

Review: 'Darwin's Nightmare': A Critical Assessment

Reviewed Work(s): Darwin's Nightmare by Hubert Sauper

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tained in the book. The Conclusion to *Voices of Protest* brings together many of the themes discussed throughout the book, and also touches on the issues of theory building and the implications of social movement activism on democracy and development. While the editors' analysis is thought-provoking, multiple research questions emerge from this final chapter. For example: to what extent are the social movements capable of creating and implementing an alternative socio-economic political project in South Africa (or beyond)? Do they need to capture the state, or can a sustainable political project be constructed outside of the state? And what is the relationship between the various social movements and the traditional 'left' forces within the Tripartite Alliance? Perhaps the mark of an outstanding book is its ability to stimulate further discussion and research. This collection will almost certainly do just that, as it provides a comprehensive, intelligent, and engaging assessment of social movements in South Africa.

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## 'Darwin's Nightmare': A Critical Assessment

*Thomas Molony, Lisa Ann Richey & Stefano Ponte*<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction: Sauper's 'Heart of Darkness'

'Darwin's Nightmare' (Hubert Sauper; 2004, France/Austria/Belgium, 107 min) is a documentary film about the Nile perch fishing industry around Lake Victoria in Tanzania. Since its release in 2004, it continues to generate accolades and criticisms that fall outside of conventional ideological boundaries favoured by globalisation's fans and its discontents. The film's director, Hubert Sauper has been embraced and rebuked by those claiming to promote the interests of the film's subjects. Yet the film has not yet been taken seriously as a discursive construction of particular ideologies of development, nor has it been subjected to the scrutiny necessary in order to understand the film's power to confirm, for a popular audience, much of what they think they know is 'true' about Africa and how such a representation can be both problematic and dangerous.

In the film, lawless 'fish cities' have mushroomed around the filleting factories, peopled by fishermen, prostitutes and feral, glue-sniffing children. Factory owners have grown relatively rich on the proceeds of a thriving export industry, while the locals eat the dried leftovers. AIDS ravages the fishing settlements and, when the dying fishermen limp home to be comforted by their relatives, AIDS destroys the inland villages as well. Fish are responsible for all of modernity's ills, including the crashing of cargo planes around Mwanza airport because they are too heavily laden with Nile perch fillets for the European dinner table.

While we are not averse to relevant criticisms of globalisation, international trade, African gender relations, geopolitics and biopolitics, we argue here that such a totalising vision of Tanzania, Africa and international development reduces gender relations, sexuality, socio-economic change, homelessness, poverty and complicated vectors of disease transmission into stale tropes associated with Afro-pessimism. We contend that 'Darwin's Nightmare' is an ethically dubious piece of journalism that exploits the power imbalances it claims to critique.

### Social Darwinism

The film harks back to the late nineteenth century sweep of 'social Darwinism' – a popular corruption of Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection. Some whites predicted on this basis that the 'Negro' race (the term used at the time) would be extinct by 1900. Their idea was that Darwin's 'survival of the fittest' implied a competition between races that the 'Negroes' would lose. (It is worth noting that 'survival of the fittest' was first used by a philosopher, Herbert Spencer; and it bears repeating that 'social Darwinism' is a misconception and misapplication of Darwin's actual theory). This popular belief was shared by some white physicians, who thought that it was confirmed by 'defects' in black peoples' anatomy, and therefore became obsessed with the details of such presumed imperfections. Although comparable defects in white patients went unreported, those in black patients were described in great detail in medical journals and became the basis for sweeping conclusions, for example, that genital and brain development were said to vary inversely. Social competition was assumed to be the essential characteristic of human nature understood through biological reality.<sup>2</sup> 'Darwin's Nightmare' is meant to refer to the pariah Nile perch fish (*Lates niloticus*) that feeds on the very social fabric of Mwanza, Tanza-

nia's most populated region. It can also refer to the nightmare perpetuated by this film of social Darwinism, where nature and global trade relations are portrayed as red in tooth and claw. This is not a new perspective on African development issues but a reiteration of nineteenth century pseudo-science. The implication seems to be that Africans will annihilate themselves because they are not fit enough to negotiate in the European's modern world.

