal, 1998). Once safely secured they were then photographed so their image could be documented and displayed around the world. Lal argues that the act of photography was, in fact, an act of scientific documentation. After the images were created and published the motivation for keeping the group alive was lost. Trucanini, who the last survivor of the group died in 1876. Her legacy, however, has endured in the form of ethnographic publications, texts, museums, and exhibitions, as was intended by those who created the images.

Both photography and anthropology examine the way people live, how they think, what they produce, and their environmental interactions. 'Photography is in its origins a work of anthropological documentation, of curiosity about the world' (Prosser, 2005: p.91). Marett (2005) argues that this process is effectively seeking out difference but claims the net result is the accentuation of similarity by demarcating one shared global history. Margaret Mead, an American anthropologist working at the beginning of the twentieth century sums up her lifetime's work: 'I have spent most of my life studying the lives of other peoples - faraway peoples - so that Americans might better understand themselves' (Mead, 1935). Mead's comments are well considered and similar to the statements of hundreds of photographers who document humanitarian causes. However few photographers have openly displayed the same depth of consideration as to how dominant audiences might interpret their images, and how the pictures might contribute to long-term negative imagined geographies. With Gregory Bateson, Mead developed a process of photographic anthropological study that she used in New Guinea (*Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*) and later in Bali (*Balinese Character*) to study local culture. Key to their methodology is the length of time a researcher must spend in one place to effectively illustrate theoretical points about a particular culture. Mead herself spent several years on each study. Through spending enough time to understand the culture, and by following prescribed photographic rules of practice, Mead argued her images were unbiased in their representation of the theories she sought to discuss. The lack of cultural bias was an important factor for creating connections with American audiences and, therefore, engendering self-reflection.

Mead's argument that a researcher can confer accuracy on his or her work through an extended research time span and the time acquisition of in-depth local understanding is one that will be returned to throughout this thesis. For photographers, the theory is summed up by photographer Janet Elliot Wulsin in one of her letters back to her family while exploring Tibet and Mongolia in the early 1920s. 'Please remember that in every place we visit there are three distinct impressions - the first or initial one; the second after the place becomes habitual; the third, after leaving and looking backwards' (Cabot, 2003). Wulsin suggests that it is the second impression that she seeks to photograph, which can only be achieved by spending enough time in one location for it to become familiar. From these discussions it can be surmised that that there are two processes of anthropological photographic documentation: an initial reaction to a new cultural/racial/geographic experience and, at some later point, an unbiased reflection that is only achieved when a photographer has completely absorbed himself into a new culture in such a way that it becomes the dominant familiar experience.

According to Mead (1935), the first impression is interpretive and relies heavily on the photographer's cultural background and understanding of normal human behaviour. In the case of Minority World photographers shooting Majority World subjects, the direct result of the first is a negative 'otherness', an 'otherness' that has a clear sense of them and us, a right way and a wrong way, an advanced and a primitive. The second, self absorbed, technique, however, is theoretically unbiased as the photographer sees himself or herself in the same space and culture as the subject and therefore leads to a 'positive otherness'. That is, it still describes a culture/race/location but from a neutral point of view which Mead claims will lead to a mutual sharing of a united human experience. This second theory not only contradicts a process of racial discrimination, argued earlier in this section, but actually claims the opposite. Greater understanding of alternative cultures leads to less discrimination through a shared global experience of the world in which we live (supported by the GMG report, discussed earlier, that claimed that reporters that knew their subject well were more likely to engage their audiences).

In seeking to work as visual anthropologists, photographers who set out to create a scientific document (rather than an artistic one) are bound by Mead's rules, yet find the process far more complex than a scientist who has never been trained in photography. Michal Heron argues:

> If we do not consider the subject's sensibility or our responsibility to preserve a balance of power between the photographer and the photographed, our attitudes are little different from those of the Victorian photographers who were so sublimely comfortable in their right to dominate other cultures and to intrude with cameras as an adjunct of that domination - to 'take' the photos along with the minerals and land.
>
> (Heron, 2002)

Mead's theory and the issue of a photographer's understanding of local culture are central to the developing discussion in this thesis. This section continues with a wider discussion on the process of photographic 'othering' before seeking to delineate a historical lineage to contemporary practice. The section will conclude with a study of imaging the Congo in order to demonstrate that lineage. In Chapter 2, the thesis returns to the concept of photographic truth claims which are examined this time in relation to the persuasion of the aesthetic. In Chapter 3, Bourne's contention that the photographer's understanding of audiences is central to his ability to communicate ideas of place is questioned against the photographer's ability to understand the subject in foreign lands outside his own cultural background in a discussion developed under the name 'chains of understanding'. Here the photographer's position as intermediary in a process of communication between subject and audiences will be examined in relation to an understanding of both cultures and Hall's concept of 'encoding/decoding' (1980). Through a case study in Ethiopia (Chapter 4), Mead's theory is once again questioned, this time through more specific image analysis. Finally, through the experiment in Mali outlined in the Conclusion, the author works with Oxfam in a detailed analysis of pictures taken while

on a contemporary food security assignment that sought to challenge Mead's theory.

The Construction of Others

The chapter so far has outlined a contemporary visual representation of the Majority World by the Minority World media, predominantly negative, and obsessed with disaster. It also outlined a colonial history of self indulgent photographic representations designed to further the promotion and expansion of empire rather than, as presumed, provide an unbiased geographical and scientific visual representation. The discussion continues with a consideration of Edward Said's (1995) argument that such imaginations lead to a hierarchical categorisation of people based on a process of 'othering', or concentrating the image on that which is different from the audiences' own experience. By focusing on what is primitive about a Majority World community, so the Minority World viewer sees himself as being superior. In exploring this contention this section will both consider the process of photographic 'othering' as an established convention in imaging foreign lands to European audiences, as well as it being a convention of early photographic practice. The section will contend that although the process of 'othering' was ubiquitous in early photography of the colonies, it was also prevalent in other forms of photographic documentary. To conclude this discussion there is a comparison of two similar images produced in the latter half of the nineteenth century will be developed. The 'contractions musculaire' of Duchene De Bolougne, who imaged a mentally ill patient in 1856, and an image named 'Doggett and Muambe', taken by anthropologist Harry H. Johnston, of an African man's head being measured on an expedition to Uganda between 1889 and 1901, will be used to reinforce an argument that 'othering' was not so much an intended tool of colonial suppression but rather a feature of early photography.

Said argues the creation of great colonial powers was achieved through an understanding of a hierarchical power system (Said, 1995) which contests the more developed a nation was, the greater the duty to impose a system of governance over less developed countries. Although the colonies have disappeared to a large extent, Said suggests the process of creating 'otherness', or difference, still exists, as does the notion that the perceived advanced nations have the responsibility to oversee the less advanced. In relation to photography, Said's argument follows that Minority World photojournalism was developed as a colonial tool of creating difference between the readership and the rest of the world. The findings of the reports listed in section one of this chapter suggest this process remains unchanged, although the empires in which the photographers once worked have all but disappeared.

Peter Burke (2001: p.125) claims that viewing images of 'others' inevitably leads to attitudes of prejudice, racial difference, and fear. The colonial imagery has been passed down from generation to generation of photographers and stuck in the visual consciousness of both Minority World photographers sent out on assignment and the editors who sent them. The powerful portrayal of Africa as a single homogenous race populated by 'barbarians', 'heathens', 'primitives', 'noble savages', and the generally underdeveloped (Campbell, 2003: p.69) has been perpetuated since the invention of photography and serves the purpose of creating the difference, 'the other'. This has been the prevailing framework for almost two centuries. Up until the middle of the twentieth century reliable information about African history was hard to find. In his book *The Story of Africa,* Basil Davidson comments:

> Nowadays, happily, we are in a very different and infinitely better situation. Thanks to a vast amount of scholarly work, and thanks also to a far better understanding of what is primitive and what is not, African life and history can now be judged with more insight and information possessed by any previous generation.
>
> (Davidson, 1984: p.5)

In this regard photography uses single characteristics in order to identify complex entities, creating sub categories for large geographical locations. In the case of contemporary

Africa these can generally be divided into two further sub categories: Africa pessimistic - poverty, famine, HIV/AIDS, conflict, corruption; and Africa exotic - safari, wild life, tribal culture, jungle.

Other Others

Jan N Pieterse (2003) makes the point that the process of 'othering' now used to delineate the Majority World, including particular focus on famine, genocide, and ethnic cleansing, is not just a process that occurs outside Europe. There is also a form of internal geographical 'othering' within Europe where certain countries and places are regarded as being different and therefore inferior. Sontag describes 'perhaps the earliest model of the sustained look downward' (Sontag, 1977: p.57) as a series of thirty-six photographs in *Street Life in London* (1877-78) taken by the British traveller and photographer John Thomson. She argues, 'Before turning to the poor of his own country, he had already been to see the heathen, a sojourn which resulted in his four volume *Illustrations of China and Its People'* (Sontag, 1977: p.57). Thompson therefore takes the model of 'othering' abroad and applies it to areas in his own country.

Europe in the 1990s saw a proliferation of visual imagery of this nature dealing with eastern Europe. This, Pieterse argues, has not stuck and those countries involved have quickly managed to regain control of their image in a way that developing countries outside Europe have not been able to do. During the remainder of this thesis the discussion will be primarily focused on the process of 'othering' through photojournalism. It will contend that the process has its roots in colonial ideology but is now reflected in the bulk of Majority World visual images consumed by UK audiences today.

The process of photographic 'othering' does not only relate to imaging the Majority World. Photography played an intrinsic role in categorising numerous anthropological, medical, social, and political subjects, as well as creating imagined geographies of far off lands. This discussion concludes with a comparison of two similar images produced in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The 'contractions musculaire' of Duchenne De Bolougne, who imaged a mentally ill patient in 1856, and an image named 'Doggett and Muambe', taken by anthropologist Harry H. Johnston, of an African man's head being measured on an expedition to Uganda between 1889 and 1901. In doing so, a broader practice of 'othering' that was not *unique* to representations of the Majority World in both method and intent will be highlighted.

Duchenne de Bolougne was a French doctor and specialist in electrophysiology who had a keen interest in photography, which he used to illustrate his research. The 'Contractions Musculaires' experiments were carried out by passing an electrical current through a human face in order to measure the relationship between facial expressions and emotion. By capturing the moment of electrification on film, Bolougne argued, he was able to explore the results in much greater detail. What is unique to Bolougne, however, is that he liked to position himself in the frame and dressed both himself and his subject in different shades of clothing, thus using aesthetics to demonstrate his ideas more clearly. In the image (Fig 1.4), Bolougne places electrodes on a mentally-ill subject who was reported to have been chosen both because of his mental condition, and because of his wrinkles, which would accentuate the results, as well as his gaunt features which allowed the easy placement of the electrodes (Koezle, 2005).

Harry Johnson was collecting specimens of tribal characteristics including wildlife, plants, and agriculture as part of an anthropological study. His diaries refer to the human subjects of his study as a 'mongrel nomad race.' Like Bolougne he was a keen photographer and viewed the photograph as a useful tool for his work. His images would be collated and brought back to Britain for further study, research, and education. What is interesting about this photograph (Fig 1.5), as is also the case with Boulougne, is that he chooses to place himself in the image with a very clear delineation of importance. Using Barthes (1964) 'kinesics' codes, communicated by bodily gestures, we can see Johnson

standing above his half-naked subject in a domineering pose. Eco (1982) refers to the importance of the relationship between subject and background. In this case the use of the straw hut once again suggests to the viewer that the subject is primitive. Both photographers also use the apparatus around the head as a means of reducing their humanity to an object of scientific observation.

Fig 1.4 Duchenne de Boulogne, C.B. The Mechanism of Human Facial Expression, Paris, France, 1862.

Fig 1.5 Harry H Johnston, 'Doggett and Muamba', Kenya, c1900.

If we are to investigate Sekula's (1982) statement that 'every photographic image is a sign above all in someone's investment in sending a message', the question from these images is what is their message? Both images undermine their subjects not just as humans but as representatives of broad social categories (disability and Africa). Both show clear relations of power between Eurocentric (Said, 1995) intellectual protagonists and their lesser, primitive subjects. Both classify race through the pretension of scientific research and in doing so invite a racist interpretation of the image. Both have direct links to contemporary photographic representations of the categories they create.

Through the above example and the discussion of imaging physiognomy, Said's theory of 'othering' can be contextualised within a much broader photographic practice. 'Othering' went hand in hand with the use of photography before specific ethical codes were developed. The opening section of this chapter has demonstrated that dominant UK audiences still have negative imaginations of the Majority World and has suggested that this is due to a continuation of the process of 'othering'. In the next discussion on the development of the *National Geographic Magazine*, the chapter will seek to trace the lineage of this process through one publication that has its roots in Victorian geographic documentary through to today where it represents a major force in public visual geography.

National Geographic and the Business of 'Othering'

Formed in 1888 at the Cosmos club in Washington DC to discuss 'the advisability of organising a society for the increase and diffusion of geographical knowledge' (National Geographic, 2008), the National Geographic Society has now become the largest non-profit scientific and educational institution in the world. Nine months after the Society was

founded, the first *National Geographic Magazine* was published, at the time a brown covered academic journal. The first two pages announced:

> The 'National Geographic Society' has been organised 'to increase and diffuse geographic knowledge,' and the publication of a Magazine has been determined upon as one means of accomplishing these purposes. As it is not intended to be simply the organ of the Society, its pages will be open to all persons interested in geography, in the hope that it may become a channel of intercommunication, stimulate geographic investigation and prove an acceptable medium for the publication of results.
>
> (National Geographic, 2008)

In 1895 the young (23 year-old) editor and photography enthusiast Gilbert Grosvenor published the first photograph against the wishes of the board and began the slow process of developing the magazine's visual content. The early pictures were all produced by scientists and explorers and followed a similar style to other geographic photography of the time (described earlier in this section). After World War One the magazine started to print in colour and after the Leica, a light 35mm camera, was introduced in 1936, the publication began to hire professional photographers to illustrate the pages. The *National Geographic Magazine* went through a number of periods led by different editors, conservative in the 1960s, politically controversial in the 1970s, newsworthy in the 1980s and back to a concentration on geography in the 1990s, all the time growing in its ability to influence Minority World visual understandings of the world beyond its readerships' experiences. 'America's most famous household magazine' (Lutz & Collins, 1993: p.2) currently has five and half million subscribers in the USA and a further three million outside the USA (National Geographic, 2009). Although the editions for international subscribers are slightly different the main stories remain the same and are geared towards an American readership. Senior *National Geographic Magazine* picture editor John Echave explains:

> We are not as American-centric as we were 25 years ago but we are still an American magazine… the magazine's mind has always been international but being an American magazine with an American audience we have to give them a touchstone so we always give them at least one story from the USA.
>
> (interview with Echave, 2006).

As discussed earlier in this section, the photography produced in the early days of the publication was publically regarded to represent geographical fact. Contemporary published images are not necessarily accepted as 'only the plain unvarnished truth,' (Schwartz, 1996) and now critics question photography's more ambivalent role in influencing public imaginations of place. Sontag argues, 'the camera's rendering of reality must always hide more than it discloses' (Sontag, 1978: p.23) and at this point the chapter turns to three questions of *National Geographic Magazine'*s use of 'othering' and its influence on dominant UK audiences. Firstly, how do images that have appeared in the magazine through its history relate to one another? Secondly, do the mechanisms of the *National Geographic Magazine* photographers' composing, focusing, and shooting reveal as much about the audiences' social and cultural makeup as they do about the subject being represented? Thirdly, through photographs, do audiences 'see... remember… imagine: … 'picture place' (Schwartz and Ryan, 2003)? The questions will not be discussed in order as they each relate to one another and therefore will be considered together.

Schwartz argues a cyclical process; 'pre-texts shaped itineraries, itineraries prescribed photographs, photographs established itineraries' (Schwartz, 1996). Photographers create established cycles of re-photographing the familiar. As a photographer arrives in a specific place and recognises the manifestation of a previously seen photograph, a landmark, a market, a local resident wearing specific clothing they have seen in a magazine picture story, they deem this fit to be the subject of a photograph and repeat the image as a reaffirmation, to provide 'indisputable evidence that

the trip was made, that the program was carried out and that fun was had.' (Sontag, 1978: p.9). Lonely Planet photographer Richard I'Anson understands this to be a standard convention, 'so what if everyone you know has photographed the Taj Mahal and the Eiffel Tower? There's nothing quite like the thrill of seeing places yourself and making your own version of the classic shot' (I'Anson, 2000).

I'Anson is perhaps the exception in his understanding and admission that photographers and editors in the professional world are perpetuating stereotypes. In fact many argue strongly they are doing the opposite. The tagline on Condé Nast flagship publication *Traveller* reads 'Truth in Travel' however the magazine deals almost exclusively in repetitions of familiar landscape with no negative imagery and an emphasis on the exotic. Travel photographers are bound by undocumented codes of practice to represent what the reader wants to see rather than what is actually present. This is guided in principal by the fact that what sells and what the advertisers want to pay money to appear next to, is positive stories celebrating, and thereby enhancing, the desirability of any given destination.

Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins (1993) argue that the pages of the *National Geographic Magazine* tells us far more about the USA than it does the distant cultures it represents and, therefore, continues in the tradition of 'othering':

> While the *National Geographic* photograph is commonly seen as a straightforward kind of evidence about the world - a simple and objective mirror of reality - it is in fact evidence of a much more complex, interesting, and consequential kind. It reflects as much on who is behind the lens, from photographers to magazine editors and graphic designers to the readers who look-with sometimes different eyes-through the Geographic's institutional lens. The photograph can be seen as a cultural artefact because its makers and readers look at the world with an eye that is not universal or natural but tutored. It can also be seen as a commodity, because it is sold by a magazine concerned with revenues. The features of the photographs, and the reading given them by others, can tell us about the cultural, social, and historical contexts that produced them.
>
> (Lutz & Collins, 1993: p.2)

Lutz and Collins describe the contents of the magazine as a contemporary educational tool that objectifies the Majority World in a paternalistic manner. 'It collects the world between its covers, it is collected by subscribers, and it relies heavily on the photograph, a technology that necessarily miniaturizes the real world' (ibid: p.34). The authors argue the magazine is in the business of creating marketable imagined geographies. This involves the glorification of the exotic and ritualistic aspects of distant cultures. Photographically, the publication has up until recently failed to credit the photographer's point of view but rather argues the photographs give a literal transcription of the scene. This was in contrast to the rise of the celebrity photojournalists from the 1930s onwards, many of whom saw themselves as artists influenced by the various creative movements of the time, notably Henri Cartier-Bresson's (1952) concept of the 'decisive moment' in which elements of an image came together in a way that went beyond a literal rendering of the scene. Moeller (1989) compares the 'decisive moment' to what she terms the 'random moment' produced by a news photographer. Here she argues the documentary photographer represents a unique event in history by photographing a moment when all things come together for a fraction of a second (the time of the shutter release) in a way that has not happened before and will not be repeated in future and is deeply historically significant. A random moment, she argues, is when a photographer captures a news event in such a way that is not unique, 'that instant which could be any time and, therefore, can be every time' (Moeller, 1989: p.409). Lutz and Collins argue these photographs emphasise 'timelessness rather than history; inherence rather than contingency; and enduring human values rather than current human actions' (Lutz & Collins, 1993: p.59). By hanging on to Victorian notions of a photograph being an uncontradictable truth, the magazine is therefore producing 'random moments', in spite of the fact many of the magazine's photographers cite Cartier-Bresson as their chief influence (National Geographic, 2008). One *National Geographic Magazine* editor (the

editor is discussed in Lutz and Collins 1993: p.59 but not named) played on the Cartier-Bresson reference by claiming the magazine sought to capture the 'incisive moment' which he defined as being the everyday between the main action. By this he thus inferred that the goal was to represent the essence of a community and culture rather than documenting a one-off specific historical event.

Lutz and Collins argue that when the *National Geographic Magazine* has been criticised for not being objective in its use of photographs it has fallen back on using the concept of 'serendipity':

> Serendipity is invoked in an almost mystical fashion to refer to what makes a good-a deep-photograph. At some level it refers to the coming together of informational content with colour, movement, and composition. But it is also understood as the photographer's ability to watch for and take advantage of meaning. These cannot be engineered and 'too strong a theory' reduces the photographer's openness to such moments.
>
> (Lutz & Collins, 1993: p.64)

The authors argue that photographers who knew their subject too well were therefore handicapped by the fact they were not in tune with editors back in Washington, who Lutz and Collins argue had a clear sense of how the story should look when commissioned. The emphasis for the photographer was therefore on creating the aesthetic that had been imagined by the commissioning staff rather than seeking truth and asserting a found political or aesthetic agenda. This theory is best illustrated through Lutz and Collins interview with one picture editor who describes (ibid: p.65) a balancing act of various photographic formats in the process of choosing which pictures should make the final spread. In one instance the editor describes asking the photographer to return to a story to find some happy faces as none appeared in the images so far pictured.

Echave admits the magazine has a poor record when it comes to photographic representations of distant cultures but claims it has been through a change of direction since Lutz and Collins conducted their research (interview with Echave, 2006). He describes the current mechanism at the magazine for choosing stories to be as follows:

> The ideas for stories can come from within or without the magazine. It can be a staff photographer, writer, editor or it can be a freelance photographer or writer. The story then goes to a story committee who consider it on the basis of how topical it is, whether it is a *National Geographic* story meaning that it has to have certain components that are of interest to our readers like geography, social or political issues, and that is not necessarily a news item that will burn out. We like to look at ourselves as a magazine that shows the whole picture and not just a record of a story.
>
> (interview with Echave, 2006)

Echave goes on to describe a process of pitching to the magazine editor that happens after the story committee has initially approved the story. For the pitch, the story editor pairs a writer and a photographer who collect detailed research on the subject. This includes results of scouting trips (normally two weeks), interviews with prominent experts in the field, a budget and other materials collated in Washington. If the pitch is successful it is then commissioned and the writer and photographer can start their work. He also speaks of serendipity and disagrees with Lutz and Collins analysis:

> We must always remember that the photographer is our ears and eyes on the ground. It is important that we don't direct the coverage from our ivory tower in Washington and say this is what it needs to be. We need to leave a huge gap for serendipity so that the photographer brings something new to the table that surprises not only me but millions of people who take the magazine.
>
> (interview with Echave, 2006)

He later defines serendipity as revealing aspects of the story that no one could have predicted. "Surprising the reader is very important and you are not going to surprise a reader if you don't allow for serendipity" (interview with Echave, 2006). He describes the process of documentary photography to be very different to building a house where builders must carry out exact instructions from an architect or the house falls down. Photography, he claims, is a process of evolving a story from what is found on the ground.

In describing the editing process, Echave again contradicts Lutz and Collins's claim that the photographer is not involved in the edit and is not given the opportunity to bring back images that were discarded by the editor:

> It's extremely important for us at the *National Geographic* to have the input of the photographer because the photographer is the reporter on the scene with the camera. So he or she can bring to the table things that I could never do.
> (interview with Echave, 2006)

Lutz and Collins point out that market research of the magazine has revealed that 53% of its readers only look at the pictures and read the captions (Lutz & Collins, 1993: p.76). They make this comment to emphasise the importance of the images in conveying an understanding of the story and claim that the caption writing is taken out of the hands of the photographer. Echave agrees and goes on to claim it is never the intention of the editors that the photographer should illustrate the words of the writer but rather "we see it as two locomotives leaving from one train station going through the same region but to different areas and towns and ending up at the same station" (interview with Echave, 2006). Aware of the duality of their stories and the importance of the photography to exist without the words, the magazine set up a separate department employed to write the captions. As Barthes notes, the caption plays a key role in the rationalisation of an image 'burdening it with a culture, a moral, an imagination' (Barthes, 1977: pp.25-26). He argues the text embedded with an image directs the viewer towards a particular meaning and denies the viewer the opportunity to explore. Peter Hamilton contests that photographers, in the process of choosing and composing their images to 'give testimony' (1997: p.86), are involved in the function of construction and re-ordering, adding text (captions) and publishing the results, thereby 'interpreting' what they see. Lutz and Collins argue that although the photographer may be given some freedom to reveal their own findings, it is the magazine that then directs the readers as to what to look at through the caption.

Although not responding to Lutz and Collins critique, Echave is persuasive in his counter argument. He describes how the *National Geographic Magazine* is unique in paying their photographers to come to Washington during the editing process to edit, to present to the magazine editor, and to work with the caption and layout personnel in making sure the final story is a realistic interpretation of their experience. Very few, if any, other publications allow even staff photographers to be engaged with this, let alone paying freelancers. Echave likens the production of the magazine to a film where the photographer has multiple roles, "the producer, the director, and the editor all rolled into one" (interview with Echave, 2006). Although admitting the publication's history was not clean of American-centric observations of the world, he claimed that since the 1970s, under the then-editor William Garrett, the magazine had been seeking to employ more diverse photographers from all over the world in order to seek new perspectives.

The Dark Continent

In order to explore the issues discussed in the main body of this section, one example will be used to demonstrate the creation of a particular visualisation of the Congo, through both literature and images, and then argue, through reference to one contemporary project, that although audiences' understandings of photography have evolved, the prominent public geographic imaginations remain unchanged and that

photojournalists still rely on the process of 'othering' to engage Minority World dominant audiences in Majority World issues.

The Belgian Congo

In the 1870s, roughly 80% of Africa's land was locally controlled. Inspired by reading the story of Henry Morton Stanley's 1,000 mile traverse across Africa in the *Daily Telegraph,* a young King Leopold II of Belgium set about the colonisation of an area in the interior. At the time, other European powers were carving up the continent in the great scramble for Africa so, not to be outdone, he chose an area fragmented by more than two hundred ethnic groups to weaken potential opposition and the conquest was soon completed. However, due to growing European concern for curbing the slave trade Leopold realised he would need a humanistic mission in order to avoid criticism. The invasion was thus portrayed as being necessary for scientific exploration, the eradication of Arab slave traders, and the 'civilising' of the natives. In order for the campaign not to appear imperialistic, the colonisation was promoted as groundwork for a future confederation of 'negro' republics.

Leopold sent ambassadors out around the Minority World to convince them that his aims were honourable. By the end of this process, Leopold had claimed and legitimised (through the Berlin conference of 1885) a colony the area of which totalled one thirteenth of the total African landmass and 26 times the size of Belgium. On 29 May 1885 he named his new state État Indépendent du Congo (The Congo Free State) and made Morton Stanley its first governor. What was unique about this state was that Leopold did not share it with the Belgium government but rather claimed it as his own (Jezer, 2001, Hochschild, 1998).

In the first decade of his rule, Leopold was widely praised for his personal financial investment in the colony infrastructure and fight against Arab slave traders. However, the opportunities presented to the King through the rubber boom and ivory trade would lead to one of the most savage campaigns of economic exploitation in human history. Between 1890 and 1910, an estimated 50% of the country's native population died (around 10 million people) at the hands of European merchants charged with coercing an unwilling local population to go into the jungle to collect ivory and rubber. Such was the demand for rubber that, by the turn of the century, virtually the entire population was engaged in its gathering, producing more than 11 million pounds per year. Leopold hired ruthless African mercenaries to oversee the operation, forcing the local population into virtual slave labour:

> Every village was required to donate a number of people to work for the Free State each year. Those that failed to deliver the required number of slaves or fulfil the production quotas were shackled, maimed and disfigured by Leopold's agents. Whole villages were put to death. Amputated hands and heads were smoked to preserve them for display and presented in baskets for inspection as evidence that bullets had been used effectively in killing natives.
>
> (Swain & Bleasdale, 2002)

As the mercenaries were paid by the numbers of rebels killed, this led to innocent mutilations throughout the country by militia seeking a quick financial return.

Noticing a mismatch in cargo arriving and leaving Liverpool from and to the Congo, Anglo-French shipping clerk E.D. Morel realised that little or nothing was being exchanged for the rubber and ivory. He recalled:
> The figures told their own story…Forced labour of a terrible and continuous kind could alone explain such unheard-of profits…forced labour in which the Congo government was the immediate beneficiary; forced labour directed by the closest associates of the King himself.
>
> (Hochschild, 1998: p.180)

55

The discovery led to the first great human rights movement of the twentieth century, involving mass protest meetings throughout the USA and Europe. Although supported by the work of abolitionists also at work at the time, scholars believe the Congo Reform Association (CRA) to be the forerunner to present-day humanitarian groups such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International (Sliwinski, 2006: p.334). Morel started his own publication, *The West African Mail*, and used British, American, and Swedish missionaries to compile photographic evidence of devastated villages, severed hands, and children with missing limbs to further his cause. Sliwinski (2006) discusses at length the use of photography in this campaign and its impact on the world human rights movement:

> What is invariably underplayed in the histories of this movement is the impact of photography. The CRA was not only the largest humanitarian movement of the era, it was also the first humanitarian movement to use atrocity photographs as a central tool. Crimes occurring in far-away places were made publicly visible for the first time in history. The presence of photography in the twentieth century's first great human rights movement is not coincidental. Indeed, the very recognition of what we call human rights is inextricably bound to a particular kind of aesthetic encounter. Historical inquiry into the Congo reform movement shows that the conception of rights did not emerge from the articulation of an inalienable human dignity, but from a particular visual encounter with atrocity. This proximity of the ideal of human rights to representations of their abuse suggests that human rights discourse serves principally as a response to the witnessing of traumatic violence. Human rights, we might say, are conceived through the recognition of their loss. Or put explicitly, human rights are conceived by spectators who, with the aid of the photographic apparatus, are compelled to judge that crimes against humanity are occurring to others.
>
> (Sliwinski, 2006: pp.334-5)

Even fiction writer Mark Twain, who acted as one of the campaign's vice presidents, wrote a fictional pamphlet of an imaginary monologue called *King Leopold's Soliloquy* which included a long rant against the 'incorruptible Kodak' (quoted in Hochschild, 1998: p.242).

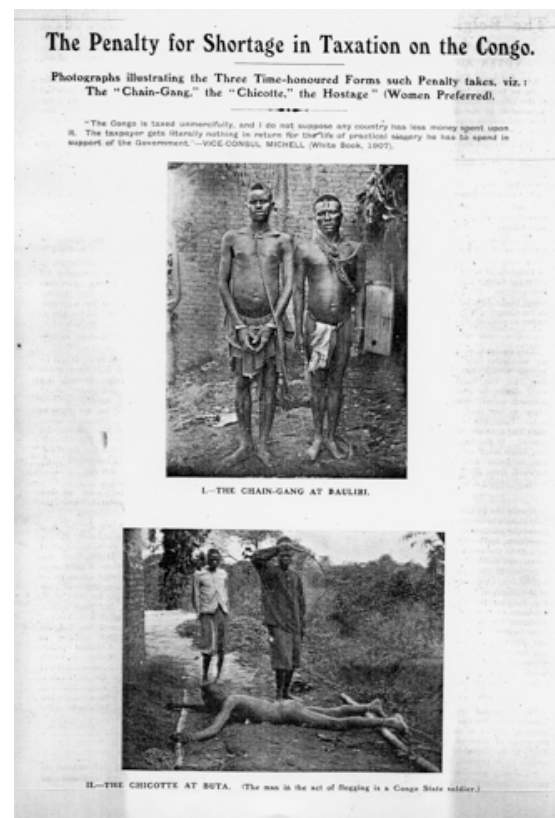
Fig 1.6 *West African Mail*. Congo, Dec, 1906: p.34.

Fig 1.7 *West African Mail*. Congo, July 1907: p.16

As well as publication, Morel orchestrated a lanternslide circuit showing photographs of mutilated adults and children along with descriptive lectures by witnesses to the atrocities. The combination was powerful and gave an alternative human story to the accounts by returnee European mercenaries who often bragged in the press about their killings and mutilations. The cumulative result, brought about in part by the photographic representations of the atrocities, was the 'Belgium Solution' whereby Leopold sold his territory to the Belgian government that, in 1908, began a new regime under the auspices of international law. The genre of humanitarian aid photography was to gather momentum over the next 80 years, covering both natural and man-made disasters from the Majority World, with little other contextualisation of place. It was not until the *Live Aid* event in 1985 and subsequent *Images of Africa* report that such visualisations would be questioned in relation to public imaginations of the countries being depicted.

Joseph Conrad's Representation of the Congo under Leopold II

Eight years after working as a trainee steamship captain in the Congo, writer Joseph Conrad responded to what he saw through his mythic fiction *The Heart of Darkness.* Using a central character, Mr Kurtz, the story described a generic European opportunist pillaging a distant land for personal gain. The book became the most widely published short novel in English and endures as one of the strongest critiques of European colonialism in all literature. Taking into account that the period in which he wrote was framed by both an obsession with measuring, mapping, classifying, and other scientific exploration, as well as a drive for the eradication of slavery under which guise Leopold had sought to cover his enterprise, Conrad's book juxtaposed scientific activity with vivid descriptions of unethical colonial behaviour. This, alongside Morel's humanistic campaign, brought into question the virtue of the King's mission. However Conrad was not above racist associations (Achebe, 1977) in his descriptions of the local population and reinforces a clear power relationship between coloniser and colonised. His book, in effect, mirrored the 'Kodak' campaign of Morel in its apparent moralistic mission as well as its hidden colonial relations of power. In positioning Conrad's text within a turn of the century imagination of the Congo, it is therefore important to understand the process of 'othering' and the prejudice that reveals itself through the text.

At the same time that Conrad was working in the Congo, photographers were engaged in the usual array of scientific visualisations, mapping. Mapping territory for potential resource extraction, cataloguing finds of perceived cultural interest, and organising an understanding of nationhood. The image below (Fig 1.8) is typical and was reproduced as a postcard for distribution throughout Belgium. The subjects can be categorised into two separate groups, the local tribesmen wearing little more than a cloth, and the merchants at either end, one of whom carries a clip board, presumably to make an inventory, and the other a stick symbolising his power of coercion. The passive stance of the local tribesman is also key in conveying a sense of ease in which the viewer should understand them. The message to viewers is that the colony is rich in valuable resources and the means to acquire them is cheap and available.
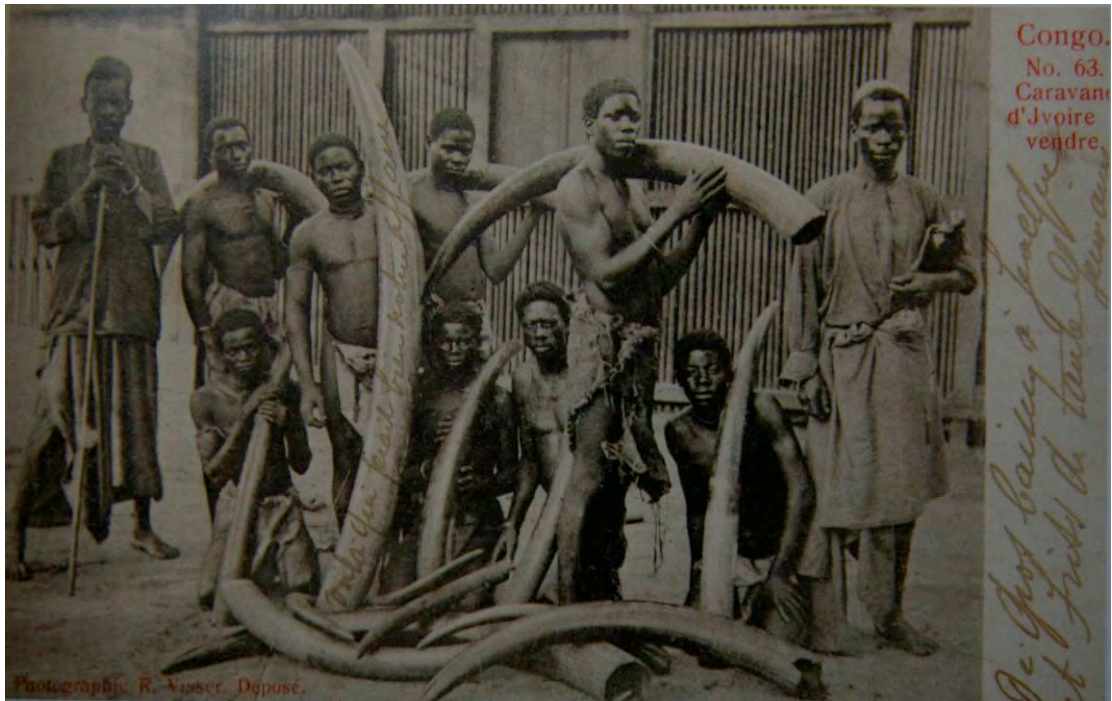
Fig 1.8 Postcard, collotype, Congo, c. 1890-1900. Image: Robert Visser.

Figure 1.9 continues the theme of resources, this time with a more literal interpretation of the concept of a country rich in mineral wealth. Geary describes the image as 'a seemingly self-contained world of promise' (Geary, 2002: p.37), framing the landscape as riches for the coloniser.

Figure 1.10 pictures a sculpture of a *minkisi* (power figure) and demonstrates the photographer's fascination with cataloguing. However, the icon does not simply represent the findings of visiting anthropologists. It also conforms to Edward Said's (1995) notion of imaging the 'other'. The representation is demonic in nature, reflecting a common assumption of Africa being a place in need of spiritual enlightenment. It 'embodies the sinister and secretive aspects of Africa - paganism and darkness' (Geary, 2002: p.28) and is an example of Africa 'as the antithesis of Europe, and therefore of civilization' (Achebe, 1977).

Fig 1.9 Postcard, collotype. Congo, c. 1890-1900. Image: Robert Visser.

Congo Français.
No. 17. Le grand Fêtish Mabialla Mandembe.

Fig 1.10 Postcard, collotype. Congo, c. 1890-1900. Image: Robert Visser.

Images from the Congo played a key role in how Central Africa was understood throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Changing technology meant that postcards were replaced with new journals such as *L'Illustration Congolaise.* Increased numbers of tourists were encouraged to take pictures and photo opportunities were arranged replicating their visual understanding of native inhabitants and cultural traditions. Geary (2002) notes the appearance of Mangbetu women on stamps, in travel books, and on postcards. Responding to this Mangbetu leaders in northern Congo learned to change their dress to meet the expectations of foreign visitors and being photographed became an important part of any meeting.

A few days after Congo declared independence in 1960 anarchy and rebellion broke out. Belgium had not left the country ready for self governance and interference by the Cold War powerhouses led to continuing years of misrule, corruption, and chaos. In 1965 the then-ruler Mobutu changed the country's name to the independent state of Zaire, a name that has only recently (1997) been changed back to The Democratic Republic of Congo. In 2001, when Bleasdale and Swain began their project, the 'brutal scramble for riches and power that so disgusted Conrad continued to tear Congo apart' (Swain & Bleasdale, 2002). The rogues now are the neighbouring countries whose armies continue to fight inside its borders and strip it of his natural resources. Ivory is still sought after; diamonds, gold, and timber are its new rubber, and their extraction continues to lead to deaths (as many as two million since independence) and the mutilation of human limbs.

One Hundred Years of Darkness

In the description above of the early photographic representations of the Congo, this chapter has outlined a European understanding of a place based on images and texts depicting human atrocities committed by irresponsible colonial rulers. In order to demonstrate a compositional lineage to contemporary photojournalism, the chapter will now consider one prize-winning photographer's depiction of the same country. Represented by VII (regarded as one of contemporary photojournalism's elite photography agencies) Marcus Bleasdale has spent over eight years covering conflict in

the Democratic Republic of Congo. The work was first published in *One Hundred Years of Darkness,* with text by Jon Swain. The book revisits the Congo one hundred years on from Conrad, and makes the case that very little has changed since Leopold's rule. Bleasdale uses uncomfortable, kinetic, aggressive, dark compositions to reinforce an enduring 'otherness', while Swain alternates between Conrad's text and his own descriptions of the modern day. In combination they work to satirise the descriptions of the colonial conquest that appear in *Heart of Darkness* (despite Conrad's derogatory portrayals of indigenous populations (Geary, 2002)), and, by doing so, directly target the guilty party, the former colonisers. The publication was recognised as one of the best photojournalism books of the year 2002 by Photo District News (the leading photography industry news publication in the USA). Bleasdale also published essays of the images in leading European and American news magazines, which won him numerous awards, including UNICEF photographer of the year in 2004, a World Press Photo award in 2006, and a Freedom of Expression grant with Amnesty International in 2007.

Fig. 1.11 *'She put out her hands, shouted something, and all that wild mob took up the shout in an amazing chorus of articulated, rapid, breathless utterance.'*
Fishermen in pirogues hitch a ride with a barge on the Congo River. To sell fish, they can risk capsizing themselves and loosing a day's catch. Image: Swain & Bleasdale, 2002.

Bleasdale has come to represent the pinnacle of contemporary humanitarian photography yet his use of 'othering' as a central tool to engage his audiences reinforces Said's theory and adds to the dark imagination of the Congo. In many of Bleasdale's photographic compositions, he cuts limbs off the subjects and, in some cases, focuses his lens on amputees. Replicating Conrad's descriptions of long dark shadows, many of Bleasdale's images are shot at last light to accentuate the size of the shadow. The use of black and white also adds to a feel of distance and connects his pictures to Morel's campaigning pictures from the past. Using such emotive punctums (Barthes, 1982: p.27), he connects audiences to the scene, thus requiring them to give greater consideration to the context. Like Morel, Bleasdale uses his photography to campaign, and works through existing charities on the ground to get access to his subjects. However, his access to his audiences is where he differs from other contemporary practitioners. Replicating the lanternslide lectures orchestrated by Morel, Bleasdale takes his work directly to the economic capitals of the industries he seeks to expose, putting on exhibitions and slideshows in banks and business gatherings, as well as publishing in dominant magazines. He also works hard to get his images seen in Congo as a mechanism to force politicians in central Africa to take note:

Fig 1.12 *He cried whisperingly at some image, at some vision - he cried twice, with a cry that was no more than a breath - 'The horror! The horror!'*
Children flee soldiers in Kinshasa. Fear is a constant throughout the Congo, as are rumours of rebel attacks, assassination attempts and daily civil rights abuses. Image: Swain & Bleasdale, 2002

> Over 4 million dead, 1,250 people dying every day. These are the stats I want people to understand. I want to ram it down their throats until someone starts doing something about it that significantly changes the way the Congolese live their lives. There are upbeat moments in DRC as in the rest of the continent and I have those images too, but it is all about editing for your audience and editing to keep your messages on track.
>
> (Bleasdale, 2007)

In this statement, Bleasdale acknowledges that pictures of "more upbeat moments" do exist but he chooses to edit them out and focus on forcing political change, aware of the cost to his audiences' imaginations of the communities for whom he campaigns. His mode of operation is similar to other freelance humanistic photographers using traditional and electronic media (podcasts, websites, and online videos) to expose his subject but Bleasdale also has a reputation for his targeted approach to creating social change through photography. The charity, Changing Ideas, which gives support to humanistic photojournalism projects. Director David Graham claims:

> The inspiration for Changing Ideas was the partnership between the successful photojournalist Marcus Bleasdale and the charity Human Rights Watch. They were aware that a major cause of conflict in the Congo was a battle amongst local warlords to control lucrative gold mines. Having discovered that gold was being sold to Swiss gold refineries, they presented documentary and visual evidence to these corporations and their shareholders. As a result they stopped buying the gold and new arms sanctions were brought against the warlords.
>
> (Graham, 2008)

The work of the charity reflects Morel's campaigning use of photography and the early development of human rights. Although all freelance humanistic photographers have individual ways of working, Bleasdale represents their commitment and enthusiasm to use photography to bring about change in the Majority World. In Chapter 2, the issue of aesthetics is considered in greater depth but here it is useful to draw comparisons to Morel in his use of visual 'othering' to further a humanistic cause, a strategy that compels audiences to imagine a place that is fractured, unstable, and dark, and a strategy that,

essentially, has not changed since the beginning of the twentieth century. Through the duration of Leopold's reign in the Congo, there is a transition of the photograph from an uncontested empirical document to a tool employed to affect social change. This happens within unchanged dominant Minority World visual imaginations of the geography of the place that is both reflected through Conrad's writing and the horrific scenes imaged in the missionaries' pictures. This dark geography remains untouched 100 years later when Bleasdale, influenced by Conrad, returns to the country to reveal a contemporary Congo still in turmoil. Both Conrad and Bleasdale know their audiences' dominant imaginations of the place they seek to describe and do not try to re-configure those understandings but rather reposition the blame. In Conrad's day, the savagery that was known to go on in central Africa was understood to be the work of Arab slave traders and satanic native cultures. Conrad re-describes the horrors but, this time, refocuses the blame on the European colonisers. Bleasdale too wants to shift blame, this time from corrupt African governments to the source of the market, the Minority World. However, in using their dark, confused, and fractured styles, both perpetuate an understanding of place that is satanic, dark, and in need of outside intervention.

