

Middle Class America in Africa

Paul Theroux and American Perspectives on Postcolonial Africa

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This paper studies the American perception of a lack of modernity in the postcolonial world. As usual, the lack of modernity allows for an idealized, romanticized vision of a simpler life without the ugliness of modern, Western life. A large aspect of Theroux's thesis concerns the need for Africa to "return" to its "traditional" ways, as a simple land, and cast-off the failed attempt at colonial modernization enforced by the Europeans. As a travelogue, Theroux is also a tourist. Therefore, this work returns to the typical motif of the search for authenticity. Here I investigate Theroux's approach to "finding" the real Africa as well as how his Africa is shaped by the experience he wants to find. Thinking himself apart from the mechanisms and history of the white man in Africa, Theroux speculates on the legacy of colonialism in the nations he visits. Customary colonial motifs of white superiority, African lack of technical know-how, and Africa's lack of culture arise. Theroux describes how Africans commit atrocities and oppress their own people in crueler ways than Europeans ever had. However, Theroux's criticism also extends to the present day European and American presence in Africa.

Paul Theroux's perspective as a privileged, middle-class, white American seems to oscillate from being racist to ignorant to brutally honest.¹ *Dark Star Safari* (2002) depicts his journey by land from Egypt to South Africa². It is important to note that Theroux's trave-

logue follows a long line of European travel writing in Africa including works such as A. Cornwall Harri's *Ethiopian Travels: The Highlands of Ethiopia Described of 1844*, H. Clapperton's *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa* (1829), Richard and John Lander's *Journal to Explore the Course and Termination of the Niger* (1830), Mungo Park's *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* (1860), and Dr. Livingstone's *Travels and Researches* (1857). Thus Theroux enters a well-beaten path of white explorers and adventurers. While his observations are often shaped (with or without acknowledging his predecessors) by previous generations of Europeans, Theroux's American perspective on contemporary Africa provides a window into how Americans both emulate European colonialist traits and diverge to offer fresh insights.

Theroux is a professional travel writer who chooses Africa as a means of vicariously maximizing shock value and discomfort for his American middle-class readers' sensibilities and values. His mood upon embarking on this particular expedition and his wish to encounter the unpleasant African experience must be remembered in comparison to what Theroux finds. In other words, his desire to find the stereotypical Western representation of impoverished, backwards, and ruthless Africa is a *fait accompli*. Theroux begins his journey with this thought:

[I]n my usual traveling mood: hoping for the picturesque, expecting misery, braced for the appalling. Happiness was unthinkable, for although happiness is desirable, it is a banal subject for travel. Therefore, Africa seemed perfect for a long journey. (Theroux, 2002, p. 5)

From this opening statement, Africa is the ideal subject for misery. It is his objective to find wretchedness, the appalling, and the picturesque in Africa. However, this project is not only about shock value.

Theroux assumes that one travels to escape. Furthermore, the only reason anyone from the West would want to travel through Africa is to experience the most extreme end of escapism. It is a place without phones, answering machines, and the other "homebound writer's irritants" (p. 3). Theroux imagines that Africa means total isolation for a Westerner. This is not just escape from personal relationships and responsibilities in the United States; it is more impor-

tantly, the possibility of escaping modernity. For Theroux, Africa is a backward continent that has never developed the infrastructure to allow modernity. On this premise, Theroux posits that Africa's backwardness is its strength because it can serve as a foil to the modern West, a line of argument not far removed from Ernest Renan and Matthew Arnold's conception of Ireland's role as a feminine counterbalance to masculine England.³ Theroux posits that Africa offers Westerners a vision into the primitive nature of man and allows the modern man to see his origins, as the "markets in Africa show us how we once lived and traded" (p. 62). Although the African city in Theroux's opinion may be desperate, sad, and violent, it offers a portal for Westerners to experience medieval Europe:

I was reminded again that medieval cities were all like this. African cities recapitulate the sort of street life that had vanished from European cities a motley liveliness that lends color and vitality to old folktales and much of early English literature. (p. 178)

Yet despite this preservation of medieval conditions and atmosphere, the urban African cityscape is the "nastiest" in the world; therefore, the African city, or the "snake pit," could only be appreciated by misguided foreigners who fail to understand how mistaken it is to mix urbanization and Africa (p.255). These foreigners are most likely unaware of the "simpler, happier bush" that Theroux remembers from his days in the Peace Corps (p. 188). One of the central arguments of *Dark Star Safari* is the necessity of encouraging "traditional" and "authentic" African modes of life, in other words, the mud huts and subsistence farming of Theroux's rural imaginings while simultaneously discouraging Western influence and aid which leads to modernization and urbanization.

Theroux continually looks for examples of how efforts to modernize Africa are failures. For example, when he stumbles across the ruins of an unused, modern style, German built housing complex in Harar, Ethiopia, Theroux deduces that its failure is due to the locals' desire to live in mud huts (p. 113).⁴ However, this ruined site allows for speculation that such backwardness is the reason that Westerners like Arthur Rimbaud love Africa. Theroux imagines and contemplates on Africa as a foil for the West:

[Rimbaud] had liked Africa for being the anti-Europe, the anti-West, which it is, sometimes defiantly, sometimes lazily. I liked it for those reasons, too, for there was nothing of home here. Being in Africa was like being on a dark star. (p. 117)

In this quote, Theroux uses the most fundamental type of binary logic: Africa is that which is not Western and not modern.⁵ Therefore, to travel to Africa is to escape modernity. Furthermore, the West is Earth, and Africa is extraterrestrial, the West is white, and Africa is dark. A whole host of other positions are signified in this statement revolving around darkness, the unknowable, strangeness, and backwardness.

The search for the authentic local experience is a familiar theme in travel literature in general as well as an easily recognized goal of anyone who has been a tourist. Guidebooks promise to help us find the non-touristy activities that are “off the beaten path” so that we may experience something deeper and more meaningful than what the overtly orchestrated tourism industry provides. Yet no matter how self-satisfying it may be to eat in a neighborhood restaurant, to find a beach without other tourists, or to form a bond with a local, tourists enter a power dynamic that orders their relationship with the local community. Nevertheless, Theroux is delighted by a local dance performance that he deems to be authentic because, “[T]his was not a spectacle put on for photographers and tourists but rather a weekly rite, done for the pure joy of it” (p. 68). The distinction between an inauthentic spectacle and an authentic performance seems tenuous, as the authenticity in this construction seems measured by the level of inaccessibility to the tourist. Theroux is equally aware and annoyed when his position as tourist is obvious, in other words, when the power structure is most visible. He complains when people in the service industry smile at him, clearly expecting a tip (p. 46). Interaction between the tourist and the local equates to the same power play involved in the service industry as a whole in any country. The local is expected to play the role of the authentic host, a play wherein the tourist/guest is meant to provide some form of compensation. Yet tourists desire to feel as though there is not actually a service being provided, that their experience is an “authentic” interaction between cultures.

When the reality of the tourist/service industry becomes too visible for Theroux, he demonstrates his frustration by expressing his disappointment. For example, Theroux confirms his dissatisfaction when stuck in the resort town, Hurgada, because it is so alien to his notions of Africa. Although this resort manager begs him to relax, Theroux replies, "I don't want to relax. If I wanted to relax, I would not have come to Africa" (p. 51). The "real" Africa for Theroux cannot be experienced while sitting comfortably on the beach; no matter how "real" this experience might actually be, the real Africa cannot be relaxing. Theroux's search for the authentic is in juxtaposition to his tendency to also seek out the familiar. That is to say, Theroux desires the non-touristed dangerous zones and also the "backwards" Africa of his fantasies which he associates with authenticity.