As we all know, 'globalisation' and 'modernisation' are contentious, jagged amalgamations of contradictory components. Some of the forces that perpetuate the spread of HIV are the same ones responsible for 'empowerment' of women within families, families within communities and communities as part of a global vision of 'development'. More money can indeed mean more prostitution, family disintegration and disease spread as implied in this film, but less money can also mean the same.<sup>3</sup> This film perpetuates a common patronising belief among the elite that when the poor get money they will spend it on the wrong things, like the Mwanza fishermen indulging themselves in purchases of beer and sex.

### Representation, Sources & Credibility

Indian feminist Uma Narayan argues that representation of 'other' cultures in the mainstream Western media is not a problem of omission, but instead that Western representations have been deeply involved in perpetuating negative stereotypes and imputations of cultural inferiority (Narayan, 1997).<sup>4</sup> Hubert Sauper's film, produced under the guise of a documentary (and categorised as such, and not 'fiction'), uses the Tanzania subject as a reflecting pool for a meditation on the big, bad West. This is executed in such a way that viewers are blinded by the incredible whiteness of being, under the guise of 'progressive

politics' à la Michael Moore.<sup>5</sup> In spite of the fact that the authors of this article and the maker of the film are all Europe-based white people speaking about Africa, this does not imply that we have one voice or that we speak with the same credibility, accountability or bias. Such issues are frequently raised in internet discussions about the film, where vituperative remarks are regularly exchanged between those who laud the director for exposing the evils of a 'system' largely supported by outsiders, and those who contest Sauper's evidence and question his methods.<sup>6</sup>

The film exploits the perception that 'Africans know everything about Africa' in ways that pervert notions of perspective or authenticity. For example, the film relies on Raphael (whose surname is variously reported as Luchikio or Tukiko), the night watchman of the Fisheries Research Institute in Mwanza, to provide the appropriate assessment and analysis of the impact of international trade and fishing on Tanzania's local communities. Instead of speaking for his own condition, perhaps noting that he himself earns a salary, meagre as it is, from the fishing industry, he is cajoled into playing amateur social scientist for a filmmaker eager to 'indigenise' his own voice. Staged in darkened footage as the 'savage', the night watchman is armed with only a bow and poisoned arrows and describes how he does not fear war and must be 'ready for fights'.<sup>7</sup> Yet his arsenal is clearly not depicted as prepared for 'modern' battles. As a performance of 'local knowledge', he is hired to read aloud from an article in *The East African* newspaper.

Similarly, the impact of HIV/AIDS on a local fishing community is assessed by the village pastor, his subjective demography of slightly confusing statistics ('45 to 50 fishermen dead in the lake', and '10 to 15 dead every month in his area') is followed by questioning in the film that makes him appear, at best, impractical in

his solutions to HIV/AIDS devastation. Yet why should a documentary ask a pastor if he teaches about condom usage? This makes no more sense than asking the local clinic staff if they prescribe prayer as the medical cure for sin. What it does achieve is to privilege his perspective on how AIDS is affecting his village and then invalidate his own beliefs about his religious interpretation of the disease. Jonathan, supposedly 'the only painter in town' is given a similar role to play, assessing the realities of street children and abuse.

Local voices that could be in contrast to the film's ideological path are consistently absent. Where are the interviews with the men and women who work in the fish factory? How can the selection of three sex workers (who appear intoxicated as they are questioned over drinks at the New Mwanza Hotel) and five street children (shown high on glue) be considered representative of the local 'stakeholders' in the international fishing industry? And of the other destitute children shown cooking and fighting over food, Richard Mgamba (the journalist who helped Sauper after being told the film planned 'to market Lake Victoria and the fishing industry to the rest of the globe'), reports that they

*were paid between Tshs 1,000/- and Tshs 5,000/- by the producers of the film and the[n] directed [to] do what they are doing, paving the way for my quest to film what they termed 'striking images'.*<sup>8</sup>

This account is supported by the painter Jonathan and others such as Mangeu and Matekere who recall that, in exchange for cash, they were directed by Sauper on how he wanted them to act.<sup>9</sup> Sauper's claim that he and his crew 'had to be very close to our "characters" and follow their lives over long periods'<sup>10</sup> should therefore be interrogated. Yet, glowing reviews in the popular press praise the director's 'admirable facility for getting close enough to his remark-

ably unguarded subjects' in a film 'enriched by the candor and dignity of its shockingly deprived interview subjects.'<sup>11</sup>