Fig. 1.13 '*I saw him open his mouth wide - it gave him a weirdly voracious aspect, as though he had wanted to swallow all the air, all the earth, all the men before him. A deep sound reached me faintly. He must have been shouting.*'
An amputee fisherman works the river. Contemporary amputation follows the colonial practice of lopping off the right hand of those shot and killed by the Belgian 'Force Publique' in order to account for their spent bullets. Image: Swain & Bleasdale, 2002.

Summary

This section has investigated the development of photography in tandem with European colonial expansion, geographic publications, and the legacy of the travelogue. The section has argued that, since its invention, photography has been an important tool in the formation of and the perpetuation of the concept of Africa as a 'dark' continent. It argues photography has always played a key role in the imaginative construction of distant colonies to dominant UK audiences and hence disagrees with the idea that *Live Aid* is the sole factor in the construction of dominant UK audiences' negative visualisations of Africa. The section also argues that the process of 'othering' was not unique to imaging the Majority World but rather central to a Victorian use of photography. The section concludes with an example from Congo to demonstrate a clear lineage from early uses of documentary photography to contemporary practice. The link provides

evidence that current dominant UK geographic imaginations of the Majority World (described in the first section of this chapter) are a result not just of recent disasters, recorded by contemporary photojournalists, but also of the historical development of photographic practice.

3. PICTURES FOR CHANGE: HOW AN IMAGE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The chapter, to this point, has demonstrated evidence of dominant negative UK public imaginations of Africa and traced their making back to Victorian pictorial practices of 'othering'. In the final section, the chapter seeks to discuss the question of how such an imagination can impact on African societies beyond a simplistic critique of subject dignity. The section serves not to critically debate the issue in full, as this in itself is a subject for future research, but rather highlight three particular economic examples of negative imagined geographies affecting African communities. The examples serve as the raison d'être for the research that follows. Issues of representation are being regarded with greater importance as new research reveals how a state's international face matters in issues of developing sustained overseas business investment, aid, and tourism. No longer just the subject of study for cultural theorists and postmodernists, media visual representations have begun to garner the attention of development NGOs and regional governments. Although authors such as Mackenzie (1985), Ryan (1997) and Said (1978) are able to provide historical and theoretical contexts for why colonial representations are still embedded in Minority World representational practice, it is the reports from Kaplan (2005), Clark (2004), and Diageo (2003) that discuss how such images directly affect the communities they represent. This section considers examples of how particular media representations play a part in the choice of aid that benefits from funding, how the tourist industry is linked to enduring national representations, and how decisions are made in regard to business investment and their relation to particular imaginations. The section seeks to point to a long-term outcome of particular representations rather than solely concentrating on the (much easier to quantify) immediate impact. In doing so the section begins a discussion that will be returned to throughout the remainder of the thesis: the cause and effect, both short and long term, of photography documenting/reporting on Africa to dominant UK audiences.

Politicians, Votes and the Imagined Need

Kaplan's (2005) study of UK audiences, discussed in the first section, suggests that public perceptions of what is needed in Africa are dissimilar to the real need. She links this to media images that form an imagination of place and therefore an imagination of what is needed to deal with the problems the place faces. Jacobson agrees:

> As focus and funds follow the cameras, the 1990s have witnessed a transfer of resources from more cost-effective, long-term efforts directed at preventing violent conflict and rebuilding war-torn societies to short-term emergency relief. Selective media coverage also contributes to an irrational allocation of short-term emergency relief because coverage is determined by factors other than humanitarian need. This invisible and indirect media impact on Western conflict management is far greater than the direct impact on intervention and withdrawal decisions that the debate over the CNN effect focuses on.
>
> (Jacobson, 2000: p.131)

Kaplan's research demonstrates Jacobson's theory that the net effect of the media's concentration on the dramatic short-term emergencies in Africa is that both the public and the UK Government tend to fund direct emergency relief rather than dealing with the more needy long-term factors that may have contributed to the emergency's causes. Piers Robinson agrees. Referring to Jacobson's research, he argues 'the image of suffering

people pressures only for a humanitarian response, not concerted and long-term attempts to resolve the broader political and military situation' (Robinson, 2002: p.132).

Like Hagos (2001), Robinson describes a close relationship between government and media in their choice of which international emergencies and issues deserve aid relief, though Robinson (2002) suggests the press always takes the lead. The suggestion from both is that governments fund aid projects that connect with their voters' imagined needs. This, as above, comes from media representations of the emergencies rather than the far less visual long-term needs.

In Chapters 3 and 4 the thesis will discuss the methods used by contemporary NGOs to court photographers into delivering particular visualisations of the work they are doing and would like to do. These are, by and large, orchestrated around short-term funding needs and seek to control public imaginations by embedding photographers and giving them access to images that relate to their current needs. Although this may be deemed 'truth production' (Lidchi, 1993), the process is not wholly positive. The media is used by NGOs to create strong negative imagery that would not be acceptable within the NGOs own publications but is nonetheless needed by its fund raising departments.

Developing Tourism in a Landscape of Famine

The case study of Mekanic Philipos that will be outlined in Chapter 4 (and discussed in full in Clark, 2004) critically analyses the construction of a single press image taken in Ethiopia, May 2003. The case study outlines how celebrity Africa campaigner Bob Geldof used visual media to apply political pressure on the G8 leaders to refocus their impending summit discussions away from reconstructing Iraq (post invasion) and towards Africa. Although famine did not exist in Ethiopia, and the NGOs that arranged his visit wanted to show that famine has been averted, the message conveyed was of Ethiopia starving again. In interviews, UNICEF and Save the Children staff, admit the media missed their message but were still very pleased with the final outcome. John Graham, programme director for Save the Children UK in Addis Ababa, comments:

> It is not an image we like. In fact, we try to avoid it as much as possible. You won't see any of that on our literature but we do work with therapeutic feeding and we do have children that look like that and, I tell you, it opens the pockets and that's the reality you are forced into.
>
> (interview with Graham, 2003)

NGOs such as Save the Children have to balance issues of misrepresentation in the press with the need to finance operations on the ground through overseas public donations and assistance from Minority World governments. Ethiopia continues to need food distribution to feed an average of six to seven million people a year and this aid is not guaranteed (ibid). These images, Graham claims, form a major role in assuring the food is forthcoming. However one of the main factors that perpetuate the need for the ongoing food distribution programme is the lack of outside long term economic investment in the country and the reliance of Ethiopians on subsistence farming. Graham, who has written a travel book on Ethiopia, points out that one of Ethiopia's potential new industries is tourism. With a diverse culture, a rich history that predates Christianity, beautiful mountains and lakes, a low crime rate, a moderate climate, and varied wildlife there is much room to develop. In an interview in the *The Sub-Saharan Informer*, Friday May 30, 2003, Geldof himself claims, "I do not understand why Ethiopia is not one of the biggest tourist destinations in the world…It is so beautiful and it is so historic and I really never understand why people are not coming here." However, as Graham later argues (ibid), the greatest obstacle is the image of Ethiopia that remains synonymous with famine.

Ethiopia has not always been regarded as a theatre of drought and famine. The first instance of tourism and tourism photography can be found during the Italian occupation of the country from 1935 to 1941. Postcards were produced to persuade Italian tourists to journey from Europe and experience what appears, by the images, to be

a primitive but exotic land. After the British and Ethiopian liberation in 1941, new military rulers introduced a law banning the use of cameras. It was instigated along with other short-term tem precautions on the advice of the military that saw photography as a potential tool for espionage and destabilisation. After independence in 1944 the law remained under Haile Sellassie's rule until the 1960s when Ethiopian Airlines began regular flights to Frankfurt. Hapte-Selassie Tafesse, then head of press information division of foreign affairs, had the idea of using the flight to bring in tourists and submitted a 12-point plan, including the lifting of the photography ban. This was agreed and Tafesse was appointed commissioner of tourism. He then set about producing postcards, posters, and other photograph-based publicity to promote the country as a tourist destination. These were based on the wildlife, mountains, remote cultures etc., and, up until 1973, tourism boomed (interview with Tafesse, 2003).

After a famine documentary by Jonathan Dimbleby in 1973 and the revolution that followed in 1974, photography was once again banned under the new Marxist regime (discussed in Chapter 4). Tafesse, who had been imprisoned, was released after eight years and began anew his work of building tourism in Ethiopia. This time he only had two years to build the industry, marketing mainly to the eastern bloc, before the 1984-5 famine and, subsequently, *Live Aid* effectively stopped any tourists from visiting the country.

The current tourism commissioner, Yusuf Abdullahi Sukkar, reports that numbers are again increasing, though not significantly and have dropped recently as a result of media coverage related to the sub-Saharan drought. Sukkar reports that at a recent world tourism fair in Germany, where the Ethiopian Tourism commission built a stand, the majority of visitors asked questions about the drought rather than opportunities to visit (interview with Sukkar, 2003). Over the past 10 years there has been a series of glossy coffee table books produced by foreign photographers on the culture and landscape of the country but none have had a major impact on global visual imaginations of the country which is still seen to be engulfed in famine.

Responding to an email question about the coverage of *Live 8* in the UK, the Ethiopian Ambassador to the UK Fisseha Adugna writes:

> Twenty years ago in 1984, there was a severe famine in Ethiopia where many people died. The BBC and other UK channels covered the famine and then a group of famous pop stars recorded a song to raise money for the starving. It was so "successful" that the following year (July 1995) they held a concert that was shown worldwide, so many millions saw the images of people dying, then watched the concert. The problem is that the media love anniversaries so every ten years they show the images of people starving in 1984 - they did it in 1994 and are now doing it again this year and next year, 2005. The BBC broadcast a film *Ethiopia: a Journey,* which gives a very negative image of Ethiopia with no account taken of the progress that has been made in the past 13 years.
>
> (Adugna, 2005)

In interviews with Tafesse and Ethiopia media consultant Tafari Wossan, both argued the best way to change the negative visualisation and increase tourist numbers was to play on the image of famine and create dark tourism sites to create opportunities for "40-somethings who grew up with *Live Aid* to visit the places they remembered from the television news of their youth" (interview with Wossan, 2003). They believe that sites such as Korem hold an emotional association with many middle age Europeans and Americans who were motivated by the *Live Aid* pop extravaganza. These affected areas in the north are still prone to drought and rely on food distribution but no longer suffer from famine and therefore, they believe, make an acceptable ethical argument to bring tourists to help develop the economy in the area. Sukkar rejected this plan as he felt it would make the current situation worse but Graham accepts the theory and argues:

> Whatever brings people to Ethiopia, it will change their perspective once they are here and see the place for what it is. So whatever the motivation, they will come

away with a positive impression. In my travel writing I do not shy away from the famine history of the country and I admit I felt a certain thrill when I visited places like Korem and other places that had featured in 1984, as these were places I had connected with.

(interview with Graham, 2003)

Against the will of Sukkar, Wossan is planning a new hotel in Sekota, a two-day trek from Korem, and plans to use photography to represent a realistic but positive impression of the area that reassures visitors they will not be confronted with the horrors of famine. "This image reinforces their understanding of Ethiopia starving but demonstrates the problem has been addressed and it is now safe to visit," Wossan comments (interview with Wossan, 2003).

The problem remains relevant in Ethiopia and is cyclical. The government has built a strong infrastructure of roads to deliver food, and international aid organisations have good monitoring systems to ensure food shortages are met. In order for the local community to untie their reliance on outside help they need to develop sustainable industries, the most obvious of which is tourism. However the images the NGOs rely on to keep funding their work are the same images that stop the tourists from visiting.

Visualising Investments

In October 2003, Diageo Africa held a series of breakfast meetings with businessmen and women with an interest in Africa, alongside representatives of the media. The point of the meetings was to discuss whether a lack of reliable information on the continent was hindering UK business investment. Each meeting was chaired by a news presenter (George Alagiah, Zeinab Badawi, and Jon Snow) and notes were published in the report *Africa, the Marginalised Continent* (2003). What is unique about the report is that it is produced by a large multinational corporation (the world's largest premium drinks company) and not an NGO. Diageo explains its motivation for the project was a desire to be more inquisitive rather than research based. It claims to have had great success in investments in Africa and was therefore asking why other companies were not following their lead.

The publication starts with similar charges to the reports described at the start of this chapter:

Africa suffers from being represented as a single geopolitical unit: political instability is endemic; the business environment is hostile and corrupt. No other region in the world is described with such sweeping generalisations as the 54 countries of the continent of Africa. The result is that bad news from one country has a disproportionate effect on the image of the continent at large.

(Diageo, 2003)

Business investors with a history of working in Africa lambasted the press for negative unbalanced stories that were at odds with what they described as "a wealth of business opportunities". David Hampshire, the director of Diageo Africa, reported that the perception of partners worldwide was that Africa would represent a very small sector of the business. In fact, Hampshire reported that Africa was the third largest contributor to the global business. The most damning section of the report pointed towards the long-term development of the continent that many at the meetings feared was being severely undermined by dominant public imaginations of a place that was "uniformly impoverished and corrupt", engendering a "climate of fear" in the private sector' (ibid). Adugna claims:

Ethiopia is seeking to attract investment, but investors will not invest in a country that seems so destitute. The reality is that it is investment heaven with plentiful raw materials, a large low-cost workforce that is eager to learn and be trained, free access to land for businesses and ideally situated for exporting to Europe and to the growing markets in Africa and the Middle East.

Present at the Diageo meetings were several business investors who had investigated the potential opportunities of investing in Africa and returned positive reports to their respective companies. However, their recommendations had been turned down on the grounds that the shareholders would be sceptical about investing in Africa (Diageo, 2003).

Companies worry they will be publicly criticised instead of praised when they declare their annual results for their activities on the continent. In the city, investments in Africa are often regarded as unstable. Dominant public understandings of a place of suffering, disease, and famine, in part created by photography, suggest that most of the continent is not conducive to profit-making. Not only are shareholders sceptical about the soundness of investing in what they see as unstable and corrupt national infrastructures, they are also worried that if they are successful in such places, their companies will be seen as exploitative. Again, a cyclical impasse develops where the perpetuation of negative visualisations create a reaction that is counter to the best interests of the countries being imaged.

Summary

The final section of this chapter has examined negative economic implications of a country's outside imagined geography upon three broad fields - aid, tourism, and investment. The section has argued that governmental prioritisation of imagined overseas aid needs, rather than actual needs, can lead to politically motivated misuse of development budgets. The impact on tourism and business investment have also been considered in light of negative visualisations of place. These examples serve as an indication of the impact of negative imagined geographies and, in turn, the need for further research in this field.

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter has introduced a series of discussions that will be explored throughout the rest of the thesis. In the first section, through describing and critically analysing a series of reports on Minority World visualisations of the Majority World, and how those reports and the attitudes they record are part of the process of 'othering' that constitutes a dualistic imagined geography being consumed by a fixed audience, that is largely negative. The reports blame the media for failing to contextualise disaster, crisis, and emergency reporting with more in depth programming, stories, and images about daily life, business, historical, and cultural issues. The DFID report, Glasgow Media Group report and Ramalingaswami's UNICEF paper all suggest practical reasons why journalists find it hard to create a more balanced visualisation of Africa. These are connected with funding, broadcast management/decision-making, and cultural barriers. The reports differ in their arguments as to why these geographical imaginations exist in the UK, but all agree that they do exist.

The second section of the chapter has explored photographic histories in order to discuss the development of negative photographic cultures. This section points out that the invention of photography and its subsequent early development happened at a time of colonial expansion and argues that photographic cultures were developed in tandem with a sense of imperial superiority. At that time, the photograph was considered to render unquestionable scientific fact and was used as a means of creating and collecting national identities. At this point, the section diverts from the main argument to discuss the issue of photographic 'othering' as an early characteristic of Victorian photography. Travel

photography was primarily a means of documenting topographic, ethnographic, and anthropological studies. However, the subjects that were chosen to be imaged were not selected in a vacuum but rather chosen for their 'otherness', which could be framed by the camera. This meant foreign cultures were only ever partially imaged, with the familiar being omitted. Through a discussion on imaging physiognomy, the section demonstrates that this process of 'othering' was not unique to travel photography. The section then goes on to use the example of the *National Geographic Magazine* to indicate the continuation of photographic 'othering' through to present times. The argument is further developed through using an example from the Congo to demonstrate how these embedded power structures have been passed down to contemporary photojournalism.

In the final section, discussion centres on the potential long-term effects of negative visualisations upon three fields - aid, tourism, and investment . Through discussing aid, the section demonstrates that communities that are reliant on outside assistance are also reliant on strong negative visual imagery to support the funding of that aid. However, the negative imagery is predominantly sourced through emergency and disaster photography of particular events, which leads audiences to believe that this is the priority for funding, rather than long-term projects that deal with the root causes of the problems. Using an example from southern Ethiopia, the case is made that developing tourism is a sustainable solution to the area's reliance on food aid. However, the perpetuation of negative imagery, facilitated but not created by NGOs supplying the food aid, acts as a barrier to the development of a tourist industry. The Diageo report on business investment in Africa, which concludes with similar findings, is also discussed. The report suggests that there are many good opportunities for international business investment in Africa but public negative imagined geographies of the continent act as an obstruction. Investors are worried about shareholders, who hold a popular belief that Africa has problems with corrupt governments, instability, and is disaster prone. Even if the investment goes ahead, and proves to be successful, the shareholders then worry about the ethical reputation of a company that is making good profits in a place that is publicly visualised as being in need of humanitarian assistance.

CHAPTER 2
THE PHOTOGRAPHER AND
THE PHOTOGRAPH

The first chapter has discussed the role of photography in a process of 'othering' understandings of 'Africa'. The chapter argued the practice pre-dates the invention of the camera and results in a negative impact on a community's dignity as well as long-term economic consequences. The chapter also concluded that the photograph, although a product of mechanics and science, is not an unchallengeable truth but rather a construction by those involved in its production and siting. Chapters 2 and 3 will critically analyse the process by which a photographer working to highlight humanitarian issues in the Majority World frames and sites an image. This chapter will highlight key choices made at every point of production. Although the author acknowledges there are many stages in the construction of imagined geographies, as outlined in the introduction, the following chapters concentrate specifically on the first stage, the production of the image.

As a photojournalist arrives at a scene he must make a series of conscious and subconscious decisions. The choices made as to what to include and what to omit from each frame are complex and in the first three chapters of this thesis the discussion will argue that they derive from a mix of historical, journalistic, economic, political, artistic, and personal influences. For the purpose of this thesis, the process of choosing a story and composing an image is termed 'photojournalistic enquiry'. The emotive power of the image, and its potential to change or reinforce imagined geographies of the Majority World, is also dependent on its siting, either through publication or exhibition, and in context to its surroundings (other images, text, advertising, page number, gallery space, etc.), as well as the intended and actual audiences. The processes of photojournalistic enquiry and siting the image are intrinsically linked and, in combination, lead to either the verification of a perceived visualisation of place or a perceived re-imagination. The issues of both photojournalistic enquiry and the siting of images will be considered together in the following two chapters. Chapter 2 examines the contemporary practice of humanitarian photography of the Majority World, while Chapter 3 explores the contemporary image economy and its influence on the creation, selection, and siting of photographs from the Majority World in the UK media.

Central to this chapter is the question of image construction and how that construction can persuade viewers to believe the photograph is a factual representation of the place in which it is imaged. In order to contextualise the role of the contemporary photojournalist, the discussion begins with the place of the single image in the contemporary UK media landscape. Here begins a critical debate about the power and technical ability of the still picture to highlight humanitarian issues in the Majority World in an industry increasingly saturated with moving images. Changes to the single image market that sees photojournalists increasingly moving to multimedia or into the gallery space will be discussed, as will the issue of how these medias have changed the way in which the photographer communicates. The section also considers the ability of the single image to convey narrative and how audiences use additional information connected to the image, through its siting, to imaginatively piece together the complete story. The second section critically discusses the practice of aestheticising poverty/disaster through a comparison of two opposing documentary styles. The discussion is focused on distant audiences' translations of the aesthetic and how that relates to the claim to be truthful. At the end of the section, the concept of compassion fatigue in relation to the previous discussion is considered. The third section examines the photographer's ability to communicate a story from the Majority World to dominant UK audiences in terms of time spent in the region, ethnicity, connection to the issue, and understanding of how those audiences might consume the image. The question contextualises a contemporary

process of 'othering' (introduced in the last chapter) and asks if using indigenous photographers should and could provide alternative perspectives. In the last section a study of South African photographer Kevin Carter's 'starving child and vulture' picture from Sudan is used to critically analyse audiences' response to strong graphic depictions of poverty in the Majority World. In doing so, a discussion of the photographer's stated roles in addressing humanitarian crisis is undertaken. The section argues there is a mismatch between the stated aims of most humanitarian photographers and the long-term outcome of their work in an industry that is more concerned with the aesthetic than audiences' visualisations of the Majority World they are involved in creating.

1. THE PLACE OF THE SINGLE IMAGE IN THE CONTEMPORARY MEDIA LANDSCAPE

Before beginning a discussion on the impact of the single news image on public understandings of the Majority World, it is first useful to contextualise the medium in view of a wider media landscape and, in particular, video. Kolstrup (1997) contextualises the argument by stating 'titles like 'Theorizing the Moving Image' give us the impression that the notion of 'moving image' is a particular phenomenon within - or an exception to - the general notion of 'picture' or 'image', understood as still pictures.' He goes on to remind the reader, 'from a historical point of view, that is true. We made still pictures 30,000 years ago; we have experimented with moving pictures for only a few hundred years' (Kolstrup, 1997). The physical object of the still image 'that can be touched, framed, collected, enclosed, burned, torn up, and embraced' (Dubois, 1995: p.12) now sits at one end of a wide spectrum, which sees the interactive online slide show in the middle and video at the other end. Although the ends of this spectrum seem clear, Dubois argues that the distinction is diminishing:

> On a theoretical level, I think it is no longer useful or even pertinent to treat photography as a thing in itself, or cinema as an ontology, or video as a specific medium. Though I have already begun to explore various interconnections among film, photography, and video, I think that we have never been in a better position to approach a given visual medium by imagining it in light of another, through another, in another, by another, or like another.
>
> (Dubois, 1995: p.1)

To consider the issues raised by Dubois, this section first looks at the physical differences between video and photography before moving to a debate over interconnectivity, sensitivities, and ethics. Photography and video share perspective, point of view, lenses, focus, a compositional rule of thirds (a photographic convention that divides a picture into horizontal and vertical lines along the third line which is explained more fully later in the chapter), the creation of three dimensions within just two dimensions, and a choice of colour or black and white. They also share an inherent relationship between the image and its surroundings in the way in which it is sited. For video this is more to do with what images come before and after and its relationship to the sound track. With the single image it is where it is placed on the page or in a gallery, and the text and/or pictures that accompany it. What the maker chooses to omit from the frame is also a pertinent question in both mediums:

> The relationship between what is seen within the frame and our inference about what lies outside the frame, is extremely important for both kinds of pictures. How do we 'see' what is outside the frame? This is a problem that has been known to painters long before it became one for film makers - at least since the Italian Renaissance - the amount of horses that continue outside the painting or that come in from outside!
>
> (Kolstrup, 1997)

This point is clearly demonstrated through a single picture by photojournalist Tom Stoddart. Stoddart's picture essay from Sudan in 1998, printed in the *Guardian* on 12

August 1998, helped raise a £40,000 public donation. Stoddart, then a freelance photojournalist with the Independent Photographers Group, flew to southern Sudan using his own resources and some assistance from Médecin Sans Fontières in Ajiep. The main picture on page one (Fig 2.1) won him the best black and white photograph at the Picture Editors' Awards in 1998 but also brought into question the photographer's actions. The picture caption describes the image as follows: 'A child looks pitifully at a local rich man who has just taken a bag of maize from him after hours spent waiting for the meagre aid supplies.' Stoddart later comments in an interview for the *Imaging Famine* website:

> What I know for sure is a still image is still incredibly strong, much stronger than TV footage, which flashes in front of your eyes and is gone. With a great still you can look at it, put it down go make a cup of tea, come back look at it again and see something else. It stays in your consciousness for an awful long time and that's the power of the still and it will never change.

(Stoddart, 2005)

Fig 2.1 Page 11, the *Guardian*, 12 August 1998.

The audiences' dominant understandings of the event, combined with reading the caption, went beyond a simple acknowledgment of the facts. With time to ponder the image in greater depth, viewers began to question the photographer's actions in light of what he was witnessing first-hand, as well as the unanswered question - what happened next? - a question that Stoddart (2003) argues is not asked when viewing similar TV footage. "There is a reason why we don't know the names of TV cameramen and we do

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know the names of still photographers," photography critic Vicky Goldberg argued during a presentation at the World Press Photo awards in 2003. She contends photography is subtler than video and therefore its impact stronger and more enduring. The unanswered question of 'what happens next?' in Stoddart's picture is its strength as it urges the viewer to examine the image, caption, and accompanying text in detail for clues. It acts as a 'stopper', halting the reader's gaze across the newspaper, prompting them to delve deeper into the information provided. This picture is discussed in relation to the single image and narrative later in this chapter.

The Move to Video

Photojournalism is currently going through extraordinary changes with the introduction of newspaper websites that demand both still images and video. Still images can now be grabbed from high definition video giving a pixel count high enough for a six-column news image (Halstead, 2007). *Washington Post* multimedia producer Travis Fox alludes to the fusing of media tools that makes the distinction between still and moving image difficult to articulate:

> The camera bag of the future is certainly going to be video; I don't think there is any question about that. In television right now you have the ability to put still pictures on television and have the ability to do audio slide shows and how many still photographers work for television outlets? None, and there is a reason for that.
>
> (Fox, 2007)

The issue of a changing global market is discussed more fully in Chapter 3. However, here it is useful to explain the technical changes in photography as they impact on the current power of the single image to influence audiences. The issue is also related to the relationship of video to still pictures as a clear distinction between still and moving image is diluting as still grabs increase in quality. Photojournalists are now being issued with video cameras to shoot for both the printed and online editions (with the online editions having the option of using video). In an interview with Editorial Photographers UK, newly-appointed Telegraph Executive Editor (Pictures) Stuart Nicol states:

> Digital stills photography will, when we look back on it, form a very small period of time in the history of photojournalism. Telegraph photographers will undoubtedly be shooting solely on video in the future, and certainly within a year we hope to be well advanced down that route.
>
> (EPUK, 2006)

In the USA, these changes are already happening as a direct result of newspapers physical sales dropping and advertising revenue tumbling. Newspapers now have to find new means to exist in an increasingly competitive market. Dirck Halstead, writing in *Photo District News*, explains:

> They have hit the 'tipping point' in which, to use the Titanic metaphor, their holds are flooding, and sooner rather than later, they will sink. However, at the same time, their Web sites are constantly expanding. Revenue is beginning to flow into these brands. According to a recent survey, for the first time, advertising revenue for local newspaper Web sites last month exceeded local TV advertising. One of the reasons for the improvement in Web and dollars is the video now being produced for these sites. Video has a big advantage. It can be attached to video commercials.
>
> (Halstead, 2007)

A further article a few months later in the *Photo District News* reported:

> The New York Times Company had about $270 million worth of online advertising revenues in 2006 and expects that figure to rise 30% this year to $350 million, according to its SEC filings. Its About.com Web site generated $80 million worth of

the 2006 ad revenues, so nytimes.com, boston.com and the Web sites of smaller papers owned by the Times Company pulled in $190 million or so. How much of that was generated by nytimes.com alone is undisclosed. But the site averaged 12.4 million unique visitors per month last year and is among the top 30 most visited Web sites in the U.S., according to Alexa.com rankings.

(Walker, 2007)

Both quotes give indications of a rapidly changing media landscape and, with it, the place of photojournalism to influence audiences' understandings of place. Video is now seen as a key tool to rescue advertising revenues (Schiller, 2007). Leslie White, the director of photography at the *Dallas Morning News* claims, 'the explosion in popularity of YouTube and the ability to monetize the news with pre-roll advertising made photographers a bridge to capturing revenue. It was a new and uncomfortable spot for any journalist' (White, 2007). The pre-roll allows a video advertisement to be placed prior to the news video beginning, forcing audiences to watch it if they want to see the package they requested. Of the 24 staff photographers at the *Dallas Morning News* all but one now shoots video (interview with Halstead, 2008). Halstead, who runs training workshops for photographers from most of the US major newspapers, continues:

The basic workflow for photographers has changed dramatically. A routine assignment now becomes a deep multimedia experience. A feature that previously would yield only one picture in the print edition now becomes a living video piece, where the voice of the subject, together with natural sound, allows the viewer to more fully appreciate the story.

(Halstead, 2007)

As the invention of digital cameras brought about the possibility of an increased number of images available to editors, so the digital video cameraman and the ability to capture still images is likely to further increase the saturation of images available to news publications. However, as they are now placing greater emphasis on their web delivery as a means of communicating visual news, so the opportunity to contextualise a story outside a single image is increased. Although newspaper sales in much of the world outside Europe and America are still increasing, Cyril Pereira from the Society of Publishers in Asia outlined (in his presentation at the Second Forum of Emerging Leaders in Asian Journalism, 4 May 2007, Diamond Hotel, Manila) that online delivery was a global reality for all news publications in the near future. Online, the photographer has a greater opportunity to contextualise a story through a multimedia presentation or video.

In contradiction to the similarities listed above, many photographers that also shoot video now testify to a different approach to covering a news story. Photographer and multimedia producer for the *Guardian* Dan Chung explains: 'In my short experience, shooting video and stills require very different mindsets' (Chung, 2007). Travis Fox, a staff multimedia producer for the *Washington Post* describes three fundamental practical and compositional differences between shooting still pictures and video:

There are three limitations (for photographers telling stories with video). Firstly, you shoot video very differently to the way you shoot stills. With stills you are going for a moment, you are going for layers, you are going for a foreground, middle ground and background and stills you have the ability to compose a more complicated composition, I would argue, because the user has more time with the image. With video you don't because each image only stays on the screen for say two, three, four seconds, you tend to shoot compositionally much more simply. You certainly can't do complicated compositions, as they just don't work. Secondly you are not necessarily shooting for the moment, you are building a sequence of images for your reportage. If you only go for the moment you are going to miss everything else, the cutaways, the transitions, everything you need for the sequence. Therefore you are going to miss the moment as you have far more things to think about. Finally the optics of video are different. Video has a very wide depth of field all the time, so even if you want to shoot in layers you are not

going to as everything will be in focus. There are ways to minimise this, shooting wide open for example, but the product looks very different.

(Fox, 2007)

Fox's articulation of the physical differences between video and traditional still photography demonstrates a subtle but important variation in the method of delivering visual information to audiences. This relates to what image-makers term 'the depth of field' or 'depth of focus'. This is the distance in front of and beyond the subject that appears to be in focus and is the tool that Mayes (2005) claims photographers use to block out what they regard as unimportant information that falls within the frame. A photographer can use aperture, choice of lens, and distance to the subject to control the depth of field with a still camera, but with a video camera, in most cases, everything appears in focus. Chung agrees: 'Another issue with small sensors is perceived depth of focus. It is hard to produce a shallow depth-of-field look, and at a wide angle setting almost everything appears to be sharp even at wide apertures' (Chung, 2007).

Without the ability to knock the areas not important to the frame out of focus, a videographer is forced to give audiences a much a wider perspective of any given scene. In the case of imaging scenes of the Majority World to dominant UK audiences this includes environmental details that would otherwise be lost in the haze of defocus. The result is a similar account of events as would have been witnessed by the human eye and a less aestheticised interpretation. In a two-minute news package, video has no choice but to contextualise an event with clear physical representations of the landscape and people that appear behind the subject. A trained single picture photographer, with influence from the advertising world, has the resources to concentrate the viewer onto a single point of focus. The result is more dramatic and powerful but decontextualises the scene against the geographical background, obliging the viewer to fill in the missing details with their own visualisations.

Although the video package gives better context to the physical environment, it does not allow the reader to pause and consider the contents. 'When everything is moving, it is harder to learn…there has to be a departure from normal motion, where time stands still, allowing a chance for reflection, analysis and interaction', argued Contact Press director Robert Pledge (1993). Getty news photographer Mario Tama, who works both with stills and multimedia, agrees, believing the still image to be more influential than a moving image:

> If you think back to the raising of the flag in Iwo Jima there is a moving image of that and a still image and what is more powerful? I have always been a believer in the power of the still image in the way it can steal a way into your brain in a way that the moving images can't always do.

(Tama, 2007)

His insight is backed up by statistics quoted (but not publicly published) by director of photography at the Associated Press Santiago Lyon, who claims that 70% of internet users finish a photo slide show they start. "There is something magnetic about the power of the still image, there is something very compelling even in this day of video and 24-hour news TV cycles. There is something about a news photograph that allows you to concentrate on it and absorb it and that is very compelling" (Lyon, 2007). The 'something' Lyon refers to is the ability of the still image to isolate a single emotion, not just through the freezing of time but also in eliminating background.

One further complication of the news still-versus-moving image debate is the ethical codes that surround their production:

> In photojournalism we have very strong ethical guidelines that are very clear and obvious but anyone who has been out in the field with TV news people understands there are not the same ethical guidelines. It's more of a production than a documentation.

Increased scrutiny by online bloggers (discussed in more detail in Chapter 3) has challenged the authority of the news image and put increased pressures on photographers to uphold very strict guidelines when it comes to setting up images. The mechanics of video news demands retakes and staged constructions to fill holes in the narrative, allowing more potential influence to the journalists and cameramen. Lyon (2007) claims this to be not acceptable for the new multi-tasking visual journalist. However, the impression left on distant audiences is harder to gauge.

To conclude this discussion, it is useful to consider two opposing arguments of video and perceptions of place. Using an observation of a tree from a modern fast train Paul Virilio asks, 'Which tree is the true one? The tree that is only a frozen image whose branches and every single piece of bark I can describe in detail, or the blurred tree that passes by?' (Virilio, 2001: p.88). Virilio argues it is the blurred one as this is the experience of the viewer. Sontag agrees:

> A still, which allows one to linger over a single moment as long as one likes, contradicts the very form of film, as a set of photographs that freezes moments in life or a society contradicts their form, which is a process, a flow in time. The photographed world stands in the same, essentially inaccurate relation to the real world as stills do to movies. Life is not about significant details, illuminated a flash, fixed forever.

(Sontag, 1979: p.81)

In Virilio's and Sontag's arguments, photography is associated with collective memory that fixes moments in time. 'Motionless, the photograph flows back from presentation to retention' (Barthes, 2000: p.90). Ayperi Ecer, vice-president of development of photography at Reuters, reworks the concept in relation to news photography and disagrees with the idea that video gives us a more accurate rendition of place. The still image "is asking the viewer to reflect on something, which is very different from the live experience that you can have in footage" (Ecer, 2008). This argument suggests the still image fixes longer in audiences' minds than video. It forms memory, and, in the context of this thesis, represents a formidable force in creating imagined geographies of the Majority World for UK audiences.

The Descriptor and the Stopper

Although picture stories consisting of more than one image (see Fig 2.1) do exist in news, the vast majority of newspaper visual news reporting is conveyed through the use of a single picture. In a survey of image use in the *Guardian* between the 9th and 14th April 2008, only 8% of the stories illustrated with photography used more than one picture. The tradition of the newspaper image has been to provide a description, "I saw this, it's an event, it's a place, it's a person" (interview with Mayes, 2005). In this practice photojournalists 'shouldn't be artists because artists have a point of view, or at least they should. Journalists are reporters and reporters report what happened' (Hal Buell, retired head of AP's photo service, quoted in Horton, 2001: p.35). The single news image is also used as a 'stopper', the term used to describe a picture or headline that halts the viewer's gaze across a newspaper and persuades them to read the main story that accompanies it. An Eyetrack study from the Poynter Institute concluded 'headlines and photos were the first visual stop for print readers' (Poynter, 2008) and that most readers entered a broadsheet through the largest photo. The research 'tracks where a person's eyes look while reading, then analyzes the data to reveal patterns. By combining and reviewing data from multiple individuals during testing, you can discover representative patterns that apply to most of the population' (Poynter, 2008). In this mode, the picture acts as a signpost to the accompanying text and functions as a means to engage the viewer but not necessarily report the story. In both uses, the picture is simplistic in construction and is secondary to the main text.

Through his experience as a picture editor at New York's Art + Commerce agency, and as a long standing secretary to the World Press Photo awards' jury, Stephen Mayes has seen a change in the use of the single image:

> To my mind the single image is by far the more complex and interesting medium because, in dealing with the single image, one is typically conceptualising a subject by providing a summary and very often this is a summary of an idea, rather than a representation….That whole process of distilling an event that happens across time into one moment, that one angle that describes everything is a really complex task. I feel very strongly that the era of the single image is really coming to a head at the moment and I think one of the drivers behind this is the medium of advertising. I would say there has been some kind of battle between documentary and advertising over the last 10 years and, without a doubt, advertising has won. The battle has been about representation - how do you communicate with large audiences very quickly? - which is essentially the same battle a photojournalist has. In an advertising image you have a single strong idea, but what is interesting is it is an idea and not an object. Very few advertisers want to show you the product. They want to show you an association with the product. Therefore they are creating an emotional association through photography and it is a fascinating process. Advertisers have become incredibly clever at portraying quite complex ideas, whether it be about pride, ownership, [or] aspiration through the use of single images and what I have seen over the past 10 years is magazines really adopting that language whole heartedly. So the whole notion of the reportage single image where you have place and context is becoming less and less common. All the peripheral stuff around the edges of the picture has been stripped out and now it is about photographing events against a flat field, thrown out of focus or shot at night. There are many ways you can do this technically, so now I see the news media adopting the language of advertising in its imagery. To my mind, this is to the good as now you actually have people, magazines, and photographers talking about ideas rather than simple representations.
>
> <div align="right">(interview with Mayes, 2005)</div>

In the statement, Mayes contends that the news single image is moving away from being a descriptor of events (which is being left to video) and more to a situation where its purpose is to create an 'emotional association.' Images are stripped of contextual content and made to leave the viewer with a feeling that relates to a particular story. The shift to video in the newspaper complicates this move, as technically it is harder to isolate subjects with the long depth of focus of the video camera. Mayes's statement also has relevance in terms of imaging Africa through the medium of news as the move away from contextualised imagery makes the continent harder for viewing publics to imagine.

TV news now outpaces newspapers and editors have accepted that their readers are likely to already know the news story before they pick up their paper. Former vice-president of the Associated Press Vin Alabiso, reports, 'we no longer await the still photograph to tell us what happened, but instead expect the still, or stills, to illustrate what we've already witnessed' (Alabiso, 1998). The changes Mayes outlines above have been fuelled by competition with other media and advertising but also a change in the role of the photojournalist. Horton agrees with Mayes, 'Editors and photographers are talking about the effect of television, advertising and magazines on newspaper photographic styles. They see a blurring of the hard edge that used to define a photograph' (Horton, 2001: p.38). No longer charged with the role of reporting news, editors and photographers are now free to comment on a story, using the 'flat field of focus' to choose what is important or pick out a small detail to give an individual account of a larger story. These changes are key to the discussion of photojournalism's aestheticisation of the Majority World and the resulting public visualisations.

Context and Narrative

The subsequent section will consider the issue of truth claims, chaos, and composition in a related, but alternative, discourse to Weinbren's (1995) assertion that 'narrative is the imposition of order on chaos, the intrusion of form on the formless.' The discussion is particularly related to the single image's ability to convey a news narrative. Barthes (1985) contends the still image is free of the narrative imperative of film but keeps many of the dynamics. Ulla Marquart (2004) continues the argument to assert the weakness of the still image is its inability to move beyond a statement of fact. This, she contends, is at odds with culture, which, in any mode, 'can be understood as narrative' (Cubitt, 2002). The cultural need for a time-based story forces the viewer to subconsciously combine text sited around the image (as a caption or accompanying story) to create an imagined visual narrative of the event. The before, the after, and the scene beyond the frame is visualised by the reader in a process of inventive narrative creation. In the case of Stoddart's image (top of Fig 2.1), the caption informs us the boy has been waiting a long time in a line to receive the bag of maize and once received the 'rich man' has stolen it from him. None of this action is present in the picture but through audiences' imagined understandings of an African food-crisis feeding centre, combined with the physical representation of the boy and 'rich man,' plus the accompanying article that reports of 'unknown thousands' in 'ill equipped camps', alongside further images of dormant skeletal figures, audiences can visualise the past narrative. What is missing from the image and accompanying text is what happened next? The narrative has no conclusion and this compels audiences to return to the image and look again, probing it for clues as to the fate of the boy and the aggressive rich man.

Aristotle first discussed narrative as a sequence of beginning, middle, and end. In agreement with Weinbren, Marquart (2004: p.26) argues this structure allows the author to 'bring order to the chaos around us, to value one person or fact higher than another, to select and omit things.' Key to the narrative is succession, which rises slowly to a climax and finishes with a resolution. The story can be linked by cause and effect or time and place, 'but what makes a narration a good story? It is the way the series of events is arranged in order to establish some kind of dramatic progression, in short the way the plot is structured' (Marquart, 2004: p.27). Without a resolution Stoddart's narrative leaves audiences hanging. The disorder created by the lack of resolution is further complicated by an advertisement at the bottom of the page in which the image sits, that features a phone company promotion with a picture of an obese male British swimmer. Dubois observes:

> In photography there is never just one image, separate, disjunct, alone in its solitude, haunted by the one, intimate moment it had with a real that has vanished forever. It is this hauntedness, formed by distance in proximity, absence in presence, the imaginary in the real, the virtuality of memory in the effectiveness of a trace, that draws us to photographs and gives them their aura: the unique phenomenon of a distance, however close it may be.
>
> (Dubois, 1995)

The contrast between the images appears unplanned but still menacing. In photojournalistic terms, the chaos gives the image value as it returns the audiences' gaze to question the picture in more depth. It works as a 'stopper', halting the viewer's stare across the page, persuading them to read the accompanying text in search of a resolution. It also leaves the viewer with a feeling of an unstructured geography, in this case a relief camp somewhere in Africa without order or a sense of purpose.