Towards the conclusion of his journey, Theroux attempts to describe the tourism rapport between South Africa and Mozambique using an analogy about how Americans visit Mexico. This analogy assumes that his American readers interpret Mexico as a colorful and exotic playground where the dollar goes far in everything from food to merchandise to sex. Theroux writes the following:

South Africans went to Mozambique for some of the reasons Americans went to Mexico: for "color" and a whiff of the gutter and the slum; for cheap eats, fresh tiger prawns especially; for "the real Africa," authenticity, and ugly knickknacks, also for snorkeling and swimming and whoring. (p.420)

Although the phrasing of this excerpt might seem to indicate an awareness of the essentialism and gross characterizations that such an analogy creates, further review problematizes such a sympathetic reading. By putting color in quotation marks, Theroux seems to be drawing attention to the shallowness of such a search; however, much of his travelogue has been a search for authentic local color. Therefore, this statement reads more like a condemnation of the South African tourist's bad taste in local color than a condemnation of the tourist's search for color itself. According to Jonathan Culler:

The distinction between the authentic and the inauthentic, the natural and the touristy, is a powerful semiotic opera-

tor within tourism. The idea of seeing the real Spain, the real Jamaica, something unspoiled, how the natives really work or live, is a major touristic topos, essential to the structure of tourism. (p.159)

Unintentionally it seems, Theroux acknowledges the tourist's search for the "real" or "authentic" while simultaneously failing to recognize the touristic nature of his own search for the "real Africa." As Culler explains, the problem for tourists "is to find an 'unspoiled' place, an attraction that has not attracted tourists or become encrusted with renown" (p.163). Theroux haughtily critiques the tourist (American or South African) while distinguishing himself as a traveler who seeks out the authentic places. Not only does this distinction tie Theroux's mission to the exploits of European colonists before him, but it also makes his own quest for authenticity seem all the more quixotic.

In a similar vein, Theroux highlights the concept of "the real Africa," but he critiques the South African vision of Mozambique, not the premise that there exists something that is the "real Africa." Furthermore, this quotation highlights the assumptions that Theroux makes about his audience, namely that he is speaking to an American, middle-class, and male reader who can appreciate the pleasures that the gutter, the slum, the consumable object, the recreational activities, and the women a poor country can offer. Theroux assumes his audience views Mexico and Africa as playgrounds for Western desires.

In terms of finding the authentic and the familiar in Africa, we must also consider the phenomenon of finding what we look for. The first sentence of *Dark Star Safari* announces, "All news out of Africa is bad. It made me want to go there, through the horror, the hot spots, the massacre- and earthquake stories you read in the newspaper; I wanted the pleasure of being in Africa again" (p. 1). From the perspective of the American reader, the first, most logical interpretation is that Theroux implies that the pleasure of Africa exists in finding the "real" Africa, a joyous and pleasurable continent that exists behind the myth of misery and terror depicted in the mainstream U.S. media. However, such a naïve perspective could perhaps suggest that Africa's problems are relatively minor compared to the everyday joy of spending time there. What be-

comes increasingly clear throughout the narrative is that the misery and the terror constitute the pleasure of being in Africa. Theroux confirms this reading as he summarizes his experience upon re-entry to the States after all of his possessions were stolen from a hotel and he is sick from food eaten in Ethiopia on the way home. He writes, "I arrived home Africanized—robbed and diseased" (p. 472). The shock of such a statement is muted by the knowledge that this was exactly the African experience he wanted.