Not that Sauper demonstrated a penchant for getting his facts right. His depiction of hapless 'scientists' discussing resource management issues in a local workshop was fairly indicative. But this time, the 'other' talked back. The Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation and IUCN, The World Conservation Union, replied to Sauper in their poignant public letter, dated 8 December 2005:

*What you have titled as the 'IUCN Ecological Congress' was in fact the 'International Workshop on Community Participation in Fisheries Management on Lake Victoria', organised jointly by the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization and The World Conservation Union (IUCN). Had you stayed in the workshop for more than 15 minutes, you would have realised that the workshop was in fact defining ways to devolve some of the responsibilities and rewards of fisheries management to local communities. While community empowerment does not translate into poverty alleviation overnight, it is a critical initial step to improve the lives of communities. The government ministers, scientists, industry and community representatives at that meeting would have gladly informed you about the purpose of the workshop, and their view of the impact of the Lake Victoria fisheries on fishing communities in Tanzania, had you asked.'*<sup>12</sup>

### **Fish Exports Hurt Local Economies?**

One of the main claims that the film makes is that Nile perch exports are 'bad' for Tanzania. This comes through most forcefully when images of packed fish fillets are loaded on Ilyushin cargo planes, while news of food scarcity in the country, due to drought, is broadcast on the radio.

The view that the multiplier effect of exporting Nile perch<sup>13</sup> is what could be actually needed in such a situation is never entertained. Food emergency systems in case of shortages are based on dry grains, in Tanzania, mostly maize. These grains are easy to store and transport, readily available in the global market, relatively cheap, and a preferred food staple in Tanzania (although rice would be a locally-preferred food around Lake Victoria). The oily *sangala/sangara* (as Nile perch is known in Tanzania)<sup>14</sup> is not a locally-preferred food; it is an exotic species that was introduced in the lake by British colonial officers in the 1950s. It is also very difficult to handle for local food distribution – to be eaten fresh, it needs a cold chain that would make it unaffordable to most Tanzanians who may be in need of food supplies; it is a large fish, difficult and expensive to dry, smoke and/or fry, the only forms it can be traded without a cold chain.<sup>15</sup> In other words, despite what Sauper implies, it can not be used to alleviate food shortages in Tanzania. Not catching and exporting it would likely mean more households without income who would add to the count of the food deficient population. The film fosters a view of hunger as lack of food, as opposed to lack of access to food – pace Amartya Sen.<sup>16</sup>

A second misrepresentation that the documentary carries out is that the coastline is totally dependent on fish exports. First, there is a substantial fishing industry that caters for local and regional markets; this handles tilapia and dagaa, a dry or fried sardine-type fish that constitutes the bulk of regional fish trade.<sup>17</sup> The local market for Nile perch heads and bones is actually quite small in comparison to these other markets. It is also decreasing in importance, as some fish factories have been making more use of left-overs on the frame to manufacture fish fillets and burgers and for animal feed,<sup>18</sup> and others have been exporting the fish products to the Demo-

cratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Malawi and Zambia.<sup>19</sup> Second, the fish export industry in Tanzania is not a 'multi-billion dollar' industry as the documentary claims; Nile perch exports from Tanzania amount to less than \$100 million annually. Third, the regions that surround Lake Victoria in Tanzania are not 'totally dependent on fish' as is claimed in the film. Such an assertion is incorrect and has led a respected BBC film reviewer to tell his audience that

*the inhabitants of the lake [presumably local Mwanzans, and not the fish] are now impoverished, and the only industry left to them consists of processing the Nile perch and selling it off to Europe.*<sup>20</sup>

There is substantial rice and cotton cultivation and large mining investments, not to speak of commercial and service activities in Mwanza. Yet it would appear from this film that prostitution services is all that Tanzania's fastest growing city has to offer. The documentary also claims two plane-loads a day (between 90 and 130 tons of fish fillets altogether, depending on the type of aircraft) translate into '2 million white people eat[ing] Victoria-fish every day.' That would mean a fish portion of 4 grams per 'white person' per day. The preferred fish fillet size in European supermarkets is somewhere between 200 and 500 grams, for preparations for 2 to 4 people.