Documentary as Art - The Move to the Gallery

Over the past 30 years there has been a steady decrease in the publication of traditional black and white photo essays in the mainstream Minority World media (Bagdikian, 1999). The end of the illustrated photography magazines such as *Picture*

Post, Look, and *Life* in the face of competition from television through the second half of the twentieth century meant that photographers working on long-term projects increasingly found it difficult to finance their work. This has been more recently coupled with an increase in ownership 'by a few very large multinational corporations,' as will be discussed in Chapter 3. Advertisers too have become more careful in investing in publications that print graphic humanitarian stories as these have a negative impact on their ability to sell products and services. In an online interview, *Time* magazine contract photographer James Nachtwey responds to a question about companies that don't wish to run his stories alongside ads:

> I manage to get my work published but there always seems to be tension. It's about marketing concerns and being journalistically responsible. It's a fact of life in commercial publishing. Journalism is, in one sense, a business. And it has to be a business to survive and to succeed.
>
> (Nachtwey, 2007)

Serious photojournalism has never sat comfortably in the political spectrum of mainstream media. Three of the founding members of the Magnum agency (Henri Cartier-Bresson, Robert Cape, and David Seymour) had all worked on the socialist daily *Ce Soir* and brought with them idealistic beliefs of the subjects worthy of photographic reportage and the way a photographer's work should be treated by publications. Photojournalism has roots in socialism with many of the early successful practitioners subscribing to left-wing agendas:

> Any suspicions that the elite might have harboured about photojournalism were confirmed when it played an important part in turning the US public against the Vietnam War. While this could only occur given the collusion of certain elements in big business, particularly in the mass media, it set a very dangerous precedent.
>
> (Stallabrass, 1997: p.4)

Don McCullin, who made his name covering the Vietnam war, bemoans the *Sunday Times* who fired him after Rupert Murdoch took over, complaining the new leadership wanted 'no more starving Third World babies but more successful businessmen around their weekend barbecues' (McCullin, 1992: p.268).

In opposition to the decrease in opportunities to publish in-depth stories in mainstream media, humanitarian photographers have found increased interest from galleries who have a tradition of supporting creative socialist protest, coupled with a growing acceptance and market for photography as art. The move has led to photographic coverage of humanitarian projects being split into two opposing aesthetics: the news image, which, as will be discussed in the next chapter, relies on an increased dramatisation of the event in order to drive sales through sensationalist stories; and the fine art documentary project, which relies on aestheticised compositional structures in order to give it value in the art market.

Fig 2.2 *Taliban Soldier*. Afghanistan, 2002. Image: Luc Delahaye.

The documentary photographers' move to the gallery has been controversial at times. In 2003, Magnum photographer Luc Delahaye held an exhibition at the Ricco Maresca Gallery in New York entitled *History* that was subsequently described as 'a turning point for a small club of international war and 'conflict' photojournalists' (Farrell, 2007). Central to the exhibition was one image, *Taliban Soldier* (Fig 2.2). The picture has a clear American lineage back through the Vietnam War, World War One and World War Two, to Mathew Brady's civil war images yet, as it depicts a foreign soldier in a distant place, there is little discussion of the ethics around the act of imaging the dead (Duganne, 2006: p.64). Sontag suggests 'the more remote or exotic the place, the more likely we are to have full frontal views of the dead and dying' (Sontag, 2003: p.70). Working in large format with a Linhof panoramic camera, Delahaye defies contemporary digital practice, printing the image at four-by-eight foot. In doing so, he renders every detail with 'amazing clarity' (Richards, 2004) and confronts gallery audiences with details they would not get from a newspaper or magazine. The images were also likened to classical paintings (Woodward, 2007) and sited for an exclusive art-going market. Controversially, the prints sold for $1,500 each and an accompanying limited addition book for $1,000. 'The subject matter coupled with the commercial aspect of the project…has caused a certain amount of controversy in the worlds of photography and photojournalism' (Sullivan, 2004). Shortly after the exhibition Delahaye resigned from Magnum and declared himself an artist.

Documentary - the presentation of facts without editorializing or inserting fictional matter - is the name attributed to the genre of long-term, issue-based photography projects, and appears by classification at odds with the gallery space. However, documentary evolved, mainly through film, to become what post-war film critic John Grierson defines as 'the creative treatment of actuality' (Grierson, 1946: p.13). Grierson believed:

> that documentary could be an effective tool to provide cultural and educational enlightenment, and saw the chance to involve citizens in the social process as the primary function of the documentary medium. The term 'documentary' came to mean a photographic format which appropriated photography's association with immediacy and truth, but which aimed at making sense of society through a specific type of representation.
>
> (Mullen, 1998: p.43)

Grierson's theories are attributed to the development of film documentary but the discussion, which informed his premise[3], had happened a decade earlier through discussions surrounding the use of photography by the Farm Security Administration in the USA.

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[3] Gierson first coined the term 'documentary' in 1926 (Wells, 2004: p.69)

The Farm Security Administration (FSA) was created in 1937 as a division of the US Department of Agriculture. The FSA, and its forerunner, the Resettlement Administration, were part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's series of 'New Deal' programmes designed to assist the farming community during the dust bowl era of the 1930s. The Resettlement Administration had set up a special photographic propaganda division under the direction of Roy Stryker beginning in 1935. The section evolved with the establishment of the FSA, which in turn became part of the Office of War Information department in 1942. Stryker brought together a team of around 15 photographers to travel throughout the US to photograph the relief efforts being carried out by the FSA. The project came at a time when America was transforming from a reading to a visual culture and pictorial magazines had strong influence over public understandings of social, economic and political developments. During its life, the division produced around 77,000 photographs that were shaped into press releases and given free to the media for publication. During the later years of the project, the photographers went on to document the mobilization effort for World War Two. The photographers, many of who were established photojournalists before the project, rose to fame but at the same time became increasingly uneasy about their work being used for government propaganda.

The central theoretical issue of documentary photography as a truth claim (Eisinger, 1995: p.79) became a crucial point of debate after FSA photographer Arthur Rothstein's picture of a skull on parched land from Pennington County, South Dakota, 1936 was issued by Stryker to the press to publicize Roosevelt's visit to the area (Fig 2.4):

> The hostile Republican press discovered that there were several other less devastating versions of the picture and made a stink. That Rothstein had moved the skull was considered a serious breach of documentary integrity, and the FSA was rocked by charges of fakery and propaganda. The public was not prepared to accept a news photograph as the creative interpretation of reality.
>
> (Eisinger, 1995: p.90)

A public discussion on photography and truth followed amongst the American photographic community, most members of which rebuked Rothstein's manipulation as unethical. Rothstein justified the action, 'Provided the results are a faithful reproduction of what the photographer believes he sees, whatever takes place in the making of a picture is justified' (quoted in Eisinger, 1995: p.89) and there began a movement away from the Victorian understanding of the documentary photograph as literal representational truth and a new balance being struck between fact and artistic interpretation. Rothstein's actions were extreme and most present-day practitioners would still regard them as unethical but they were key to a development of the discussion of photography, art, and truth claims that Sontag points out is still part of contemporary representation discourse:

> Transforming is what art does, but photography that bears witness to the calamitous and the reprehensible is much criticized if it seems 'aesthetic'; that is, too much like art. The dual powers of photography - to generate documents and to create works of visual art - have produced some remarkable exaggerations about what photographers ought or ought not to do. Lately, the most common exaggeration is one that regards these powers as opposites. Photographs that depict suffering shouldn't be beautiful, as captions shouldn't moralize. In this view, a beautiful photograph drains attention from the sobering subject and turns it toward the medium itself, thereby compromising the picture's status as a document. The photograph gives mixed signals. Stop this, it urges. But it also exclaims, what a spectacle!
>
> (Sontag, 2003: p.77)

Fig 2.3

Fig 2.4

Fig 2.5, Fig 2.3-2.5 Pictures of the same skull in different locations. Pennington County, South Dakota, USA, 1936. Images: Arthur Rothstein.

Contemporary humanistic documentary practitioners now accept that structural compositional techniques need to be employed to both engage audiences in the gallery space and to transcend the individual to the universal. As part of this process they borrow from fiction, often relying on a central protagonist and developing a storyline to outline a wider issue. Making reportage on a single family affected by the famine is easier for the photographer to create and audiences to consume than reportage about 200,000 people dying of starvation across a wide area. The power of the humanitarian documentary in the gallery comes from its association with immediacy and claims of authenticity but in moving there, audiences are both reduced in numbers and also in their belief of the photographer's 'truth' claim and therefore the impact is also reduced (Howe, 2001 & 2005). As Delahaye shifted his style towards gallery audiences, creating 'distanced and all-encompassing panoramic views that have a power, solemnity and scale reminiscent of the French nineteenth century history paintings' (Hinson quoted in CMA, 2004), so he risked losing the discussion he sought to create. Delahaye 'straddles art and journalism'

(Aletti, 2003), portraying issues to be debated and a reality to be consumed. It is persuasive, in part, by the fact it is mechanically produced and therefore uncontested, but is weakened by its choice of site.

Summary

In the first chapter a nineteenth century understanding of the photograph as evidence was described. In this section a discussion on the siting of an image in a contemporary media landscape and its relationship to a contested truth claim has begun. This has relevance in the way the image is read and believed, and therefore in its contribution to public visualisations of place. These visualisations come from a mixed exposure to video and still images yet, as this section has argued, the power of the still image to fix in the memory makes the single image a powerful source in the construction of imagined geographies. Key to the siting of the image is the creation of narrative and how other images, text, and sound combine to give an understanding of an event. This section has argued that this process is different when an image is sited in a gallery space as opposed to the printed page. The pressures of the market have forced photographers to look for alternative means of distribution, in particular the art market. 'The move into galleries and book publishing has been one of the few ways for photographers to step around the restrictions imposed by the mass media' (Stallabrass, 1997: p.131). In the next section the discussion continues with a closer investigation of photographic truth claims and their connection to the aesthetic.

2. BEAUTY, MISERY, AND TRUTH CLAIMS

This section begins with a discussion of the relationship between truth claims, beauty, and photographic composition. By tracing contemporary image-making back to early painting it seeks to demonstrate the function of symmetry and beauty as a means of convincing audiences of uncontested fact. The argument is developed through an analysis of the influence of modern artistic strategies on contemporary photojournalists. Using two photographers as examples, the section will then contrast and compare different visual responses to disaster in the Majority World and discuss how these depictions compliment and contradict audiences' preconceived visualisations of place. This, the section argues, informs the publishers' choices of pictures and therefore the images audiences are most likely to see. The third discussion in the section is on the much-debated photographic practice of aestheticising poverty in relation to the photographer's work, discussed in the previous section. This leads to a brief interlude to discuss the classical composition of mother and child before concluding with an analysis of the concept of compassion fatigue.

'Beauty is Truth'[4]

Symbols and patterns are used throughout Christian art as a means to convey truth. By creating order and unity in a picture's composition the artist symbolises righteousness and, in association, truth and goodness. In Rudulf Arnheim's *Art and Visual Perception* (1974) the author describes how balance is created within an image through an established point 'where movement and weight come to a kind of dynamic equilibrium' (Kolstrup, 1997):

> In a balanced composition all such factors as shape, direction, and location are mutually determined in such a way that no change seems possible, and the whole assumes the character of 'necessity' in all its parts. An unbalanced composition looks accidental, transitory, and therefore invalid. Its elements show a tendency to

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[4] (Keats, 1991: p.36)

change place or shape in order to reach a state that better accords with the total structure.

<div align="right">(Arnheim, 1974: p.20)</div>

One of the first lessons most photographers have in basic composition is the rule of thirds. Four lines (two vertical and two horizontal) are drawn through the third lines of an image through which the main action should take place (see Fig 2.6). This, the photographer is told, creates balance in a picture. Exact symmetry in a face, a leaf, or even the solar system equates to a balanced mathematical formula and reinforces a sense of truth. A painting by Leonardo da Vinci (Fig 2.7) and a photograph by Sebastião Salgado (Fig 2.8) demonstrate the lineage of religious symbolism and symmetry. The balance provided by observing the compositional rule of thirds common to both painting and photography gives the subject dignity and humanity, and therefore harmony, beauty, and truth (Plato, 1993). In these examples, the mother's eyes fall along the top third and the baby is situated on the left third. Balance is created by having the mother face into the picture, right to left, balanced by the baby on the left third line looking right to left back at the mother.

Fig 2.6 Demonstrates the rules of thirds. The red lines are the placed along the third lines through which the main action should take place. Xining, China, 2006. Image: D J Clark.

Fig 2.7 Madonna and child. 1491. Image: Leonardo da Vinci.

Fig 2.8 Children's ward at the Korem refugee camp. Ethiopia 1984. Image: Sebastião Salgado.

In direct opposition to order and beauty is chaos and ugliness. Photography editor and critic Fred Ritchin describes most images we see of disaster as ugly and 'wonders: if there were more ugliness to the imagery, how would that be truer to those depicted' (Ritchin in Salgado, 2004: p.4). He claims only a few photographers take the time to elevate their work above a simple representation of the 'material conditions' and, in doing so, are able to humanise the victims of disaster. The chaos in this case represents an inability to explain a situation through a pictorial representation, leaving the subjects soulless and the situation beyond repair. In summary, the picture is 'meaningless' (Adams, 1981: p.25). Ritchin therefore argues the documentary photographer humanises by making sense of, and providing authority to, a picture by the use of established artistic rules of harmony.

Many contemporary aesthetic strategies derive from the modern art world and can often leave the viewer more confused than enlightened. Photographer and academic Paul Lowe argues, "photographers use learnt visual strategies to construct a working methodology which, if successful, they repeat on different assignments" (interview with Lowe, 2003). With an emphasis on aesthetics, photographers can cover up for their lack of knowledge and leave the reader with a feel "of somewhere in black Africa" (ibid). Alam, writing a few years earlier, describes similar strategies but using a different format of wide angle, black and white, grainy, high contrast images (Alam, 1994). Evans claims that some photographers now openly admit to setting pictures up to accentuate the drama, leading to very formalistic images made to order (interview with Evans, 2003). Given that stock libraries now operate within the same database as news, this might be the first indication of traditional markets beginning to merge:

> Chaotic, fractured, complex, blur, out of focus images tend to make places look like that. They make places look mad, chaotic where nothing can be solved and when you apply that to Sierra Leone or Palestine for example the viewer assumes these places are beyond help.
>
> (interview with Evans, 2003)

Paulo Pelligrin's image from Haiti (Fig 2.9) and Marcus Bleasdale's image from The Democratic Republic of Congo (Chapter 1, Figs 1.11-1.13) demonstrate an unstructured stylistic response to crisis that is arguably ugly (Ritchin) and chaotic (Lowe). Following Ritchin's argument, it may also be concluded from such compositions that the subject is dehumanised rendering the power of the image meaningless in its ability to create a social reaction, as the subjects appear beyond hope.

Fig 2.9 People stand in line since early morning to vote in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, February 2006. Image: Paulo Pellegrin.

Salgado, Pellegrin and Photo Humanism

Brazilian photographer Sebastião Salgado is best known for long-term humanistic projects that deal with global issues affecting the poorest people on earth. The themed photographic essays evolve into large-scale exhibitions and coffee table books. Salgado strongly defends his use of light and compositional harmony that gives dignity to his subjects and suggests hope that the problems they face may yet be solved. "If the person looking at my pictures only feels compassion, I will believe that I have failed completely. I want people to understand that we can have a solution" (quoted in Campbell, 2003: p.77). He refutes claims that his work embodies classical religious themes, preferring to refer to it as "the spiritual side of man" (quoted in Campbell, 2003: p.76). The dignification of his subjects is key to his communication methodology as, by capturing 'the beauty and nobility along with the despair' (Stallabrass, 1997: p.19), he is able to engage Minority World audiences on their own terms. "I wanted Americans to look at the pictures of these people and see themselves" (quoted in Stallabrass, 1997: p.19). Nachtwey agrees with Salgado and responds to a critique of his viewers taking pleasure in pictures (Sontag, 2003): "The people I have met deserve eloquence…why shouldn't someone living in dire poverty also be beautiful? Or have dignity? That beauty exists, its nothing that I invent" (quoted in Smyth, 2008).

Salgado, born in the Majority World, is critical of photographers who dehumanise their subjects in the face of adversity:

Sometimes we from the Southern hemisphere wonder why you in the North think you have the monopoly of beauty, of dignity, of riches. Ethiopia is a country in crisis, where the people are suffering so acutely, yet Ethiopians are probably among the most beautiful, most noble people in the world. There is really no point in going there to deny this reality.

(quoted in Stallabrass, 1997: p.19)

Trained as an economist, Salgado, took up photography in 1973 after taking pictures for the International Coffee Organisation in Africa with whom he worked for a time. Although famous for, and partly funded by, his pictures of the assassination attempt on Ronald Reagan in 1981, Salgado quickly moved away from hard news, preferring to concentrate on large-scale issues which, in part because of his economics background, he could deeply engage with. Supported by his then-agency Magnum, his most notable early

humanitarian work in the Majority World came from the Sahel (Mali, Chad, Sudan, and Ethiopia) where he spent 15 months working alongside Médicins Sans Frontières to document the wars and food crisis of 1983-4. This was not his first assignment in the region having visited 10 years earlier with the World Council of Churches who hired him on the spot after seeing his portfolio as an emerging 29-year-old photojournalist. The essay was originally published as a book, *Sahel: L'Homme En Détresse* (Sahel: Man in Distress), and in Spain as *Sahel: El Fin Del Camino* (Sahel: The End of the Road), but was not widely seen at the time. 'It seems that these images of human struggle and suffering were too graphic and disturbing for the U.S. arbiters of public taste, or perhaps they were too challenging of our stereotypes' (Puleo, 1994: p.2). Other than two pages in the *New York Times* and four pages in *Newsweek,* very few of the pictures were seen in America for the first four years. What is notable about this project is that the pictures became popular through galleries and the coffee table book *An Uncertain Grace* rather than the mainstream media.

Salgado is not unique in arguing for a more humanistic approach to depicting poverty in the Majority World. Paulo Pellegrin refers to himself as a 'Photohumanist' (Coleman, 2008) working in difficult circumstances to convey the suffering of people worldwide. "Basically, I try to be respectful in a situation which is not very respectful. I feel that I'm granted a privilege, to be able to witness people's extreme emotions, and I treat that with great care" (quoted in Coleman, 2008). Italian by nationality, Pellegrin began his career in Rome before moving to Paris and later New York after becoming a Magnum nominee, and then full member, in 2005. Like Salgado he prefers to work in black and white but uses "an abstract element that helps to convey meaning and symbols" (quoted in Coleman, 2008). His work suggests chaos in a world inherently tragic by nature, in particular concentrating on the Islamic world and its potential threat to the West. He sees his work as working in combination with hard news, examining a story in greater depth but then 'reducing the information within a frame to a single gesture or the look on a human face' (Beem, 2006).

Although working for Salgado's previous agency (Magnum) and choosing similar subjects, Pellegrin's preference of composition is very different. His images are dark, unstructured, and impressionistic, demanding a different emotional response to that of Salgado. Whereas Salgado takes influence from, and compares himself to, Eugene Smith and Henri Cartier-Bresson (Ritchin in Salgado, 2004) Pellegrin sites Josef Koudelka, Gilles Peress, and Robert Frank (Coleman, 2008, Beem, 2006) as key influences, pointing to a very different school of visual representation. "There is a line", Pellegrin explains, making reference to two different schools of photography (quoted in Beem, 2006). The director of Contact Press Photo, Robert Pledge, explains this line in a presentation to Chinese photographers at the 2007 Pingyao festival. He described the process by which he edited Li Zhensheng's book *Red Colour News Soldier* on the Chinese Cultural Revolution. "I told Li that this image was a Henri Cartier-Bresson and this image was a Robert Frank. We tried to get a mixture of both." Here Pledge makes reference to two distinct genres of photojournalism - the Cartier-Bresson 'decisive moment' where all the key elements of the image come together in a harmonious collaboration, and the Robert Frank 'abstract' where the discordance of the image shocks the viewer into an emotional response. The line lies between the two, the harmonious and the discordant.

Salgado has leant numerous languages and works hard to dissolve into cultures where he works whereas Pellegrin sees himself as an outsider. "I go with the eyes of a foreigner…it's a journey where I go through these countries trying to find relationships, to understand, to create a dialogue -- first of all between me and what I see, but then, hopefully, to involve the viewers in this conversation" (quoted in Coleman, 2008). Whereas Gilles Peress worked on an agenda of unstructured compositional inclusion, Pellegrin and Salgado work on a 'process of taking away' (Beem, 2006), giving audiences a choice of what to look at by using simply constructed compositions with a clear point of interest or punctum (Barthes, 2000). The key difference between the photographers is the way in which they engage with their audiences' imagined geographies of the places in

which they work. Pellegrin has gained fame quickly since 9/11 as his style connects with his audiences' sense of fear of the Islamic world. Salgado too plays to his audiences' visual imaginations of the places he works, choosing subjects and environments that conform to an understanding of the Majority World as poor and unfair. "I'm not showing these pictures to make anyone feel guilty, but to provoke a discussion" (Salgado quoted in Puleo, 1994: p.4). He appeals to his audiences' sense of justice by humanising and beautifying his subjects with light and classical compositions. Ultimately his aim is to take his audiences beyond compassion by creating a reverence for human dignity and a 'realisation of the interconnectedness of our lives and our fates' (Puleo, 1994: p.4). In communications with the public through interviews and presentations, he agues that humans belong to the same family and that photography is a strong medium to demonstrate this (Hopkinson, 1990).

Both Salgado and Pellegrin use visual strategies with clear connections to the art world and both, arguably, produce beautiful images but does their use of aesthetics persuade audiences of their truth claim? Salgado's visualisation of the 'other' in the Sahel appears subversive in relation to both historical and contemporary media portrayals of African famine. The argument that his Sahel images were too graphic for Minority World audiences (Ritchin in Salgado, 2004 and Puleo, 1994) contradicts the overplay of harsh images from the Ethiopian famine shown all over the world in late 1984 and then regurgitated for the *Live Aid* event of 1985 (later discussed in Chapter 4). It appears more likely the images were rejected because they portrayed starving Africans (the others) living in families and communities, helping each other, and retaining a cultural identity despite their extreme conditions that contradicted the publications' audiences' understandings of a people who had given up the will to live. It was this inconsistency and the unavoidable emotional response that possibly made it too hard for the editors to publish. Pellegrin's image construction, on the other hand, is more suitable. Through his use of blur, movement, and fractured composition he compliments the text that runs alongside it and he has never had problems in getting his images published. There is little personal connection to the key characters, rather a mood created by the image and utilised to convey meaning. The pictures are compelling because they confuse the viewer and thus encourage them to look closer. Pellegrin and Salgado also differ in their interplay with their audiences' imagined understandings of the places they depict. Salgado challenges and Pellegrin reinforces. This differentiation plays out in the siting of the pictures. Pellegrin compliments the hard news images, adding an artistic twist to the drama already created by the wire photographer. Salgado contradicts and challenges mainstream images, which look uneasy if printed beside them. His work sits more comfortably in a gallery, away form daily news pictures, in a space that allows time to reflect and contemplate. There audiences can take pleasure in and despair at depictions of poverty/disaster, allowing the two diametrically opposed responses to co-exist.

Aesthetics, Power and Truth Claims

Susan Sontag believes that by employing a particular aesthetic when photographing atrocity, a photographer weakens his images' ability to convey truth:

> For the photography of atrocity, people want the weight of witnessing without the taint of artistry, which is equated with insincerity or mere contrivance. Pictures of hellish events seem more authentic when they don't have the look that comes from being 'properly' lighted and composed…. By flying low, artistically speaking, such pictures are thought to be less manipulative - all widely distributed images of suffering now stand under that suspicion - and less likely to arouse facile compassion or identification.
>
> (Sontag, 2004: pp.23-24)

Sontag (2004) argues that the conception of contemporary warfare is intrinsically linked to well-crafted visual representations that purposefully avoid the rawness of simple images that depict death and suffering. In contrast, the power of leaked photographs, such as

those from Abu Gharib, have enormous impact due to the lack of desensitisation through the aesthetic. Bathes agrees with Sontag, claiming 'if a photograph is too impressive it is quickly deflected. We consume it aesthetically, not politically' (Barthes, 2000: p.36). Stoddart tells a story of his mother describing his images as containing a "raw beauty" while being interviewed for the *Imaging Famine* project (interview with Stoddart, 2005). The term suggests his images lack the artist's eye and convey a simplistic illustration of the scenes he photographs. Stoddart elaborates on the term, explaining the pictures "are powerful and disgust you, but also have a weird beauty to them" (ibid). In this statement, he suggests the power of the picture is its ability to engage audiences with the subject through a combination of aesthetic and raw facts. What is key to Stoddart's photographic strategy is a belief in being personally involved in the process of picture taking. In a discussion of his Sudan famine images, he disagrees with the concept of journalistic impartiality, insisting that a photographer needs to be involved to communicate (ibid).

Stoddart's position is contextualised by a comparison between himself and wire photographers who have the reach to cover a story more comprehensively, but less personally. As a single camera operator shooting for the magazine/art market, Stoddart sees himself as a commentator rather than a reporter and openly admits to relying on a simplistic aesthetic to convey emotion. "What is a mother clutching her dying child feeling like? I want her emotions to be transferred to the viewer through the lens" (interview with Stoddart, 2005). In his photo essays, Stoddart often takes a compositional middle line between the structured (Cartier-Bresson) and the chaotic (Frank) and suggests that a photographer can use both conventions to tell a story rather than relying either on one or the other. The concept of 'raw beauty' implies the strength of his work derives from a strategy of humanised anger that is intent on both repulsing and engaging the viewer.

David Levi-Stauss agrees with Stoddart and contests Sontag and Barthes' claim when referring to Salgado's pictures. 'The aestheticisation of suffering and the concomitant objectification of the other do not disappear when we look at these pictures. They are in fact, intensified, clarified, and made more insistent' (1991: p.98). Stallabrass, who agrees with Levi Strauss (1997: p.38), points out that many of the critics fail to consider the inherent beauty of the subjects being portrayed in Salgado's work, assuming them to be 'artless' until Salgado turns his camera to them:

> Some pictures by Salgado directly refute this: in one, a bare chested man stands holding a little child to his side, staring at the lens, while behind him a large printed head of Christ turns its eyes towards him. The point of the picture is very much the likeness between the two.
>
> (Stallabrass, 1997: p.38).

Yet Salgado is not simply photographing people that happen to be beautiful. When shooting he chooses his subjects and understands the mechanics of the camera and film he is using. In his introduction to *An Uncertain Grace*, Eduardo Galeano (in Salgado, 2004: p.8) quotes Anna Cataldi, who escorted Salgado through refugee camps in Croatia and only saw 'dark' and 'formless' scenes that Salgado was able to turn into images that 'emitted light.' In another text, Galeano claims Salgado:

> does not extract the symbols from his head, to generously offer them to reality, requiring that they be used. Rather, reality selects the precise moment that speaks most perfectly for it: Salgado's camera denudes it, tears it from time and makes it into image, and the image makes itself symbol - a symbol of our time and our world.
>
> (Galeano, 1992: p.245)

However, Salgado himself refutes the argument that he tries to to image 'reality' when he is questioned on the reasons he does not use colour. "It is too much real. It doesn't allow you to have a single degree of imagination" (quoted in Campbell, 2003: p.75). Colour is often associated with realism and the authentic, but 'the presence of colour…lessens the sense of the photograph's veracity as an image and witness' (Clarke, 1997).

Documentary photography has a long history of bearing witness to events and Clarke suggests that the absence of colour gives the image more authority in this capacity.

Salgado's truth claim is ultimately questioned through what Ritchin refers to as 'magical realism' (Ritchin in Salgado, 2004: p.147). Campbell discusses the concept as 'most often applied to aesthetic forms that emanate from the global periphery and seek to challenge the dominant and totalizing modes of intelligibility propagated by the imperial center' (Campbell, 2003: p.75). In Salgado's case, a Majority World photographer who seeks to give an alternative narrative to that accepted by the Minority World challenges Said's theory of imperial 'othering'. Campbell points out that this assertion is often quoted but rarely explored as the meaning implies his images are 'the result of a more concerted and institutionalised set of fantasies' (Shapiro in Campbell, 2003: p.75). Salgado's Majority World background and claimed alternative visual perspective (Ritchin), however, can be argued to be a truth claim inspired and influenced by a photographer wishing to redress an imbalanced view of the world. In this case, it represents a movement to challenge a Minority World view and therefore is biased at the outset and is similar to the NGO positive image agendas discussed in the thesis Conclusion. This also supports the argument that Minority World publications were uncomfortable publishing Salgado's Sahel work because his 'magic realism' employed an aesthetic that disturbed the audiences' agreed understanding of the situation being depicted.

Interlude: Women and Children

In a discussion of the pictorial aesthetics of poverty it is useful to interlude with a brief discussion of what Stanley Cohen terms the 'universal icon of suffering' (Cohen, 2001: p.178), namely the child. Although none of the photographers discussed thus far in the section concentrate solely on this image, numerous surveys have concluded this to be the dominant image of African disaster seen in the UK press (van der Gaag & Nash, 1987: p.22; VSO, 2001). The child image replaces a colonial missionary iconography (Manzo, 2008: p.651) that sought to demonstrate the need for spiritual care with associations of a need for parenthood, the child being an innocent victim and in need of protection and care. Ecer describes the directive for wire photographers going to cover a famine. "They go trying to convey an emotion and basically that's it. It sounds easy but it is the hardest part of the job and how do you do that? You focus on children, you focus on women and that is it!" (interview with Ecer, 2005). Manzo argues images of children used in this way have a contradictory nature:

> They can be read as both signifiers and metaphors: the same image (such as the much-critiqued 'starving baby' image still featured in emergency appeals) can faithfully represent a shared value such as the principle of humanity whilst problematically representing one part of the world as infantile, helpless, inferior.
> (Manzo, 2008: p.652)

Central to the discussion of the child image is a reference to the Christian icon of Madonna and child as traced through a Western history of pictorial representation. *Guardian* writer Joseph Harker explains that "the way the media works is it likes the idea of women and children as victims" (interview with Harker, 2005). Dorothea Lange's Migrant Mother is today hailed as one of the most expressive pictures in the history of photography (Beaven, 1994). This famed image of the American depression shot, while returning home from an assignment in 1936 for the Farm Security Administration, depicts Florence Thompson, a pea picker in Nipomo, California, clutching a baby with two other children's heads buried behind their mother's uneasy gaze. The image quickly came to symbolise the farmers' fight for survival (Write, 2002: p.58). However, the circumstances of the picture's production demonstrate an uneasy manipulation of the event. Lange describes her process of photojournalistic enquiry:

> I saw and approached the hungry and desperate mother, as if drawn by a magnet. I do not remember how I explained my presence or my camera to her, but I do

remember she asked me no questions. I made five exposures, working closer and closer from the same direction. I did not ask her name or history…I knew I had recorded the essence of my assignment.

(Lange, 1960: pp.42-43)

Fig. 2.10

Fig. 2.11

Fig: 2.12

Fig: 2.13

Fig: 2.14

Fig: 2.15

Figs 2.10-2.15 Lange's original sequence of photographs, Library of Congress, Wahington DC. Images: Dorothea Lange.

Lange's statement, the contact sheet, and choice of Figure 2.15, shows the photographer stopping at the point she knew she had captured an image that would create the necessary emotional response in her audiences. 'Images such as these have become long-standing cultural icons that can automatically elicit the appropriate emotional response' (Wright, 2002: p.59). However, the contact sheet also shows Lange manipulating the scene, moving the elder sister out of the tent then discarding her for a tighter crop of the mother alone with the youngest children. Lange's remit from the FSA was to produce government propaganda and not to provide object historical factual

representations. Lange had been a successful society portrait photographer in the 1920s and was chosen for the assignment with the FSA because of her ability to invest 'the down and outs with the same dignity as the high and mighty. She managed to both humanise and dramatise the effects of the depression' (Beaven, 1994). Lange used her skills as a portrait photographer to create the image and all unnecessary information that threatens to obscure the message are edited out.

Lange's subject did not share the same sense of accomplishment. Florence Thompson, who was 32 years-old when Lange photographed her, had migrated from Oklahoma to California in the 1920s and had been moving ever since. Thompson's daughter Catherine, who appears on the right of the picture, explains:

> Mother tried to have it stopped but they said she couldn't because it was public domain…she was a little resentful that these people were taking this picture of her and everyone was using it but it wasn't benefiting her at all.
>
> (Beaven, 1994)

Lange took the image first to the *San Francisco News* who published it the day after the main story was printed (Hariman & Lucaites, 2008) and from there it was quickly established as the classic image of the depression (Beaven, 1994). This offshoot of a sacred icon became a secular icon (Goldberg, 1991), a representation of endurance in the face of destitution. Hariman and Lucaites (2008) note:

> Rather than merely another instance of reproduction, it is more accurate to see the Lange image as a transitional moment in public art. The "Migrant Mother" provides two parallel transcriptions of the Madonna and Child: the image moves from painting to photography, and the Mother of Christ becomes an anonymous woman of the working class. These shifts demonstrate how iconic appeal can be carried over from religious art to increasingly secular, bourgeois representation, and from fine arts institutions to public media.

When comparing Lange's picture with a similar image from Somalia, Moeller argues that 'we react with greater emotion to the photograph of the African child' (1999: p.39). This she attributes to the fact that audiences believe the American child will survive whereas the African may not. Wright points out (2002) that Moeller's observation is based on the fact both are breast feeding which he notes is not actually the case. Lange had photographed Thompson breast feeding (Fig 2.10) but chose to use a later frame taken while the baby was sleeping. The observation however is relevant to audience visualisations of the events surrounding the picture. Although (we presume, as Moeller only describes the Somali image) there are no clear indications in either picture as to the fate of the child, Moeller is arguing that American audiences cannot imagine that an American child could be harmed by poverty whereas 'the African infant, it seems, cannot possibly survive; and even if it does survive, the ravages of famine will have seriously compromised not just the health but the developing brain of the child' (Moeller, 1999: p.39). This conclusion comes from both the siting of the image in news publications with text outlining death tolls and harsh warnings for the future, and from dominant public imagined geographies of place. The iconic repeated image of Madonna and child therefore has variants in emotional response directly related to both the siting of the image and audiences' pre-conceived imaginations of the place in which the image is captured.

Summary

This section has outlined key factors in the ongoing debate of the photojournalist's compositional selection, in particular the choice and consequence of a particular composition. Basic journalism ethics dictate a need for impartiality and factual reporting, though the reality for the photographer is very different. Caught between a need to portray an objective image of what is before them, and the commercial concerns of publications

and galleries that value artistic interpretation, a photojournalist must make format and compositional choices that impact on audiences imagined geographies of the photographs setting. Through this debate, the section has highlighted two different photojournalistic compositional strategies and discussed the photographer's truth claims.

Through the analysis of Dorothea Lange's *Migrant Mother* image and in reference to the work discussed earlier in the section, an additional dimension has been highlighted - the image's ability to foster action from the readers. A photojournalist's remit is usually to report, not to change. If audiences are impelled to action, this must be considered a by-product of the work, not an inherent requirement of it.

Through the analysis of Dorothea Lange's *Migrant Mother* image, and in reference to the work discussed earlier in the section, an additional dimension has been highlighted. This is the image's ability to foster action from the readers. In contrast, NGO communication positively pushes their audiences to action; it is the main motivation for embedding/facilitating photographers. In its simplest form, the 'action' image draws compositional references from popular art while, at the same time, appealing to audiences' maternal instincts to interfere with the pictured situation. Drawing from religious iconography, the need for spiritual salvation is replaced for a need for physical salvation and the saviour can now be the viewer. The process, this section has argued, typically relies on the mother and child picture generating a simple message with little context.

Claire Short, the British Secretary for International Development in April 1998, criticised UK international NGOs, arguing that the use of such image constructions is counter-productive and leads to compassion fatigue. Short went further by calling on the NGOs involved in famine alleviation to concentrate solely on 'positive advertising' (speaking at a seminar on disasters, April 1998) as, in her opinion, the UK donor public were giving up hope in Africa. The attack was regarded by the media as interference. Moreover, it appears to have been proved conclusively wrong by the continued success of NGO advertising departments in extracting public donations during disaster relief appeals by relying on the mother and child image (interview with Conlin, 2005). The uneasy relationship of NGO educationalists that champion ethical image guidelines and NGO fundraising and media departments who rely on stark representations of need will be discussed in Chapter 4 and the Conclusion.

3. THE GREAT MISMATCH: PHOTOGRAPHY, REWARD AND RESPONSIBILITY

In interviews, Sebastião Salgado (1998), James Nachtwey (2007), Jan Grarup (2005) and Tom Stoddart (2005) have all claimed they wished they were doctors rather than photographers. This is a common response by humanitarian photographers when asked about their perceived role in averting and dealing with the situations they witness. It also demonstrates insecurity in dealing with what is, for the most part, an unquantifiable humanitarian response. A doctor can heal and see the process before his eyes. A photographer's work is much more subtle, pushing for political and financial intervention to undisclosed audiences. It is also contentious in the eyes of those audiences. A common response to a graphic picture of individual violence or stark need is not only to condemn the perpetrator but also to ask what the photographer, who was clearly present, did to avert or deal with the problem. Hall (1980: p.131) articulates the difference between the cameraman, who films the dog and can be bitten by the dog, and the audiences, who see the dog but are safe from its danger. In the same way, the photographer, who is present at the scene of injustice, has the opportunity to intervene in a way the viewer, who witnesses the injustice through the image, cannot. In the first section of this chapter, using the example of Stoddart's picture (Fig 2.1) of a 'rich man' stealing rice from a boy, the argument was made that the lack of a conclusion to the narrative gave the image impact.

This section will discuss the repercussions of that impact to the photographer in terms of long and short-term consequences.

This section critically analyses the role and perceived responsibility of the humanitarian photographer. The purpose of this discussion is to demonstrate a mismatch between the photographer's stated aims and the actual long-term results of his work. In Chapter 1, dominant negative UK imagined geographies of Africa were examined in terms of their existence (section one), their historical connection (section two) and their impact on the communities imaged (section three). Sections one and two of this chapter have dealt with the siting and use of the single image as a means to persuade audiences of a photographer's truth claim. This section brings together all these arguments to contend that the majority of humanistic photographers are focused on aesthetics and short-term quantifiable goals rather than the potential long-term damage to the imagined geographies of the places they depict. This, the section will argue, is in conflict with their stated aims and objectives. In order to demonstrate this, the section will deconstruct examples of photographic projects that have led to quantifiable social action using a business model developed by David Graham, director of UK NGO, Changing Ideas. Graham, a retired London businessman with an interest in photography, became disillusioned with contemporary photojournalists who he charges 'were frequently unable to successfully realise their humanitarian projects because they lacked essential business skills and other resources' (Graham, 2008). The NGO he runs, which works with contemporary photojournalists and develops partner projects with other UK based NGOs, is not concerned with the aesthetic but rather concentrates exclusively on realistic humanistic outcomes. Through this process the section will also critically discuss the mismatch between the photographer's stated aims in pursuing such projects and the industry's acknowledgment of success, which is predominantly based on artistic merit. In the final discussion, the section will use a case study of Kevin Carter's famous 1992 'child and vulture' picture from Sudan to evaluate the ethical dilemma of the humanitarian photographer's responsibility.

Photographer as Agent of Change

In interviews with NGO workers (interviews with Bermejo, 2003; Bloemen, 2003; Pietzsch, 2005; Kabaluapa, 2005) the work of photographers in dealing with issues of food security was described using the concept of a 'team player'. The photographer was seen as undertaking a role that needed to be done as part of a larger logistical response. Their job was simply to raise awareness of the issues in key funding and political communities in order to realise financial goals and, in some cases, create political dialogue. NGOs facilitated photographers working for, or with close connections to, key media outlets in the countries they sought to influence, and were brought in when there was "visual proof" (interview with Pietzsch, 2005) a disaster was underway. However, there are examples of photographers working independently, whose published images raise a public response that the photographer feels committed to engage with. Without the support of an NGO, such appeals rarely have goals beyond an immediate response and little is known of the long-term effect of any action instigated as a result of the response.

Fig 2.16 Flavio da Silva after asthma attack. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Image: Gordon Parks.

Fig 2.17 Cover of *Life*, 21 July 1961. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Image: Gordon Parks.

Jay Prosser (2005) discusses the case of Gordon Parks' pictures for *Life* magazine (published 16 June 1961) of Flavio da Silva, a 12 year-old boy from the slums of Rio de Janeiro as an example of one such response. In 1961, Parks was on assignment for *Life* magazine working on a story about poverty in Latin America. In the Catacumba favela he came across the da Silva family, who he spent three weeks photographing. His story hinged around the eldest son, Flavio, who was charged with looking after his seven younger siblings while his parents went out to work. During Parks' stay Flavio was diagnosed with tuberculosis and given a short time to live.

The publication of Parks' images brought about an immediate response from *Life* readers leading to a fund of $30,000 and his acceptance at the Children's Asthma Research Institute and hospital in Denver, Colorado, for two years of treatment without charge (Parks, 1997: p.221). In the context of the Cold War and the threat of South American communism, Parks' images struck a chord with an American agenda to provide aid to the poor in Latin America. Sontag acknowledges this to be a normal process of the influence of pictures. 'What determines the possibility of being affected morally by photographs is the existence of a relevant political consciousness' (Sontag, 1977: p.19). Parks returned to the favela with writer Jose Gallo who broke the news of Flavio's apparent salvation to the da Silva family. 'Flavio's going to America where he will be made well again. The rest of you will have a new home in Guadalupe with new furniture, good food, and new clothes for everybody' (Parks, 2005: p.200).

After two years Flavio returned to Rio, first to a half-way house boarding school and then, after he was expelled, back to the favela. He went on to have a publicised argument with his father, who had let the new house degrade to shambles (Prosser, 2005: p.110), at which point the *Life* magazine rescue story was called into question. Parks, who kept in touch with Flavio, returned in 1977 to find the life of his family unchanged. "The mother ends up back washing clothes, the father loses his trucking business, and Flavio feels like they are back in the favela again: Fifteen years of failure showed there beneath a dripping wash. The throwback to a state so close to their former one was hard to accept'' (Parks in Prosser, 2005: p.110).