Imagining himself to be a completely independent and objective reporter, Theroux describes how decolonization has been unsuccessful, and how Europe has failed Africa. Yet despite these judgments of African and European failure, Theroux never allows for any American culpability. On one level, Theroux notes how colonization continues to shape Africa by observing the way that Africans interact with outsiders. He finds that the former colonizers are still present, continuing to create problems; for example, he notes that the French soldiers in Djibouti have a reputation for exploiting child prostitution (p. 93). Regardless of the validity of such a claim, putting the animosity against whites on the French helps explain the hostile reception that Theroux often receives. In Harar, the people scream "foreigner" at Theroux and try to spit on him. Theroux explains that the foreigner is considered unlucky and unsafe, no doubt as a result of the European colonial legacy (p. 104). Strangely, as a means of clarifying such a treatment Theroux writes, "Since aloneness is the human condition, a stark example of the perfect stranger was the white man in black Africa, alone in his post, the odd man out" (p. 106). Theroux actually does not make specific reference to colonialism but instead implies that it is the difference between races that actually explains the hostile African reception. By portraying the hostile reception as a racially motivated prejudice, Theroux denigrates Africans as bigots without allowing for the logical explanation that his presence is something of a reminder of the "white man in black Africa" working his "post" as a colonizer, be it a lonely job or not.

While in Sudan, following President Clinton's bombing of the country, Theroux finds himself participating in a conversation between Western diplomats who are recounting various horror stories about Africa (p. 16). When one of the speakers proclaims that Africa is returning to a pre-colonial state (read pre-modern and

forsaking the gifts of colonization), Theroux offers this judgment of the situation:

This was a crudely coded sway of saying that Africans were reverting to savagery. Yet in another respect what he was saying was true. After a spell of being familiar and promising, Africa had slipped into a stereotype of itself: starving people in a blighted land governed by tyrants, rumors of unspeakable atrocities, despair and darkness. (p. 17)

Missing from this assessment is one evident detail; the Western perspective spins the story on Africa to reflect the stereotype. Yet Theroux's firsthand experience makes his anecdotal argument persuasive. Using race as the primary marker to discuss the differences between Africa and the West allows Theroux to make many inflammatory statements about failures of African civilization. While Theroux may be presenting a bold perspective on Africa that shocks his more liberal readers used to a more colorful, sugarcoated picture of rural bliss and exotic African people, he also replicates those same news stories he mentions in the opening, the backwards, violent chaos that is the inverse stereotype of Africa. Whether choosing to dig beneath the surface of the idealistic Africa or the Western media's portrayal of Africa as hell on earth, Theroux ultimately arrives at a conclusion that supports one of the extreme stereotypes about the continent.

In line with colonial era stereotypes, and justifications for colonialism, Theroux describes whites as being technically superior to Africans. Occasionally this position is expressed through brief asides; such as a lament for the uncompleted colonial railway lines that could have done so much for Africa if only revolution had not come so soon (p. 97). On a more personal level, he notes how the white British men that offer him a ride are far more proficient at fixing a blown tire than the Africans: "Mick and Abel jacked up the truck, Ben supervising. The tire was changed in half an hour. This speed was in great contrast to the cackhanded incompetence shown by Mustafa and his men the day before" (p. 161-2). However, these brief observations are less pronounced than specific cases of management and organization that Theroux uses to present an image of

black Africa as backwards. While visiting a white Zimbabwean farm, he admires the efficiency and organization of such an operation, which is clearly a pointed jab at the other locations he visited during the trip. Making this case even more directly, Theroux visits one of the black squatters on this white farmer's land. He finds the black man to be buffoonish and ridiculous (p. 369). By describing the plight of Zimbabwe's white farmers with such stark contrasts as this particular example of the efficient and sensible white compared to the unreasonable and foolish black squatter, Theroux achieves his effect of demonstrating black Africa's inability to organize and govern. He further strengthens this claim by giving voice to a group of white émigrés from Zimbabwe: these disposed farmers argue for a return to a white government for the sake of organization and economy (p. 385). Although this minority opinion might be useful in the larger debate, Theroux juxtaposes their argument along images of massacre and chaos in Zimbabwe since Robert Mugabe's takeover. For instance, in Cape Town Theroux makes detailed note of the rare book *Volksmoord/Genocide* a grizzly collection of crime photography from the farms where whites have been killed, often in barbaric ways (p. 461). Yet why go to such lengths to promote such a work in this context if not to reaffirm his racial bias against black African civilization? Theroux seems to argue that postcolonial Africa has suffered at the hands of Black leadership. However, on occasion, Theroux's attitude towards race is more complicated. His criticism of Zimbabwe's black government contains a gesture towards some sort of greater awareness:

Mugabe spent a great deal of time attacking whites and trying to make Zimbabwe's failure into a racial issue, but in fact black Zimbabweans accounted for most of the victims of human rights abuse — the government-sanctioned torture and murder, the electric shocks and beatings in police stations. (p. 480)

In this case, Theroux attempts to reaffirm his point that whites have been discriminated against in Zimbabwe while also highlighting how blacks have suffered the majority of Zimbabwe's ills if for no other reason than because they are the majority. While such a stance seems to indicate sympathy for the whole of Zimba-

bwe, Theroux's larger claim is that the black government is cruel and backwards⁶.

Furthermore, Theroux carefully details the examples of African cruelty as a means of pointing out just how far African civilization has slipped without the guidance of colonial masters. While in South Africa, Theroux makes a pilgrimage, against the advice of all the locals, to visit the squatter camp where a young American Stanford graduate was killed by an angry mob because of her race (p. 455)⁷. As is often the case in *Dark Star Safari*, this anecdote taken individually evokes no suspicion. However, when presented in the company of so many other examples of African cruelty, this story seems like an inflammatory comment on the oppression of whites in Africa. Later while aboard a train that passes through a South African squatter camp, he notes how stones are thrown at him when he refuses to pass food out the window (p. 469). While I do not wish to debate the validity of this experience nor deny that a white person might experience such situations, I do wish to draw attention to Theroux's problematic, one-sided representation of the events and his ordering of these experiences which create an overall impression of Africa as barbaric.

When Theroux finds his own novel, *Jungle Lovers*, on the banned book list in Malawi, he explains that Malawi bans the works that would be the classics of "any enlightened country" (p. 315). Although this comment is directed at a government that denies access to Western classics, Theroux is equally critical of common individuals as well. He describes in detail the ignorance of a boatman who believes that the Indian merchants get their wealth by taking the hearts of black virgin girls and using them to pull in fish that are full of diamonds (p. 344). While these descriptions may be made in a comic fashion, Theroux presents these events as truthful depictions of his actual experience. By giving voice to the strain of sub-Saharan indophobia, Theroux is exposing an ugly consequence of postcolonialism. Colonialism engenders racism, but Theroux chooses to mock the "backwardness" of these views rather than draw attention to the colonial condition that created this hostility. Indians immigrated to Africa to perform clerical, administrative, and banking work for the British Empire; however, independence movements often lumped these Indians together as "others," "exploiters," or "collaborators" with the British. While this case played

out most dramatically in Idi Amin's Uganda resulting in a massive deportation of Indians, the lingering aftereffects of British colonial prejudice that circulated in response to the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and ensuing years of struggle for independence trickled down to affect common citizens like the boatman⁸. Again, I do not deny the validity of these encounters, or the existence of those sentiments, but their presentation lends credence to the stereotype of Africa as backwards. By drawing attention to a well-known source of racial tension in Africa (in this case postcolonial intolerance towards Indians), Theroux supports his thesis that Africa is backwards.

Not only are Africans described as technically inferior, but they are also presented as beastly. One bus ride causes Theroux to remark on the bad smell of the local people (p. 275). But despite such basic sensory insults, Theroux insinuates something more sinister when he is sick. He writes that "Africans who seemed to understand that I was weak pursued me, the way predators harry slower or uncertain prey animals, and they demanded money, as though knowing that I was too weak to refuse them" (p. 329). This example is only one instance when Theroux likens Africans to predatory animals. His notions hark back to the early colonial impressions of Africa, where rather than noble savages, Africans were recast as plain savages or beasts paving the way for the "White Man's Burden," the moral imperative to colonize and proselytize. In describing the locals as beastly, Theroux also lingers dangerously close to the justifications for slavery: reminding one of the anthropological and physiological studies and application of social Darwinism that buttressed the slave trade. Later, when he gives in to his desire to visit the protected big game parks (no matter how touristy they may be) he consoles himself with the following:

The most dangerous creatures I had seen so far in Africa had been the shifta bandits firing their rifles over the truck I was riding in just north of Marsabit: wild men. The most exotic were the Ugandan hookers in their nighttime plumage, hissing at me from the roadside trees in Kampala: wild women. (p. 404)

Here Theroux is conflating the local people with the exotic animals. This description paints Africans as more dangerous than the

continent's exotic animals while simultaneously dehumanizing the people. Theroux continues on this topic when describing his comfort and safety during a ride through the countryside in a truck carrying cattle. Although physically uncomfortable, Theroux relays how his mind is at rest since the life of cattle is worth more than African human life. He assumes the driver will likely be extra careful thereby insuring his personal safety (p. 154). Again, this point confirms Theroux's low opinion of African civilization and humanity while also demonstrating his regurgitation of older colonial era stereotypes about Africans. By presenting these encounters as fresh evidence of African life from his "unbiased" American perspective, Theroux entices his readers to relearn the colonial stereotypes about Africa.

Echoing the observations of other postcolonial writers from Graham Greene to V.S. Naipual, Theroux observes how Africans have become worse oppressors than their European colonizers⁹. Yet ironically, Theroux delights in the colonialist lifestyle. He comments on how he feels like a real Orientalist while sitting beside the pyramids at night (p. 81). Later when he catches up with an old British civil servant, who he admires for the man's good motives, Theroux imagines that he might like to retire to Africa to run a school if not for what people back in America would say about him (p. 289). This daydream seems particularly troubling based upon his overall condemnation of international aid. However, the most worrying example involves Theroux's meeting with a South African who runs a farm in rural Mozambique. In this encounter, the South African asks, "are those your chaps?" when Theroux buys his guides some soda. Theroux interprets this question in colonial terms: "It was a significant question, the moment when one muzungu sized up another's workers. 'My Africans are better than your Africans' was a serious colonial boast [...]" (p. 342-3). It is unclear why Theroux would choose this particular interpretation; however, this example clearly demonstrates that Theroux views his guides as subservient and himself as a colonial master.

Further condemning African civilization, Theroux's perceives the African elite as unwilling to solve Africa's problems:

Medical and teaching skills were not lacking in Africa, even in distressed countries like Malawi. But the will to

use them was often non-existent. The question was, should outsiders go on doing jobs and taking risks that Africans refused? (p. 298)

Although it is difficult to criticize his firsthand knowledge, this sort of circumstantial and anecdotal presentation, combined with his condemnation of international aid in Africa, supports the agenda for reproving African self-management. The result of this partial blame based on anecdote is that Western readers unfamiliar with Africa are prone to take Theroux's observations as fact. When readers, like the author of the following book review, take Theroux's observations as accurate and unproblematic, then the stereotypes of Africa are reaffirmed:

Theroux is a curmudgeon, a brave traveler and a skeptic, honestly offering readers portraits of cruel post-colonial tyranny, heartbreaking poverty, and desperate hopelessness. For anyone wanting an unfiltered picture of early twenty-first century Africa, Theroux's account will be eye-opening. Not only does he detail his own adventures in vivid prose, but he also recounts--often in their own words--the hardships of the Africans whom he meets. The towns, villages, and open lands he passes through from Cairo to Cape Town hardly resemble the places he remembers so fondly. Everywhere he goes he finds devastated villages, hunger, petty dictators, fear, and the threat of violence. Yet despite the depressing realities of this changed Africa, Theroux tells his stories and those of the Africa he explores as a solo traveler with honesty, compassion, and gusto, leaving the reader glad to have shared his journey. (Barth, 2003)