A third twist that the documentary does is to forcefully link fishing to all things that are wrong with Tanzanian society. One of the film's opening scenes is of a sex worker singing 'Tanzania, Tanzania, *nakupenda kwa moyo wote ...*' (Tanzania, I love you with all of my heart) while a rude European pilot mocks her. This is not translated, and so to a foreign audience means nothing. To a Swahili speaker, on the other hand, the scene also shows a powerful portrait of a woman whose pride of place and identity remain intact, even under the assaults of the brutish

'johns'.<sup>21</sup> Her words appear to be lost on Sauper, or at least are left untranslated so to depersonalise the sex worker and reveal yet another heart of darkness.

Further, while we do not want to make light of the conditions of street children in Mwanza, their plight is not fundamentally different to that of those in other cities, where the fishing industry is not operating. Subtle omissions are replaced by a blatantly skewed translation in one of the film's rare daylight scenes when a Tanzanian working for the film interviews a group of street children by the lake. He asks one of the street children in clearly audible Swahili, *Baba yako, anafanya kazi gani?* ('What work does your father do?'), to which the child says *Wanalima* ('They farm') – translated with the subtitle 'He is on the water.' The child repeats, *Wanalima*. A second child is then asked, 'Is your dad also a fisherman?' The child says, 'My dad is dead.' Then the interviewer returns to the first child (whose father is not a fisherman, but was misleadingly translated into saying that he was) and asks: 'Do you want to be a fisherman like your dad?' and the child says, *Sitaki* ('I don't want to'). Such clear manipulation of the subtitles to make this appear to be a group of street children abandoned by their parents at the will of the global fish industry is the epitome of poor journalism. That it presumably comes from 'good' or 'progressive' intentions does nothing for the cause of any genuine anti-capitalist critique.

Research-based evidence shows that fishing households have on average higher incomes than purely farming households on Lake Victoria.<sup>22</sup> Fishing can help raise cash to get access to agricultural inputs and hired labour (i.e., for cotton cultivation in the hinterlands of Mwanza) and is thus likely to increase productivity and income in farms. We are not arguing here that higher incomes necessarily entail better welfare of households and communities. However, we

take stance against the documentary when it portrays how fishermen with cash 'squander' their money on drink and prostitutes. The equation for Sauper is: no cash = poverty; cash = perdition.

### Mwanza, Famous or Infamous for Street Children & HIV/AIDS?

Mwanza is in fact well-known among researchers on issues of both HIV/AIDS and street children for two reasons, neither of which is acknowledged in the film. Mwanza is home to one of the oldest and most successful grassroots NGOs dealing with problems of street children in Africa. Named from a Swahili word meaning 'to nurture one another', *Kuleana* has been a Tanzanian-led centre for housing street children and for advocating for the rights of all children since 1992. The problem of homeless children is severe in Mwanza town, but if the film had explored the actual problem, instead of its archetype as globalisation's repugnance, *Kuleana* could have provided some perspective.

Mwanza is also the site of the first definitive medical research linking treatment of sexually-transmitted diseases with prevention of HIV transmission. In the late 1990s, the now famous 'Mwanza study' conducted by an international team of public health experts showed that treating sexually-transmitted diseases could reduce rates of HIV transmission.<sup>23</sup> This study has provided useful data for advocates of better primary health care provision and increased attention to sexual and reproductive health as a matter of life and death. While the level of health care provision in Mwanza remains in need of improvement, there are anti-retroviral drugs for the treatment of AIDS at the regional hospital, funds from the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), and mobile health clinics funded by the Clinton Foundation. AIDS clearly is a devastating disease in the Lake Victoria communities as the film depicts. Nevertheless,

this should be placed in the perspective that the area is better-equipped than most of sub-Saharan Africa to deal with the situation.

### Fish for Arms?

Could 'awakening' the European consumers of Nile perch to the negative externalities of the industry stop them from consuming the fish? This may already have started if the BBC's Nick Fraser is correct; that Darwin's Nightmare – 'one of the most shocking films made in recent years' – has ensured that Nile perch has been removed from French supermarkets.<sup>24</sup> If so, would this possibly make the lives any better for the fishing communities in Mwanza?