Parks kept a key interest in Flavio and continued to keep up with the story. The impact of his photograph was one that never left him:

When Parks first takes his camera to the slum, the favelados (favela inhabitants) seek to dodge his lens. His informant tells him that they believe the camera is 'an evil eye that brings bad luck', and in Flavio Parks, reveals how in the destructive potential of his 'choice of weapon,' it does. Flavio as symbol or sign does not get a better life. As foster mother Kathy Goncalves says, 'he couldn't even realize what he was meant to symbolize.' The most remarkably interventionist effect of Parks's photographic witnessing is that Flavio is removed from his family and sent to a Denver institute and home for two years. While this might clinically save his life, it also steals his cultural life, and the sacrifice of the son takes on other, irremediable dimensions.

(Proser, 2005: p.111)

In 1998, the *Guardian* returned to the Flavio story to find the situation had deteriorated further. They find him divorced, without work, and living in the remnants of the house the *Life* readers had bought him. The article adds, 'Far from being a symbol of how to help the third world, Flavio is perhaps a better example of the difficulties - some may say irresponsibility - of spontaneous acts of charity (Alex Bellos in Prosser, 2005: p.111).

This example demonstrates a dual response to a powerful humanitarian photograph which was not managed by an NGO and that reaped a large donation from the viewers. In this rare case, the photographer has access to information on both short and long-term outcomes and is able to witness a juxtaposed effect: The short-term response by American audiences, who create a substantial fund to both cure Flavio and provide for his future; and the long-term actuality of his failure to capitalise on the opportunity. Few photographers have the will or the resources to follow up people that feature in their stories, unless the story has extraordinary impact. For Parks, the process was one that became deeply disturbing as it undermined his motivations for practicing his trade.

This example questions a photographer's claim that his presence is justified by the donations raised as a result of his work. Tom Stoddart recalls the response to his photo essay from Sudan in 1998:

When the pictures did go into the *Guardian*, the *Guardian* readers immediately dug deep into their pockets to donate to MSF. This is very satisfying for a photographer when that happens because when you are leaning over someone in a famine or a war situation you have to know you have a right to be there and that you are not taking valuable space away from aid workers or doctors.

(Stoddart, 2005)

While the figures seem to prove the power of the images to engage the audiences, a financial response - as Parks found - does not always lead to a bettering of the lives of the people and communities imaged in the long-term. What is lacking in most photographers' approach to humanitarian reportage is a long-term calculation of how their pictures can lead to the changes they desire as a result of audiences' donations. Part of this confusion comes from the industry itself that fails to recognise calculable social change as a determining factor in the process of judging awards. The myriad of photojournalism competitions, awards, grants, and boutique publications are predominantly judged on strength of story and visual aesthetics rather than achieved humanitarian goals (with the exception of Changing Lives). The Luis Valtuena International Humanitarian Photography Award, run by Medecins du Monde, asks competitors to 'capture the essence of humanitarian and solidarity values and actions in scenes that they have witnessed first-hand during the previous 12 months' (Medecins du Monde, 2008), the Care International Humanitarian Photographic Award is given to projects with 'humanitarian values at the very heart' (Care, 2008); and the Prix De La Photographie, Paris, Human Condition Award 'seeks to document the state and condition of human societies across the planet, as they exist today' (PX3, 2008). None of them mention humanitarian outcomes in their criteria for winning the award. Graham's desire to re-concentrate humanistic photography

on outcome rather than intent comes from a business perspective where profit or share price is the ultimate bottom line, not the creativity or process that got you there. In the case of negative imagined geographies, few photojournalists consider the long-term impact of their work on the communities they photograph (examples of which are outlined in the last section of Chapter 1).

The Photographer's Dilemma

If the goal of imaging is to create a response, the Parks case demonstrates the complex choices photographers must make when deciding to highlight social need through photography. The emotions the photographer must face when on the ground, confronted by the need before them, further complicates the process. Magnum founder Robert Capa reminds all working photojournalists, that "if your photographs aren't good enough, you're not close enough"(Capa, 2008), pushing the photographer to get near to his subject. Taking the example of Kevin Carter's well known picture from Sudan (Fig 2.18), this chapter finishes with a discussion of the photographer's experience in dealing with imaging African disaster, both at the time of image capture and, later, when dealing with audience responses. This experience is critical to an understanding of the choices photographers make and, in turn, how those choices impact on the composition of the images they create.

On 23 May 1994, Kevin Carter received the Pulitzer Prize for feature photography for an image he had captured 14 months earlier in Ayod, Sudan. The image of a weak, emaciated young girl squatting on the ground and threatened by a vulture in the background had by then 'became part of the global humanitarian effort to prevent apathy' (Moeller, 1999: p.39). Published worldwide and hotly debated, the picture's controversy stemmed not only from the inhuman conditions that persisted in war torn Sudan but also from the photographer's reaction when questioned about his actions after he had taken the picture. First published in the *New York Times* (26 March 1993), and lacking an accompanying textual conclusion to the narrative, readers demanded to know what had happened to the child. Extraordinarily, an editor's note was published on 30 March 1993:

> A picture last Friday with an article about the Sudanese girl who had collapsed from hunger on the trail to a feeding center in Ayod. A vulture lurked behind her. Many readers have asked about the fate of the girl. The photographer reports that she recovered enough to resume her trek after the vulture was chased away. It is not known whether she reached the center.
>
> (NYT, 30 March 1993)

An account by fellow photographer and friend Joao Silva (Marinovich & Silva, 2000), who was present with him in Ayod, is more ambiguous. Joao and Carter had been trying without luck for some time to get into Sudan to photograph the war and famine. Hitching a ride on a UN plane, they were given just a few hours to shoot pictures before being flown back out. In the mad scramble for images that followed, both photographers scoured the relief camp for hard-hitting pictures. Carter found the girl in the picture during this search and, as he began to photograph, the vulture landed behind her:

> I recognised what I saw as a very powerful set of symbols and I wanted to be sure I had the shot…it maybe difficult for people to understand but as a photojournalist my first instinct was to make the photograph. As soon as that job was done and the child moved on I felt completely devastated.
>
> (Carter in Krauss, 2005)

Silva by contrast reports Carter to have been both saddened by the encounter and ecstatic in his realisation of the power of the picture. In his own account (Marinovich & Silva, 2000), Carter scares the vulture away but it is not clear whether this was to stop his fellow photographer (with whom he was also competing) repeating the image or to save the child becoming carrion. Observers have since noted, though never proved, that her

guardian had likely left the child in order to collect food from the relief plane. Carter had never considered collecting information on the outcome of the child and later backtracked on his initial admission of ignorance on the fate of the child, claiming the child had in fact reached the centre.

The ethical debate that followed has been widely attributed as the cause of Carter's suicide two months after he received the Pulitzer Prize. His ex-girlfriend, Julia Lloyd, explains, "He got blamed and it really affected him. He wept over comments, he was shattered" (quoted in Krauss, 2005). Photojournalist Paul Velasco says:

> A lot of people were not seeing this great image as great, they were seeing it as a Kevin failure to save the kid and that pissed me off a hell of a lot. If that picture hadn't played most people wouldn't know how to spell Sudan. It became the catalyst for incredible awareness for change.
>
> (Quoted in Krauss, 2005)

However Carter's inability to come to terms with not having picked the child up was only one of a number of factors that may have led to his death. He had a history of attempting suicide that went back to before 1993 and his suicide note does not mention the vulture picture specifically but rather includes it loosely in a reference to a career of photographing news in southern Africa. 'I am haunted by the vivid memories of killings and corpses and anger and pain…and I am haunted by the loss of my friend Ken' (Marinovich & Silva, 2000: p.247). The determining factor seems likely to have been the death of his closest friend and fellow photographer Ken Oosterbrook, who died on an assignment Carter that would have also been present at had he not been doing a TV interview about his Pulitzer.

Carter's case is important when considering photography and UK geographic visualisations of the Majority World as it brings with it an additional dimension of public gazes. Photographers strongly deny the need to physically get involved in the relief of the situations they depict, rather seeing their role as one of merely recording and reporting. At the one-day symposium *So You Want to Change the World with Photography*, Manchester, February 2003, Stoddart rebuffed critics who suggest he should interfere when confronted with injustice. 'Don't shoot the messenger', was his simple response. Like Stoddart's picture from Sudan (Fig 2.1), the narrative of the girl's fate in Carter's image is incomplete and this frustrates the audiences' gaze across the page as they seek answers. Unlike video reports that are structured as narrative and finish with a conclusion, the formulation of which necessarily pushes the videographer to follow the story, Carter's picture leaves the question open. Accordingly, audiences respond by demanding to know what the photographer's action was. In the process of researching this thesis, many of the humanitarian photographers interviewed discussed the fact that the situation on the ground was often very different to that imagined by their audiences (Stoddart, 2005; Grarup ,2005; Alam, 2005; Datta, 2005).

Fig 2.18 p.A3 *New York Times*, 26 March 1993.

Spanish photographer Pep Bonet describes his experience in Darfur:

> I have been photographing children dying of malnutrition, of several diseases, I take the picture but I cannot do much more. There are plenty of doctors trying to help those kids and at a point you cannot do much more. You have already done a lot by just going there and trying to tell their story.

(interview with Bonet, 2005)

Here, Bonet indirectly admits to giving a limited representation of what he is confronted with. Silva's description of searching the camp in Ayod for the strongest images demonstrates the process of journalistic enquiry. Had Carter included the relief station (which he later claimed was close to the child) in the frame he would have avoided the criticism but most likely found the image lost its impact. Selective editing by the photographers on the ground - omitting relief workers and food aid, and concentrating on decontextualised close-ups of the worst cases - gives the impression the photographer and victim are isolated and, coupled with a missing narrative resolution, leads to a

questioning of the photographer's action. This weakens the strength of the image to create change as the audiences' anger is deflected from the issue onto the photographer's motives and action. In the multiple texts and films accessed to write about Carter's vulture image there is little discussion of audiences' response to the crisis or the outcome of the girl's predicament. Rather they concentrate on the actions of Carter. This is a part reversal of the situation that Ritchin comments on in Salgado's work, 'An unfortunate tendency to elevate the messenger while denying the message' (Ritchin in Salgado, 2004: p.149).

Summary

The examples of Parks, Stoddart, and Carter all demonstrate the power of the still image to create a social reaction in viewing audiences. In all three cases they prompted the viewing public to donate funds to change the situation depicted. This simple but quantifiable reaction most frequently acts as the photographer's articulated justification for creating the pictures, a justification that is not supported by a photojournalism industry that rewards the success of the aesthetic rather than the humanitarian response. The long-term effect on distant understandings of place and the potential of these negative imagined geographies to undermine a community's ability to develop is rarely part of a photographer's thought process.

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the two key factors that influence the creation of humanitarian photography from the Majority World - the siting of the image and photographic enquiry - and, in turn, provided an analysis of how these processes impact on visualisations of place. The first section considered the place of the single image in a broader media landscape, in particular its relationship to video. It argued that while video is a better means of contextualising a subject, a single picture is stronger in its ability to create an emotional response through aesthetics and inconclusive narrative. The section also considered the changes in understanding that occur when an image is moved out of the publication and into a gallery space. Here the section argued that, through their greater focus on the aesthetic, gallery space audiences found more time to contemplate a picture, but believed in its truth less.

In the second section, the aestheticisation of poverty was discussed both as a product of the changes in the news industry and the ability of the image to convince audiences of truth. By comparing two very stylistically different photographers, the section has argued that a decontexualised aestheticisation of the Majority World often fits better with contemporary sales-based Minority World news agendas and therefore is more often published.

The final section has discussed the photographer's motivations and potential rewards, arguing a mismatch between the photographer's stated goals and those achieved and rewarded in the industry. The section argues that aesthetics is the driving force behind most photographers' work, rather than humanitarian targets which are difficult to quantify and lie outside the industry's aims and objectives. A concentration on aesthetics in turn leads to a dismissal of the underlying issue of the creation of imagined geographies and their power to influence distance audiences (discussed in Chapter 1).

CHAPTER 3
DIGITISED IMAGE MARKETS AND THE POLITICS OF PLACE

The total global image market is estimated to be worth $6.5 Billion (Rubython, 2002), but, due to its fractured nature, no one really knows the exact figure. Around 60% of the market is in direct commissions to photographers and the rest is in sale of 'off the shelf' images (Cane, 2002). During the past 10 years the market has been revolutionised by new technologies. Linda Royles, managing director of the British Association of Picture Libraries and Agencies, states "there is a phenomenal change going on in the market at the moment. I really think people will look back at this period in the same way people now look at the changes from agricultural to industrial" (interview with Royles, 2003). According to Stephen Mayes (2006), 'so fast has been the phenomenal change that we don't yet have the systems in place to control the digital revolution. We are clinging to old rules in the hope that they will support us in the new world. But they don't fit. Put simply, we live in confused times'.

It was not the technology behind the revolution (image digitisation) that forced the sudden change but the means of distribution (the internet). In theory, this should have led to nothing more than a simple modification of the industry but the news publications and agencies were slow to react, leaving space for more technologically-minded investors to move in and perform the transformation. Businessmen, seeking a return on their investment, have replaced photo enthusiasts and ex-photographers who used to run the agencies. This chapter argues that this change in managerial motivation has led to a fundamental difference in the way many audiences of Minority World news publications negotiate the geopolitical landscape of the Majority World. It also argues that many audiences know little of this, nor have much interest in the subject. However, among news image consumers, the contextual imaginations of distant places are subtlety changing.

For the purpose of this argument the chapter will consider photographic representations of the Majority World offered to UK audiences. This presumes the majority of audiences have not visited the places which are being represented, and therefore are contextualising the images outside their own personal experience. In relation to other visual media, in particular television, it is difficult to quantify the extent of influence on the conscious and subconscious geographical imaginations. This is not a subject this thesis seeks to quantify (though it has been discussed in the previous chapter) and therefore this chapter will concentrate on the changes to the industry, the ways in which this has impacted on image compositions and editors' choices, and the resulting understandings of the communities imaged. Through this discussion the chapter seeks to consider three key questions: what is the influence of the contemporary image economy on photographic visualisations of the Majority World; how do these structural changes affect perceptions of place; and is the photographer's national identity a factor in their visual representation of community?

The chapter starts by describing the new global image economy in relation to the market in the early 1990s, the market as it exists now, and the predicted market of the future. Through this description an analysis of the key changes will be made, which will form the main subject of the continuing discussion. The second section critically analyses the photographers' compositional and subject choices in relation to context, power, and style, outlining a major priority shift in the past decade. The second section also questions both the influence of the market and influence of indigenous culture on image composition and the resulting visualisation of place by distant audiences. The third section outlines a process of communication between the photographer and their audiences in what is termed 'chains of understanding'. Revisiting Stuart Hall's (1980) argument on encoding

and decoding, the section questions the changes that have taken place in both processes as a result of a modified image economy. In the final section the chapter uses case studies in Bangladesh and Ethiopia to demonstrate the growth of Majority World indigenous photography as a result of the market change and considers this growth in relation to theories of digital colonialism and fairly traded photography.

1. A NEW GLOBAL IMAGE ECONOMY

This section describes the market in the early 1990s and compares it to that of the current market (highlighting the changes that have taken place) and the predicted future market. It will also discuss the implications of these changes to photographers and the markets in which they operate. At the end of the section, video grabbing will be postulated as the future of photojournalism and the conclusion drawn that the market is midway through a transition that will fundamentally change the way news photography is sourced. A consideration of how this is affecting public understandings of distant places, discussed in the following sections, is therefore timely and important to the future development of photojournalism.

The Early 1990s

This section refers only to pictures that were freely available for purchase by any publication worldwide, and excludes all directly commissioned photographs that are shot exclusively for a single use. In this portion of the industry, there were three dominant sources of photography in the early 1990s - news wire services, feature news picture agencies, and stock picture libraries.

Named after the wire along which Morse code news was originally sent, the wire services first introduced pictures in 1927 but these were not sent electronically until 1935 (AP, 2007). There are three dominant international news wire agencies. Reuters, established in 1851 and based in London, currently has 194 bureaux serving 94 countries and also provides financial information and technology solutions (Reuters, 2007). Associated Press (AP), established in 1848, has 240 bureaux worldwide and serves a predominantly US market (AP has 1,700 subscription publications in the USA alone (AP, 2007)). Agencé France Presse (AFP), established in 1835 and based in Paris, has 117 bureaux worldwide serving 165 countries (AFP, 2007). During the early nineties photographers working for wire services would scan images at the local bureau and send them to the main office from where they were distributed electronically to the publications which subscribed to the service. Each image would take around 40 minutes to send and therefore normally only one image would be sent per story. Primarily newspapers and weekly news magazines used the images though as there was little choice due to the small number of pictures the system could cope with in a day. Publications would prefer to use staff or directly commissioned freelancers where possible to avoid replicating rival publications (the author worked for short periods as a photographer for all three agencies between 1989 and 1991 and this statement is based on that experience, information online (AP, 2007) and an interview with Paul Lowe (interview with Lowe, 2003)). Wire services had been using local photographers since the early 1980s and did provide basic training (interview with Rahman, 2003). However, they were normally employed as stringers (non-contract photographers) and only in places where local bureaux existed (interview with Halawani, 2003).

Feature news picture agencies were staffed predominantly by Minority World freelance photographers, who followed world news and submitted picture stories to agencies that sold the images on commission to weekly/monthly current affairs magazines. Photographers would shoot for the most part with colour slide film and courier the processed slides to the main office. Agencies such as Sigma, Magnum, Network, and Black Star are good examples.

Stock Picture Libraries collected freelance and travelling photographers' images to be sold on a 50% commission basis by a photographic library that stored their slides and prints in filing cabinets. The libraries were extremely labour intensive as picture researchers would trawl through thousands of images until they found a selection meeting the client's needs. They would then send those images by post to the client in the hope there was a sale. The process would start again when the images were returned (interview with Royles, 2003). The success of stock picture libraries relied on their physical proximity to the publications that would use them.

In 1994 Peter Fenton, in association with the Drik picture library in Bangladesh, conducted a survey of indigenous photographers working in the Majority World. His findings demonstrated that competent photographers did exist in the bulk of the countries surveyed but few were selling their images internationally. 'Due to power structures that exist in the world today, the large majority of images of the South that we see, are taken and produced by photographers from the North' (Fenton, 1995). Adrian Evans, Director of Panos Pictures, London, says that the flow of photography came from Europe and the USA. Both print publications and NGOs commissioned photographers to travel overseas, to complete a number of assignments on location, before returning with their film (interview with Evans, 2003).

In summary, the early 1990s picture economy was firmly centred on major European and American cities. The only Majority World photographers who were able to participate in this flow of information were local wire photographers normally based in the capital cities of their respective countries. However, their input was severely hampered by the fact they worked without contracts, under the supervision of Minority World staff, and in a sector that relied on highly specialist distribution technology that was owned and controlled by Minority World agencies.

New Technologies, Gates and Getty

With the emergence of cheap film scanners in the mid 1990s and then digital photography in the late 1990s the wire agencies began changing their working methodologies. Photographers now carry laptop computers and send images from the field with mobile and satellite connections removing the need to return to their bureau to file. Images are being sent faster and from more remote areas but, in turn, this has led to an expectation that the wire services should be able to respond to news quicker and with more images. Agencies have since built vast networks of local stringers in the Majority World to ensure they can get images quickly from every region of the world. Reuters for example has more than 300 Chinese stringers across China.

Indian photographer Pablo Bartholomew argues that the most talented local photographers have gone to work for the wires because they offer an opportunity for international exposure and reasonable financial rewards (interview with Bartholomew, 2003), a statement reiterated by photo editor, writer, and academic Colin Jacobson (interview with Jacobson, 2003). However, the wires "teach fast-food photography" and give no formal training, Bartholomew argues. Here Bartholomew is referring to a style of photography that has no contextual or historical depth in relation to the wider profession of photojournalism, but rather just teaches a simplistic methodology based on the wire service needs. Without a visual contextual background in which to develop his own style, the photographer becomes a mechanism of the wire service which is not able to harness any local cultural contribution. Indigenous Majority World photographers have no opportunity to express their culture but rather create products based on a Minority World perspective. This argument was repeated in interviews with Chad Touré and Rula Halawani (Bartholomew, 2003; Halawani 2003; Touré 2003) and will be returned to throughout the rest of this thesis. Photographer Paul Lowe comments that wire photographers rarely progress to work on features because they become accustomed to working on single images. "You get your expenses paid, all the latest gear, and a front

seat at every major news story. On the other hand, you don't own your own copyright and you go where they tell you" (interview with Lowe, 2003).

Pat Rogue, a Philippine Associated Press (AP) photographer based in Manila who has been working for the wire services since 1989 (initially as a stringer and later as a staff photographer), explained the AP method of working at a presentation to the World Press Photo seminar class at Ateneo University in Manila (July 2007):

> We are required to be always ready as when a news story breaks we must be there first. Speed is very important to meet international deadlines, so we shoot, file, shoot, file…These days we try to shoot much tighter than before. We still look for a wide, medium, and tight shot but they are more likely to move the tight shot on the main subject…We are looking for stories that have an international significance although many of the local papers subscribe to our wire. The pictures are sent from the field to our office in Manila who then send to Tokyo, the regional office. Tokyo makes the decision of which countries to move the pictures depending on the story.
>
> (Rogue, 2007)

Here Rogue explains a system of sending pictures that is based on speed, that is focused on one detail rather than a wide area, and that is simplistic in that it can be understood by world audiences rather than local audiences. Similar systems exist at the other wire services that stream images to subscribers' computers. The whole process takes a matter of minutes from the image being shot to it arriving on a picture editor's computer. Given that the images are likely to be coming from the picture agencies and the editor can see all the photographs being filed on his screen, competition to be the first, and to provide the most emotive and dramatic pictures, is fierce between the agency photographers. These are not always the most accurate images. Nik Gowing explains the mechanics:

> The pressure of real time means we're all fighting for the high ground on what I've called 'the information edge'. It's about being heard, watched and noticed. Hesitate or prevaricate and you lose the initiative. In this rush to seize the high ground and with it a hope for influence, many in this zone of complex emergencies have simply not embraced the virulent, potent, destabilising nature of often poorly handled information. Much of the handling is frankly too inaccurate and more imbalanced than the handler believes. In the rush for this information edge the temptation is to speculate, to exaggerate, and therefore not to get things as right as the new technology implies we do.
>
> (Gowing, 1998)

On occasion the wire service will hold a picture for a few hours if they have an image they don't want their competition to replicate. Waiting until the event is over or it turns dark will ensure a rival agency does not instruct their photographer on the ground to get a similar picture. The process is immensely competitive. Rogue also refers to a crucial decision that is made in the regional offices as to what news story is important to which country. So the feed to an American picture editor will be very different to the feed a Thailand picture editor, though they come from the same wire service.

The feature and stock picture markets have also undergone a transformation. At the beginning of May 2003, JP Morgan reported that Getty Images, a new agency set up in 1993 (which started trading in 1995) by Jonathan Klein and Mark Getty, grandson of the legendary oilman and businessman John Paul Getty, had sales of over half a billion US dollars and more than a 40% share in the stock image market. Its main competition was not other established photo agencies but another new image conglomerate, Corbis, set up in 1989 by Bill Gates and estimated to have a 10% share of the same market (JP Morgan, 2001). Both agencies had utilized large investment revenues to buy out existing market leaders and introduce new technologies to create what was until then an undefined market. Getty recalls, 'I was looking to find a business, which was fragmented

worldwide in its application and would be transformed by changes in technology' (Rubython, 2002; Cane, 2002).

Both agencies are based in Seattle, USA, but have a slightly different emphasis. The strength of Corbis is editorial whereas Getty has targeted the commercial and advertising markets (Rubython, 2002; Cane, 2002). The Managing Director of the British Association for Picture Libraries and Agencies (BAPLA), Linda Royles, argues that they have other motivations. "Getty wants to dominate the picture industry in the same way his father dominated oil and Gate's agenda is more about the penetration of technology into business" (interview with Royles, 2003). Neither Getty nor Gates claimed to have had an interest in photography before buying into the market.

Both agencies started the process of digitising photography and selling it cheaply online through searchable databases (Getty Images bought the company Photo Desk and made the existing interface their own). Customers are now able to log online, put in a keyword search, and then browse the pictures found. They are then able to purchase an image and download a high-resolution copy. Photographers can submit digital images to the libraries online which has led to both agencies competing directly with the wire agencies, selling both stock and 'up to the minute' images to illustrate newspapers and magazines articles. With shrinking newspaper picture budgets as a result of increased competition from the internet and 24-hour TV news, plus a general demand for more photographs, newspapers are now reportedly using stock images in far greater numbers to illustrate stories (Manuelli, 2003; Rubython, 2002; Cane, 2002). Colin Jacobson explains that many of the images "are ambiguous" and can therefore be used to illustrate numerous scenarios. They can be bought by publications for as little as $17 each and therefore are much cheaper than commissioning the work (interview with Jacobson, 2003).

Digital technology has blurred the lines between the three non-commissioned international picture markets described in the early 1990s, leaving five major players all competing in news, features, and stock. The feature news picture agencies and stock libraries that survived the Corbis/Getty buyouts and have not gone bankrupt as a result of the new competition have had to modernise and specialise quickly to survive, and most are also now competing in all three markets. Paul Lowe explains:

> Traditional picture agencies are also filing pictures daily now, so for example Magnum and VII are competing directly with the wire services as well as Corbis and Getty so there is no middle group doing both jobs, working as wire and magazine photographers simultaneously.
>
> (interview with Lowe, 2003)

When asked for images to illustrate international news stories, picture editors go to their computers, where pictures are automatically streamed from their subscription services, and begin a search. For major newspapers and news magazines this is likely to include the five major players listed above and possibly some additional smaller agencies with a speciality in that area. The images are always listed by date and time (Lightbox, 1998; John, 2003). Roger Tooth, picture editor at the *Guardian*, explains:

> We subscribe to all of the picture agencies at great expense so we have enough pictures to cope….We are criticised for not sending photographers enough but it is hugely expensive and it is hugely expensive to subscribe to all these agencies at the beginning of the year. What is left we have to divide and it is very difficult to identify why we go to the places we do.
>
> (interview with Tooth, 2005b)

Tooth receives around 7,000 pictures per day to his computer from the *Guardian*'s subscription services and claims to look at every image (interview with Tooth, 2005a). However, with such a vast number of images it is no longer possible for an editor to see each one individually so pages of thumbnails are scanned for significant images.
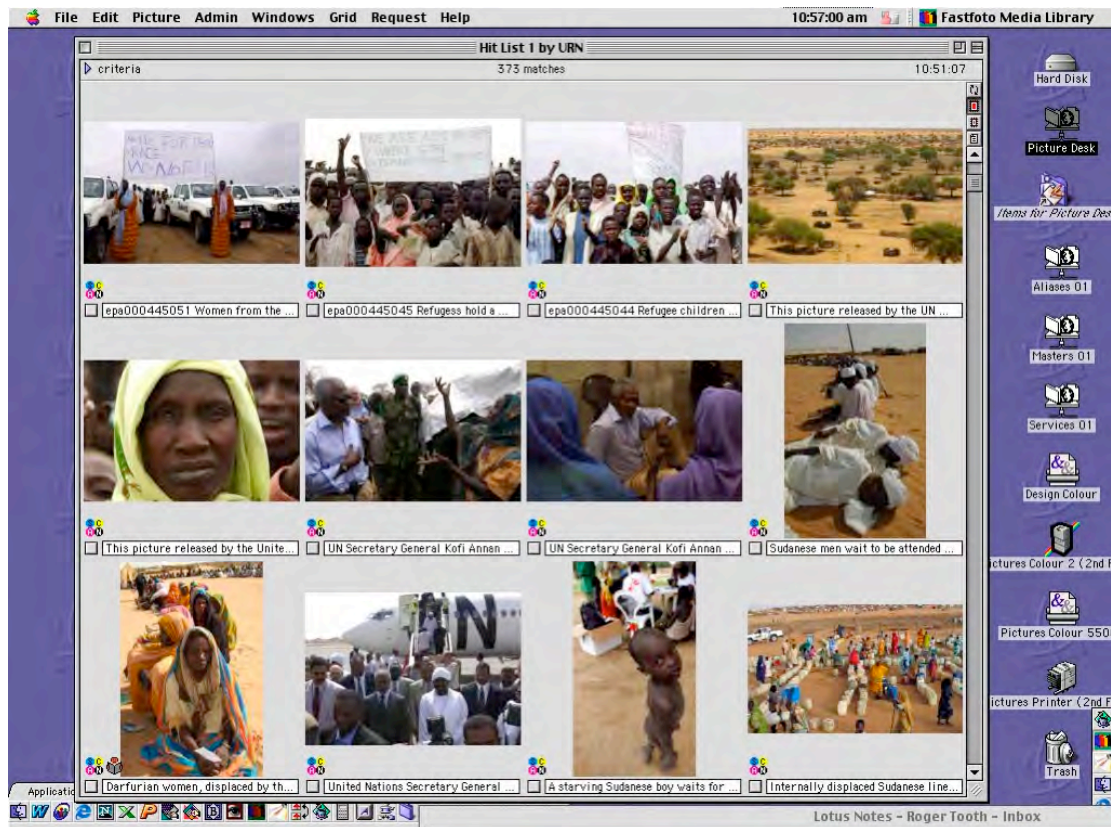
Fig 3.1 Screen capture from *Guardian* picture editor Roger Tooth showing a page of results after searching his subscription services using the keyword 'famine' on 7 July 2005. The search yielded 373 matches for that day, most from Niger where there was a current food shortage.

In order for an agency to ensure sales/use of pictures, the thumbnail must stand out. In the example above, a search for an image to illustrate a story on Niger yielded more than 30 pages of thumbnails, from which the editor must choose one in a relatively short time frame. Barbara Herrmann, Asian picture editor for *Stern* magazine, describes how she searches. "We receive about 10,000 pictures a day. I enter a keyword, scan the pages of thumbnails, and click on any image that jumps out to see the bigger picture" (interview with Herrmann, 2007).
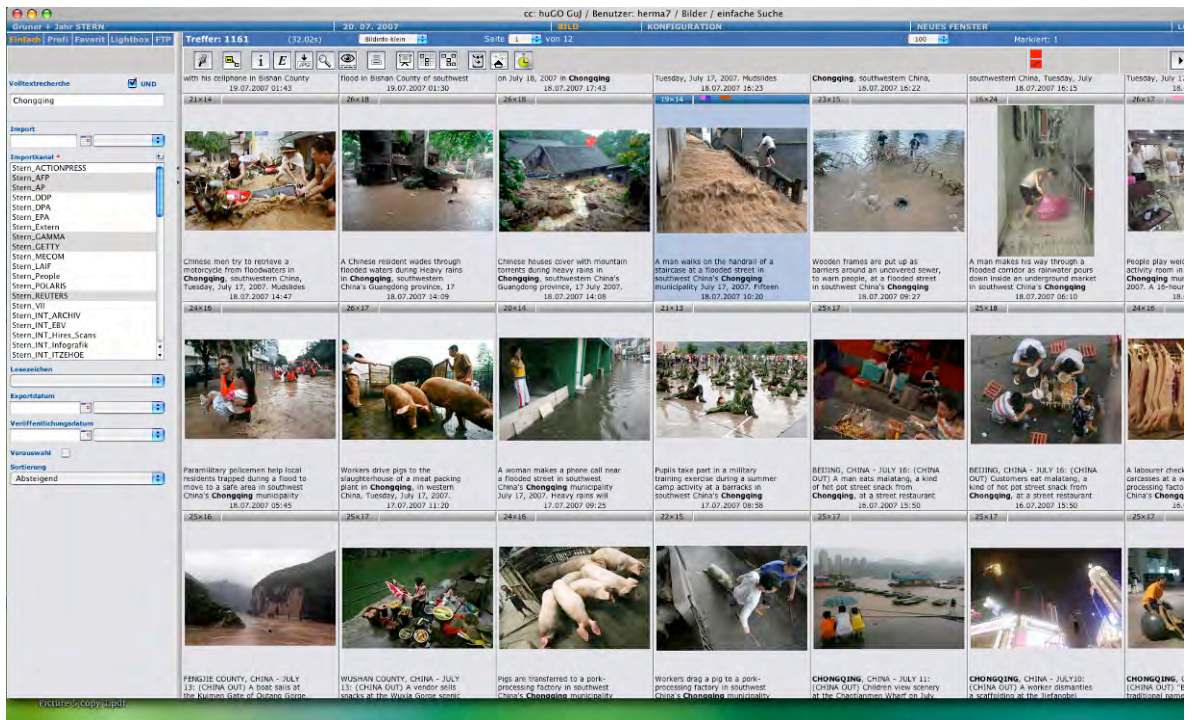
Fig 3.2 Screen grab from Barbara Herrmann's search for images of flooding in China, using the keyword 'Chongqing' flood 27 July 2007.
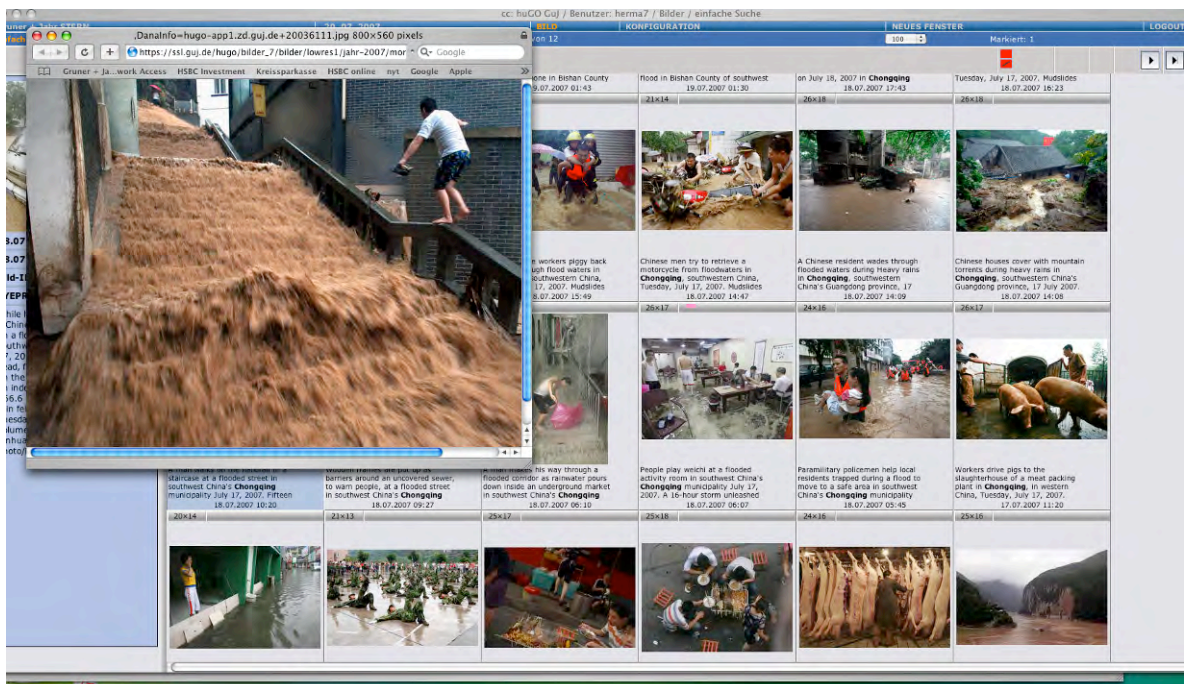

Fig 3.3 Screen grab from Barbara Herrmann's search for the keyword on 'Chongqing' (after individual thumbnail is clicked) 27 July 2007.

In Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3 above, Barbara Herrmann demonstrates the results of a search using the key search on the word 'Chongqing' on 27 July 2007. At that time, the city in central China was experiencing flooding. The Stern image bank is fed by 25 agencies that contribute approximately 10,000 new pictures each day. The viewer has a choice of looking at pages of 50, 100, or 200 images at a time. In the left bar of Figure 3.2, Herrmann has highlighted the agencies with which she wants to limit the search (in this case, AP, AFP, Gamma, Getty, and Reuters). The thumbnail search and the amount of images available to picture editors today, as compared to 10 years ago, has created a subtle but key change to the way in which photographers compose images. Wide pictures that give greater contextual understanding of the news event to audiences that have no personal experience of the imagined geography (such as the fifth image on the top row of Figure 3.2 and the fourth and last images in Figure 3.1) compare poorly on a page of

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thumbnails to tight images that concentrate on the action of the story (such as the image chosen by Herrmann in Figure 3.3).

The switch to thumbnail viewing from printed picture viewing, as described by Herrmann and Tooth, has changed the dynamic by which photographers seek to illustrate global news. Given most newspapers use a single image (as discussed in Chapter 2) to illustrate a story, this new market, played out as thumbnails on a computer screen, greatly simplifies understandings of place. As Rogue states, photographers are still required to shoot tight, medium, and wide yet they understand it is more often than not that the tight image sells, as this is the picture that jumps out on the thumbnail sheet. The result leaves audiences with pictures from places outside their experience that have little geographical information. They are simplistic compositions that highlight one element of the story. Graphically strong, they dramatise the event while leaving the viewer with little information with which to visualise a physical place. This technological change has therefore impacted on Minority World understandings of places outside the audiences experience and, in a UK context, this includes Africa.

Benefits to the Majority World Photographer

In theory, the technological advances made in the market in the past 10 years should have benefited indigenous photographers. Digital photography allows photographers in any location around the world to sell photographs into the international image market by using a computer and phone line. In the case of the news wire services, this has occurred, but the same is not true for features and stock. In Africa, South America, and some areas of Asia this is primarily due to resources. The culture of news photography usually means the employer supplies the employee with equipment, but freelance photographers who are responsible for buying their own cameras have traditionally been the ones supplying feature and stock photography markets. Although digital photography is cheaper in the long term than film, the initial outlay is expensive. In the two studies conducted in Bangladesh and Ethiopia, the only indigenous photographers who had embraced digital photography were those working for the wire services (Shahidul Alam in Bangladesh and Endalkatchew Tesfa in Ethiopia both had digital cameras but were not using them commercially at that time (interviews with Alam, 2003; Tesfa 2003)). In countries that have embraced digital photography, such as China, the problem is often a combination of linguistic and cultural difference. Although the images can be sent easily via email and FTP (file transfer protocol used by photographers to send large files electronically), the databases within which they are sold rely on European language metadata (most captions and keywording for wire photographers is done in the regional offices by trained translators/caption writers). However, freelance photographers cannot afford to pay privately for such services and are unable to file. The Xinhua agency in China has responded to this by no longer recruiting photography graduates to work in their international bureaux but rather language graduates who they believe are easier to train as photographers than training photography graduates in European languages (interview with Huang, 2007). The Drik picture library in Dhaka has invested in film scanners and is in the process of creating a digital archive. This allows the agency to compete as a specialised international agency through an online database. There was also an abundance of film scanners in Ethiopia but none as yet (2003) were being used to scan and send pictures into the international market.

The Move to Video 2

The beginning of Chapter 2 discussed the crisis of Minority World printed newspapers and how senior newspaper management saw the move to video content on their websites as a potential solution to falling advertising sales. The discussion highlighted an economic imperative to retrain photojournalists with video skills in order to provide new content, while at the same time require them to continue providing still

images for both the online and printed editions. This move is likely to further affect a Minority World visualisation of the Majority World. Since the 1970s, television has been the leading instrument of news delivery and a key factor in shaping people's visual understanding of the Majority World (Harrison & Palmer, 1986; DDZ, 1998; GMG, 2000). In terms of the speed of distribution, 24-hour live television news networks usually cover an event before traditional producers of still images (print publications), which tends to free the photographer from the task of telling the whole story. The thumbnail galleries further compounded the lack of contextualisation, as described above. However, the move to online news delivery provides an opportunity to reverse both trends. Firstly, the immediacy of online news means that photographers no longer have to wait until the following morning to get their images in front of their audiences. As newspaper websites move away from shovel technology (the software used to place a digital copy of the physical newspaper onto the paper website) to independent and in some cases more important entities, so they have the ability to compete with television to be the first to break a story. Secondly, websites have no limitations of space and therefore photographers have an ability to deliver a story with a series of pictures or a video. These new freedoms gives them space to contextualise a story more fully and give a clearer visualisation of the place where the event takes place.

Summary

This section has argued that the image economy in the first decade of the twenty-first century is substantially different to that of the previous century. It has described the image market of the 1990s and compared it to the current market, arguing that the digitisation process has fundamentally changed the way in which printed newspapers and magazines source and select images for publication. This has affected the way in which photographers work and compose images, which has, in turn, resulted in even less contextualisation for audiences of the Majority World where imaged events are taking place. The section also discussed a transitional economy arguing that the market is only halfway through the process of change. From this, the section concludes that the first decade of the twenty-first century is likely to form a unique period in the history of photojournalism with new opportunities for photographers to change the way the Majority World is visualised.

2. MANIPULATION AND THE INDIGENOUS VOICE

The first section concentrated on the change in the photography market, while this section analyses the influence of the contemporary market on picture construction, which in turn affects public imaginations of the Majority World. The section starts by considering a series of potential, intended, and unintended manipulations that a photographer, an editor, and an organiser of photography can impart on the process of image production. As the previous chapters have argued, manipulations have been present since the invention of photography. However, this section specifically considers the pressures that are applied to Majority World photographers in the construction of their images. The section continues with a consideration of a perceived Minority World audience view, known in the industry as the 'Western Eye', and asks if such a perspective actually exists. After a short interlude to introduce some of the key issues encountered by Majority World photographers working for international agencies, the section finishes by considering three particular forces that can manipulate the final image audiences consume.

The Manipulators

David Perlmutter (2004) argues image-makers throughout history have sought to manipulate populations for political gain, in particular by playing on emotion:

In the world's first major treatise on governance, Plato's *Republic*, the philosopher argued that most artists should be banned from an ideal state because they upset public opinion with 'emotional' images that 'too easily fool the senses, confusing reality with falsehood'.

(Perlmutter, 2004: p.1)

However, through an analysis of a series of well-known examples (Eddie Adam's execution picture from Saigon, 'The Man against Tanks' image from Tiananmen, and the beaten pilots from Somalia), he also points out that popular understandings of the impact of these images is very often different to the actual impact. He argues that, although these images stick in the mind and are later associated with political change, they rarely actually make any difference.

This section begins with a consideration of photographs from the 2006 Lebanon war to discuss four potential manipulations a contemporary photojournalist could engage with. It is important to note before explaining these that all four are seen as violations of photojournalistic policy and there has been a comprehensive response from the organisations involved in dealing with both the photographer and the systems that allowed the incident to happen.