For readers seeking tyranny, poverty, hopelessness, hunger, devastation, fear, and violence, Theroux's perspective is a compatible choice. For reviews of this nature, the fact that these conclusions come from a well established writer and include the evidence of some interviews with Africans seems to be enough to validate Theroux's claims. Furthermore, Theroux's work is presented as an independent American prospective, however; he is actually perpetuat-

ing common European colonialist assumptions about Africa. This type of interpretation tends to treat the journey itself as the most important element of the work rather than the findings; which is a point that echoes the familiar theme of the Western mind using Africa as a proving ground.

During his journey, Theroux admits that the idea of finding his own personal rejuvenation in Africa is another one of his “African fantasies” (p. 198). This rare moment of confession seems to admit that many of these observations about Africa say more about Theroux’s penchant for finding his predetermined authentic Africa: for his desire to disavow American responsibility in Africa, for forwarding his mistrust of international aid, and for playing out his sexual fantasies. Falling into the same colonial paradigm as Young describes in *Colonial Desire*, Theroux is both attracted to and repulsed by Africa because it operates as the binary opposite of his Western sense of self. Therefore, the best of Africa is what least resembles the West (the pre-modern bush), and the worst of Africa is the modern African city. This binary thinking extends to African people as well, as Theroux feels attracted to the raw, sexual women of Africa while at the same time he is revolted by the inhumanity and chaos. Yet despite the thousands of miles traveled and the countless personalities he meets along the way, Theroux’s journey is an interior, self-conscious exploration of the past and his personal feelings towards Africa. Basically using Africa as a zone for personal exploration and failing to attempt an objective interpretation of Africa, Theroux falls into Achebe’s archetype of the colonizer using Africa to discover himself or challenge his will. Theroux (consciously or unconsciously) consistently emulates colonial paradigms under the guise of an innocent and detached American.

Notes

- 1 For example Theroux’s hatred for aid-workers in Africa can be interpreted as the following: (1) his belief that Africans are currently incapable of supporting themselves and need to learn responsibility with the crutch of Western aid, (2) his lack of awareness about the complexity of how international aid functions in Africa, or (3) an astute comment about how international aid is being misused.
- 2 Future study may discover additional examples from his fictional works set in Africa *Fong and the Indians* (1968), *Jungle Lovers* (1971), and

My Secret History (1989) to determine how his vision of Africa and Africans is constructed as well as to study the reception Theroux receives from his hosts.

- 3 See, "The Poetry of the Celtic Races." Ernest Renan. The Harvard Classics. Vol. 32 Ed. Charles W. Eliot LLD. New York: PF Collier and Son Company 1910. As well as, "On the Study of Celtic Literature." Matthew Arnold. 1866.
- 4 For a similar line of thinking, see his implication that universities are illogical in Africa whereas dwelling in mud huts and living hand-to-mouth is natural (205).
- 5 As noted elsewhere, see Achebe, Chinua. "An Image of Africa." *The Massachusetts Review*. Vol. 18, no. 4 (Winter 1977), pp. 782-794.
- 6 I am aware that this line of argument could be interpreted as a sort of defense of Mugabe. Although I am well aware of the international condemnation of Mugabe's government, I wish to draw attention to Theroux's fixation with white percussion in Africa. Therefore, I highlight Theroux's criticism in order to demonstrate a pattern of attention towards corrupt and cruel Africa, while admitting that instances like Mugabe's policy or the slaying of white farmers are, of course, reprehensible.
- 7 In 1998 Sindiwe Magona, a native of the township Guguletu where the murder took place, wrote *Mother to Mother*, a work that fictionalizes and recreates the famous murder.
- 8 See Kasozi, A. B. K. *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda, 1964-1985*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994.
- 9 Prominent examples would include Greene's *The Comedians* (1965) (a novel that Theroux recently wrote an Introduction for in the Penguin Classics series) and Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* (1979).

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