Perhaps a focus on the fishing industry is missing the point of the film. The trailer to the film (in French) concentrates exclusively on what could only be described as his fish-for-arms 'speculation', where Nile perch is flown to the West in huge cargo planes that apparently return to Tanzania with weapons to fuel Africa's conflicts.<sup>25</sup> This idea was born during Sauper's 'research' on another of his documentaries, *Kisangani Diary*, that follows Rwandese refugees of the Congolese rebellion. He recalls on the official 'Darwin's Nightmare' website that,

*... it turned out that the rescue planes with yellow peas also carried arms to the same destinations, so that the same refugees that were benefiting from the yellow peas could be shot at later during the nights ... First hand knowledge of the story of such a cynical reality became the trigger for 'Darwin's Nightmare'.*

Sauper's use of the word 'trigger' is no accident. The French-language advertising poster for *Le Cauchemar de Darwin* (and the cover of the DVD in widest circulation in Tanzania) is of three white images against a black background: the first, a sketch of a fish.

The second, the skeleton of a fish with the anal fins replaced by the trigger and magazine of an assault rifle; the third, an assault rifle. The implication is that the film will show how fish somehow turn in to, or are exchanged for, weapons. If there is any doubt, then the Spanish-language poster for 'La Pesa-dilla de Darwin' is more striking still, with the black background contrasting against the blood-red stencil of a fish that has the butt of an assault rifle for a tail.<sup>26</sup> Reviewers have taken the bait, and have provided prospective film viewers with predictably Afro-pessimistic appraisals:

*To make the journey profitable, the planes that collect the fish now come filled up with arms. In addition to destroying the environment, the West has also increased the likelihood of conflict in Africa,*

reads the review by BBC's film critic for 'Storyville'.<sup>27</sup> The film critic for the *New York Post* is even briefer in his prognosis: 'Africa starves because corrupt governments own the natural resources and export them to buy weapons to keep their people at bay.'<sup>28</sup>

This has irked the Government of Tanzania, a country that has welcomed refugees from neighbouring countries and for many years worked hard to negotiate peace in the Great Lakes region. President Julius Nyerere, known as 'the father of the nation', gained the reputation as an international statesman in part for his efforts to these ends. His successors, particularly the current president, Jakaya Kikwete, have taken a key role in these negotiations. In a televised address from the Bank of Tanzania Institute in Mwanza on 31 July 2006, a visibly angry Mr. Kikwete argued that the film had failed to provide specific evidence linking fish exports to the arms trade: 'One of

*the biggest lies in the film is that the planes that are coming to pick fish from Mwanza bring weapons that are used to destabilise the Great Lakes region.*<sup>29</sup>

President Kikwete asked Sauper to provide evidence linking fish exports to the arms trade, because there is none in the film.<sup>30</sup> Several times in the film, Sauper asks his informants, 'What do the aircraft bring into Tanzania? Do they come empty?' No evidence is provided and at times the director is laughed at by those he asks. Still, he continues throughout the film, persistently quizzing pilots and also grilling, as James Christopher of the *New York Times* puts it, 'the factory managers, the fishermen, the urchins and the prostitutes.'<sup>31</sup> Nobody entertains Sauper's hypothesis until finally an airman confesses to having had 'two flights from Europe to Angola with big machines like tanks'. Yet the airman makes no mention of having stopped in Mwanza or anywhere else in Tanzania.

The omission of a date line for these events is also significant. Angola's bloody civil war ran for 27 years from 1975, and of course weapons were delivered to Angola because government troops and UNITA rebel forces were fighting each other and needed arms and ammunition to do so. While there is no direct suggestion in the film that Tanzania assisted in the supply of weapons for the Angola conflict, this does seem to be implied. This is most obvious in references to the article by Richard Mgamba which suggests that Mwanza has been used for the delivery of arms en route to other countries.<sup>32</sup> Since Mgamba wrote his report there have been allegations linking Tanzania to illegal arms trafficking, the most forceful being a report by *Mwanakijiji* that uses evidence from United States intelligence, among other sources.<sup>33</sup> The article also refers to a UN report on arms smuggling and trafficking with the Democratic Republic of Congo which reveals that Mwanza airport allows flights that do not comply with international civil aviation rules, and provides photographs of 'suspicious airplanes sighted by the Group of Experts on 16 November 2005 at Mwanza airport.'<sup>34</sup> The film fails to comment on



any such evidence, nor is Sauper able to provide any evidence of his own.

The Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania in France concluded that Sauper stumbled upon the perch theme because of his lack evidence about weapons being flown into Mwanza.<sup>35</sup> On the official website's page entitled 'Filming in the Heart of Darkness', and with remarkable similarities to Conrad's work, Sauper describes:

*Forced idleness became a dull routine. We would sit in the merciless equatorial sun surrounded by a million Nile Perch skeletons, the local's food, trying not to go mad.*<sup>36</sup>

Under such conditions one might speculate that Sauper was tempted to look even harder for the weapons he had heard about years ago when working in another country on 'Kisangani Diary'. The outcome is a film that, as the *New York Times* film reviewer A. O. Scott puts it, 'turns the fugitive, mundane facts that are any documentary's raw materials into the stuff of tragedy and prophecy.'<sup>37</sup>

### Tanzania's Nightmare, Sauper's Dream

Undoubtedly Sauper and his promoters' sensationalisation of the 'fish-for-arms' boosted sales and has helped advertise their film. President Kikwete, by devoting his entire nationwide month-end address to 'Darwin's Nightmare', unwittingly handed Sauper the best publicity he could have hoped for. While few Tanzanians still appear to have watched the film, the national media discussed it at length. *The Daily News* supported the government (predictably, some might say),<sup>38</sup> while *Uwazi*, a Swahili-language tabloid, was forced to make an unconditional public apology to the National Assembly for publishing a cartoon that allegedly belittled a Member of Parliament's condemnation of the film.<sup>39</sup> Counterfeit DVDs of the *Filamu ya Mapanki*, as

it became known, began to be sold on the streets, presumably to make a profit from those who might want to see for themselves what all the fuss was about.<sup>40</sup> Internationally 'Darwin's Nightmare' had become more than Sauper could have dreamt of in terms of publicity. Domestically it had turned into what one commentator has termed 'a parliamentary nightmare'.<sup>41</sup> The nightmare perpetuated when the Government of Tanzania apparently reacted with what Sauper described as a 'campaign of intimidation' against people who spoke out against the film.<sup>42</sup> According to the Economist Intelligence Unit, the government threatened to deport some of the journalists who were interviewed in the film:

*Richard Mgamba of The Citizen newspaper was apparently harassed by the authorities and threatened with deportation to Kenya, even though he is a Tanzanian citizen. He fled Mwanza, owing to fears that a demonstration against the film – organised by the local authorities and held in early August [2006] – would spiral out of control.*<sup>43</sup>

A website entitled 'The Otherside of this Documentary: Know the truth about this documentary film'<sup>44</sup> has appeared in a bid to defend 'Brand Tanzania' on the international stage. There are no formal acknowledgements that the site is supported by the government, but it is likely that it is the product of a resolution passed by Parliament that, '[t]o cleanse the country's name ... recommended the production of a documentary that will counter the allegations by giving a true picture of Nile Perch business in Lake Victoria'.<sup>45</sup> It offers a gallery of photos (mostly fish, but a couple of doctored images of Sauper posing with Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden) and an opportunity to send articles to the webmaster. As with visitors' comments in the discussion pages, all the articles are unified in their condemnation of the film. One article by the Ministry of

Natural Resources systematically attacks the film with clarifications pointing out, for example, that the aircraft used to transport the fish are contracted by companies in Europe, not the Tanzanian processors.<sup>46</sup> Another official statement, from the Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania in France, contests the film's assertion that globalisation has forced Tanzania to 'condemn the majority of its population to ... slavery, prostitution, and drug addiction.'<sup>47</sup>

The site's *pièce de résistance* are video clips of interviews with people working in the fish industry and with some of the young 'actors' featured in the film. Accounts of the events leading up to the 'Otherside' interviews are anecdotal, and it is not difficult to identify who commissioned them, given the Parliamentary resolution mentioned earlier. Yet it is unclear what pressure, if any, the interviewees who had featured in the film were under to speak out about how the film research and filming took place. Speaking from the safety of Europe, Sauper expressed his concern that,

*[t]he very last thing you want as a filmmaker is for the people you left behind to be in danger.*

By the time the 'Otherside' interviews took place the young men who feature in the film would have quickly realised how Sauper manipulated their words and deeds to fit his own agenda. Under questioning, they tell viewers the 'truth' about this documentary film and the actions of the director who shunned his responsibilities to vulnerable people. One of Sauper's comments during an interview on the ethics of free trade and filmmaking is more accurate, and pertinent, than the director intended and provides a fitting coda to this review: 'There isn't anything new in my movie. It's all known.'<sup>48</sup>

## Endnotes

1. Thomas Molony is Research Fellow, Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh. and Postdoctoral Research Fellow, School of Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. Lisa Ann Richey is Associate Professor of International Development Studies, Institute for Society and Globalisation, Roskilde University, Denmark. Stefano Ponte is Senior Researcher, Danish Institute for International Studies. We are thankful to Ben Jones for constructive criticism and feedback.