As a photographer approaches a scene he must immediately make a series of informed choices as to what to include and what to leave out of a particular composition. These decisions are based partly on aesthetic considerations and partly on visual information contained in the frame. This is a selective process, as the photographer must quickly (sometimes instantaneously) decide what information is important and what can be left out. As discussed in the previous section, normally 24-hour TV news beats photography news to tell the story and so photojournalists are being required to make a comment on the story by selective cropping rather than producing a wide image that tells the full story. The image databases on which the pictures appear in newsrooms also push the photographer to be more simplistic in their compositions. Close crops make the image jump out of a page of thumbnails on the picture editor's desk and have a greater likelihood of being chosen. Mayes sums this up:

> The imperative to get there, shoot and upload overtakes the process of investigation and scrutiny that used to be journalism. Editing in the field becomes an instantaneous process that necessarily drives the photographer to select the most obvious images, often driven by the pictures graphic impact on the camera's two-inch screen. The picture desks themselves are under increased pressure to process greater volumes of imagery at the same time, leaving less time to check, analyse and integrate information.
>
> (Mayes, 2006)

The production of obvious, tighter images affords the photographer greater responsibility in choosing the essence of the story and makes it harder to detect misinformation. Mayes (2006) continues:

> Even more important than the new process of production is the new process of distribution. The digital age is built around the internet and our audience, which we could once describe as the 'consumer', is no longer on the receiving end of our output. They are now active participants and co-producers of the news.
>
> (Mayes, 2006)

In this statement, Mayes is referring to the fact that in the past a newsreader would only see and have access to the final image that appeared on the page. Picture editors themselves would also have far less choice and often only saw a single image of an international news event chosen by the local agency bureau. Today, the public has access to the wire services via the internet and can compare images from every photographer present at the scene. This has led to a new media watchdog in the form of

bloggers who study images coming in from the wires and then publish findings of foul play, particularly if the image contradicts the blogger's political standpoint:

> Online scrutiny of the news media reached a new level of intensity this summer during the Israel-Lebanon war. In particular, the war energized a freewheeling group of conservative bloggers who comb through news Web sites in search of evidence of bias. They target the Associated Press, Reuters, The New York Times and other major news outlets.
>
> (Lang, 2006)

Although in most cases the bloggers assumptions are later proved inaccurate, their presence has introduced a new need for close scrutiny of the authenticity of any images published in dominant media. Pro-Israeli bloggers accused photographers covering the 2005 Lebanon war of setting up pictures (Zombietime, 2006), using misleading captions (Schlesinger, 2007) and manipulating images using Photoshop (the industry standard photography software package used by photographers). The latter can be done on a number of levels, from minor contrast and colour changes to the removal or placement of objects out of, or into an image. 'Photoshopping', as it is known, dominates the debate as it has the potential to undermine the audiences' inherent belief in the news image and undermine the role of the photojournalist. The other manipulations discussed were possible before digitisation through darkroom manipulation and are discussed in relation to changing understanding between photographer and audiences as a result of the digitised image market. The 'photoshopped' image has become a major ethical talking point in the world of photojournalism.

Darkroom manipulations have been possible since the beginnings of photography, perhaps made most famous by Stalin's removal of political opponents from images in state collections. What has changed since then is the audiences' understandings of the ease of photographic manipulation. Personal computers and digital cameras have been part of this transition in understanding. If the news agencies are to survive they must convince their audiences of their strict codes of conduct and swift action if a photographer is found to be in breach of this code.

Comparing the case of Adnan Hajj, a Reuters stringer who photoshopped two images from the war in Lebanon to emphasise the impact of the war in his home city, and Walid Ra'ad's Deutsche Börse Photography Prize-winning image of a similar subject, clearly delineates the boundaries set in news as compared to the gallery. Hajj was immediately dismissed from Reuters' lists of stringers, alongside Reuters' Middle East bureau picture editor. The final report, written by David Schlesinger, chief photo editor at Reuters, concluded:

> We were not satisfied with the degree of oversight that we had that allowed these two images to slip through. We have tightened procedures, taken appropriate disciplinary action and appointed one of our most experienced editors to supervise photo operations in the Middle East.
>
> (Schlesinger, 2007)

Hajj had made no major changes to the meaning of the images; other than a little darker smoke in one (Fig 3.4) and an addition of two flares from an Israeli fighter jet in the other; but his manipulations were seen throughout the news world as a threat to their credibility. In March the following year, another Lebanese photographer, Walid Ra'ad, also used Photoshop to add smoke to an image of conflict in Beirut, as part of a body of artistic work. This time it was an old image of the Lebanese civil war Ra'ad had taken from his rooftop as a youth, which he submitted to the most prestigious art photography prize in Europe, the Deutsche Börse Photography Prize, as part of a portfolio of images. The work was clearly intended for the gallery and never purported to represent a factual event, yet it makes a useful point about the relevance of where an image is sited, as discussed in the previous chapter. In the newspaper, dominant audiences accept an image to represent a truth claim whereas in the gallery an image's authenticity is not guaranteed. Ra'ad won

the top prize at the Photographers Gallery in London and was decorated with the award for the greatest contribution to European Photography over the previous year.

Fig 3.4 Beirut, Lebanon. Image: Adnan Hajj, Reuters.

Fig 3.5 Beirut, Lebanon. Image: Walid Ra'ad, the Atlas Group.

Ra'ad described his motivation. 'Traditional history is written as a chronology of events or a biography of participants. We are not saying history should not include this. We are certainly saying that history cannot be reduced to this' (Ra'ad, 2005). In this statement, Ra'ad argues that there is space for both manipulated and straight photographs as a means of recording history. Liz Wells defines the straight image:

> Straight photography points us to a way of making photographs in which evident artifice, construction and manipulation are avoided as a matter of principle…it does not, and cannot, mean an unmediated, uncrafted photograph or an image which is not the result of intention or shaping by the photographer.
>
> (Wells, 2004: p.314)

Hajj's local perspective was clearly misplaced in the international image market. It is not clear if his manipulations were representative of an accentuated feeling of anger for his homeland being bombarded, or a careerist manoeuvre to get his images published. It may have been both. What is evident is that the editorial image market did not accept his manipulations in the same way that Ra'ad's manipulation was accepted by the image art

market. The differentiation is important when considering how photojournalists' work on the Majority World is moving away from news publications and into the gallery. The siting, in the latter, contributes to audiences questioning the authority of the image.

While Hajj's dismissal was consistent with the editorial policy of Reuters, readers and professionals alike are bewildered by the confused standards that simultaneously allow other newspapers to manipulate with impunity on the grounds of taste. A few years before Hajj's misjudgement, the world's newspapers were full of pictures of the Madrid bombing, some of which digitally removed a severed arm from the foreground of one much-used image. Undertaken by picture editors rather than photographers, this manipulation was widely regarded as legitimate without censure, as Mayes notes:

> Meanwhile there are contradictory policies within even the most scrupulous publications. What are we to make of magazines that proclaim the sanctity of news imagery on the inside pages, but routinely manipulate the cover image on the grounds that there's a difference between reporting news and selling the magazine? Or those newspapers that publish composite images and call the results 'photo illustration'? There is nothing intrinsically wrong with any of this, but the lack of accepted conventions confuses readers and strikes fear in the hearts of editors.

(Mayes, 2006)

In the above statement, Mayes articulates what he later refers to as 'confused times', with ethical standards regarding manipulation differing between the sellers of images (the photographers) and the buyers (the publications). All wire agencies ask subscribers to sign an ethical-use clause which states they are not allowed to manipulate the pictures. However, they remain powerless to enforce it. Images produced by Majority World photographers and placed into the global image economy are still subject to Minority World editors choosing the images, shortening/rewriting captions, choosing the size and placement on the page, and manipulation in Photoshop.

The final question explored in this discussion is that of the local photographer and the policymaker. Although there is debate about the real power of images to influence government, policymakers are aware of the fact that images have a role to play in persuading publics of the benefits of their decisions. Visual manipulation has become commonplace in modern politics but increasingly questioned by bloggers, once again raising awareness of the issues amongst photographers and agencies alike. In July 2006, public relations representatives from Hezbollah were accused of reburying dead children after Israeli aircraft bombed the village of Qana, suspecting the village of housing Hezbollah fighters. The next day photographers were bussed in to see the damage and witness scenes of children being unearthed from the rubble, scenes that, the bloggers claim through reconstructing pictures posted on the internet, were faked for the cameras.

Fig 3.6 Image: AP, uncredited.

It is not the place of this thesis to examine the authenticity of the images discussed but rather to acknowledge the new pressures on the photographer's point of view that have been created by the digitisation of photojournalism. Majority World photographers imaging an event that has political opposition in the Minority World are now scrutinised in a way that pressures them to conform to a political agenda. Bangladeshi photographer Rafiqur Rahman explains a recent incident where Reuters questioned his journalistic integrity:

> I once took a picture of a protest in support of Bin Laden. The protestors were holding up a poster, which had amongst many other things a very small print of Bart Simpson on it. The US State department were convinced I had added this to the picture and accused me of interfering with the picture. I had to run all over Dhaka to find an original poster and then send our Singapore office copies to prove the picture was real otherwise I too would have been fired.
>
> (Rahman, 2003)

The 'Western Eye'

At the beginning of Chapter 1 a series of reports were discussed that argued the dominant visual understandings of Africa were negative. The reports discussed these findings in relation to audiences' lack of direct knowledge about the places from which short news stories were being reported. News presenter George Alagiah concurs with this view, saying that the vast majority of his audiences had no experience of Africa from where he reported and therefore no ability to contextualise his account. However, Alagiah maintains that "to isolate news and expect it to do everything, to inform, to educate, establish connectivity is just too much" (quoted in Holland, 2002: p.6). Nonetheless, audiences gain an understanding of place through a fusion of history, geography, and current affairs, and in the mediated environment, knowledge of Africa, which is reliant on context deficient news, is going to be problematic.

What is required are reports which provide a wider context that embraces investigations into the causes of problems as well as peoples lived experiences. The aestheticisation of poverty through news photography, discussed in Chapter 2, has not helped overcome this lack. As Sontag (1979: p.55) has written, "for more than a century, photographers have been hovering about the oppressed, in attendance at scenes of

violence - with a spectacularly good conscience.' As a result they have overlooked evidence of modernity in the Majority World in part because that makes the supposedly natural relationship between 'us' and 'them' difficult to sustain both economically and psychologically (Kenny, 2000). Director of the Majority World picture agency, Shahidul Alam, confirms the demand for negative images is constant, with 'floods, cyclones and slums' the most frequently requested images of Bangladesh made to his library by international publications. Although his image bank contains a vast range of subjects on modern life in Bangladesh including, for example, people working in high tech industries, such images are never requested internationally (Alam, 1994).

When pictures other than those of disaster are sought, they tend to confirm dominant understandings indirectly. As Adrian Evans of Panos Pictures details with respect to images of Africa:

> In Africa there are two styles often talked about. There is Afro-romanticism and there is Afro-pessimism and that is all you see…If you come up with something very good from Africa that isn't the romantic or pessimistic, it sells. People just don't think about doing it.
>
> (interview with Evans, 2003)

If Afro-pessimism refers to the standard disaster imagery, Afro-romanticism signifies the desire for pictures of the natural, noble, and wild Africa that make up both nature programmes and travel stories. In contrast, Evans listed his best selling stories of recent years, pointing out the success of the essay on the bike race across Burkina Faso by Chris Keulen, which he claims consisted of everyday rounded subjects (ibid). Here Evans is suggesting positive images of the Majority World are not being used because there are few around and the rarity of this fact itself makes them sellable. However the stories Evans refers to are all features rather than news and as the image below with caption suggests, the story is not wholly positive. The image plays on the fact the 'French equivalent' event has better services and that the cyclist does not have the resources for repairs, thereby confirming popular understandings of a deficient place.

Fig 3.77 The Tour du Faso is Africa's greatest cycle race, but does not have quite the same technical backup as its French equivalent. Cyclist Ibrahim Alzouma from Niger broke down in the savannah and had to walk all the way back carrying his broken bike. His team did not have the money for proper equipment or repairs. Image: Chris Keulen.

Without the necessary context in which to place the pictures audiences' see of Africa it is difficult to visualise outside the frame to a broader context. And context is key - after two days of discussing global photographic representation at *The Democratic Image* conference in Manchester, April 2007, 'Context is all' was the summary headline in the *British Journal of Photography's* report (Smith, 2007).

As the image market has transferred from physical to digital so the capacity for images has expanded. Photographers anywhere in the world can now take a picture and load it into searchable databases for publications to consider. However, the act of placing

the image on the market does not guarantee a sale. Instead, a successful sale is determined by what Evans calls "the agenda" and makes it clear that neither he nor the photographers set the agenda, which is done by the publications. Indeed, Evans bemoans the fact that many of what he regards to be the best stories the agency has produced have never sold (interview with Evans, 2003). Similarly, photographer Simon Norfolk, who has tried to take and sell pictures of what he believes to be important issues, despairs of the fact that because America is the largest media market, any photographer that ignores the American market will find it hard to survive. Being seen by mass audiences means photographers have to acknowledge the US market and produce pictures for its needs.

Paul Lowe makes a similar point when he describes the global news market being driven by the idea that a single image understandable by a housewife in Detroit is the commercial bottom line (interview with Lowe, 2003). Here he points to a reality that photographers operating in the news market had no choice but to conform to a specific point of view. Horton advises photojournalists to know and understand their market, 'A1, inside, secondary play, the feature section' (these are terms used to reference the place a picture is placed in a newspaper, (Horton, 2001)) but in the case of a global market this is far more complex. If you are a staff photographer for the *Sun* or the *Financial Times* you will have a clear idea about who your audiences are but modern day global news photographers have widely variable audiences spread throughout the world. American broadcaster Ed Murrow explains the concept as "being understood by the truck driver but not upsetting the professor's intelligence" (quoted in DFID, 2002).

What these understandings point to is the way that the global image market, with its 'agendas', embodies a series of commercial and cultural expectations that are more significant than a photographer's national identity in the construction of successful images. Another way to approach this is through the question of visual grammar, especially the idea of the 'Western Eye'.

International news agencies have often steered away from using indigenous photographers because those agencies were unsure about the capacity of Majority World photographers to produce work appealing to, or readily understandable by, a global audience. The following discussion sets out with an investigation into the concept of the visual construct known as the 'Western Eye' to consider what it represents and whether it exists. Jon Levy, editor of *Foto8,* explains the basis of the concept:

> A local photographer might be able to put more feelings into a picture and has better local knowledge. However, a British photographer working for a British publication understands and uses the language of the readership and this leads to a clearer message.
>
> (interview with Levy, 2003)

Adrian Evans, who is under pressure from the Panos Institute to use more local photographers, agrees with Levy and explains that "it's a question of compositional grammar, which you have to know to operate in this world. A lot of places in Africa, they just don't know the grammar" (interview with Evans, 2003). But is this visual language or compositional grammar beyond photographers outside of Europe and America?

Drik director Shahidul Alam does not dispute that there is an international visual grammar that might be called a 'Western Eye' that drives the global image economy, but he believes the ability to operate in terms of this pictorial language can easily be taught. Because of this Alam established a photography school (Pathshala) in Dhaka that understands the 'Western Eye' as a visual language which can be taught like English or French. For Alam, teaching an indigenous photographer this visual grammar provides the best of both worlds. It means indigenous photographers can get better access and understanding of a situation than a visiting photographer from outside the area and then turn that understanding into a globally marketable photograph (interview with Alam, 2003).

The 'Western Eye', as it is taught in Pathshala, refers to an in-depth understanding of western photojournalistic history as well as contemporary international practice. It assumes knowledge of accepted compositional practices that are both recognised by global audiences and that can communicate new meaning. Interestingly, Levy recognises that photographic culture has more to do with individual style than the place the photographer originates from, as he makes clear by citing the Czech photographer Josef Koudelka's pictures of Wales.

Koudelka was born in 1938 in Boskovice, Moravia, and later studied at the University of Technology in Prague where he became interested in photography, which led to a career as a photojournalist. Returning to Prague (from Romania on a commission) just two days before the Soviet invasion in 1968, he rose to fame recording the Czechoslovakian defeat. This led to an invitation to join Magnum (who had sold his Prague images anonymously) and the chance to seek political asylum in Britain. With no chance of returning home he travelled around Europe on various grants and commissions including a social documentary project in Wales. As Levy explains of the result:

> Only Josef Koudelka could have taken these pictures in that way as it was applying his art and vision to a place and that is something to be gained, a different opinion about it if you will. The issue is therefore raised whether the pictures should depict an accurate reality of a place or the photographer's impression of it? A photographer that does not know that much about the reality of an issue or situation will rely on the visual stimulus that they get and they will start translating that into images based on first opinion. Some magazines are happy with this and will hire a well-known photographer to travel to a country for them because they want his style and interpretation. Where as if you want something factual you will probably turn to someone with the most knowledge.
>
> (interview with Levy, 2003)

Although Drik and Pathshala have promoted a strong ideological standpoint about the virtues of indigenous photographers as well as training their staff and students in issues of globalisation, visual representation, digital colonialism and visual anthropology in order to avoid negative stereotyping, it is hard to overcome the power of the global image economy if a photographer wants to operate internationally. During one research trip to Bangladesh, the author found that it was another Bangladeshi photographer, Rafiqur Rahman, who held the greatest responsibility for the country's representation. As both a still photographer and cameraman for Reuters, his images were beamed around the world on a daily basis and played in international newspapers and TV stations. He had no doubt about what he was aiming to file. "Reuters want real pictures, the truth but they also want strong pictures. I know the type of picture that sells and I supply the office" (interview with Rahman, 2003).

At the time of the author's first research visit, the second Iraq war was still in its latter stages and the author had been frightened by some of Rahman's images seen in the British press before his departure, with one photograph of an angry local protestor waving a gun in Dhaka (Fig 3.8) prominent. Visiting a similar demonstration after he arrived the author saw the same character in the front row with thousands of peaceful protesters behind him. Rahman was shown the image and asked why his pictures did not represent the whole:

> I know this man, he has turned up to every anti American protest for the last six to seven years, but the gun is a toy. I know as I have been very close. He always makes a very strong picture but I am clear in the caption that the gun is a toy. The problem is not all news editors use my caption and the meaning gets lost. News is news, it happens, positive and negative I do not control the news or the way the final picture is used, I just try to tell the truth. You have to remember that newspaper editors are businessmen who are trying to make money and give their

political opinion. They modify reports and choose pictures according to their own agendas.

<div align="right">(interview with Rahman, 2003)</div>

Fig 3.8 Protestors at a Dhaka anti-war rally. April 2003. Image: uncredited.

Syed Shujauddin Ahmed (2003), director general of the National Institute of Mass Communication in Dhaka, argues that 'Muslim bashing' is currently a saleable commodity and photographers working within the international market are therefore looking for those images. He concedes Islamic extremism is on the rise in Bangladesh but only represents 4-5% of the population. The ratio of images depicting this that come out of Bangladesh is, however, far higher.

As well as market forces dictating the construction of saleable images, media owners, governments and influential personalities can also interfere in the market for political gain. In turn this coverage can persuade governments to act. If market forces and political interference are the factors that dictate what images are sold, this implies the photographer plays no part in the process of representation. However the photographer makes many decisions in the process of capturing and editing a picture. Speaking at the *Whose Image is it Anyway* event at The Barbican, London, in March 2003, the British Council photography director Brett Rodgers explained:

> A critical stream of theoretical work, arising from post-structuralist insights found in the works of Baudrillard to Barthes, Foucault and Sontag has led to a wide-spread rejection of the idea that acts of looking or recording can ever be neutral or disinterested, but are embedded in relationships of power and control. Just as two different people from the same family never have identical memories of the same family event, two different photographers produce entirely distinct images in front of the same scene, because they bring their own personal assumptions, background and experience to the situation.

<div align="right">(Rodgers, 2003)</div>

Another common but repeated photographer's habit is what Alun John refers to as the "Casablanca Option" that is, rounding up all the usual suspects.[5] When in Sierra Leone, it was presumed John would want to visit the amputee camp and in Beirut he was offered a trip to Shatila but preferred to look for more positive stories (interview with John, 2003). More commonly referred to as 'stereotypical', images of the 'familiar' have been lambasted by many critics (Nash & van der Gaag, 1987; Lutz & Collier, 1993; Magistad, 1985) leading to the word having negative connotations. However the use of 'familiar'

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[5] The name is taken from a line in the film *Casablanca*. When a crime has been committed, the lazy Police chief tells his subordinates to 'round up the usual suspects' rather than investigating the crime.

images in advertising has long been used to reinforce the quality of products and services and is only seen as negative in this case because of the unconstructive associations. Photographers are accused of looking to find familiar images without investigating the 'true' situation. Neo Ntsoma explains her experience:

> When a photographer from *Time* or *Newsweek* or any of the big international publications comes to South Africa, they come to our paper, as we are known for our photography. I have been asked to go out with some of these photographers to show them around, but they are only interested in the poverty in our country. They have seen pictures from other photographers and they want to go to these places to get these pictures.
>
> <div align="right">(interview with Ntsoma, 2003)</div>

George Alagiah explains familiar coverage by the term 'template reporting'. This involves, in the case of famine, for example, a set formula that includes:

> the emaciated child, preferably crying; you've got to have a feeding centre, where mothers with shrunken breasts are trying to calm their children; you've got to have an aid worker, usually white, usually a woman who is working against the odds.
>
> <div align="right">(Alagiah in DDZ, 1998)</div>

This image translates directly to still photography where similar unwritten templates exist. Goldberg believes that what is left out of the picture is as important as what is left in (interview with Goldberg, 2003). Peter Stalker agrees recalling his experience as a photojournalist covering famine:

> There was no point, say, in showing families eating - however meagre the meal - otherwise they would not appear hungry. And they should not be smiling at the camera, even though it is quite possible to smile and be hungry at the same time. It was better also to concentrate on children since hungry adults who are listless because tired or anaemic can come across in a photograph as lazy or irresponsible.
>
> <div align="right">(Stalker, 1998)</div>

Like the stereotype the question of the subjects dignity is another theme frequently discussed. Nash and van der Gaag refer to the imagery from the 1984-5 famine as being 'truly pornographic' and asks whether the subject's permission to photograph had been granted or not. They suggest that even if the subjects did object, they were not in an emotional or physical state to make their protest known. The *Images of Africa* report concludes the photographic practice had been predatory and demeaning and that the Ethiopians images had been used to sell newspapers and raise funds without regard for the dignity of those pictured. Photographers preyed on women and children as these made a more dramatic image (Nash & van der Gaag, 1987). This issue is frequently raised but without the resources to question those photographed.

Summary

This section has dealt with two key and interrelated issues. The first is concerned with the pressures that influence the composition of images that are traded in the international news image economy. The discussion has focussed on three potential manipulations: by the photographer themselves, the publication editors/owners, and by organisers of photography seeking political gain. The second has considered the concept of the 'Western Eye', the visual grammar of the global image economy that some take to be intrinsic to European or American photographers, but which in reality is a compositional language that can and has been taught to photographers world wide regardless of their national identity.

From the first discussion it is possible to conclude four points. Firstly, that although the issue of photographic manipulation has always been present, new technology has

given rise to new opportunities in digital manipulation making it possible for any photographer to make fundamental changes to the pictures they send without the need to come to a central office. Majority World photographers vary greatly in their knowledge and experiences of Minority World audiences (discussed more fully throughout the remaining sections of the chapter) yet they are being asked to shoot for international wire services whose priority audiences are global. When their images fail to conform to this point of view their images are scrutinised at a greater intensity for potential manipulation. On occasions they also face the dilemma of patriotism versus journalistic integrity, having to knowingly shoot images that will damage the societies in which they live. Secondly, the vast majority of Majority World photographers supplying news images into the international economy are freelancers or stringers meaning they are paid per picture rather than as members of staff who are paid whether they get a picture or not. This has led to increased pressures to supply a particular "sellable" photograph. Thirdly, political stakeholders have become increasingly aware of the power of photographs and are investing more resources into facilitating photographers to get powerful images that further their cause. As many of the freelance/stringer Majority World photographers have no formal journalistic training they are potentially more susceptible to political manipulation. Fourthly, the trend in most Minority World newspapers over the past 10 years has been to reduce staff photographers and increase wire subscriptions. Therefore the agency has become the main hard news image provider both internationally and locally. *Guardian* picture editor Roger Tooth explains:

> These days we very rarely send one of our photographers to a news event; they are mainly used to illustrate specialist features. Most of my photography budget is now spent on agency subscriptions, which gives us tremendous choice.
>
> (interview with Tooth, 2005a)

This has increased the opportunity of indigenous photographers to represent their communities to Minority World publications, as the wire services are increasingly employing local photographers, while insisting on a visual language and professional codes that produce a global vision of diverse places. The result has been to problematise any simple, let alone natural, duality of Minority versus Majority World.

The second section discussed the concept of the 'Western Eye' by considering it through the syllabus of Pathshala students learning how to sell their images into the global picture. Levy and Evans have argued that effective photographic communication depends on an understanding of Western audiences' visual grammar best served by experienced photographers whereas Alam has argued that this language can be learnt and combined with the local photographer's better access and knowledge that leads to a stronger communication with his audiences. The concept of the 'Western Eye' makes sense if it signifies the demands of the global image economy, but is problematic if it presumes a clear dividing line between Western and other photographic cultures. As this section has demonstrated any such line is becoming less clear if not irrelevant due to the development of global photographers who straddle a number of different situations. The following two sections will further bring into the question the existence of the concept through a series of discussions, studies, and experiments.

3. PARACHUTE PHOTGRAPHERS AND THE CHAINS OF UNDERSTANDING

Another way to consider the major drivers behind the production of photographic imagery of the Majority World is to investigate the transfer of understanding from a photographer shooting a subject to audiences consuming the image. To achieve that, this section examines the differences in how a local wire agency photographer communicates a story to global audiences in comparison to a staff photographer sent directly from the publication overseas to shoot exclusively for that newspaper's readership (an example that will be demonstrated in the next chapter). As fewer newspapers send staff

photographers this section argues that the new global image economy has fundamentally changed the established chain of understanding between photographer and audiences.
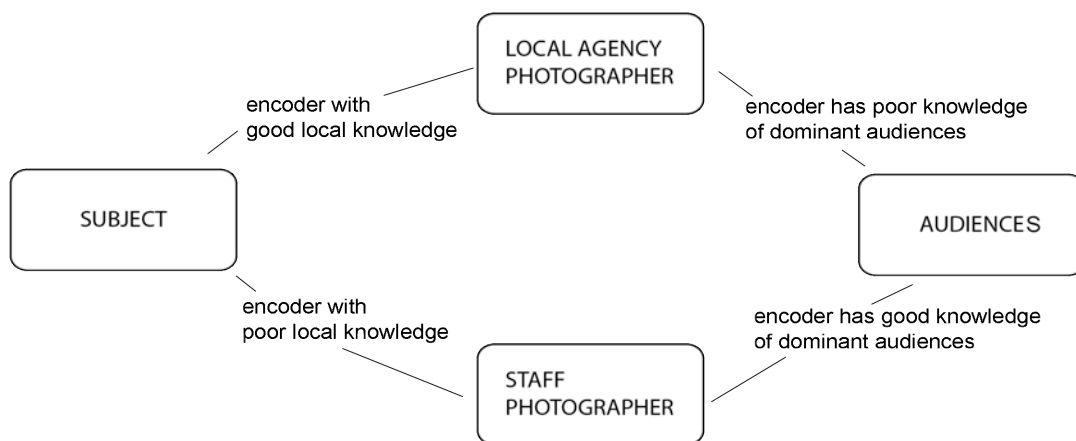

Fig 3.12 Chains of Understanding. Diagram: D J Clark.

The diagram above revisits Hall's discussion of encoding (1980: p.134) in light of the growth of indigenous photographers covering global stories for news agencies supplying Minority Word publications. This is a simplistic demonstration of the changes that have taken place (outlined in the first two sections) and serves to demonstrate a theoretical repositioning. This section argues that although the chains of understanding have changed as a result of the digital image economy, the money-driven single picture system with which local photographers deliver their images does not give them the space in which to picture a local perspective or to play to particular audiences. This goes beyond arguments about who has the' Western Eye' because the new system means the majority of photographers produce similar compositions because of market constraints. The section also discusses, through the concept of internal 'othering', the relationships between the encoder and subject, which go beyond national identity. Here the situation on the ground is demonstrated to be far more complex than the above diagram suggests, and through studies in Bangladesh and Ethiopia in the next section, the thesis will further contest the concept of the indigenous photographer having an essentialist identity that produces a particular view.

The previous section introduced the concept of the 'Western Eye' and this section seeks to develop the discussion by a consideration of the process of communication between photographer and audiences. Hall (1980) argues early theories of media communication that rely on the chain 'sender/message/receiver' are too simplistic and suggests the process should be thought of 'in terms of a structure produced and sustained through the articulation of linked but distinctive moments - production, circulation, distribution/consumption, reproduction' (Hall, 1980: p.128). He outlines two points in the communication process, the encoding (in this case the production of an image) and the decoding (interpretation by audiences) as being important. For the purpose of this discussion the emphasis will be on the encoding; the production of a 'story' from an event using an image and text (that accompanies the image as it is sited as a caption, accompanying story or headline).

In the example of an Ethiopian story produced for UK audiences who have little experience or information about Ethiopia, a simplistic deconstruction of this process gives the commissioning editor/curator two options: Either to employ an Ethiopian photographer who probably understands the issues and can give a local representation of the event; or to send a UK photographer who probably has a better understanding of how to communicate to domestic audiences but is less well versed in the issues involved.

This discussion is split into three questions. Firstly, does the length of time a foreign photographer works on a story in a distant community change the way he

photographs it? Secondly, does a local photographer give an alternative perspective based on local knowledge? Thirdly, is there any evidence from contemporary practice of the differences between foreign and local viewpoints?

Parachute Photography

In the earlier discussion of the humanistic aesthetic in Chapter 2, Sebastião Salgado's use of compositional harmony was likened to that of Cartier Bresson's 'decisive moment'. However, Campbell (2003) and Mraz (2003) both argue that his methodology is very different to the Magnum ideology of witnessing the "transitory" (Miller quoted in Campbell, 2003: p.81). Photojournalist Paul Lowe (2005), who was briefly represented by Magnum, articulates this argument in an interview for the *Imaging Famine* exhibition (2005) where he explains that "every picture you make is made in a very short time frame." He argues staying in a place for an extended period of time does not change the nature of the photograph created. Rather this is dictated by the event that happens in front of the photographer:

> In Somalia, for example, I stayed for two weeks there and I made two weeks' worth of pictures…it was a substantial body of work but each of those pictures was made within its own time frame and specific context and I wouldn't have made a better picture in that particular moment by staying any longer because the picture was made at this precise moment. It is more to do with the conceptual, moral, ethic, aesthetic - the whole thing that makes you a photographer. It's those things you bring to a situation that determines the kind of pictures you make, rather than necessarily the amount of time that you are there.
>
> (interview with Lowe, 2005)

Although Salgado 'regards the photograph as a unique conjunction of the spatial and temporal' (Campbell, 2003: p.81) in agreement with Bresson and Lowe, he also insists the image must reflect a relationship between photographer and subject. In order to achieve this he prefers to work on long-term projects, staying months rather than days with his subjects, and developing deeper understandings and key relationships.

In an interview published in *Photo Metro 84* (Bloom, 1990), Salgado argues that the photojournalist must engage with the context of the subject he is photographing:

> You photograph here, you photograph there, you speak with people, you understand people, people understand you. Then, probably, you arrive at the same point as Cartier-Bresson, but from the inside of the parabola. And that is for me the integration of the photographer with the subject of his photograph…. An image is your integration with the person that you photographed at the moment that you work so incredibly together, that your picture is not more than the relation you have with your subject.
>
> (Salgado quoted in Bloom, 1990)

Salgado agrees with Lowe's concept of the photographer bringing himself to the picture - "when you work fast, what you put in your pictures is what you brought with you -your own ideas and concepts" (Salgado quoted in Lassiter, 1994). Salgado also argues a photojournalist needs to get beyond their predetermined visualisation of the event:

> When you spend more time on a project, you learn to understand your subjects. There comes a time when it is not you who is taking the pictures. Something special happens between the photographer and the people he is photographing. He realizes that they are giving the pictures to him.
>
> (Salgado quoted in Lassiter, 1994)

In Bloom's interview (1990), Salgado refers to this process of being spiritually connected to the subject as the "photographic phenomenon."

Photographer Tom Stoddart, who like Salgado has covered many of the contemporary global humanitarian issues, is sceptical of staying too long on a story. "Sometimes you get to know too much about the story and too much about what you are photographing" (Stoddart, 2005). This he argues can dilute the photographer's anger at what he is witnessing and therefore weaken concentration and the resolve to communicate the story to outside audiences. Mayes agrees with Stoddart, explaining his experience of commissioning Minority World photographers to cover stories in distant places:

> As an editor I see people who arrive in a situation and they are on fire for a week because it is a new situation and they are seeing it for the first time. They absorb it; see the detail and they are incredibly perceptive. They see things that a local person has seen so often they forget. At the same time there is another psychology of familiarity. I see other photographers who are horrified when they go into a new situation. They come so prepossessed with the practicalities of where do I eat, where do I live, where do I process my film, or whatever they have to do, that they just fall to bits. So what they have to do is spend three months there and they dig and they dig and they dig and again they achieve an insight but through a different route. The end result is very similar.
>
> (interview with Mayes, 2005)

Mraz makes the case that 'Salgado's conceptualization of the 'photographic phenomenon' may be new, but the idea that depth in photojournalism comes from the time you have spent with your subject has been voiced before' (Mraz, 2003). Citing Philip Jones Griffiths, Eugene Smith, and other photographers who worked on long-term projects, he makes the case that time strengthens a photographer's knowledge of the subject and therefore their ability to communicate a narrative.

Salgado and Mraz do not discuss the economic reality of most international travelling photojournalists, which constrains the time spent on the ground. Lowe and Stoddart talk in-depth about the mechanics of modern-day magazine assignments, which give little scope for lengthy, in-depth projects. In Sudan, Stoddart (2005) remembers a French photographer being a few days behind him and the pressures he was under to get out and get the pictures published before the competition.

The Indigenous Alternative

In September 2005, a Panos Pictures exhibition, *Eight Ways to Change the World*, reporting progress on the millennium development goals at an upmarket gallery on the South Bank of London, caused Alam to write a stream of seething reports (Alam, 2007: p.4). The exhibition was supported by seven leading development NGOs. Of the seven chosen photographers commissioned to represent the challenges to the Majority World none were from the Majority World and all but one were male. The award-winning photographers had produced an exhibition of creative imagery for relatively affluent London audiences to consume. Alam, who was present at the opening, was further angered by the response he received when he questioned one of the organisers on the decisions made in the production process:

> All the photographs were taken by white Western photographers. No-one questioned the implication of such an exercise. When I confronted one of the organizers he explained that the curator - a director of a Western photographic agency - had decided not to use Majority World photographers because they 'didn't have the eye.' The sophisticated visual language possessed by the Western audience was presumably beyond the capacity of a photographer from the South to comprehend, let alone engage with at a creative level.
>
> (Alam, 2007: p.5)

The hypothesis of the 'photographic phenomenon' requires the photographer to engage on a personal level with the subject through both an in-depth understanding of the respective issues and culture. This, as Salgado and others suggest, can only be achieved with time. However the length of time needed is theoretically reduced if the photographer comes from the same country and removed completely if the photographer comes from the same community. Alam not only argues that Majority World photographers can learn the 'Western Eye' but established his own photography school to teach it. 'Pathshala continues to defy gravity. A school of photography in one of the most economically impoverished nations, and with no external support, continues to produce some of the finest emerging photographers' (Alam, 2007: p.12). In recording the achievements of the school, Alam omits awards from Asia but rather lists awards from 'Mother Jones, World Press, The National Geographic' (ibid) and remarks on graduates employment at '*Time* magazine, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*' (ibid) all of which are European or American. In doing so, Alam is proving his point but at the same time indicating that the aspiration of the Majority World photographer is the same as those from the rest of the world. Mayes agrees:

> People often ask about indigenous photographers or ask, 'shouldn't this picture have been taken by a woman photographer, or a child?' - this whole notion of the point of view. In terms of indigenous photographer, I think it makes no difference whatsoever because they are often aspiring to be placed in the same media or to be seen by the same audience as the non-indigenous photographer. Therefore, of course, they are copying the codes and they are copying the formats.
>
> (interview with Mayes, 2005)

Here Mayes also agrees with Alam, suggesting that Majority World photographers use similar visual strategies to those from the Minority World, but suggests that in doing so they lose the opportunity to present a different view. In Chapters 1 and 2, this thesis has explored some of the central critiques of Minority World photojournalism. The process of 'othering' and the aestheticisation of poverty are two of those critiques, which for the purpose of this discussion will be used to explore a different Majority World perspective. If Mayes's argument is true, the critiques should equally apply to Majority World photographers.

In a trip to Madagascar, UK NGO Water Aid photo officer Jess Combie hired two photographers, Marco Betti from the UK and Pierrot Men from Madagascar. She had hoped to get two different perspectives but was later surprised to find that it was not the UK photographer who felt out of place in the district's Water Aid works:

> What I hadn't taken into consideration was how shocked Men would be at the level of poverty. I had assumed a native Madagascan would be used to the conditions we saw, but actually Men found the slums we visited incredibly upsetting.
>
> (Crombie, 2008: p.21)

Through research trips, the author found that city-based Majority World photographers varied greatly in their understandings of the issues facing the countries in which they live and the way they represented those issues. The clearest example of this was in Ethiopia. The 2003 *Graduation Bulletin* of the Masters Fine Arts and Vocational Training Center in Addis Ababa published a selection of the best photography of the 421 graduates from that year. The majority of images look no different to what you may expect from a similar college in Europe or the USA: a mix of landscapes, documentary stories, and environmental portraits. However, the last two images and an illustration on the back cover are worth exploring in more detail.

Fig 3.9 The Omo region (translated by Sawra Tafari), picture from student gallery. Image: uncredited
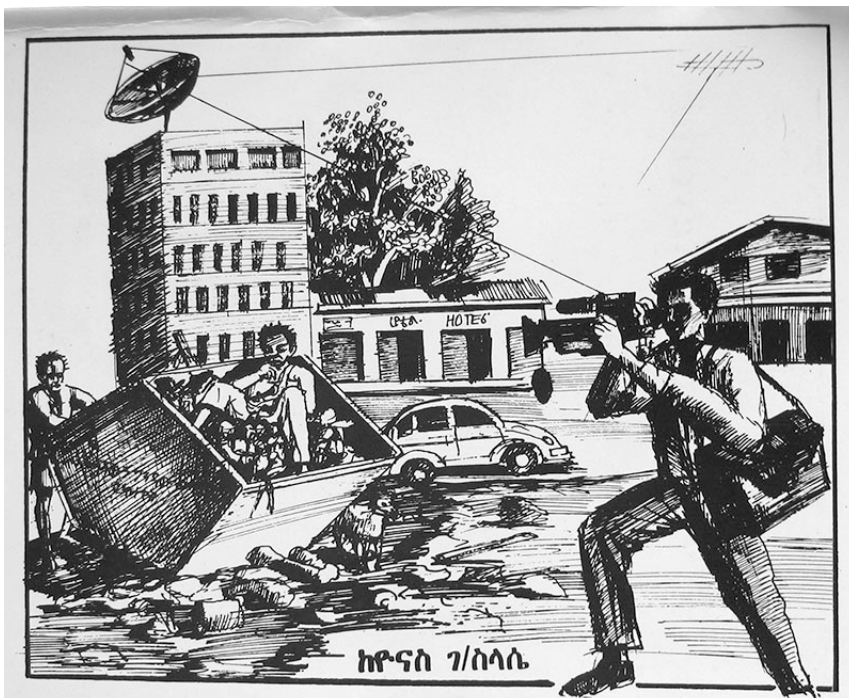

Fig 3.10 Sketch from back page of the *Graduation Bulletin* (The Ethiopian script at the bottom of the image is the name of the author) 'From Yonas G/Sellasie' translated by Sawra Tafari.

Two images in the annual's gallery section show bare-breasted women from the Omo region of southwest Ethiopia.[6] Both pose for the camera, are decorated with local colourful handicraft, and are backgrounded by straw and mud huts (Fig 3.9 is one example). It is unclear why the editors of the bulletin have chosen these pictures over any other to represent what the tutors obviously deem to be successful photography. However the aesthetic clearly mirrors observations of the *National Geographic Magazine* during the twentieth century. 'The principle of absolute accuracy dictated printing photos of bare-breasted native maidens...but the demand of artistry and the uncontroversial meant that these native subjects were young, well-proportioned and often draped like classical nudes' (Pauly,1979: p.528). If published in the UK, the images would likely be critiqued as a Western imagination of primitive Africa but their inclusion in an Amharic graduation annual aimed at students from an Ethiopian school indicates both a process of internal

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[6] Although for the purpose of discussion both images would be usefully reproduced, I have chosen not to reproduce the second image due to legal and ethical concerns, as what could be a teenage girl appears semi-naked.

'othering' and a situation that cannot be understood in terms of a natural dualism that pits the Minority World against the Majority World.

The sketch inside the back cover (Fig 3.10) of the same publication conflicts further with the premise that a local photographer will supply an alternative view. It shows a cameraman filming two men in a garbage container who appear to be scavenging for food. The sketch illustrates a modern urban environment with a satellite dish on top of a large building. Lines have been drawn from the camera to the dish, and then onward, from the dish, towards an indistinct mark in the sky, suggesting the cameraman is beaming live pictures to outside audiences. The choice of subject, the hungry scavengers, in a country known best for food insecurity, contradicts the call by Ethiopian intellectuals for a revisualisation of their country. It appears the photography academy is teaching its students that this kind of image is worthy of their attention and should be shown to outside audiences.

Mayes's argument, demonstrated through the Masters School annual, suggests local photographers have nothing new to add to a contemporary image economy. However, Reuters executive Ayperi Ecer disagrees:

> I think there is a general change in photojournalism because technology is so much better, because there is a new generation of photojournalists and you don't need intermediates any longer. Local photography is very different from people coming in and observing the situation. With local photography there is also the situation of pride. Its your country, you do not only want to show catastrophe, your country is not only a catastrophe area…you want to also show hope because basically that's what it is about...for example you see this in the Tsunami. The Indian photographers have much less dead bodies than photographers flying in. I think it is changing because these photographers are very used to that situation, they have seen it all through their lives. It's not that they are discovering it. I think we will see a difference in the next generation, as these photographers will go further than those photographers who are just flying in.
>
> <div align="right">(interview with Ecer, 2005)</div>

Ecer's comment was given at an interview during the 2004 World Press Photo awards where the winning photographer was Arko Datta, an Indian Reuters photographer, whose image showed a woman grieving the death of a relative in Cuddalore, India, after the Tsunami with the hand (but not the body) of the dead relative in shot.

At the 2005 *Recontres Africaines De La Photographie* festival in Mali, African photographers met to discuss their latest exhibitions and the development of the profession throughout the continent. As Minority World audiences have sought an alternative aesthetic so many of the photographers have succeeded in making links to art galleries outside Africa, but few have developed working relationships with the international publications such as those Alam cites in Pathshala's list of achievements (2007: p.12). "The problem we face is not quality but communication" (interview with Touré, 2005), director of Gallerie Chab in Bamako explains. While events such as the festival in Bamako encourage photographers to develop their inherent photographic culture, international publications need their image-makers to conform to particular visual strategies designed for their specific audiences. Ecer's argument, therefore, appears to discuss a middle ground between the local photographer, who draws influence from their own visual culture, and the indigenous photographer who studies and conforms to outside perspectives. The local Reuters photographer, she suggests, provides an alternative view but within the confines of a global Reuters aesthetic. This makes any easy categorisation of contemporary photography into Minority versus Majority world problematic.

Chains of Understanding

The traditional model of print journalism has been that a publication will employ or commission a photographer to report a story. This action takes place with the presumption that the photographer has a clear understanding of the publication and its readership and therefore shoots with them in mind. A photographer working for the *Guardian* will illustrate a story in a very different way to a photographer working for the *Sun* because the social makeup, the prior understanding, and the methodology of interpreting the aesthetic will be very different for each readership.

A photographer employed or commissioned by a newspaper will also often work with a writer to bring consistency to the written story and pictures. Roger Tooth, speaking at the *Imaging Famine* conference, 6 September 2005, The Newsroom, London, explains the *Guardian's* decision to send photographer Dan Chung to cover food shortages in Niger (August, 2005):

> One of the key tools is to have a photographer and reporter on the ground. When you can do this the whole thing happens more coherently. This picture (Fig 3.11) we used on the front page alongside a feeding centre picture and this illustrates that if you get a photographer and a writer together you can then start to tell a story in a much more coherent way. This told the story that this is a much more complex situation than you might see on the TV. As a thinking paper, that was much more effective for us.
>
> (interview with Tooth, 2005b)

Under the traditional system of reporting, a photographer covering a story in the Majority World would fly in, link up with a writer on the ground with whom a discussion would take place as to how they wish to cover the story. The photographer would then carry out the assignment with a perceived understanding of the story's relevance to the publication and the dominant audiences' interests and prior knowledge. The previous section argued that the main problem facing this type of coverage is the photographer's lack of knowledge of the places and events leading to simplistic template reporting based on dominant audiences' interests and prior understanding. Misunderstandings of the situation on the ground, reflected through poor captions, often led to misrepresentations of the events as a result of a lack of knowledge of local customs, culture, and language.

The two faces of Niger *Guardian* 1/8/05 p.1

Plenty of food – yet the poor are starving

Yesterday, 8.45am Tahoua feeding centre

Fig 3.11 Front page, the *Guardian*, 1 August 2005. Images: uncredited

As the circulation of Minority World newspapers continues to decline so staff photographers are losing their jobs to be replaced by subscriptions to international agencies. These subscriptions enable newspapers to source images for both international and national news without the need to send their own staff. The overall economic gain is persuasive in light of the pressures to reduce costs.

The reduction in staff numbers also has a knock-on effect in the newspaper's ability to brand its images. Alun John, who was the first picture editor at the *Independent* newspaper and who shaped the publication's unique image brand in the late 1980s, argues that picture editors no longer have the power or budget to shape an individual style (interview with John, 2003). Colin Jacobson refers to this as a "visual globalisation", which essentially makes all global news coverage the same (interview with Jacobson, 2003). Vicky Goldberg recalls a recent major news story when three leading US news magazines published "a similar, almost identical image on the cover" (interview with Goldberg, 2003).

As news image branding has slowly disappeared, image branding in other fields such as tourism and NGO publications has started to increase (Clark, 2003). This is due the to the fact that designers can now search Getty, Corbis, and smaller competing stock agencies online to find particular styles of images that fit an agreed brand. Cheralyn Kirkwood, designer at the Grand Vacation Company, explained the process:

We have a corporate style that uses images of people in their 20s and 30s enjoying themselves on holiday, with yellow as the dominant colour. Before, we would commission photographers from the UK to tour our resorts and take pictures, whereas now we tend to search the stock libraries for pictures that fit our brand.

(interview with Kirkwood, 2003)

The exchange of photographers for subscriptions to global agencies changes the relationship between the encoder and decoder as images are no longer sourced from (and encoded by) photographers who understand specific publication audiences but are now created by local photographers shooting (encoding) for diverse global audiences (see Fig 3.12). Images are made by photographers whose compositions are dictated by forces of the market rather than the need to give an informed understanding of a news event to particular audiences. Being the first to file; making sure their image can be understood by a wide range of global audiences; understanding that their picture will appear on an editors screen as a thumbnail and the need to have impact at this size; playing to the political, contextual, and stylistic values of the biggest spenders; and making sure they offer something different to the competition are all important factors which influence composition and captions. The photographers are cut out of the communication process as soon as they have loaded their images onto the agency database. They file and often never know where their pictures will appear, with what caption, in what context, alongside which story, and who will be seeing them.

Summary

In a voice interview accompanying the Reuters *State of the World* exhibition online, Ayperi Ecer (2006), explains that the contemporary photojournalist's role is "to inform from everywhere for everywhere." This discussion has not questioned Ecer's photographers' race/location but rather their audiences. Ecer's description of the role of a Reuters' photographer suggests the organisation also offers local perspectives to global audiences, which this section has argued is not achievable within the current restraints of the market. In a highly competitive financial based economy, image compositions favour the interests of the biggest buyers. Even if Majority World photographers do manage to get a local perspective into their images and onto the databases they are still not guaranteed the publishers will contextualise them in the way they were intended. Local photographers outside the Minority World also have the problem of dealing with a system that is sceptical of a local view that contradicts the news agendas of the biggest picture buyers.

This section has discussed how the length of time a foreign photographer spends in a place affects the way he composes his images. The discussion was inconclusive but rather delineated different methodologies for different photographers that appear to vary according to the individual personality rather than the nationality or familiarity of the photographer. A second discussion dealing with the potential for local photographers to offer alternative perspectives was equally inconclusive as image composition again depends more on the individual photographer than their cultural background. The final discussion of the section outlined a change in how Minority World publications were sourcing their images from the Majority World, but again demonstrated that, although compositions were changing, these shifts were not being dictated by an increase in local photographers making the images but instead by market forces. The next section will use studies in Ethiopia, Bangladesh, and China to demonstrate these findings.

4. THE GROWTH OF INDIGENOUS PHOTOGRAPHY, DIGITAL COLONIALSM AND FAIRTRADE PHOTOGRAPHY

The last section argued that the introduction of new technologies and the financial restrictions picture editors now face (making it difficult for them to send staff photographers overseas) has improved opportunities for indigenous photographers to sell pictures internationally. This section will continue the discussion on Majority World photographers, their political standing in their own countries, and the issue of photographic culture. It will give a general overview of the current development of Majority World photography and then, using examples from Ethiopia and Bangladesh, plus an experiment in China, evaluate the arguments. Key to this section is the relationship between visual language and the international image economy. It will question whether there exists an identifiable regional visual language that is apparent in photography. It will also consider the status of photographers within their local culture, and ask whether growth of indigenous photography has occurred along the lines implied in the previous section?

Growth of Indigenous Photography

The first section of this chapter has indicated that a change in the global image economy has favoured the use of local photographers over travelling photographers. The section outlined how new technology and the internet made it easier for photographers outside the traditional photographic agency capitals (New York, London, and Paris) to participate in the picture market, and how the immediacy of the internet meant that agencies demanded pictures quicker than before, again favouring the local photographer. Here, the section will explore whether these new conditions have led to an increase in Majority World photographers selling work into international markets.

Interviews were conducted with senior figures within the Thompson Foundation (UK), World Press Photo organisation (The Netherlands), and The Reuters Foundation (UK), all of whom have expert knowledge in the field of Majority World photojournalism, and all of whom report an increase in the number of practicing photographers, the number of training courses available, and the quality of photography produced. The director of World Press Photo, Michiel Munneke, noted that the 2002 chairman of the award jury and the overall winner were both from the Majority World (interview with Munneke, 2003). However, it is important to note that both individuals that Munneke refers to have spent a good deal of time in the UK and USA respectively. The importance of Minority World experience among Majority World photographers will become a dominant theme in the case studies and will demonstrate the problem in referring to Majority and Minority World photographers as two separate entities. Photographers Rula Halawani (Palestine) and Paul Lowe (currently living in Bosnia) both suggest that conflict has played a crucial role in the development of photography in certain Majority World countries. Halawani claims the influx of foreign photographers to Palestine has brought about radical improvements in local photography. As she says, "We learn from these guys" (interview with Halawani, 2003). Lowe reports that young Bosnian photographers experienced in covering war were now being used in Afghanistan and Iraq (interview with Lowe, 2003).

In order to explore the question of photographic development, two examples are explored in more depth. The examples were chosen to represent opposite ends of accepted photographic development. In an initial survey of overseas development offices in the UK (conducted by email in January 2003 and sent to all participants in the *New Openings Survey* (Clark, 2003)), the author was unable to find anyone who knew of an Ethiopian photographer. Bangladesh, however, received the greatest response, principally through the reputation of the Drik picture library. These two countries were therefore chosen for more in-depth studies.

Ethiopia

Historian Richard Pankhurst gives a detailed account of the development of photography in Ethiopia between 1867 and 1935 (Pankhurst, 1996). While photographers were reported to be working professionally in Addis Ababa as early as 1905, there is no mention of an indigenous Ethiopian photographer. Instead the market was dominated by Armenians and travelling Europeans. The first mentioned professional Ethiopian photographer was Negash Wolde Amanuel. Born in 1931, Negash describes flourishing amateur photography habits in the 1950s when Ethiopian troops, serving in Korea, returned with box cameras bought en route in Japan. Negash trained as a photographer in New York and went on to work for *Time/Life* for five years before returning to Ethiopia to set up as a photographer (Negash, 1997). Emperor Haile Sellassie's strict regime and the Marxist Derg government that followed made it difficult for non-state photographers to work publicly. Ironically, perhaps the greatest influence on modern Ethiopian photography was the advent of the communist regime in Addis Ababa which drove many Ethiopians to seek a future outside their homeland.

The author spent four weeks in Ethiopia in June/July 2003 conducting folio viewings and interviews. Before leaving the UK, a survey was carried out amongst all the UK NGOs listed on the BOND (British Overseas NGOs for Development) website with projects in Ethiopia. The author was not able to find one Ethiopian photographer known to the NGOs' respective media departments. A further internet search was conducted with the major picture agencies for Ethiopian photographers, both online and through email requests, which again yielded no results. A final search was conducted through the World Press Photo database which lists all photographers that have ever entered the competition and five photographers' names and their publications were revealed. Further to this list, the name of an Ethiopian media consultant, Tafari Wossan, based in Addis Ababa, was given to the author following an interview with broadcaster Jonathan Dimbleby in March 2003. Wossan was contacted on arrival in Addis Ababa and he joined the author in conducting a four-week search to find photographers and conduct portfolio reviews. During this time, the author met with over 20 photographers including the five on the World Press Photo database. Although the search was not totally comprehensive, the author was satisfied that the majority of the highest-level practitioners of photography in the country were interviewed.

Of the photographers surveyed, the five most internationally successful photojournalists all gained photographic training while in exile in Europe and America, and had have recently returned to set up in business. All had experience working for international publications and agencies, but none demonstrated a style other than that from the place they had trained outside Ethiopia (interviews with Fiorente, 2003; Tesfa, 2003; Mekonnen, 2003; Mamo, 2003). Of these five photographers, four were, at that time, working sporadically for international wire agencies and the fifth with American adventure travel magazines. The business partner of Antonio Fiorente, one of the aforementioned five photojournalists, left for a trip to the USA and UK to promote and sell his photography to international agencies during the author's research visit. Although internet connectivity is slow, all five photographers had web access and were well resourced with the technology needed to sell their work via the web.

Other Ethiopian photographers who remained during the Derg government demonstrated work relevant to the local market but below the standard required by international publications. Through all the folio reviews in 2003, the author was not able to identify a style that was culturally significant. Every Ethiopian photographer interviewed was male. At that time, the acceptance of photography as a credible tool of news delivery in Ethiopia was limited. Newspapers, for example, ran few photographs and regarded the photographer as an accessory to a written journalist. No newspapers in Ethiopia subscribed to international wire services and, as a result, all the photography published in the newspapers was either shot by local photographers or copied and printed illegally

from the internet. As a result, no international wire agencies had bureaux in Addis Ababa, though all had relationships with local stringers. Photographers interviewed reported they maintained a low profile in Ethiopian society. Tamrat Giogis, editor of the weekly newspaper *The Fortune*, had recently used photography much more prominently and was reporting increased sales. Giorgis argued that other papers were already seeing the impact and were adjusting picture use accordingly. He predicted a rapid change over the coming year (interview with Giorgis, 2003). Growth in photography training was also positive. Three photography colleges had recently been opened offering one-year diploma courses. The Masters Fine Arts and Vocational Training Center, the biggest of the three, had nearly 1,000 students graduating every year from three campuses.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh has a rich history of indigenous photography and exists within a sophisticated Asian culture of news and magazine production. "They say Canada is the country of wheat, well Bangladesh must be the country of news" (interview with Rahman, 2003). Shahidul Alam, who studied as a scientist in the UK, has successfully sustained an international protest campaign for the recognition of Bangladeshi photographers. His organisation, Drik, has expanded from a small two-person photographic agency to a large media organisation serving a predominantly local market. As referred to in the first section of this chapter, Drik's picture library is poised to join other specialist agencies trading stock and feature images online, using its majorityworld.com portal. Through the same process of enquiry conducted for Ethiopia, Bangladeshi photographers were also investigated and a long list created from the results. Key to this list was the influence of Drik. What is unique about Drik amongst other Majority World photography agencies is its sister training academy, Pathshala, which offers short courses and a full three-year degree in photography. Graduates from the school are drawn from both gender groups and many of them work internationally. Three graduates have been chosen for the World Press Photo Masterclass (where 12 of the most promising young photojournalists in the world are chosen each year) since 2003.

The photographers working at Drik each showed folios of tear sheets from international publications where their work had been published. They demonstrated an understanding of the market. However the author was not shown evidence of a Bangladeshi style. The image construction appeared to be in the tradition of Minority World views, discussed in the previous section. There was evidence of pictures that only a local photographer is likely to have gained access to, particularly in sensitive religious and political areas. The author was told repeatedly in interviews that photographers were held in low status by society. This was evident by the fact that all students interviewed at the school had already graduated from a local university, or were studying elsewhere simultaneously, as their parents did not believe photography could provide a viable future. The growth of photography in Bangladesh was apparent, but more gradual than in Ethiopia.

Experimental Research

Following the publication of his 2003 research which argued that no indigenous visual style could be found in Ethiopia and Bangladesh (Clark, 2004), the author encountered criticism from photo educators and editors who believed that photojournalists from different countries retained a unique cultural stamp on their compositions and choice of subject. In response to this, an experiment was conducted to critically evaluate this claim. On 9 September 2004, the author brought a group of five student photographers to photograph a community of migrant families living in slums behind the railway station in Zhaoqing, Guangdong, China. The photographers were all second or third-year university BA students, specialising in photography. Two students were studying at Zhaoqing University and were from Guangdong, the province in which the pictures were being taken, and a further three were UK students who had only arrived in China the day prior to

the shoot. None had visited China before and were, therefore, seeing this situation for the first time.

The group spent about three hours following Rosa, a worker from the NGO China 8 which provides basic education and healthcare to the community. The students were briefed together as a group in both Chinese and English. The assignment was to provide the NGO with a set of images of their work and a visual description of the community with which they worked, to be used by China 8 for a forthcoming fundraising drive. The NGO is supported by both Chinese and international supporters, so there was no clear guidance on what particular aesthetic was required.

All the students were given around three hours to complete their work after which their disks/films were collected by the author for processing/scanning and a set of contact sheets of all the pictures taken was produced, along with an alphabetical letter assigned to each photographer. The contact sheets were then shown to five picture editors in the UK and five in China, five photo educators in the UK and five in China, international and Chinese photographers at the Pingyao photography festival 2004, and photography students in China and the UK. Later a series of anthropologists, psychologists, and others also used an online version of the survey to submit results.[7] All were asked to state which of the photographers (named with letters A to E) were Chinese and which were from the UK. They were also asked to comment on what had informed their judgement.

Of the first responses documented (over 200), only 2.1% chose correctly, statistically a smaller proportion than random guessing should have produced. Those that guessed correctly however were not able to pinpoint a reason for their choice other than 'a feeling'. Professor Yang Xiaoguang, dean of the Department of Image Art at Dalian Medical University, which houses the largest photography department in China states, "It is impossible to tell these days. Our students use the same textbooks and look at the same photography as every other photography student in the world. They also use the internet if we don't have the books" (Xiaoguang, 2004).

The experiment suggests a lack of clear cultural visual identifiers in the images shot by both sets of students, and backs up Mayes's argument that there is no clear differential aesthetic from photographers from the Majority World discussed earlier in this chapter. What was clear from the experiment was a difference in perceived quality. One of the two Chinese photographers that participated was, in most viewers' opinion, 'a better photographer' than the others. In most cases he was incorrectly attributed to being from the UK.

Since conducting the experiment the author, who teaches a mixed group of international and Chinese MA Photojournalism students in China, sets a yearly task for the students to shoot a single news image that specifically 'demonstrates their cultural background'. The assignment confuses the students and, when anonymized and placed with other images shot, the students are not able to tell which image belongs to which nationality of student.

These studies demonstrate that skilled practising photographers do exist who understand the language of the international image economy and are already engaging with it at different levels. Through the experiment, and in the studies, there is no evidence of a country's unique specific cultural style but rather proof of visual globalisation. The status of photographers within both Ethiopia and Bangladesh societies was low, though improving, and there is strong evidence to suggest the numbers and quality of indigenous photographers are increasing. Any divide between Minority and Majority world is thereby fluid and regularly breached.

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[7] These are still online at http://www.djclark.com/change. Click on 'experiment'.

Digital Colonialism

As discussed in the first section of this chapter, the global image economy has become far more flexible in the past decade, moving from physical prints and slides kept in filing cabinets in European and American major cities to a fluid digitised market, based on the internet. As Mayes argues (2006), this flexibility has not managed to extend to the gatekeepers who remain in the Minority World and represent the interests of that world.

David Larsen, director of Africa Media Online, a picture agency that represents African photographers, introduces his company on a videocast:

> More often than not it is news organisations and academic institutions outside of Africa that are interpreting Africa to the world and even Africa to itself. If we are to ensure a stable world order in the information society, information democracy must be a fundamental goal. A vital part of ensuring information democracy is to enable the Majority World to speak on its own terms and interpret its own reality to the rest of the world.

(Larsen, 2006)

Director and CEO of TVE Asia Pacific, Sri Lanka, Nalaka Gunawardene, agrees with Larsen, 'recognising everybody's communication rights in the information society is not mere slogan or campaign; it's an integral part of social justice' (Kijiji Vision, 2007). At the 2005 Bamako photography festival in Mali, Larsen addressed a group of African photographers in his fight against what he calls 'digital colonialism'. His aim is to convince all photographers working in Africa to use his online picture library software with which they can be joined together under the Africa Pictures.net portal. The innovative project allows each photographer to control their area of a single agency and sell to global markets. Larsen argues that this concept takes out the influence of foreign interests and gives news publications both in Africa and outside a genuinely local perspective.

There are however two major obstacles to the project's success. Firstly, the technology required for the photographers to participate is sparse in Africa. High-speed internet access is available along the northwest coast and a spine running half way up the southeast coast of the continent but the majority of the cities still don't have the infrastructure to participate. Secondly, the costs of running the business in South Africa are high and photographers would get a much better deal if they went with Minority World alternatives such as Alamy (UK) or Photoshelter (US). These two agencies allow photographers to sell their own pictures through customised software that also links them together in one market.

Drik in Bangladesh has a more competitive model (majorityworld.com) as there is no financial outlay and images can be sent in on CD or film for scanning. The agency is much newer than African Pictures.net, has lower running costs (in particular labour costs) but needs time to develop. Both agencies provide alternatives to Minority World sources as they only represent Majority World photographers so that image buyers visiting their sites are guaranteed a local photographer.

Fair Trade Photography

In concluding, this section the question of local photographers' right to represent their communities even if that representation is not aesthetically unique is discussed. The organisation Kijiji Vision has, since its founding, claimed that 90% (Kijiji Vision, 2007) of Majority World images are taken by 'Western' photographers. The figure is a misunderstanding from research on UK NGO photography of the Majority World (Clark, 2003) that found that 90% of images were taken by NGO staff (Kijiji had presumed the staff were all drawn from the Minority World, which was not the case). Although data on

the proportions of images published in the UK were not quantified in the study (Clark, 2003), it can be assumed that the vast majority are sourced either by Minority World photographers or through Minority World photography agencies (Alam, Hastings and Watts 2007; Larsen 2007). Panos Pictures, the UK's leading photo agency on Majority World issues, lists 84 photographers on their website, only 23% of whom are from the Majority World (Alam, Hastings and Watts, 2007).

Core to both Drik and Africa Pictures.net's success outside their own continents is the promotion of fair trade photography in the Minority World. This is an issue of political economy rather than visual language. The process of persuading editors and NGOs to consider using local photographers is based on two main selling points. Firstly, it is argued that the local photographer will produce a different perspective and offer unique insights into news stories, thereby increasing the value of the images (a contention that the earlier discussion argues is not necessarily the case). Secondly, the following fair trade policies are stressed:

1. A fair price is paid directly by the publication, avoiding middlemen or reduced prices.
2. The revenue from the production of an image of a particular community is invested back into that community.
3. The responsibility to represent a community is invested in a community member who theoretically has a much broader contextual understanding.

To elaborate on the respective issues, 'a fair price' is said to relate to the value to the publication rather than to the photographer. Kijiji's argument is that a photograph's value is not at its source (the average salary of a photographer in the country where the image was taken) but at its output (the average fee paid by the publication for an image published). The 'avoidance of middlemen' suggests that the publications can deal directly with the photographer rather than going through an agency. However, both models Kijiji Vision promotes, namely the Memat system (Africa Pictures.net) and Majorityworld.com (Drik), act as 'middlemen' and take a good proportion of the sale. The second issue, that of 'reinvestment', is one that photographer Paul Lowe also promoted in his address at the *Imaging Famine* conference. Directing his comments at NGO picture editors, Lowe argued that using a local photographer represents a far wiser investment than employing a visiting photographer as their overheads are much lower giving them more to invest in personal projects outside the immediate commission being undertaken.

Journalistic ethics appear divided on the issue of using local photographers. The first two points of a 12-point ethical code issued by The National Union of Journalists in the UK states a journalist:

1. At all times upholds and defends the principle of media freedom, the right of freedom of expression and the right of the public to be informed.

2. Strives to ensure that information disseminated is honestly conveyed, accurate and fair.

(NUJ, 2008)

Though not directly addressing the issue of the journalist's nationality, the first point appears to support the right of any journalist to report any situation, regardless of nationality, whereas the second appears to reject the model of the parachute journalist who lacks the time to understand in full the situation they report. Alam writes regularly on the issue of media plurality and argues for a quota system to insure impartiality:

In media, there has to be a mechanism whereby other voices are heard. Media plurality is a very important concept. What happens today is that certain voices are left out of the dialogue. That's the wrong way to do things, and I think that question needs to be raised at every level.

(interview with Alam, 2005B)

His argument is not for a single indigenous perspective but a balanced one.

Summary

The previous section has described the practice of photojournalistic visual representation of the Majority World in the Minority World, consisting of two fundamental cognitive processes. The first requires a grasp of the subject and the second an understanding of the audiences. It has argued that, historically, the Minority World has seen a large bulk of images of the Majority World taken by photographers that understood their dominant audiences but, due to pressures of the task and industry, had little time to comprehend the complexities of the subject. The final image therefore was a reflection of the cultural makeup of the photographer and his audiences' imagined geographies rather than the subject. It then discussed the alternative representation, made by indigenous photographers with a presumed stronger understanding of subject but less of an understanding of the audiences. Through this discussion, the section argued that the indigenous perspective was not in fact aesthetically different but potentially different in terms of the choice of images the indigenous photographer was likely to use.

This section has continued the discussion with a series of studies and experiments that engage with the previous section's argument. It has demonstrated that in Ethiopia and Bangladesh there been increasing numbers of local photographers participating in the global image economy, with many of them having had personal experience of living or working in the Minority World. However, studies using both local and visiting photographers have also demonstrated there is no identifiable viewpoint for either set of photographers derived from their identity. Taking this as a conclusion, the section then moves on to an ethical argument of using local photographers in order to break down Minority World digital dominance and concluded with a discussion of fairly traded photography which, given the lack of an alternative aesthetic, relies on an economic and ethical argument. A fair price is related to the value to the publication rather than to the photographer. The avoidance of 'middlemen' suggests that the publications can deal directly with the photographer rather than going through an agency. In the case of non-contracted photographers, both models that Kijiji Vision promotes, do not offer a method of unmediated and direct access to working photographers and in some cases the photographers would get a better deal with a Minority World agency.

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter started with a description of the recent changes in the global picture economy that favour local photographers. In terms of the concerns of this thesis, the advantage no longer lies with the UK photographer but instead belongs to the African photographer who can reach the story quicker and fall back on a greater degree of knowledge. However after introducing these changes and an expected growth of Majority World photographers, the chapter outlined a series of forces that constrain the local photographer from being free to give an alternative view, which in turn may influence audiences' imaginations of place. This starts with the mechanism of distribution and selection. Thousands of thumbnail images now compete on editors' computer screens and this inevitably favours the simplistic, decontexualised and over dramatized view. Competition from TV and between agencies gives less time for photographers to consider composition or the depth of their stories and market forces entice Majority World photographers to represent Minority World interests. The research discussed in this chapter shows little evidence of a change in contextualisation of Africa to UK audiences even though in many instances the people behind the cameras have changed.

The chapter argues the new global image economy has in fact simplified dominant audiences' understandings of distant places as the shift away from dedicated photographers to agency subscriptions has meant pictures sourced have to appeal to

much wider publics. Again the simplest way to give agency images the greatest currency is to keep them tight and simple, drawing an audience by their impact but doing little to contextualise the geography of the place where the event took place. Shrinking news publications and the greater use of the single picture add to this drought of visual information. However, the economy is still in motion and the opportunity the internet presents with space for picture essays and video stories, combined with an increased use of local photographers, means there are opportunities to once again change the dynamic in the future.

In the last two sections the chapter argues the editor's choice between using a local photographer or a travelling photographer has been made redundant, as newspapers reduce their photographic staff and take up global agency subscriptions. The effect of the change has meant that photographers now shoot to generic global audiences thereby ignoring their ability to play to specific localised readerships. Meanwhile, the increase in local photographers employed by agencies is countered by the demands of the image economy that restricts their ability to express a local voice. Studies in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and China all reveal increased quality and quantity of local photographers participating in the global picture economy, yet none demonstrate a particular cultural aesthetic attributable to the identity of the photographer. The rise of the local photographer is nonetheless supported by a fair trade argument that gives them the ethical high ground in the process of commissioning.

The chapter has also concluded the concept of the 'Western Eye' is problematic if it supposes an obvious dividing line between Western and other photographic cultures, and can only be made sense of in terms of the needs of the global image economy. However, any such line decreases as global photographers move across borders and cultural identities. These studies demonstrate that skilled practising photographers do exist who understand the language of the international image economy and are already engaging with it at different levels. Through experiments and studies, discussed in this chapter, there is no evidence of any country's unique specific cultural style but rather proof of visual globalisation.

CHAPTER 4
PHOTOGRAPHY, FAMINE
AND DEVELOPMENT

The first three chapters have sought to investigate the interconnections between photojournalism and public visual understandings of the Majority World. The first chapter delineated UK public understandings of the Majority World and their link to photography. The second chapter discussed the process of both creating news photographs and also siting pictures both in print and in the gallery space. Both processes have implications for the imagined geographies of the places the images depict and (as discussed in Chapter 1) a potential impact on the economic and social development of the countries concerned. The third chapter critically analysed changes in the modern global image economy and how those changes have impacted image constructions.

This chapter focuses on a single case study, the Ethiopian famine of 1984-5. The chapter is divided into two sections: a description of the event combined with a discussion of how the famine was consumed by dominant UK audiences, and an analysis of recent disaster coverage from the same country. Through the two interconnected sections, the chapter seeks to trace a compositional lineage that feeds from a contemporary image market and influences public understandings of place. Returning to a question posed in Chapter 1, which asked whether dominant UK understandings of Africa were the result of *Live Aid* or a long representational history of Africa, this chapter analyses how the photography of this particular event (the Ethiopian famine that led to *Live Aid*) constructed specific and enduring geographic imaginations and how these visualisations impact on future photographic compositions of the country.

The chapter is divided into two main discussions. The first considers the 1984 Ethiopian famine as a turning point in dominant UK public imaginations of Ethiopia and the second analyses the pictorial representation of one contemporary Ethiopian news story in relation to imaginations of the place in which it occurs. The chapter starts with a discussion of the history of imaging Ethiopia, from early drawings to the first photographic representations. Through this discourse the first section will argue that although the country had a history of famine, for most of its early record the country managed to cultivate a relatively positive image among audiences in the UK. The following discussion then considers the Jonathan Dimbleby famine report from southern Ethiopia in 1973 and its impact on UK understandings of the country. The argument develops with a description of the build up, the event, and the aftermath of the 1984-5 famine in northern Ethiopia, offering a critical analysis of the first BBC reports that broke the story. Following this, the chapter discusses the formation and execution of a popular response through Band Aid, *Live Aid* and other non-NGO/government responses. The first discussion concludes with a deconstruction of the images of the BBC report and questions how the sum of the images affected dominant UK public understandings of the wider continent in which they were taken, and why.

The second section of the chapter uses one case study to discuss how contemporary representations of Ethiopia are affected by the event 25 years previous. Here a single image of baby Mekanic Philipos, his mother, a UNICEF worker, and UK celebrity Bob Geldof, taken at a feeding centre in southern Ethiopia, is analysed. Through a study of the circumstances in which the picture was created, those present, the influence of the contemporary global economy, and the facts on the ground, the section will argue that a fabricated 'famine' image was constructed for UK medias in order to conform to dominant UK imagined geographies of the country in which the event took place.

1. ETHIOPIAN FAMINE: A MEDIA SPECTACULAR

The Ethiopian famine of 1984-5 was significant in that its representation, first as a news item and later as a popular humanitarian cause, had a considerable impact on dominant UK public understandings of the continent of Africa. It also 'altered the position of development NGOs in the development process' (Lidchi, 1993: p.99), both in terms of scale and attention to visual communication. This section provides a summary account of the events that led to the Ethiopian famine, critically discussing the key factors that led to a revisualisation of place and the NGO response to criticism of their communications policy.

The Image of Ethiopia

Before starting a discussion on the representation of the 1984-5 famine in Ethiopia it is first useful to understand dominant UK public understandings of place before the event. The first chapter outlined UK public imaginations of the continent of Africa, arguing they were, in the main, negative. In the case of Ethiopia, this section argues that the negative visualisation occurred not through a long history of imaging the 'dark continent', as outlined in Chapter 1, but predominantly through one single event. In order to quantify this it is first necessary to discuss representations of Ethiopia before the 1984 event.

Optics were first introduced in the late eighteenth century to Ethiopia by Scotsman James Bruce, one of the first foreigners to live in the then capital, Gonda. He used a six-foot diameter 'Camera Obscura' from which he was able to produce more accurate drawings. His subjects are mainly of 'flora and fauna, and a few portraits, including those of two Ethiopian ladies of rank, Astér and Takla Maryam' (Pankhurst & Gérard, 1996: p.19). Bruce surprisingly chose not to represent the architecture, or the religious and social life of the city in which he lived, choosing more exotic subjects outside.

The first known photographs from the country were also introduced by a British resident, Henry Stern, who arrived in the country as a missionary in 1859 as part of a protestant campaign to convert the Falashas. He was a keen photographer and, like Bruce, concentrated on the more primitive villages outside the main cities. Stern came to blows with Emperor Téwodros who ordered his house be searched and cameras confiscated. In spite of his local assistant's explanation of the perceived wizardry, Stern was imprisoned along with several other British residents (including the consul and Queen's envoy). Ironically, his incarceration led to the first in-depth photographic study of the country courtesy of a British military expedition which was dispatched in 1867 to free the captives. As part of the mission, the Duke of Cambridge, who was in charge, proposed the Royal Engineers create a team of seven officer photographers to document their journey through Abyssinia (Holland & Hozier, 1870). In spite of carrying heavy equipment, the team managed to take over 15,000 photographs between them. Their focus was, in most part, on the expedition itself and local culture, and landscape received little attention. The expedition also avoided the main cultural centres of Gondar and Lalibala, which were not en route.

Although Ethiopia was not colonised in the early days of photography, photography's introduction to the country was entwined with power relations with Europe. Both Stern's images and those of the Royal Engineers portrayed the local culture as primitive, in need of both salvation (the missionary) and discipline (the military). Ryan (1997) discusses the use of photography in the Abyssinia campaign as 'an application of the military'. Kathleen Howe (2003: p.242) extends the reasoning and argues that this mechanical function of military photography 'inscribe a set of colonial assumptions in the images produced.' Taking a related Royal Engineers' mapping exercise of the Holy Land as case study, Howe discusses the use of photography as evidence of Edward Said's assertion that 'imperialism is an act of geographical violence through which virtually every space in the world is explored, charted and finally brought under control' (Said, 1990: p.77). She argues that the process of detailed photographic survey conducted through Minority World colonial objectives, in effect, represented a handing over of ownership of

place and hence the completion of the process of military conquest. In the case of the Abyssinia campaign the objective was not to colonise but rather rescue British captives and demonstrate to both neighbouring states and the world the might of the British Army. The choice to photograph this exploit, and then exhibit and publish was clearly designed to establish an understanding of the power relationship between Great Britain and any Majority World country (Ethiopia being used as example) that sought to infringe on its interests.

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century a wealth of European documentary photographers visited Ethiopia (Revoil, Swayne and James), bringing back with them reproductions commonly used in travel literature at the time and transforming a European imagination of Ethiopia into an exotic destination for ambitious travellers. The Italian conquest of Massawa in 1885 further increased the influx of photographers and, in turn, visitors to the area. Travel and photography continued to grow throughout the 1890s with the Italian colonisation of Eritrea (Pankhurst & Gérard, 1996: p.24). In 1890 European photographers used Eritrea as a staging post for expeditions into northern Somalia and Ethiopia. There appears to have been a mixed reaction to the photographers' presence. Frenchman J.G. Vanderheym recalls being begged to visit Addis Ababa by emperor Menilik and photograph his family (Pankhurst & Gérard, 1996: p.25) whereas most street photographers found great resistance from local Ethiopians who saw the camera as a curse. Herbert Vivian (1901) reported people fleeing from him when he attempted to photograph and, in one case, the Cathedral in Harar actually closed after orders were given to only open for services to prevent its desecration by photography. The dislike for being imaged is an ongoing trait still experienced today by many photographers in the country. Minister for tourism in the 1960s and early 1970s Hapte-Selassie Tafesse recalls the reaction while taking visitors around the country in a bid to promote tourism:

> There was opposition to photography. Some felt the picture took their blood, others were not happy in the way they were being portrayed as poor and primitive. When I started to bring tourists by the plane-load, when they went to the market, people would throw tomatoes, stones, etc. at them, saying you are exposing our poverty and we are proud people. You take pictures to underline our backwardness and poverty.
>
> (interview with Hapte-Selassie, 2003)

In contrast the royal family clearly felt the act of being photographed complimented their status and would take a great deal of time preparing themselves for the event. The images were constructed according to the subjects' instructions and the photographer obliged to conform.

Throughout the early twentieth century photographers continued to come to Ethiopia and, in turn, its popularity as a tourist destination grew. Photographers concentrated on the country's historical sites and monuments, and were encouraged by a succession of emperors. While World War One led to a slow down of visiting documentarians, the Italian invasion in 1935 had the opposite effect. One German freelancer working for *Berliner Illusttrierte Zeitung* created a vast reportage of the country in 1935, as well as covering the hostilities with Italy. Other than the British invasion, Ethiopia had managed up until 1935 to avoid the visual degradation that came with colonialism. Like the British invading party, the Italians also sought to use the camera as a means to subjugate but had to compete with alternative representations provided by journalists already present, who had opposing political interests. The Italians illegal use of poisonous gas in the war with Ethiopia led to 275,000 Ethiopian deaths, and brought world condemnation and a flood of international journalists wanting to expose the Italians as the wrong-doers (Harrison & Palmer, 1986: p.40). There is no evidence of Ethiopian photographers being involved but rather there appears to have been a propaganda war fought out in Europe with the UK-perspective being pro-Ethiopian and anti-Italian. Erotic postcards of Ethiopian women were passed around to Italian soldiers to entice them to fight and, once again, the conquering army sent photographers to record their military

achievements. However, these images were confined to Italy and therefore probably had little effect on outside visualisations of place. By 1936, after the invasion was complete, this form of image making ceased as the ruling fascists instituted a policy of strict racial discrimination, which outlawed the erotic postcards, and started to promote tourism, which demanded a different image. However once again, the images designed to bring Italian tourists and workers to Ethiopia were reserved for the consumption of Italian audiences.

During this period, images of Ethiopia were being sent back to European and American publications where different political ideologies were being played out. Stories were published in the growing mainstream news magazines where pictures began to play a more significant role in the 'battle' to win hearts and minds. In the *Time* magazine cover story of 3 November 1930 (Fig 4.1) covering the coronation of Haile Selassie, the country is described and pictured as the 'land of Judah'; an independent state surrounded by European colonies. Selassie is imaged as royal and cultured, which the accompanying article emphasises. Selassie appears again on the cover in January 1936, this time as *Time* magazine 'Man Of The Year' for his resistance to the Italian invasion. In contrast to this, right-wing publications in support of the Italian invasion used images of poverty and simplicity in order to justify their aggression.

Fig 4.1 *Time* magazine covers, 3 November 1930 and 6 January 1936.

The Impact of 1973

It is not possible to estimate the extent of famine in Ethiopia before 1888 as the sources are largely hagiographical, describing events in relation to religious intervention (Conrad, 1986) rather than documentary fact. However, there was a series of famines that occurred in the area from at least the ninth century onwards (Harrison & Palmer, 1986: p.43). Of those recorded, the evidence for the 1888-92 'great' famine is the most substantial, with reports not only from the government of the time but also European travellers and missionaries. If estimates of deaths are to be believed, about a third of the population died, making it a far greater disaster than events in 1973 or 1984. Pankhurst (1986) argues its long-term effects changed the entire social and cultural makeup of the country as people migrated, and established legal and social institutions, such as marriage, were dissolved. Drawings and paintings of the event do exist but few photographs. Ethiopian rulers had a reputation for indifference towards their population's suffering on the basis that famine had been always regarded as part of the Ethiopian landscape (Harrison & Palmer, 1986: p.43). The acceptance of Ethiopian suffering in the famines in both 1973 and 1984 is also highlighted in the reports from those years.

As outlined in Chapter 1, Hapte-Selassie Tafesse was minister for tourism under King Hapte Selassie. He was imprisoned for eight years under the Derg regime, after which he was reinstated, continuing in the role of tourist minister until his retirement. He reports that up until 1973 Ethiopia's tourist industry was thriving:

> We had 85,000 tourists in the year before the 1973 famine, [making us] probably one of the most visited countries in Africa at the time… Ethiopians were greatly respected around the world before the revolution and treated like kings. In America, England, and France, Ethiopians were highly respected but then came the revolution, the famine, the wars, the misery, so now we are down the bottom of the list.
>
> <div align="right">(interview with Hapte-Selassie, 2003).</div>

Prior to 1973, Hapte-Selassie recalls a stream of journalists coming into Ethiopia to record cultural, historical, and geographic programmes. The country was represented as the watershed of Africa with an emphasis on 'the lakes and rivers… After the famine, then the revolution, then another famine, then the war with Eritrea and then HIV everything stopped… the tourists don't want to see misery on a holiday' (ibid).

TV journalist Jonathan Dimbleby, whose report on the 1973 Wollo famine began the process of re-visualising the country to dominant UK audiences, admits he arrived in the country with a "romantic picture of Ethiopia" (interview with Dimbleby, 2003). By chance, he had heard about the killing of 17 university students who were part of a protest instigated by three professors who had visited and photographed the famine and wanted to follow the story up with a documentary (Harrison & Palmer, 1986: p.48). In the one-hour BBC film, *The Unknown Famine (*often referred to as *The Hidden Hunger*, the title of an article Dimbleby wrote in the *Guardian* at the same time) Dimbleby shocked UK audiences with stark images and reports that 100,000 to 200,000 Ethiopians had died and up to double that number were at risk.[8] Dimbleby himself recognizes the issues in dealing with such emotive subjects and acknowledges the media's need for dramatic images:

> People know much more about Ethiopia than they did but the vision is very tunnel vision and that's partly because of my own trade. We depict only disasters far too much of the time and if you are on the receiving end of those images or articles you are bound to say to yourself that Ethiopia is this dreadful basket case of hungry individuals. There are hungry individuals but Ethiopia is also a glorious, rich, wonderfully diverse set of peoples and cultures, and it's become therefore one of my favourite countries on earth.
>
> <div align="right">(interview with Dimbleby, 2003)</div>

His film was copied and re-edited by King Hapte Sellassie's political opponents, which partly contributed to the king's downfall in 1974 and the take over by the Derg. The new government quickly imposed a ban on public photography and most foreigners were expelled from the country leading to a period of quiet from the region (interview with Wossan, 2003). However, the lasting impression to Minority World audiences was that of famine and the violent overthrow, which was extensively covered by the media, an image the Derg government took eight years to realise was affecting their economic growth (interview with Hapte-Selassie, 2003). In 1982, they reinstated the ex-minister of tourism and began a process of trying to re-image the country and restart the tourist industry. Early attempts at this time to find promotional photography included asking tourists who were leaving the country for copies of their images as they were not able to find photographers within the government who could produce the necessary quality (interview with Wossan, 2003). Two years into the new campaign, the 1984 famine pictures began to emerge.

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[8] More recent estimates put the figure at 40,000 to 80,000 dead (De Waal A, 1991: p.58).

A Long Development

In September 1983, Anthony Suau, a young staff photographer at the *Denver Post*, asked his editor to send him to Ethiopia to cover the famine. His request was refused but, in defiance, he took unpaid leave, withdrew $5,000 saved for buying a new apartment and funded a trip to document the food crisis. Returning with strong emotive images, he managed to get just a few published in his paper and a few other dailies but the story was considered too downbeat and 'died on the wire' (Harrison & Palmer, 1986: p.97). A year later in 1984, after the BBC had woken the world to the crisis, Suau's pictures were finally acknowledged and he was awarded a Pulitzer prize for two feature stories, one of which was from Ethiopia (Pulitzer, 2008).