2. See Eric B. Ross (1998), *The Malthus Factor: Poverty, Politics and Population in Capitalist Development*, London: Zed, 1998.

3. For examples from Mwanza, see K. Coen Flynn (2005), *Food, Culture, and Survival in an African City*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

4. U. Narayan (1997), *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, traditions, and Third-World feminism*, New York: Routledge.

5. Sauper is so persuasive at this that his film was nominated under the 'Best Documentary Features' category at the 2006 Academy Awards. Other hopefuls were 'Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room', 'Murderball' and 'Street Fight'. His film was not awarded an Oscar.

6. For example, see discussion fora on <[www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)> or <[www.darwinsnightmare.net](http://www.darwinsnightmare.net)>, postings on <<http://mettyzbongoland-reflections.blogspot.com/>> and podcasts on <<http://mwanakijiji.podomatic.com/>>.

7. Bows and arrows have a number of important resonances in the culture of the Nyamwezi and Sukuma (whose power base is in Mwanza), where they serve as major symbols of paternal ancestry and male identity; R. Abrahams, 'Sungusungu: Village vigilante groups in Tanzania', *African Affairs* 86 343 (1987), pp. 179-96.

8. R. Mgamba, 'Reporting Africa in Western Media Style', n.d., <[http://www.darwinsnightmare.net/REPORTING\\_AFRICA.html](http://www.darwinsnightmare.net/REPORTING_AFRICA.html)> 20 February 2007.

9. darwinsnightmare.net, 'Mwanza fish industry video', n.d., <[http://www.darwinsnightmare.net/Fish\\_Industry\\_Video.html](http://www.darwinsnightmare.net/Fish_Industry_Video.html)> 20 February 2007.

10. <<http://www.darwinsnightmare.com/darwin/html/startset.htm>>

11. D. Rooney, 'Variety magazine film review [of Darwin's Nightmare]', 23 September 2004, <[http://www.variety.com/awardcentral\\_](http://www.variety.com/awardcentral_)

- review/VE1117924973.html?nav=r\_eviews07&categoryid=1986&cs=1> 1 March 2007.
12. 'Open letter to Hubert Sauper from the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization and The World Conservation Union (IUCN)', T. Maembe & A. K. Kaudia, Jinja/Nairobi, 8 December 2005. One of the authors of the letter confirmed with us that they never received a response from Sauper.
13. 'Socio-economic effects of the evolution of Nile perch fisheries in Lake Victoria: A review', J. E. Reynolds, D.F. Greboval, FAO, Rome, 1988.
14. *Lates niloticus* is also known in Tanzania as *chengu* and *mkombozi* ('saviour').
15. See S. Ponte, 'Bans, tests and alchemy: Food safety standards and the Ugandan export fish industry', *Agriculture and Human Values* 24: 179-193, 2007.
16. A. Sen, A. (1981), *Poverty and Famines: An essay on entitlement and deprivation*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
17. On Uganda, see Fisheries Resources Research Institute (FIRRI) 'Survey of the regional fish trade', Research report for the Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project and the Lake Victoria Fisheries Research Project, FIRRI: Jinja, 2003.
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26. Carteles de cine, 'La Pesadilla de Darwin (Spanish language film review)', 19 December 2006, <<http://www.carteles.metropoli-global.com/paginas/ficha.php?qsec=pele&qid=2922835413>> 25 February 2007.
27. Fraser, BBC Storyville review; the film was broadcasted on BBC 2 on 23 May 2006.
28. K. Smith, 'Darwin's Nightmare (film review)', 3 August 2005, <<http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/nypost/access/876920931.html?dids=876920931:876920931&FMT=ABS&FMTS=ABS:FT&date=Aug+3%2C+2005&author=&pub=New+York+Post&edition=&startpage=050&desc=ODDBALL+FAMILY+AFFAIR>> 24 February 2007.
29. 'Economist Intelligence Unit: Country Profile, Tanzania, September 2006', EIU, London, 2006, p. 17; see also *Tanzania Daima*, 'Mti unaozaa matunda matamu hupondwa kwa mawe', 20 September 2006.
30. Sauper claims that he introduced himself to the President at a dinner party in Paris and 'he did not ask me any questions'. Mr. Kikwete had not seen the film at that stage. M. Mwanakijiji, 'A KLH News interview with director H. Sauper of "Darwin's Nightmare"', 13 August 2006, <[http://mwanakijiji.podomatic.com/enclsure/2006-08-13T21\\_08\\_06-07\\_00.mp3](http://mwanakijiji.podomatic.com/enclsure/2006-08-13T21_08_06-07_00.mp3)> 3 March 2007. President Kikwete made a two-day working visit to France in May 2006, attending a dinner hosted by Brigitte Girardin, Minister Delegate for Cooperation, Development and Francophony, on 15 May.
31. *The Times* (London), 'Family feud for thought', 5 May 2005.
32. *The East African*, 'Dar officials accused of abetting arms racket', 24 June 2002.
33. M. Mwanakijiji, 'Tracing reports of Tanzania's illegal arms trafficking in the Great Lakes region 1997-2006', 2006, <<http://www.blog.co.tz/rom/friends/>> 3 March 2007.
34. 'Letter dated 26 January 2006 from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to the resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council', United Nations Security Council, New York, 27 January 2006.
35. 'Le Cauchemar de Darwin: A Response from the Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania in France' (Embassy of the United Republic of