Ethiopia had a history of food insecurity that had affected previous regimes. In the case of the previous ruler, Haile Selassie, famine had contributed directly to his downfall. The resultant communist Derg government of Mengistu Haile Mariam was caught up in the Cold War and politically isolated from Minority World democracies. The resulting famine was a product of a combination of two factors: the civil war with northern separatists that used 46% of the nation's budget; and an ongoing drought (Moeller, 1999: p.113). Although portrayed by the media in 1984 as being unexpected and sudden, the famine developed over a long period of time with repeated warnings from 'Ethiopian government officials, the United Nations, development agency workers, missionaries and a few journalists, but these received little attention in the North, either from governments or the media' (Lidchi, 1993: p.100; Harrison & Palmer, 1986: p.93). The Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (R&RC) of Ethiopia, set up in 1973 as a response to the earlier famine, put out a report as early as May 1981, and then later in March 1984, which outlined an impending food crisis and reported surges of refugees moving into feeding centre camps. An early warning system (EWS) had been in place soon after the 1973 crisis, manned both by the government and international NGOs, and began sounding the alarm long before the crisis developed.

Mike Aldridge, the BBC East Africa correspondent based in Nairobi, was passionate about the issue and had been covering the story since March 1983 (Franks, 2006: p.293). 'It's not true to say that in October 1984 that the famine exploded on the world, the build up had been reported, the world knew about it or certainly should have known about it but critically what the world hadn't had as the famine was becoming catastrophically worse was the visual evidence' (Aldrige in Mills & Rayani, 1986). Aldridge produced 'several competent pieces on the Ethiopian famine but the impact radio coverage had on public opinion was relatively insignificant' (Magistad, 1985: p.67). There were also a small number of articles and TV reports but the global response was minimal (Moeller, 1999: p.113).

Although the R&RC were producing warnings, there was internal division in the Derg government about how to deal with the media. Commissioner Shimelis Adugna was sacked following the first press trip he arranged in March 1983 (which Aldridge had been on). He was replaced by the more cautious Dawit Giorgis, who later defected to the USA and wrote *Red Tears* (1989), an account of the famine from his perspective. His personal version of events outlines a struggle between the R&RC and the Marxist leaders who preferred the issue to remain unreported. In August and September 1984, R&RC staff were taken away from their jobs in order to assist with preparations for the government's tenth anniversary festivities which were being planned by North Korean organisers.

Imaging the Famine

In the UK, the release of Charles Stewart's Central TV documentary on Ethiopia, *Seeds of Despair* (originally pitched as *Seeds of Hope* but the name changed when he discovered the situation to be far worse than he had imagined), combined with a Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) appeal in July 1984, raised the profile of the

famine. However, the NGOs could not agree to focus on one country, so the appeal was launched for the whole of the drought-affected area in the Sahel. The DEC is a unique organisation to the UK which unites the main broadcasters with the largest overseas aid NGOs in the country. Aware of the DEC appeal, and in view of TV company competition, the BBC sent Michael Buerk, then stationed in Johannesburg, South Africa, to visit the area and send a report to go out with the appeal. Buerk sent a message to Oxfam:

> Help, Have had a request from BBC in London relating to an appeal to be televised next Thursday entitled 'Famine in Africa'…need urgent advice on where I can leap in and out quickly with pictures of harrowing drought victims etc to be edited and satellited…money no object, nor distance, only time.
>
> (Buerk, 2004: p.270)

He had planned to go to neighbouring Mozambique but was persuaded by Paddy Coulter, then head of communications at Oxfam, to visit Ethiopia (Buerk, 2004: pp.271 -274). Buerk worked with Kenyan-born Mohammed Amin (1943-1996), a cameraman and Africa bureau chief of Visnews (then an agency supplying TV footage to the BBC and now part of Reuters TV). In Wollayta, a day's drive south from Addis Ababa, Buerk managed to get a short piece before flying back to Nairobi and satelliting it to the BBC for broadcast two hours before the ITV documentary was broadcast. Buerk scooped Stewart's documentary by going on air first and also having more impact than the more considered production. *Seeds of Despair* producer Robert Lamb was frustrated by the competition – 'sometimes five minutes on the news is worth 45 minutes of a documentary' (quoted in Magistad, 1985: p.67). Thanks largely to the two programmes; the aid appeal was hugely successful, especially in the context of the time, a fact that has been forgotten in light of the later, greater response. By the start of October it had raised around 10 million pounds and was due to end on 19 October. However, the success was not mirrored in the USA, which was caught up in the Olympics and the presidential conventions (Moeller, 1999: p.115).

The response to the appeal generated a need for follow-up stories from Ethiopia, but working there was proving problematic. The civil war was intensifying while, at the same time, the Ethiopian government were making celebration plans for the tenth anniversary since independence. In a five-and-half-hour speech delivered by Mengistu on the day of the celebration and witnessed by 200 reporters (all of whom were given visas that did not allow them to leave the capital), the leader never once mentioned the famine. 'Domestic priorities of the Ethiopian Marxist government of Mengistu Haile Marian dictated that news about the famine should not get out' (Moeller, 1999: p.113). UK audiences were also growing sceptical about the use of the funds raised for emergency relief in Ethiopia due to the Ethiopian government's perceived unwillingness to deal with it themselves, and the media organisations involved with the DEC appeal felt the need to bring some good news stories from the region to demonstrate the value of the previous campaign. Reports from NGO workers in the field were, in fact, to the contrary and indicated that the situation was deteriorating.

Independent documentary film maker Peter Gill was the first journalist to get permission to return to Ethiopia with a camera crew but, rather than going to the north of the country where the famine was worse, he was persuaded, for reasons of security, to go to the south. Gill's motivation and argument to the Ethiopian government was to contrast the lack of food in Africa to the mountains of surplus food in Europe that was making other headlines. Gill was asked to avoid all references to famine and instead concentrate on food insecurity, a request he claims he refused. Later, during his trip, he did manage to get to the north of the country and, like Amin and Buerk, managed to film in Korem. However, industrial action at ITV meant his film, *Bitter Harvest*, was not shown until after the Amin/Buerk report.

Mohamed Amin was the second journalist to obtain a visa to film inside Ethiopia. Amin had a long history of working in Ethiopia and used his relationship with Tafari Wossan, head of media at the R&RC (and now a media consultant who helped facilitate

the author's research in Ethiopia), to harass officials into giving him a visa. 'I have known Tafari for more than 20 years and put a lot of pressure on him, explaining our visit was for the benefit of millions of his countrymen,' Amin claimed (Smith, 1998: p.214). Wossan had also been at the heart of the famine story in 1973, having also facilitated Dimbleby's 1973 film, and had been sent before the 1973 film was aired, by the Emperor, to try and persuade ITV not to broadcast it. The BBC was keen for Buerk to join Amin and managed to persuade him to push for permission for him and radio correspondent Mike Wooldridge to join him to go north to the areas of Korem and Makelle, the epicentre of the famine. Buerk's July report had come from the south and was packaged in a single day but he was keen to go to the worst hit areas. More importantly, they were aware of Gill's work and knew he had only been given access to the south, so getting exclusive coverage in other areas would add value to the story.

Buerk, Amin, and Wooldridge reached Makelle on a World Vision charter plane on 16 October, and had not expected to be faced by such a dire situation. After filming in a baby-feeding centre they drove to Korem. The next morning they arrived in the feeding centre in Korem and their obvious shock at what they found was conveyed both in the film footage and the voice-over of their now famous report. With on-going industrial action at ITV holding up Peter Gill's documentary, Buerk had plenty of time to file the report and still beat the competition. The producer decided to fly him back to London rather than satellite the report. During the flight he wrote the words to accompany Amin's images. 'It took half a continent to get the opening right,' Buerk (2004: p.293) recalls. The additional time, Buerk believes, had a great impact on his ability to rework the script and look over the film rushes. "I actually edited this piece three times as long as I wanted because I just felt driven to do that" (quoted in Franks, 2006: p.300).

The package was first broadcast as the lead item on the lunchtime news on 23 October 1984. The images silenced a hardened newsroom and led to donations and tears from the duty staff. Different versions then ran on the *Six O'Clock News* and *Nine O'Clock News* later that day and as follow-up pieces the following day. The footage itself enjoyed longer play than was normal. The competition at ITV had been beaten and the BBC was keen to exploit this. More importantly, however, was the fact that it was a slow world news day, with only one major European news story, the food mountains rotting in EEC warehouses. The *Six O'Clock News* was a new programme, created only a few weeks before the Amin/Buerk report was broadcast. It was 10 minutes longer than other news programmes, the extra time being given for more in-depth reporting. Ron Neil, the new producer, had met Buerk as he had entered the building on his return from the airport and they had had a brief discussion. Neil recognised the story to be the type of item he had hoped to give greater prominence to and, after seeing the footage, and given the competition and contemporaneous EU food mountain piece, decided to make it the lead item. Neil describes his impression of seeing the footage for the first time:

> We had all seen pictures of famine, but these images were different, so haunting and powerful, the whole wide angled landscape of distress combined with wonderfully sparse but powerful commentary made it such a memorable piece of television. Because we were the new programme and we believed in giving good stories proper air time we ran it at length….we wanted to give the audience a greater sense of the scale of the story rather than swiping it past in a few seconds.
> (quoted in Franks, 2006: p.302)

The new news programme, along with the newly launched soap opera *East Enders*, was eating into the BBC finances, and the *Nine O'Clock News*, which still retained larger audiences, was at the time threatened and keen to compete. They moved the story to fourth in the agenda but only cut one minute off the *Six O'Clock News* version.

The food mountain item enhanced Amin and Buerk's story and highlighted the injustice, making the story political. 'This dichotomy provided the sole "political analysis" of the famine situation in the Sahel. Famine was simply a lack of food. The implied solution was easy: transfer over the surplus to Africa' (Lidchi, 1993: p.108). The news package

was not telling the world 'anything new' (Moeller, 1999: p.112). In the first nine months of 1984, the issue had frequently hit the broadsheet headlines (four times as a lead front page story in the *New York Times*) as well as the July DEC appeal. The difference was the unique circumstances in which the TV report appeared. Its siting was crucial to its success.

The Story Spreads

The impact of a news bulletin broadcast from the BBC in London was not only felt within the UK. London was the centre of world news broadcasting in the 1980s as:

it is in a time zone midway between the Occident and the Orient, and virtually every international airline in the world passes through London. English is also the international language of communications and many overseas journalists do their initial training in London.

(Harrison & Palmer, 1986: p.73)

The programme could therefore spread quickly around the world in a way competing news from other geographic locations could not.

Correspondents from the London bureau of US network NBC saw the broadcast and pushed for it to be aired later that evening in the USA, alongside Buerk's original sound, which was very unusual at the time. The request was first rejected but later reversed after Joseph Angotti sent the package by satellite, against the instructions of Paul Greenberg, the nightly news executive producer. Once viewed, Greenberg changed his mind and broadcast a two-and-a-half-minute package under the title 'The Faces of Death in Africa', followed by a similar-length package the following night. In the 36 hours following the NBC broadcast, 10,000 people called Save the Children which in one month led to $1.4 million of donations (Moeller, 1999: p.116).

The Amin/Buerk report was broadcast by 425 of the world's major broadcasting agencies (Philo, 1993: p.121) to a potential audience of 470 million people (Franks, 2006: p.291). Lidchi's research reveals, 'in Britain, Oxfam's switchboard was jammed for three days. The scale of the coverage moved the famine story onto everyone's agenda' (Lidchi, 1993: p.103). Even the UK tabloids took up the cause, including the *Sun*, which had previously dismissed the story. However, the original Amin/Buerk report was exploited by the tabloids which focused more on the deeds of the international NGOs ('white knights' and 'Angels of mercy' (Harrison & Palmer, 1986: p.98)) than that of the famine itself. On 25 October, the *Daily Mail* led with the headline 'For God's Sake Help Us' and the *Mirror* concentrated on then owner Robert Maxwell's mercy mission. 'Whereas television news had little time or space in which to do analysis, along with the added puzzle of how to put abstract concepts into pictures, the tabloids generally did not have the interest' (Magistad, 1985: p.92). The story quickly became about the aid effort rather than the famine itself (Philo, 1993: p.122) contrasting passive Ethiopian victims with enthusiastic philanthropic deeds of Minority World observers, thus revisiting the process of 'othering' and casting Africa as the 'dark continent'. When Peter Gill had gone to Uganda the year before to report on the famine for Thames television, his only way to convince his paymasters to run the story was by concentrating on the white nurses (Harrison & Palmer, 1986: p.98).

The coverage led to a large-scale aid operation in early November, including an airlift involving over 50 airplanes and helicopters bringing in food to internal distribution points. The aid operation quickly took over as the main story, with all NGOs operating in the area receiving extended coverage. Ethiopia became the place for politicians and celebrities to make a Christmas visit to champion the cause and be photographed with the starving. 'Politicians, Actors Gather in Ethiopia: Drama of Famine Victims Draws Celebrities' (quoted in Moeller, 1999: p.118) read one *Washington Post* headline.

Geldof's 'Cause Célèbre'[9]

Irish pop singer Bob Geldof was watching the BBC news broadcast at home and felt compelled to act. He joined with fellow pop singer Midge Ure to write the song *Do They Know It's Christmas*, which was recorded with a host of celebrity musicians under the name Band Aid and sold to raise money and awareness of the famine. The name *Band Aid* is important as 'it was double entendre indicating the participant's awareness that the money raised was not sufficient in itself to eradicate the famine' (Lidchi, 1993: p.103). The group's aim was simple: to raise as much money as they could and, with it, feed starving Ethiopians. They intentionally avoided political statements and engaged the public in their push to leap over formal process and bureaucracy. Ethiopians were starving and Band Aid would deliver their food. The contrast of European food mountains and the simplicity of Geldof's coarse demeanour worked both in terms of raising money and the issue. On 5 January 1985, Geldof landed at Addis Ababa airport to be met by Mother Teresa, who was on her way out of the country. He then set out on a highly-reported Sahel tour, being welcomed by African governments, and was given unlimited access to areas previously out of bounds to foreign visitors. 'His punk diplomacy and lack of institutional links combined to position him as the voice of the people. He represented, independent and active citizens' (Lidchi, 1993: p.104). With this level of support, he also felt able to confront politicians and governments in a way the NGOs had never managed.

In early 1985 Band Aid reorganised as *Live Aid* and set about putting on a 16-hour pop concert from London and Philadelphia, to be broadcast to 108 different countries and eventually watched by an estimated 1.6 billion people. The concert continued the boorish approach to philanthropy, with Geldof at the helm swearing and bullying the viewers to donate and thus participate in a global relief effort. Throughout the day, images of starving Ethiopians were broadcast in between a total of 45 celebrity performances, embedding and intertwining the concepts of Ethiopia and famine in the subconscious of substantial UK audiences:

> Many compared the concert to Woodstock and drew connections between the new pop altruism and 1960s anti-war activism. Once again a foreign issue was distorted – in this instance by the media drawing comparisons between the cause of African famine and the cause of American 60s youth culture.
>
> (Moeller, 1999: p.119)

The resulting donations broke all records, with a total of £35 million in the UK, and £144 million worldwide, given to charity. A new culture of mass celebrity events in support of aid to Africa was spawned, with Sport Aid and later Comic Relief two prominent examples of the trend.

The Images that 'Moved the World'

The 1984-5 Ethiopian famine and the events that followed brought about sweeping changes to dominant UK public understandings of Ethiopia. The stark 'biblical' scenes from Korem were constantly replayed with high-profile celebrities endorsing the campaign to broad sections of society. Amin's camerawork has been discussed in great detail since. The slow shaky panning of the camera, the grey muted tones of the subject, and the long, fixed camera pauses on desperate faces all are regarded as key contributing factors to the impact. Yet the African cameraman was largely ignored as the creator of the package, with most of the credit going to Buerk. His poetic report opened:

> Dawn and as the sun breaks through the piercing chill of night on the plain outside Korem, it lights up a biblical famine, now, in the twentieth century. This place, say workers here, is the closest thing to hell on earth. Thousands of wasted people are

[9] Moeller, 1999: p.118.

coming here for help. Many find only death. They flood in everyday from villages hundreds of miles away. Delved by hunger, driven beyond the point of desperation. Fifteen thousand children here now, suffering, confused, lost. Death is all around, a child or an adult die every twenty minutes. Korem, an insignificant town, has become a place of grief.

<div align="right">(Buerk, 1984)</div>

Fig 4.2 Still frame grab from the Buerk/Amin 23 October 1984, BBC *Six O'Clock News* report from Korem (digital video given to the author by Tafari Wossan).

The viewers' impression was of a British BBC reporter witnessing a horrific scene with additional comment by French (23 October) and British (24 October) aid workers. Ethiopian workers are filmed carrying bodies, distributing clothing, and guarding supplies but are not interviewed for commentary. The news package is an outside view with the subjects depersonalised. No names are given, and on the soundtrack there is just one personal reference, that of a three year-old girl who later dies in front of an estimated 470 million viewers (Moeller, 1999: p.111).

The style of the report caught US audiences off guard, which was widely attributed to have been the result of the combination of Amin's camerawork and Buerk's words:

> The magnitude of the suffering had helped create the impact, but it was the quality of the images that made the scenes so arresting. For Americans unused to British News styles, the slower pace of Amin's camerawork allowed its audience to form strong impressions. 'It was as if each clip was an award-winning still photo,' said William Lord, executive producer of ABC's World News Tonight.

<div align="right">(Moeller, 1999: p.117)</div>

The theory of extraordinary camerawork was validated through a series of awards that followed. However, an analysis of the longest (seven-minute) report broadcast on the BBC *Six O'Clock News* reveals the package is not ground-breaking or extraordinary in its use of pans, stills, or a particular aesthetic. There are a total of eleven still pictures that concentrate on a face, nine of which are of women or children. The number is no greater than the average in any other news broadcast of this nature. None of the stills appear to have been shot using a tripod and appear very shaky (commonly regarded as unprofessional). The pans and zooms also appear hurried and random. Amin and Buerk were telling a human story rather than just giving facts and figures, and they appear to have made an impulse reaction to the horror they had come upon. The scene they faced was highly visible due to the fact refugees had descended on swelling feeding camps (85,000 in Mekele and 40,000 in Korem) that afforded a wide landscape of the disaster. That, in conjunction with soft early morning light, gave Amin a strong visual opportunity. In essence the raw footage is a standardised depiction of 'lone individuals or a seething mass, victimised, hungry, staring blankly for a pitying audience far away' (Campbell, 2003: p.70).

Mike Aldridge who was with Amin as he filmed was asked if the cameraman did anything differently to make such a huge impact:

Well number one I think it was the sheer scale of it, since the earlier famine here ten years before we hadn't had anything on this scale. But I think as I watched him at work on that day, one of the things he did so effectively was to convey not just what was happening to people, how they were trying to exist but also what was happening to them inside. It wasn't always easy because people were quite subdued and that might sound surprising living in such appalling conditions but there was almost a silence around, there wasn't much sound. When someone had died any relatives around them would certainly be sobbing but to a large extent this was a quiet place and I think what Mo captured very effectively was almost the dignity that people had. Through focussing on their expressions and their eyes and showing us these immensely graphic images of the haunting look in peoples eyes. Perhaps one of the most powerful images of all was the mother and child lying together down there, the bodies had been placed together under the calico…that is one of the most memorable images of all.

(quoted in Mills & Rayani, 1986)

Amin's son, Salim who now runs his father's photographic agency Camerapix in Nairobi, believes the awards were deserved for his father's ability to get to the story, rather than his camerawork. Salim Amin argues cameramen "take the majority of the risk; they have to be in the frontline to get the pictures. A lot of times if they are locals it is their contacts and their access that enables a correspondent from outside to come in and get the story" (quoted in Mills & Rayani, 1986). The argument for the local photographer here follows that it is the contacts and local knowledge that makes it possible for the story to exist. Buerk argues it was the similarity of the images to the audiences' visualisation of scenes from the bible that created the impact. "People looked like those depicted in the colour illustrations in my old school Bible. Sort of sackcloth colour and a certain nobility of features" (quoted in Harrison & Palmer, 1986: p.119).

Geldof believes it was the challenge thrown out to audiences by Amin's camerawork that proved effective:

I do not know why Mo Amin's pictures did this to me…but the pitiless, unrelenting gaze of his camera was different. Somehow this was not objective journalism but confrontation. There was a dare here – 'I dare you to turn away, I dare you to do nothing,' Mo Amin had succeeded above all else in showing you his own disgust and shame and anger and making it yours also.

(quoted in Smith, 1998: p.219)

The fact there was little other news that day and the packages appeared at length and high up the news agenda also added strength:

The viewing public is subconsciously influenced by how a story is placed within a newscast or newspaper. The more prominent a story in the total of a news presentation the more likely an audience will consider it important. Previous newspaper and television news stories about Ethiopian famine had been shorter, and played as secondary news stories well within the newscast or newspaper. When the BBC played the story as it did, it gave the famine instant prominence. The Ethiopian famine had not been 'news', in the sense of having a strict time element, until the BBC made it news.

(Magistad, 1985: p.92)

The power of the Korem images, and the reason they are remembered today, appears to come from their siting within a 1980s global media landscape. First sited on the BBC news and then later intertwined with images of pop culture figures, constantly repeated over a seven month period (October 1984-July 1985), the pictures became embedded in the mainstream British psyche. Images from this story played an important part in pushing the story up the news agenda. To understand their impact, it is first

important to consider a number of key factors related specifically to their siting in context with the period and media landscape in which the report first appeared. Although the images and voice-over are undoubtedly emotive, this section has argued that they are not extraordinary in terms of aesthetic quality, particularly when compared to alternative visualisations such as the Sahel images produced by Sebastião Salgado (discussed in Chapter 2). The main factors that influenced the impact of this particular news story are summarised below.

Firstly, at the time they were shown, approximately eight million people watched the *Six O'Clock News* in the UK and 10 million watched the *Nine O'Clock News* (Franks, 2006: p.307). This was during a period of high news popularity and little choice on the British TV networks. Secondly, the relationship to other news on the day of the broadcast worked, by coincidence, in favour of the package. Two factors, in particular, were crucial: the lack of other strong world news stories, and the juxtaposition with news about growing European food mountains. Thirdly, the news team working with Buerk was not being pressured by competition thanks to the ITN strike, affording them the opportunity to take time to consider the edit in much greater detail and use high-quality images from the original tapes rather than a compressed satellite feed. Fourthly, the recently-launched *Six O'Clock News* was still experimenting with format and wanted to use this story to consider a more lengthy news piece. This format was untested but almost accidentally gave the story authority, as audiences at the time were not used to extended news items. Fifthly, the news blackout by the Derg government for the tenth anniversary celebrations led to a break in the famine coverage from Ethiopia, and although the famine continued to slowly worsen, it was not being reported widely up until the Amin/Buerk piece. The Amin/Buerk report, therefore, appeared as a sudden event. 'Aid agencies too are well aware of this unfair calculus where the sudden takes precedence over the chronic in terms of attracting assistance' (Franks, 2006: p.306). Sixthly, the event happened in the build-up to Christmas, the season of goodwill in much of the Majority World (whereas the previous report had come in July). Finally, the scene, with its soft light and seething mass of famine-stricken, biblical figures lent itself to a photographic visualisation.

Decoding the Famine

It took some time before an analysis of the report's impact could influence the immediate rush of follow-up stories. Much of the reporting still relied on the 'five w's' approach (a convention used by journalists to report a breaking news story that asks the reporter to include *who* is in the story, *what* it is about, *where* it happened, *when* it happened, and *why* it happened) with an emphasis on the raw facts rather than the human story. Most of the early reports concentrated on the numbers dying, who was to blame, the amount of donations, etc. (Moeller, 1999: p.120). It took more than a month before the news representations returned to the victims and the style of Amin's footage. The post-broadcast analysis concluded that television was the best medium for highlighting the disaster. Previous newspaper and magazine articles, accompanied by pictures, had not managed to move audiences into a response. 'The broadcast of the Amin/Buerk videotape was taken to be one of those unequivocal moments in television history when a TV story matters, when indifference disintegrates under the moral imperative of television pictures' (Moeller, 1999: p.124). Eight years later, when the next major African famine story broke in Somalia, the print photographers had learnt important lessons about personalising the coverage and looked to tell more individual accounts. They had learnt that by the time people saw their images in print the story was already known to their readers who had watched the previous evening news. It was therefore important for them not to repeat the same image, but instead to get closer and make a comment on the individual rather than the whole:

> They learned to take advantage of the fact the still image can still best capture a moment of epiphany. When covering disasters, they learned to let the public see the pain and hear the pain – and then see it and hear it again and again. What television had in immediacy, newspapers, and to some extent even magazines, could make up for in repetition.

Close up images of people's pain, that were so rare in 1984, were being repeated throughout the print media in 1992's coverage of Somalia.

Fig 4.3 Pictures from Paul Lowe covering famine in Somalia in 1992. Images: Paul Lowe, Panos Pictures.

In the majority of these communications, famine was linked to the whole continent where it took place, rather than identifying specific regions. For development NGOs working in the Majority World, the events 'denoted a coming of age' (Lidchi, 1993: p.105) as they experienced a sudden but sustained increase in donations. This then led to a reassessment of their communications strategies and the introduction of new image policies. The media also came under fire with the writing of new reports (van der Gaag & Nash, 1987) and critical articles and books about the long-term effects of hard-hitting imagery on both the UK audiences and the communities they sought to represent (Moeller, 1999).

NGO educationalists, who were at first pleased that the issue they fought to put on a national agenda was being discussed, started to realise the fallout from the event. The audiences they sought to engage had been given a populist one-dimensional view of Ethiopia by the UK media and the NGOs who sought to exploit the interest:

> These were 'white' media images and messages, which offered a traumatic mediation (through the commentary) of the experience of 'witnessing' the African famine. They omitted the African voice and presented no explanation of the complex casual factors or historical precedents for the famine. These images conveyed the helplessness and the passivity of Ethiopians not their dignity or partnership in development. These media images packaged, labelled and coded 'Africa' for easy identification, confirming and restocking racist images rooted in the west's colonial past. The reportage coalesced 'Africa' with 'Ethiopia' with 'famine'.

> (Lidchi, 1993: p.110)

This was not a re-imagination of the continent to dominant UK audiences, which had always regarded Africa as being underdeveloped, but a deep reaffirmation, jeopardising the work NGO educationalists had been doing for the previous 20 years (van der Gaag & Nash, 1987: p.1). The internal divisions that opened up within the organisations themselves also exacerbated the harm being done to the educationalists long-term goals. The media were not solely to blame for the images and messages about Africa that came from the event; NGOs were equally responsible (Lidchi, 1993: p.110; van der Gaag &

Nash 1987: p.30). In her thesis *The Ethiopian Bandwagon* (1985), Mary Magistad describes a frenzy of activity by NGOs who were aware of a proposed cut in the British aid budget and wanted to make as big an impact on the UK electorate as possible in order to reverse the government's plans. In light of the images coming from Ethiopia, 'Tory MPs mounted a backbench revolt, and both journalists and the general public were outraged. Within days, Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe denied ever having suggested such a cut in the first place' (Magistad, 1985: p.31).

In response to the educationalists frustrations, *Images of Africa,* a European initiative, was launched in cooperation with African voluntary agencies (a total of 13 organisations) the following year to evaluate the damage caused by the images. The UK report compiled by van der Gaag and Nash (1987), outlined in Chapter 1, concluded there was little difference between the media's visualisation of the event to that of the NGOs. In its analysis of published images, it finds a focus on women and children, a lack of geographical placement of the event within Africa, an overuse of close ups of faces from a height looking down on the subject, and an identifiable objectification of the subjects imaged:

> More than half the photographs were of women, or women and children; 24% were of children alone. Only one photograph was of a man. The remaining 33% showed land (17%), a refugee camp (6%), or an expatriate (11%). All the photographs showed Africans as passive, if not starving. 63% were of very pitiful or emaciated people. 70% of the people being photographed seemed unaware that their picture was being taken. 63% of the photographs were close-ups; the majority of these also coming into the 'shock/victim' category.
>
> (van der Gaag & Nash, 1987: p.48)

Van der Gaag and Nash go on to question the ethics of benefiting from extreme grief comparing the images to pornography. 'Had the subjects been aware that they were being photographed? Had they had the choice, or the capacity, to protest or exercise informed consent given their emotional and physical state?' (Lidchi, 1993: p.111). Wossan, disagrees with van der Gaag and Nash's assertion. "The people in Korem were desperate and my impression was there was no objection to being filmed. Presuming they did not have the capacity to make a judgement in itself is demeaning" (interview with Wossan, 2005). Moeller's *Compassion Fatigue* argument is based on an over-saturation of hard-hitting disaster images. However, she concedes that 'as distorting as the media's representation of famine might be, those disasters which manage to cut through the compassion fatigue night to have their moment in the bright lights may be the fortunate ones' (Moeller, 1999: p.111). In many of the interviews conducted with photographers for this thesis (Lowe, 2003; Halawani 2003; Grarup 2003, for example), and in the author's own experience, the reaction from a disaster victim to the photographer's presence on the ground is very different from that perceived by distant audiences. The arrival of the media is in fact a positive sign to the victims that the disaster has reached such a scale that it warrants the world's attention which, in turn, implies a response will be forthcoming. Moeller, however, points out that 'by the time the media have riled up their audience to do good, it is too late for many' (1999: p.111).

Different Perspectives

To explore the question of whether Ethiopian photographers produced a different perspective on the Ethiopian famine, the author reviewed an R&RC picture archive of government photographs in Addis Ababa. The archive is still protected and the author had to gain permission and was not allowed to make duplicates of any images. Within the archive were numerous albums of pictures of the famine areas, prepared by R&RC photographers for government reports. Wossan had established an audiovisual unit to record the famine though, at the time, few of the images were released by the government. The pictures are similar in content to Amin's footage but lacked any close-up detail:

The difference between the pictures the Ethiopian cameramen and the international team is there is always an element of distance with the Ethiopians. Close-up was never our strongest point. The distance may be to do with a will not to invade the privacy of the people. Ethiopian photographers are not aware of compassion in photography. If they were they might produce better images. Basically the Ethiopian photographers are short of professionalism, that is all.

(interview with Wossan, 2003)

In this statement, Wossan appears to make two very different assertions, firstly that a local photographer would not be willing to get close to the subjects due a cultural awareness that in doing so he would disturb the subject's dignity and secondly that if the photographer had more international professional experience, he would learn to overcome this and therefore ignore his inherent unwillingness to upset the subject. The first assertion seems to contradict his earlier assertion that the people of Korem would not object to being photographed. The second reflects Wossan's acceptance of the international image economy being the guiding principle for successful disaster photography, which is also reflected in images from the Ethiopian *Masters Photography School Yearbook*, discussed in Chapter 3.

The overall conclusion from all the *Images of Africa* reports was that the product of visualising the famine was humiliating to the people of Ethiopia and served primarily to serve Minority Wold interests. In particular, it criticised NGOs and the Minority World media for not engaging local Africans in representing themselves (though it should be noted that the most influential camerawork was undertaken by Kenyan-born filmmaker Mohamed Amin). One brief moment from the extended Amin footage also hints at an acceptance of the cameraman by those in the camp at Korem. As Amin pans along a line of people waiting in a line, a woman sees the camera coming and readies her baby to smile/wave (Fig 4.4). She is clearly aware of what the camera is and its function and she wants to make sure that she and her baby are well represented. The *Images of Africa* reports concur that images produced from the Ethiopian famine were overwhelmingly negative and any acknowledgment of the camera appears to have been edited out:

The ascendant image was of Africans who had no voice, no identity and no contribution to make during the crisis. They were the passive receivers of aid, whereas the Western subjects were the bestowers of an interventionist miracle.

(Lidchi, 1993: p.112)

Fig 4.4 Still frame grab from the Buerk/Amin 23 October 1984 BBC *Six O'Clock News* report from Korem (digital video given to the author by Tafari Wossan).

After publication of the reports, the educationalists' influence rose within the NGO makeup and they pushed for new image guidelines to guard against future violations. They drew attention to pre-existing organisational charters that called for cooperation and mutual respect with the people the NGOs sought to work. Some educationalists had accused the NGO fundraisers, together with the media, of falsifying their representation of the famine. The claim was based on evidence that 'positive' images of local activity to alleviate famine was available to them but was ignored on the basis of its inability to produce the required reaction. Although many NGOs did produce educational materials to counter-balance the negative representation of Ethiopia some time after the event, these were poorly funded and only reached very small audiences (van der Gaag & Nash, 1987).

Summary

Amin's images contributed to negative public understandings of both the nature of famine and, more generally, the country of Ethiopia, understandings that have never since been dispelled. The starving, fly-eyed, close to death child has become the universal symbol for photographers and picture editors when making representations of the 900 million people and 57 countries that make up the continent. The symbol represents abuse of the innocent (Moeller, 1999) and is coupled with arid backgrounds of muted colour (or, especially in the photographic realm, black and white). Journalists have found this genre of famine coverage hard to break out when representing food insecurity. The NGO response of a call for positive imagery within the media, as well as the instigation of their own picture policies, has had little impact on dominant UK visualisations of place (Chapter 1).

Suau's pictures from Ethiopia, taken one year before Amin and Buerk's now-famous visit, should have broken the story but remained unnoticed until exposed by television. Harrison and Palmer's conclusion was that for all photography's aesthetic beauty, it could no longer compete with television as a popular communication method, contradicting the argument made for the power of the still picture in Chapter 2. 'Even if Suau's photographs had been published simultaneously in America's top 10 newspapers, they could never have rivalled the initial slap in the face, the impact, exposure and immediacy of a two-minute video report on one of the TV's national news programs' (Harrison & Palmer, 1986: p.97). Still pictures have become a tool to manage audiences' responses, drawing out support, personalising the disaster by concentrating on individual experience and leaving time for the viewer to contemplate by exploring an image in its whole, but TV news breaks the story.

Fig 4.5 *Time* cover, 21 December 1987.

Through a number of unrelated and partly random coincidences, the siting of the Buerk/Amin report led to it becoming a key event in the formation of dominant UK imaginations of the country of Ethiopia. These coincidences include the ITN strike, the lack of other news on the day, the juxtaposition with the EU food mountain story, and the fact Bob Geldof was watching. As a result, by 1985 the dominant image of Ethiopia had changed in Minority World visualisations. The images produced from this point reflected a new outlook (Fig 4.5) with famine as a central reference point.

2. THE GREEN FAMINE AND THE IMAGE OF MEKANIC PHILIPOS

In this section, the Ethiopian case study continues with a contemporary example of imaging Ethiopia to UK audiences in the context of news. Through the study, the section demonstrates links to imaginations of Ethiopia formed in the wake of the 1984-5 famine, described above, and the influence of a changing global image economy, described in Chapter 3.

On 26 May 2003, 19 years on from the Buerk/Amin report, Sir Bob Geldof flew from London to Addis Ababa to begin a five-day tour of the country. There was a drought in the Horn of Africa and Ethiopia was once again dependent on food aid. Geldof's trip, facilitated by UNICEF and Save the Children, was focused on using the media to persuade the attendees at the G8 summit (scheduled to begin on the weekend following the visit) to discuss issues in Africa. Geldof claimed success at the end of the visit:

> The week before we came here and all this week every TV station and newspaper in America and Europe were full of our stories. The G8 could have got away with not talking about Africa, they could have talked about Iraq and declare they are all friends now. So it does work. You force this thing; you force it on to the agenda. So they have to deal with it. And unbelievably there are good things happening in G8 now. It is working.

(Geldof, 2003)

Geldof was accompanied on the trip by Lucy Matthews, a representative from the political lobbying organisation DATA, set up and run by Geldof and U2 singer Bono (Paul Hewson). Matthews was there to advise Geldof on how to deal with the press. The problem they faced was the fact there was a drought in Ethiopia but no famine:

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If you crudely divide Ethiopia into north and south with Addis Ababa in the centre, the north, which is historically prone to famine, had built an efficient infrastructure of predicting food shortages and distributing before people went hungry. Save the Children, who worked in that area, wanted to use the Geldof trip to get the message across that their role in dealing with food shortages was successful.

(interview with Graham, 2003)

People in the south of Ethiopia, renowned for its lush vegetation, were experiencing nutritional problems caused by the rains coming at the wrong time. Unexpected downpours had led to the destruction of the staple food (a false banana) but there then followed a period of drought when there was then not enough rain to turn the flowering maize into a harvestable crop. As a result, children were suffering from malnourishment. Although there was plenty of food, there was a nutritional imbalance, which meant many babies did not get the foods they needed to grow. UNICEF employed Professor Mike Golden, an expert nutritionist, to devise a 21-day feeding programme to correct the imbalance and set up therapeutic feeding centres (TFC) in the affected areas. In 1984 such skills and infrastructure were not available, and many of the affected children would have died. The message UNICEF wished to convey was that there was a problem with malnutrition (not lack of food but the wrong food) but, in 97% of cases, their system was returning malnourished babies to normal health within the three-week programme.

Geldof's visit was conducted around a tight daily schedule: Tuesday to meet with officials and visit a poor neighbourhood in Addis Ababa; Wednesday to travel south to see the Yirba TFC near Awasa; Thursday to continue south to visit anti-AIDS clubs and the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission programme at Dilla hospital; and Friday to fly north to revisit the area of the 1984-5 famine and see how the situation was now being dealt with.

This study is based on interviews with the following people, all of whom were present during the May 2003 Bob Geldof visit to Ethiopia: Soraya Bermejo (UNICEF media officer based in London); Shanta Bloeman (UNICEF communication officer based in Addis Ababa); Mahimbo Mode (UNICEF emergency manager in Ethiopia); John Graham (Programme Director, Save the Children UK, Ethiopia office); and Antonio Fiorente (Ethiopian Associated Press photographer). Interviews were also conducted with Bezunesh Abraham (mother of Mekanic Philipos, and one of the subjects in the case photograph) and Mesfin Marium (the paediatrician at the Yirba therapeutic feeding centre, where the case photograph was taken). Names are only referenced in cases where the information given is disputed or where it only represents the opinion of one interviewee.

Fig 4.6 *Daily Mail*, 28 May 2003. Image: Anthony Njuguna, Reuters.

The Photographers

A number of Ethiopian news photographers took pictures at the official receptions in Addis Ababa, but only five photographers followed Geldof south. They were,

Antonio Fiorente – Ethiopian photographer stringing for Associated Press
Antony Njuguna – Kenyan photographer working for Reuters
Arthur Edwards – UK photographer. Flew out with Geldof and worked exclusively for the *Sun*.
Eddie Mulholland – UK photographer. Flew out with Geldof and worked exclusively for the *Daily Telegraph*
Stephen Morrison – Canadian photographer, working for European Pressphoto Agency (EPA).[10]

A number of print journalists also accompanied Geldof on his visit, as did TV camera crews from Reuters, Associated Press, Sky News, and BBC News.

This study gives an opportunity to compare the coverage of both staff photographers working for a specific newspaper and local agency photographers, as well as the relationship of contemporary news photography in Ethiopia to the famine event of 1984-5.

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[10] Morrison had recently been sent to Nairobi to open an Africa office. EPA was set up in 1985 and provides photographs to European publications. Based in Frankfurt, the agency has strong ties to Agencé France Presse (2007).

The Photographs

The *Sun*

The *Sun* ran three stories in total, all with images, over the week that Geldof was in Ethiopia on 28, 29 and 30 May 2003. Two of the three image stories (on 28 and 30 May) could be considered positive, with smiling, healthy-looking people interacting with Geldof. The third story sandwiched between the positive images was of Geldof holding Mekanic Philipos, looking concerned. The caption names Mekanic wrongly and the text below, associated with his picture (written by accompanying features writer for the *Sun*, Oliver Harvey), is factually incorrect and, in places, totally fictional. Harvey reports on the Mekanic Philipos case:

> Close to death, tiny Mekanin Abraham is gently cradled by Live Aid hero Sir Bob Geldof. Mekanin's tummy is bloated from lack of food and skin pulled tight on his tiny ribs. A fly lands on his face but he is too weak to swat it away. His tearful mother Buzenesh 30, tells Geldof: 'I was so hungry I wasn't producing milk. Our cattle have died and we have little food. I pray Mekanin survives. I love him so much.

(Harvey, 2003)

As argued in the previous section, the photographer and writer in this instance have a strong understanding of their readership's contextual understanding of Ethiopia and both the text and images play to this. The baby's stomach is covered in the picture and is not actually bloated. There is no lack of food reported by the mother who is cheerful throughout the exchange with Geldof (as shown through Antonio Fiorente's contact sheets that cover it). The image is a factual account of the meeting but the caption and the associated text appears to be based on the *Sun* readers' dominant imagined geographies of Ethiopia, rather than the facts on the ground. This supports the argument that photographers from the UK flying into report on Majority World stories have little contextual understanding of the situation and often get the facts wrong.

Fig 4.7 & Fig 4.8 The *Sun*. Images: Arthur Edwards.

Fig 4.9 The *Sun*. Image: Arthur Edwards.

The *Daily Telegraph*

The *Daily Telegraph* also ran three stories from the week with text from accompanying writer Stephen Robinson. Each story was supplemented by a single image, which were varied in content. The first was a positive image of Geldof interacting with smiling AIDS orphans, the second was a tight image of a malnourished child from the Yirba feeding centre (though this was not Mekanic Philipos), and the third was an image of Geldof in the north, walking in parched land. The three images, taken as a whole, give a rounded perspective of the story, though the captions are non-specific and, in the case of the image of the child, whose condition is attributed to drought, factually incorrect. The most disturbing of the images is the third, shot in Bilbela village close to the epicentre of the 1984-5 famine. Frustrated by a long journey with few photo opportunities, the cameramen on the trip persuaded Geldof to walk in an area of rocks and sand for a photo opportunity (interview with Graham, 2003). Guided by locals who were present during the Geldof trip, the author revisited the exact site of the picture three weeks after the event and discovered the image was non-representative of the area, which was covered in greenery (Fig 4.18).[11]

Fig 4.10 The *Daily Telegraph*. Image: Eddie Mulholland.

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[11] This raises an interesting connection to Arthur Rothstein's images, discussed in Chapter 2 (Figs 2.3-2.5).

Fig 4.10 The *Daily Telegraph*. Image: Eddie Mulholland.

Fig 4.10 The *Daily Telegraph*. Image: Eddie Mulholland.

Reuters and Associated Press

Both Reuters and Associated Press (AP) employed African photographers to cover the story, though only AP used a photographer from Ethiopia. No Ethiopian newspapers can afford wire service subscriptions and therefore there are no international agency offices in Ethiopia. Reuters has an office in Nairobi (neighbouring Kenyan capital) from where they sent staff photographer Antony Njuguna. Antonio Fiorente, an Ethiopian photographer who makes most of his living from wedding and advertising photography, was stringing for AP.

Although both photographers covered all five days, the author was unable to find any international publications, other than the *Sun* and *Daily Telegraph* which ran any of the images except, notably, the one of Geldof handing baby Mekanic Philipos back to his mother, Bezunesh Abraham, in the Yirba TFC on Wednesday 28 May 2003 (published widely throughout the world on the following day). All the agency photographers took different versions of this picture and filed to their respective agencies/publications. The month after the event, DATA collected a list of 142 media representations of the Geldof visit. Of those, the only images that appeared in publications, excluding those taken by the *Sun* and *Daily Telegraph* photographers and featured in the previous two sub-sections, were from the Yirba clinic. The captions from AP and Reuters are accurate (the spelling of Mekanic is not clear when translated from Amharic) and the contact sheets, from Antonio Fiorente show good and accurate coverage of the entire trip. However, the

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only image that was published in papers relying on the wire services was that of the malnourished baby in Geldof's hands. Below is the caption, as filed by Antony Njuguna:

> Caption: BOB GELDOF HOLDS A MALNOURISHED CHILD AT A FEEDING CENTRE IN ETHIOPIA. Irish rock star Bob Geldof (R) holds Mechanic Philipos a malnourished one year-old boy from her mother at Yirba feeding centre in Awasa, 300km south of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 28, 2003. Geldof, who organized the world's biggest rock concert in 1985 to help Africa's starving, is visiting Ethiopia to highlight a looming humanitarian crisis. Aid agencies estimate 14 million Ethiopians are at risk of starvation after the worst drought in nearly two decades.
>
> Photographer and credit:- REUTERS/Antony Njuguna (received via email from the Reuters head office)

The following accounts describe the events that led to the picture.

Shanta Bloeman, (UNICEF communication officer based in Addis Ababa):

> Well we got to this site and it was late in the day, not late but late to file stories. I had forgotten about the fact these people needed to file everyday and the urgency of that process. Geldof wanted to be in the paper every day so it was important for us to respect this. This place is three-and-a-half hours south of Addis [Ababa] so we got there and the journalists wanted to work quickly so they could file. They kept saying we don't have time to waste. So we got to this place where there are three tents, three phases [with three different levels of acuteness of malnutrition], so this first one was the acute phase one, where children are admitted when they first arrive. Basically it is a large tent, about 25-30 metres long, like one of those army tents with women hanging around on the mattress (see Figs 4.16 and 4.17). There were five journalists, five photographers and no one wanted to leave before their competition. So I end up shouting more and the whole thing was very fraught. So we tried to interchange between TV and the print and photographers in this tent…. Stephen [EPA Photographer] kept saying, these pictures aren't dramatic enough, my office wants dramatic pictures. He wanted me to take him to places where livestock were dying, and when I said there were no such places, he replied "there is no story for me then."
>
> (interview with Bloeman, 2003)

Antonio Fiorente:

> I was instructed to follow Bob Geldof, everywhere he went and everything he did. We were looking to capture that moment. There were other people from AP with us who gave us instructions. It was mad. Lots of photographers and TV news people pushing each other, sitting or standing in the way of my lens…. This baby was very badly malnourished and the UNICEF guide brought him across to see the baby. The guide picked the baby up and handed him to Geldof who handed him back to his mother. This was the picture. He did not pick up any other babies on the trip, just stroked them but the reason this picture was so strong is the fact the baby is much worse than others we saw…. There was a lot of competition between Reuters and AP. Our advantage was we had our own car and did not travel with UNICEF, so we could go at any time we liked, so we could have the advantage of being able to send first.
>
> (interview with Fiorente, 2003)

Mahimbo Mode (UNICEF emergency manager in Ethiopia):

> There was a lot of pressure from London. They were all in communication with their satellite phones, in particular Sky, who were doing live broadcasts and the print media were immediately under pressure to cover the same issues. That is,

Sky would interview Clare Short or Tony Blair and then go live to Ethiopia. The print media would be talking to their offices in London who were watching the Sky broadcast and getting instructions to concentrate on the same issues…. there was no desire to include or explain the problem. They were just focused on going straight to a TFC and getting pictures of babies.

(interview with Mode, 2003)

Analysis

Njuguna's image that appears in the *Daily Mirror* (Fig 4.6) correlates almost exactly to the Alagiah template described in the previous chapter (DDZ, 1998), reinforcing a familiar message of famine in Ethiopia, replacing the white aid worker with Geldof. The above accounts of the circumstances in which the image was made confirm reports of orders being sent to photographers from editors watching live television broadcasts from Minority World media headquarters. Competition between agencies leads to speed and drama becoming the driving force behind the photographer's approach to the subject, rather than a need for accuracy. For those filing to global audiences, deadlines occur every hour as the timeline moves across the world. Missing the Paris or London 10pm deadline may mean an image is never published as 24 hours is a long time in news. In this case, these pressures led to a very similar image being filed by all the photographers. There were also no attempts made to contextualise the image. Dominant UK audiences who looked at this image were given an overall impression that this baby was starving, this baby was going to die, and this baby was representative of thousands of other Ethiopian children, all suppositions that were entirely untrue. Text in the *Daily Mirror* and the *Sun* (which cropped the mother out) on 29 May reinforced these messages.

Njuguna's picture (Fig 4.6) is very literal and simply composed. The religious symbolism is strong with Geldof, the Christ figure, reaching out to heal the child held in the mother's arms: an image the average 'housewife in Detroit' (Chapter 3) would have no problem in comprehending. Geldof, who in his first visit to Ethiopia in 1984 had 'refused…to be photographed with a starving child' (Harrison & Palmer, 1986: p.133), stated he still wanted to avoid producing clichéd and exploitative imagery but was caught off guard. TV images of the event show the UNICEF worker handing Geldof the child and Geldof almost immediately handing it back to the mother. The television audiences see clearly Geldof's unwillingness to be seen cradling malnourished children on camera but the newspaper readers get a very different understanding of the event. The still picture captures a moment in time when Geldof has the baby in his arms. In it he appears to be accepting rather than, as was the case, rejecting the child, and this becomes the defining image of the trip. Fiorente's contact sheets show a total of 14 frames taken during the meeting of Geldof and Bezunesh Abraham. Only two of which show the baby in Geldof's arms.

Fig 4.13 Contact sheet of Antonio Fiorente's encounter with Bezunesh Abraham and baby Mekanic Philipos.

Fig 4.14 Image: Antonio Fiorente.

Geldof claims the trip was successful in bringing Africa into the agenda for the G8 summit and therefore demonstrated a strong 'CNN effect' (Robinson, 2002). However, the G8 declaration makes no mention of Africa and two of the aid workers interviewed by the author for this study said they were disappointed with the outcome (Mode, 2003; Graham, 2003). Conversely, both UNICEF and Save the Children both expressed delight at the outcome of the visit, reporting financial and political gains that would not have come otherwise. Graham argued that similar trips made by Princess Anne and Michael Buerk earlier in the year had little effect when compared to Geldof.

In regard to the indigenous photographer's perspective, Antonio Fiorente (Ethiopia) and Antony Njuguna's (Kenya) images show equal quality and skill to the others on the trip but no alternative perspective. Fiorente did file one image (Fig 4.14) that showed a more balanced representation of the meeting between Geldof and Bezunesh Abraham, but the image was never selected to run on the wire. Their captions were also more accurate than those of their UK counterparts, though in every case where Njuguna's image was published (the author found no instances of publication of Fiorente's image), the caption information was shortened and changed. Below are two instances:

1. The *Daily Mail* prefaces the caption with the word 'despair' and adds to the caption a statistic of 4,000 babies being treated at the centre. From Fiorente's contact sheet (Fig

4.13) and the image of Geldof laughing with Bezunesh Abraham (Fig 4.14), it appears the mood was not of despair. In an interview with Mesfin Marium (2003), a doctor at the Yirba clinic who was present for Geldof's visit, he confirmed there were 400 babies and not 4,000.

2. *The International Herald Tribune* captions (and cropped) the same Njuguna image (Fig 4.15) with the lines, 'The founder of Live Aid, Bob Geldof, holding a baby, Wednesday, in drought-stricken Ethiopia praised the Bush administration for its role in the fight against hunger. He also lauded Bush for signing into law a $15 billion plan to help fund the fight against AIDS.' The caption bears little resemblance to that filed with the image and shows clear linkage to an American political agenda.

Fig 4.15 *International Herald Tribune*, 29 May 2003. Image: Anthony Njuguna, Reuters.

Both local photographers relied on their knowledge to arrive at a better understanding of the situation than the other international photographers, but this was only demonstrated through more accurate captions, which were then changed by the international publications (in the case of the *Daily Mirror* bringing the image closer to the imagined geographies of its dominant readership). In the case of Fiorente, who also managed to capture a more accurate representation of events but his images did not fit the expectations of international image editors, nor their audiences' understandings of the places being imaged, and his images were not chosen for publication.

Fig 4.16 360-degree panorama of the Yirba TFC. Image: D J Clark.

Fig 4.17 180-degree panorama of the landscape in front of the Yirba TFC showing plenty of green areas rather than the barren landscape imagined by the readership. No indication of the landscape can be found in any of the published images. Image: D J Clark.

Fig 4.18 Landscape of Bilbela village area where Geldof was asked to walk in an area of patched ground for the assembled photographers. The bare areas are ploughed fields and not parched land. Image taken three weeks after Geldof's visit by D J Clark.

Finally, the question of Bezunesh Abraham's dignity is addressed. Mesfin Marium (2003), the paediatrician at the Yirba TFC, explained that, in his opinion, the visit and photographs were seen as a great privilege by those involved. He estimated that 4,000 local villagers had turned up to watch the proceedings and there was a lot of excitement. The author interviewed Abraham four weeks after the event and on the day before her baby was released, fit and healthy, from the Beshuto health centre (the baby had been transferred to Awasa the nearest large town for specialist treatment). Below is the transcript, translated by Sawra Tafari,

> Clark: What is your opinion of this picture?
> Abraham: I give thanks to God for this picture because it helped save the life of my son.
> Clark: Were you aware of the picture being taken and that it might be published worldwide?
> Abraham: Yes I knew, because they explained to us before they came to visit us what would happen.
> Clark: Do you feel embarrassed by this picture at all?
> Abraham: No, I don't feel embarrassed, why should I?

Abraham believed that having her picture taken would contribute to the wellbeing of her son and therefore happily obliged. Given that UNICEF benefited from the coverage and were responsible for her son's medical treatment, this appears to be justified. Fiorente's contact sheet of the event (Fig 4.13) shows Abraham displaying a variation of facial expressions, including smiling, but all those published show a look of despair. Abraham was not troubled by this and asked for a copy of Njuguna's picture to put in her home.

Summary

Through this study, it is possible to compare the approach of a local Minority World wire photographer to that of a UK staff newspaper photographer in respect of their representation of Majority World issues to dominant UK audiences. The three wire photographers were more concerned with speed, impact, and the competition than the

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two newspaper photographers. Newspapers that used the wire images were only interested in the 'famine' image, which were published widely on the day after the image was taken. They were offered more than one version of the image but chose the one that played most directly to the imagined geographies of their dominant readership. Although the original captions were largely accurate, they were shortened, added to, and manipulated to fit the news agenda and visual imaginations of the respective publication and its readership. There is no evidence of a local perspective.

The two staff photographers covering the event were under less pressure. Their images were similar to those taken by the wire photographers but their captions were less accurate and played directly to their dominant readership's understanding of the place being imaged. However, the newspapers that sent staff ran images other than those from the feeding centre in the days before and after. In the case of the *Sun*, the other two image sets were much more positive and helped contextualise the country outside the image of a starving child.

Fig 4.19 Bezunesh Abraham with baby Mekanic Philipos at the Beshuto Health Centre, Awasa, Ethiopia, 25 June 2003. Image: D J Clark.

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Through this Ethiopian case study, the chapter has brought together discussions from the first three chapters to demonstrate an example of a key event, beyond the experience of dominant UK audiences, impacting on a long-term visual understanding of place, in this case Ethiopia. The chapter has argued that although the Sahel famine of 1984-5 was a significant disaster it was only through a series of random coincidences that the Buerk/Amin reports from northern Ethiopia had such a significant impact on dominant UK audiences. Other photographers and TV crews had produced similar reports over a sustained period that all had some degree of impact but were quickly forgotten in the wake of *Live Aid*. Returning to the discussion of Chapter 1 in which it was argued that the representation of Africa presented at *Live Aid* came as part of a stream of negative visualisations that predated photography, this chapter has evidenced one country, Ethiopia, which has been re-visualised to dominant UK audiences through a single event.

Although the NGO educationalists responded to the effects of the Buerk/Amin reports and new guidelines were introduced to engender a more balanced and positive visualisation of the continent of Africa, the impact of these had little influence on Ethiopia. The second section of the chapter outlines a contemporary example that demonstrates the visual lineage from the Buerk/Amin report to modern reporting from Ethiopia. Through manipulations encouraged by the present-day image economy, the photographs (and their captions) of a multi-faceted trip to Ethiopia by Bob Geldof in May 2003 were moulded to fit dominant UK imaginations of place that connected Ethiopia with despair, emaciated children, and famine – a similar visualisation to that displayed in the Buerk/Amin reports from 20 years earlier. This suggests that the reporting of this particular event in 1984, although in a tradition of negative and dark representations (Chapter 1), has been the key influence in photographic representations that followed over the next 20 years.

The wire services' preference for local photographers over foreign photographers appears to have made little difference to the representation of place as market pressures pushed the indigenous photographers to conform to a particular composition. However, the travelling photographers from the UK were able, over the duration of the five days, to supply their readers with a more considered understanding of place through a series of images that played out in the paper during the trip. The move away from using staff photographers to agency photographers therefore suggests the UK is getting a narrower view of Africa, which is likely impacting dominant visualisations of place.

The example disputes van der Gaag and Nash's (1987) claim that the dignity of the image subject is impaired as the mother of baby Mekanic demonstrates a considered understanding of the process of her representation, which she approves of, in spite of the negative choice of images. The example also reveals the sanctioning of the misrepresentation by all those involved, as it appears an accepted means of working by both the media and the NGOs. Through conforming to repeated imagined geographies of place, the photographers get the images that their editors back in London are expecting, and the NGOs get the political and financial backing they need to continue their work. In all the interviews of those present at the scene, many acknowledged but none questioned the misrepresentation or the potential long-term damage to Ethiopia.

CONCLUSION
THE NGO RESPONDS

After the extensive media coverage of the 1984-5 Ethiopian famine, NGOs in Europe undertook an in-depth review of their approach to visual representation. The *Images of Africa: UK Report* (van der Gaag & Nash, 1987) was a major part of this process and produced a series of critiques of UK NGO communication policies that in turn led to the establishment of image policies within the major organisations (Lidchi, 1993: p.122). These policies sought to redress the predominance of negative imagery in relation to the Majority World by showcasing pictures that highlighted positive developments. Oxfam and Save the Children were the first to produce printed guidelines (respectively *Oxfam and Images* and the *Impact of Images Guidelines,* later changed to *Focus on Images* in 1991) that outlined in simple steps how to 'represent its partners overseas fairly, accurately and with respect for their dignity' (Oxfam, 1988). The following year the General Assembly of European NGOs published *The Code of Conduct on Images and Messages Relating to the Third World,* which called for all its members to consult with their Majority World partners on matters of representation. In 1994, the *Code of Conduct* for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief – used widely by NGOs that did not have their own written codes for image use – was published with a specific clause on imaging disaster that called for the recognition of disaster victims as 'dignified human beings, not hopeless objects' (IRC, 1994: clause 10).

Despite these codes of conduct, surveys carried out by the author in 1994 and 2003 (Clark, 1994 & 2003) demonstrate that NGO usage of images has changed very little over the past 10 years, and that the concern for the nature of Majority World representation had not made a significant impact on the sourcing of images (Clark, 2003). Although 60% of the organisations surveyed in 2003 claimed they had changed the way they used images over the previous 10 years, the quantitative research revealed very little statistical differences. The 2003 surveys also revealed:

1. The proportion of the surveyed NGOs claiming to have a picture policy rose from around a third to over a half, but no more of these policies had been written (still only around 15% had written policies).
2. Employees remained the main source of pictures, with volunteers overtaking freelance photographers as the second source of pictures on file. Most of the contributing freelance photographers still came from the UK.
3. For those organisations that did commission photographers, there was a modest increase in the amount of guidance given to freelancers and the strictness of the stipulations within freelance contracts.

Positive Developments, a 2004 international photographic exhibition held at the Eden Project in Cornwall is a good example of an initiative that follows the NGO picture requirement of positive imagery. The publicity for the exhibition read:

> There are things happening all over the world that are transforming people's lives for the better, but which the public never see. This is why NR International, in partnership with the Eden Project, launched a remarkable exhibition of photographs taken by people working to change the lives of some of the poorest communities in the world.
>
> (DFID, 2008)

The project was not revolutionary in its concept but rather came in the midst of a stream of visual efforts to re-position dominant UK public understandings of the Majority World. The efforts have been primarily driven by educationalists working within international development NGOs, many of whom acknowledge the negative impact of their previous

fund raising campaigns on the dignity of the people with whom they seek to work.

For example, in marking its fiftieth anniversary in 1992, Oxfam produced a photographic book entitled *Oxfam 50* that set out to challenge what they saw as a distorted view of the Majority World as a 'theatre of tragedy' and 'tourist paradise' (Oxfam, 1992: p.7). Led by educationalists within the organisation, the new positive look included the use of colourful happy portraits, construction, agriculture, and other productive pursuits, along with captions containing the names of the subjects and detailed descriptions of what was happening in the picture. Lidchi describes the conflicts that existed within the international NGOs at the time:

> The logic and persuasiveness of the 'Educationalist' critique belied the complexity of its claims. It constructed a powerful chain of equivalences between a series of binary oppositions - fundraising versus education, charity versus social justice and modernisation discourse versus the new orthodoxy of development. The 'Educationalists' described the events of 1984-5 as having exacerbated internal divisions: by allowing the fundraisers to rule the day, NGOs had settled for the wrong, but undoubtedly, more popular and powerful messages and images. In so doing they had presented a 'curative/relief/charity' vision of the developing world rather than promoting a 'preventative/development/social justice' model. They had encouraged Northern people to act charitably and to adopt a patronising attitude to the people of Africa.
>
> (Lidchi, 1993: p.117)

Using Michael Foucault's work on discourse, Lidchi argues the NGOs' pursuit of a new positive visual agenda made them an agency of 'truth' production and not 'truth' reflection' (Lidchi, 1993: p.8). This evaluation is not dissimilar to the way the NGOs were critiqued in the past for following a negative agenda in pursuit of higher public donation revenue. Such policies, she argues, result in images losing their status as documents that are capable of changing audiences' opinions. They become psychologically linked to a particular agenda rather than an independent journalistic report and people therefore tend to see such representations in the same way they view visual advertisements, contrivances intended to persuade the viewer of a particular reality rather than offer an unbiased document. Lidchi explains:

> If representations of the developing world are not thought of as isolated documents or reflections or 'reality', but as discursive practices, practices regulated and regimented by the operation of one or more discourses, then the manner in which they are produced and the discourses inscribed within them must be subject to examination.
>
> (Lidchi, 1993: p.8)

Foucault's work provides a way of going beyond the binary opposition of positive and negative manifested in the fight between the fundraisers and educationalists. The Foucauldian perspective argues that such binaries are not necessarily opposed to one another; rather they represent two related phenomena that produce each other. In this process of determining the representational value of an image, Lidchi (1993: p.122) argues the researcher must not look at pictures in isolation but, firstly, as part of a viewer's reading of the image in relation to other influences and, secondly, as part of the 'discursive, historical and institutional context in which imagery of the developing world is produced' (Lidchi, 1993: p.9).

The representation of Mekanic Philipos (Chapter 4) has demonstrated a contemporary juxtaposition in the use of pictures by NGOs working in Africa. Picture policies based on NGO modes of operation require the production of positive imagery or the positive 'other'. Although Chapter 1 has argued that many pictures, both historical and contemporary, have produced particular geographic imaginations, all have been created in terms of reflecting the 'truth'. However, the demand for 'NGO positive' images is connected with the 'discursive constitution of charitable practice' (Lidchi, 1993: p.8),

which, because of the institutional image guidelines and policies is actually 'truth' production. Notwithstanding the codes of conduct, NGOs are also aware of the need for strong negative imagery in order to effectively campaign. In Morel's model (Chapter 1), the NGOs facilitate photojournalists, such as the team which photographed Mekanic Philipos in the UNICEF feeding centre, by getting access to subjects and circulating the resultant imagery in the mainstream media. The effect of this practice is contrary to the stated aims of picture policies because of the way it perpetuates negative images of Africa, similar to those illustrated in the reports discussed at the beginning Chapter 1.

The reports outlined in Chapter 1 also demonstrate that NGO picture policies designed to reverse the dominant visualisation of the Majority World in the UK have failed. However, with the growth in local Majority World photography outlined in Chapter 3, it is possible tell alternative stories that may have an impact on UK understandings of the Majority World. In the guiding principles of Siobhan McGee's update of the European code of conduct (first published in 1989) she recommends that member organisations should 'always use local photographers where possible (provided the quality is of sufficient standard)' (McGee 2005). The studies of Bangladesh and Ethiopia in Chapter 3, however, suggest that although such moves are ethically sound, they do not necessarily lead to a different perspective. The studies concluded that claiming a photographer's background and identity (Majority World versus Minority World) necessarily produced a different visualisation is problematic, especially if it supposes an obvious dividing line between Western and other photographic cultures. As this thesis argues, any notion of a clear, fixed dividing line between 'the West' and 'the rest' makes little sense today given the structures and needs of the global image economy.

Constructing an Alternative Visualisation of Famine

Before a final summary of the main issues addressed by this thesis, the Conclusion will first consider some original photographic practice set up to investigate whether it is possible to produce hard hitting imagery of an issue NGOs seek to engage and place them in the UK media while working within the parameters of a picture policy that seeks to overcome the impact of negative imagery. In November 2005, I accepted an assignment from Oxfam GB to photograph a food security project in the Gao district of northern Mali. In partnership with the communications department at Oxfam GB, I wanted to consider the implications of Oxfam's internal picture policy. I undertook the commission as a freelance photojournalist with the specific aim of finding pictures to illustrate the issue of food insecurity in the western Sahel that would be publishable in both Oxfam communications and the mainstream UK media, all the while remaining within the current Oxfam guidelines. I also wanted to reflect, from the photographer's point of view, on other issues discussed throughout the thesis, in particular the critique of aestheticising poverty, 'parachute' photography, and the revisualisation of African problems in a way that challenged UK audiences' imagined geographies. These questions are important to a conclusion that seeks to engage with photographers by offering an alternative solution. It is also important to note that Oxfam GB did not have a local photographer contact in Mali and although one of my tasks was to find Malian photographers that the NGO could work with in the future, there was not an opportunity to study a local photographer's perspective on this particular issue at this particular time.

A scarcity of rain and a locust plague in the Sahel during the early months of 2004 led to a poor harvest in October-November, with production below that which was required to sustain the local population through the year ahead (interviews with Kabaluapa, 2005; Pietzsch, 2005). Realising the potential food security threat, Oxfam, along with other NGOs, put out early warning signs for an impending famine in the western Sahel in October 2004. Following the 26 December 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami and the resulting wealth of public donations, the Sahel campaign was put on hold and further appeals in March and April of 2005 were unsuccessful (interview with Pietzsch, 2005). It was not until July that the first "visible signs" (interview with Pietzsch, 2005) appeared. Photographers and film crews were flown in and the appeal received the

attention it needed. Although Oxfam and other NGOs facilitated the media, the images produced once again reverted to the simplistic representations from previous disasters (see Fig 6.1 below).

Fig 6.1 21 month-old Jima Akasouma is treated at a Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) CRENI (Centre de Recuperation Nutritionale Infantile) therapeutic feeding centre for severely malnourished children. A famine in Niger had put the lives of up to 2.5 million at risk. August 2005. Image: Jenny Matthews, Panos Pictures.

In the latter months of the same year (2005) the rains once again were insufficient to sustain the community for another year and the NGOs working in the area were forecasting food shortages for 2006. After discussions with Oxfam, I chose to visit the region in late November 2005 long before the 'visible signs' of malnutrition for the following year emerged. Oxfam's terms of reference required a 'positive' visualisation of the people with which they worked and, therefore, late November seemed better suited given resources would have been more plentiful and 'positive' images easier to come by. The challenge was to produce a set of images that warned of the impending food shortages but also adhered to the European NGO Code of Conduct on Images and Messages (2006), fitted the Oxfam brand style (visualised through a style book given to me), were sourced within Oxfam's ethical terms of reference, and had the power to both persuade UK publications to print them and, in combination with the Oxfam publications, potentially influence public imaginations of Africa if repeated over time.

I spent six days in the Gao district, four of which were spent photographing for Oxfam. A total of 372 images were submitted to both the regional Oxfam office in Mali and the Oxfam GB headquarters. Below is a selection of 15 images known to have been published in Oxfam communications.

Fig 6.2 *Inside Oxfam*, Oxfam supporters' magazine, spring 2006.
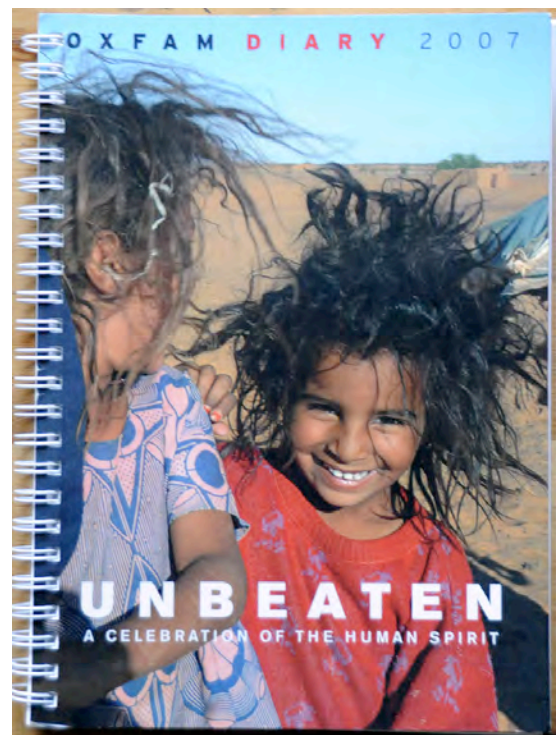

Fig 6.3 *Oxfam Calendar* 2007

Fig 6.4 *Oxfam Diary* 2007

&

Fig 6.5 *Oxfam Exploring Geography*, Revised Edition 3

Fig 6.6 Oxfam Diary 2007

Fig 6.7 Oxfam Diary 2007

After Oxfam GB had reviewed the photographs submitted from the commission, the communications department provided me with written feedback on the extent to which the work fulfilled the brief by manifesting "Oxfam's values and identity." This report stated:

- By shooting a mixture of active, close up, abstract and portrait shots, with an emphasis on people, your photographs are what we look for as a means of generating connectivity and increased understanding of our programme, within a development context.

- The wider view of Oxfam's brand is that it reflects our values of empowerment, inclusiveness and accountability. Many of your photographs encompass principles of dignity, reality and engagement that represent these values, vital to the way we communicate about our work.

- Stylistically, your photos are vibrant and colourful; yet still manage to reflect the reality of living in a difficult arid environment. You've also taken a number of stunning single images that are both strong aesthetically and which also fit with our brand values (e.g. 0300, a beautiful and empowering image of Assiyitou Walet Ramna, engaged in an Oxfam supported rice growing project in Doro Village) [See Fig 6.8].

(Gibbs, 2006)

Fig 6.8 Assiyitou Walet Ramna, engaged in an Oxfam-supported rice growing project in Doro Village. Image: D J Clark.

On returning from Mali I sent the same 372 images to my agency, Panos Pictures in London, where photo editors selected the 25 they believed to be marketable to the mainstream press. The images were uploaded to their database and have been on sale since January 2006. I also packaged a photo feature from the series highlighting the impending famine and sent it to 24 potential news magazines in the UK. The response from the media was very different to that of Oxfam. To date no images have sold or been published outside Oxfam communications. In contrast, the pictures from Niger in August 2005 that were widely published of the food crisis showed its 'visible' stage in photographs that recalled earlier famines in African settings. Jenny Matthews, who is also represented by Panos Pictures, produced the image of Kima (Fig 6.1) that sold widely and became a key picture for *Closer* magazine, which as a result asked Matthews to return and follow up the story (Imaging Famine, 2005).

The exercise demonstrates a clear disparity between the NGO communication needs and the UK press. The positive, upbeat image of Malike, Moma, and Leila (Figs 6.2-6.5) was important for Oxfam in 2006-7, appearing in their magazines, education packages, calendars, and on the cover of the 2007 Oxfam diary. However, the same image was not even selected by the editors at Panos Pictures as one for potential sale and thus never reached their archive. During the four days in Gao, I saw examples of children with intestine infections that produce the bloated belly familiar from conventional African famine imagery, and could have, were I not operating on a commission from Oxfam, easily have produced marketable photographs that would have gained wide circulation in the Minority World.

This experience provides a different reading of the 'educationalist' critique within the NGO community. That line of argument maintains that the negative visualisation of Africa as a constant disaster zone is 'untruthful'. However, my experience in Niger shows that if one were simply recording what was in front of the lens, it would have been credible - perhaps even necessary - to produce what would be regarded as stereotypical photographs of famine. This means, as Lidchi (1993: p.123) argues, both negative and positive 'are effectively essentialist propositions: the unexamined 'falsity' of the negative is counter posed against the 'truth' of the positive'. In fact, the Oxfam guidelines on empowering imagery function as an intervention that diverts the photographer away from

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a standard truth claim and requires them to focus on the 'brand' image. In this context, Lidchi describes NGO guidelines as a movement to bring the 'untethered' photographer into line with the underlying goals of the organisations that employ them. That is, the photographer needs to accurately depict the work of the NGO and not necessarily the actual issue, to aid in good citizenship in the Minority World, and to empower the people with which they work. As a consequence, the Oxfam guidelines outline a very different set of values to those described in Chapter 3 as being prevalent in the global picture economy. Unsurprisingly, they do not sit comfortably together.

Concluding Review

The thesis began with an analysis of *The Live Aid Legacy*, one of the most important reports on how 'we' in Britain view the Majority World. In response to the report the thesis has considered how dominant UK audiences conceive of the media, its role, the news and imagery it produces, and the consumers subject to these stereotypes. The introduction has argued that our knowledge of the world is mediated and if we relied on direct experience as the basis of understanding we would necessarily know very little. Therefore, knowledge of the wider world depends on representations provided to us from a variety of sources. Central to the consumption of these representations is the formulation of discourse, which is heterogeneous, regulated, situated, and embedded. Discourse is the product of many authors, it does not produce a single interpretation at the expense of all others, it can contain contradictions despite being regulated, and it materializes social life and is sedimented in institutions and practices. Discourse, however, is not just linguistic but also made up of other representational forms like images. In turn, images comprise a range of forms, but the discussion in this thesis has concentrated primarily on news photographs.

To review the main findings of the thesis, this Conclusion returns to the central research questions outlined in the introduction, and provides a summation of the major themes that have been explored in relation to those questions.

i. What are the dominant UK public understandings of Africa as a place, how has photography contributed to these imagined geographies, and how do these imagined geographies affect African communities?

The thesis has considered the findings of six recent studies concerned with the portrayal of the Majority World through a wide range of media. The reports have been divided into two sets of findings; the first considered the media representations of the Majority World; and the second public imagined geographies of place. The thesis argues there is an unsurprising link between the portrayal of place through the press and dominant public visualisations of place. The reports found that location, finance, and political ties were the driving factors that governed how the UK media portrayed an event in the Majority World. The further away an event took place, the smaller its financial impact on a global market, and the fewer cultural or political ties a country had, the simpler and less in-depth the resultant coverage was likely to be. This, in turn, impacted on dominant public understandings of those places, which only then receive coverage if specific events like disasters, wars, or epidemics take place. 'Africa', therefore, is largely understood through these representations.

Through an analysis of the history of photography, the thesis has argued that the process of imaging Africa through a camera has always been entwined with the construction of a different, 'dark', and 'inferior' continent. The visualisation started before the invention of photography through literature, travelogues, and paintings but accelerated as colonial influence increased in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Photography became a tool for creating specific colonial identities, and for documenting military conquest and scientific and anthropological study. Through a study of the *National Geographic Magazine* and a comparison between two specific, creative renderings of the Congo, the thesis has drawn links between past and present, and demonstrated a clear

compositional lineage that influences contemporary practice. The repetition of particular photographic representations is demonstrated in a number of cases throughout the thesis, culminating in the final chapter. This demonstrates the visual lineage from the 1984-5 Ethiopian famine to contemporary representations of Ethiopia. These and other examples demonstrate that the current image economy influences the production of two distinct imaginative representations prevalent amongst UK dominant audiences; the Minority World as civilized/developed and the Majority World as barbaric/underdeveloped. Throughout the thesis it has been stressed that these binaries are not natural. They are, however, naturalised. That means they have the appearance of being natural even though they are constructed as part of a complex array of discursive practices in which each side of the dualism relates to the other. In other words, it is because of the need to constitute ones self as civilized/developed that notions of barbaric/underdeveloped are ascribed to the other.

The opening chapter argues that the title for the *Live Aid Legacy* report was misleading in the way it assumes UK negative imaginations of Africa were the sole result of one event – *Live Aid*. Using works by Edward Said, Derek Gregory, David Harvey, and James Ryan and Joanne Schwartz on imagined geographies to discuss a historical lineage of negative 'othering', the chapter makes the case that the depiction of the Ethiopian famine in 1984-5 and subsequent *Live Aid* event of 1985 was part of a stream of similar visualisations that go back to a period before the invention of the camera. However, Chapters 3 and 4 develop this discourse to contend that from the mid-twentieth century onwards, with a lack of alternative colonial contextualisation, it is news images of major events that are now the main influence on UK public imaginations of places in the Majority World, and the access photographers have to those events plays a key role in the way distant audiences understand the places they portray.

In opposition to the Minority World's negative imaginations of the Majority World, this Conclusion has acknowledged a recent move by NGO educationalists to reposition public understanding of the Majority World through picture guidelines that encourage a more positive aesthetic. Although the NGO picture policies have been in operation since the late 1980s, the reports discussed in Chapter 1 demonstrate that these codes have had little impression on dominant UK imaginations of Africa. The case of Mekanic Philipos, outlined in Chapter 4, has demonstrated one reason why the same NGOs that enforce these image guidelines also facilitate journalists in the production of powerful negative imagery of the issues they seek to address. The case study from Mali has further demonstrated that such picture policies, though worthy as concepts, are at odds with the current picture needs of the UK press, and therefore have little effect outside the NGOs' own communications which, as the thesis has argued, are understood by their audiences as 'truth production', and therefore lack the impact needed to influence public visualisations of Africa.

The thesis has also addressed the issue of how these representations affect the communities they represent. As noted, a detailed study of this is beyond the scope of this thesis, but three examples of how Minority World imagined geographies impact on the economies of African countries were suggested. The examples discussed - aid, tourism, and investment - demonstrated the significance of the subject in relation to economic development. In this context, many of the stated objectives of socially-motivated photographers are in opposition to the long-term effects of negative visualisations. Unlike the short-term influence of socially-motivated photography, which is easy to quantify (at least in terms of financial contributions), the long-term effect of negative imagined geographies is much harder to evaluate. In the Mali example, I acknowledged the long-term implications of negative images and therefore shot positive pictures that had the potential, if replicated and used over time, to challenge current dominant UK public imaginations of 'Africa'. However as a result I was not able to sell the images in the UK media and thus could not, at least potentially, influence public understandings. The images therefore were not in a position to benefit the communities they showed, and the application of Graham's business model for effective change failed in its purpose (although this was as a result of their siting rather than their aesthetic qualities). This

leaves no obvious solution for the photographer, but rather requires the UK media to re-evaluate its priorities with regard to reporting news on Africa.

ii. How does a still photographic image influence the imagined geography of a place, what are the key elements that give these pictures the claim to be truthful, and can photography contribute to an alternative geographic visualisation?

The thesis has considered the place of the single photographic image in the contemporary UK media landscape. It has argued that although the moving image (video) is generally regarded to be more influential in the media, the single image is still relevant and, in some situations, more powerful at conveying a message and a sense of place. A photograph's ability to halt the reader, engage a more considered examination of the landscape, and create intrigue gives power to the still image to impress itself upon viewers' imaginations of place in a way that a moving image cannot. However, the study of the Ethiopian famine in Chapter 4 questions this power by arguing that still pictures of the famine in the Sahel by Salgado and Suau failed to have the impact of the BBC news coverage and only had relevance in an international media landscape after Buerk and Amin had broken the story. This argument, however, is not clear as the impact of the Amin/Buerk package benefited greatly from its siting on national television.

The thesis argues that contemporary news aesthetics, influenced by complex advertising constructions, have decontextualised the single news images in order for publications to provide a greater graphic appeal. With audiences coming to the news image already knowing the story (thanks to 24-hour news television) the photographer is challenged to create a comment through the production of a feeling or emotion. The Mali images chosen by the Oxfam GB team of Malike, Moma, and Leila (Figs 6.2-6.4) are both an alternative example of Cohen's 'universal icon of suffering' (the child) and of a confused aesthetic that gives little indication of place but rather conveys a mood (an issue dealt with in Chapter 2). The feel of the Oxfam image is positive (summed up in the Oxfam title, 'smile please') and contradicts the established representations of Africa that leave their audiences with the sense of place being confused, fractured, desperate, and in pain.

The thesis elaborated the issue of photographic representation with a discussion of truth claims made by photographers through their imagery. The argument concluded that, when combined with traditional artistic rules of composition, the aestheticisation of poverty creates both 'beautiful' and 'convincing' pictures. In contrast, unstructured images influenced by contemporary art have less effect in convincing audiences of a photographer's truth claim. However, the most powerful factor in convincing audiences of a photographer's truth claim is the siting. When sited in a media that is trusted, such as a newspaper or news magazine, readers rarely question the photographer's enquiry and choice of composition. This, in turn, confirms or questions the readers' visualisation of the place in which it occurred. The move of photojournalism from the news publication to the gallery, the thesis argues, is not significant in the ability of the image to influence public imaginations of place. Although the gallery gives more opportunity for alternative representations and more space for contextualisation, it also attracts fewer viewers and weakens audiences' belief in the images.

The thesis questions the ability of any individual photographer to change an imagined geography by arguing that the photographic industry in which he or she works has little regard for the issue. Photographic reward, Chapter 2 has demonstrated, is based around the aesthetic value, and not the humanitarian outcome, of the image, and when the humanitarian outcome is measured, it is only done so by looking at short-term results.

iii. What is the influence of the contemporary image economy on photographic visualisations of Africa, how do these structural changes affect dominant UK perceptions of place, and is the photographer's national identity a factor in their visual representation of community?

The thesis considered a changing global picture economy and argued that the digitisation of photography has resulted in fundamental changes to the industry. These changes are still in motion and likely to result in the future replacement of the still camera with the high-definition video camera. The current image economy has seen the increased use of local photographers. It is now far more likely that the images seen by Minority World audiences of the Majority World will have been produced by indigenous, Majority World photographers. The 'chains of understanding' have shifted from reflecting audience-based perspectives (the photographer coming from the communities in which the audiences are based) in favour of subject-based perspectives (the photographer coming from the communities in which the subjects being photographed are based). However, the chapter has also argued that the local photographer is constrained by the demands of the market, which is still dominated by Minority World interests. The result is that any local influence on aesthetic or point of view is outweighed by an economy that demands a particular image, based on Minority World interests.

The changes in the image economy have also produced subtle changes to the visualisation of Africa among UK audiences. The use of computerised thumbnail galleries and the over-reliance on agency subscriptions to report news outside the publications geographical location has led to a more dramatic, less contextualised view of places unfamiliar to the audiences. The tight crops that stand out on a page of small images have no space to provide important geographical information that places the event being imaged in a wider environment. The need to get the story up before competitors, and a concentration on comment rather than facts, are two further factors that have pushed the photographer away from a more neutral viewpoint.

The expected difference between a visiting photographer, who can interpret a scene using his domestic audiences' visual grammar, and a local photographer, who should be able to offer an indigenous perspective, has been diminished by a new economy that predominantly delivers a globalised view. The experiment in Mali was an example of a UK photographer 'parachuting' in for a four-day assignment and then leaving. Without the time to acclimatise and understand the issues, I stuck to established templates that reflected his client's needs. However, experiments carried out in China, outlined in Chapter 3, suggest that even with local knowledge photographers are not able to produce a view that is recognisably different to a 'parachute photographer' and may indeed also resort to 'othering' their subjects when working outside their own specific community. The final section of Chapter 3 uses case studies in Bangladesh and Ethiopia to demonstrate the growth of Majority World photography, backing up arguments made in the earlier sections. It also proves that although local photographers often have better access to subjects due to their connections and understanding of local customs and languages, there is no clear indigenous voice. The chapter argues that the image economy represents the dominating factor. The final section of the same chapter, however, makes a case for the use of local photographers, not on grounds of aesthetic but using an ethical argument of fair trade and media ownership to counteract the growth of digital colonialism.

iv. Using famine as example, and exploring the situation in the continent of Africa, how does the coverage of an event contribute to the construction of a place? What role does photography play in influencing both UK audiences' short-term responses to contemporary disaster as well as their enduring imaginations of place?

In Chapter 4 the thesis has used a specific case study to discuss the role imaging an event plays in responding to disaster and the production of imagined geographies. The chapter, which concentrates on Ethiopia and the 1984-5 famine, argues that the news images of the famine have influenced the past 20 years of Ethiopian representation and, in turn, solidified dominant public imaginations of place. Minority World photographers that have returned to Africa (and in particular Ethiopia) have perpetuated particular visualisations, based on the news images from 1984, that are present in both their minds

and, more importantly, the minds of their audiences. The experiment from Mali confirms this theory, as the images of food security that do not conform to Amin's pictures from Korem have failed to be accepted by the UK media. The lineage of disaster photography demonstrating negative visualisations of Africa is not new as *The Live Aid Legacy* suggests that the pictorial representation of the event have had the most influence on audiences. The short-term gain of a direct response to the situation can be counter-balanced by long-term negative imaginations that impact on the community's economy for years to come (or at least until the next major news event). The Mali experiment failed to unearth an alternative visualisation that highlights an impending disaster but re-orients the imagined geography towards a more positive visualisation. The author is not convinced an alternative exists for the traditional photographer. However, the evolving image economy may yet throw up an unanticipated solution.

As the internet increasingly competes with TV as the main source of news delivery, and as newspapers move their resources online (outlined in Chapters 2 and 3), so the photojournalist is required to swap the still camera for a high-definition video camera capable of shooting both still and moving images. The newspaper websites, no longer constricted by space, can potentially provide more spacious and in-depth visual coverage of global news. The combination of the technical attributes of the new cameras (which, for example, don't allow for shallow depth-of-focus), and the growing numbers of indigenous photographers working for international news agencies in the Majority World, provides new opportunities to break the cycle of negative visualisations and bring greater context to the images being produced. With these changes, many of the critiques raised in this thesis could be addressed. Citizen journalism and internet social networking will also supply new forms of visual media to mainstream UK audiences, providing a potentially much broader context to images than that are supplied by the traditional, disaster-focused media. However, until alternative representations of Africa are sufficiently numerous and powerful to start altering dominant public imaginations of the continent, something that is going to take considerable time, the continent and its people will continue to struggle as a result of Minority World understandings enabled by the conventional visual discourses of photojournalism.

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