Tanzania in France, Paris, 2006). There is some speculation <<http://imdb.com/title/tt0424024/board/nest/37248219>> that Sauper was influenced on the Nile perch theme after reading T. Goldschmidt (1998), *Darwin's Dreampond: Drama in Lake Victoria*, Cambridge: MIT Press, a semi-autobiographical account by a scientist on the effects of the foreign fish on the lake's ecosystem.

36. In constant, introspective musings, the *Heart of Darkness* protagonist Marlow describes the effects of the jungle on the ivory trading Kurtz using remarkably similar language: 'But his soul was mad. Being alone in the wilderness, it had looked within itself, and, by heavens! I tell you, it had gone mad'; J. Conrad (1995), *Heart of Darkness*, London: Penguin (1902), p. 107.

37. *New York Times*, 'Feeding Europe, Starving At Home (Review)', 3 August 2005.

38. *Daily News*, 'Sauper's lost war', 10 August 2006. The same article poured scorn on bloggers' criticism of those involved in 'resource mismanagement'.

39. *Tanzania Daima*, 'Gazeti la Uwazi lataka kuomba radhi', 17 August 2006; *Daily News*, 'Bunge winds up session, demands apology from tabloid', 17 August 2006; *The Daily News* also reports that the resolution 'advised the government to follow up some of the allegations made especially of using the planes to import firearms, which are allegedly used to perpetuate conflicts in the Great Lakes region.'

40. '*Filamu ya mapanki*' translates to 'Film about the [fish] off-cuts'.

41. *Sunday Observer*, 'Fish heads consumption and the making of a parliamentary nightmare', 20 August 2006. Nimi Mweta's article led to online discussion in late August 2006 on <<http://www.jamboforums.com>>.

42. International Freedom of Expression eXchange, 'Chantage à la citoyenneté contre un journaliste qui a participé au documentaire le "Cauchemar de Darwin" (Journalist who appeared in film "Darwin's Nightmare" is threatened with deportation)', 21 August 2006, <<http://www.ifex.org/alerts/layout/set/print/layout/set/print/content/view/full/76481>> 7 July 2006.

43. Economist Intelligence Unit, Tanzania, p. 17.

44. <<http://www.darwinsnightmare.net>>

45. *Daily News*, 'Bunge rebukes 'Darwin's Nightmare' filmmaker', 12 August 2006.

46. Truth On Hubert Sauper's 'Darwin's Nightmare', URT.

47. Le Cauchemar de Darwin, Embassy of URT in France.

48. J. Land, 'Darwin's director Hubert Sauper on the ethics of free trade and filmmaking', 2 August 2005, <<http://www.villagevoice.com/film/0531,voiceover,66468,20.html>> 3 March 2007.