

# BOOK PROPOSAL

## TITLE:

**A White Woman Alone in Africa**

**Innovative Fieldwork**

**2001**

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LENGTH: 80.000 words

MARKET: Obligatory reading for students in sociology, psychology, and social anthropology. Broad range of readers with interests in the social sciences and humanities and/or meetings with other cultures. Both the Norwegian and international market.

BRIEF INTRODUCTION: *A White Woman Alone in Africa - Innovative Fieldwork* will be an agenda-setting intervention in the debate on fieldwork, methodology, and meeting people from other cultures. Its basis is the fieldwork that the author carried out in Africa for her research on the topic of humiliation. Stories from the researcher's travels will be told and accompanied with textboxes that address questions of methodology and cross-cultural psychology.

The central aspect of the book is its contribution to the literature and debate on the methodology of fieldwork. The personal experiences of the researcher as a white woman alone in Africa provide both, exciting stories, and flashlights on the often-underdeveloped focus in Western books on scientific methodology, particularly the problematic idealisation of the detached and so-called objective researcher.

As such, the book can be read as a piece of travelling memoirs in the great tradition of best-selling travelling literature from Eilert Sundt to Robert Louis Stevenson (<http://www-bib.hive.no/tekster/ekstern/stevenson/southseas/>), the new and popular Danish author Carsten Jensen, *Jeg har sett verden begynne* (Jensen, 1998), or Robert D. Kaplan, *The Ends of the Earth. A Journey at the Dawn of the 21st Century* (Kaplan, 1997), as well as provide invaluable reflections on methodology and cross-cultural encounters.

The fieldwork was carried out for a research project that had the title *The Feeling of Being Humiliated: A Central Theme in Armed Conflicts*. She carried out 216 qualitative interviews, addressing Somalia, Rwanda and Burundi and their history of genocidal killings, on the background of the Holocaust perpetrated in Hitler's Germany. From 1998 to 1999 the interviews were carried out in Africa (in Hargeisa, capital of Somaliland, in Kigali and other places in

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Rwanda, in Bujumbura, capital of Burundi, in Nairobi in Kenya, and in Cairo in Egypt), and from 1997 to 2001 also in Europe (in Norway, Germany, Switzerland, France, and in Belgium).

The author is a psychologist and physician, and has a history of working and studying in different cultures. For seven years, from 1984-1991, she worked as a psychological counsellor in Cairo, Egypt. Her medical and psychological studies (1974-1984) she carried out in New Zealand, China, Thailand, Germany, Norway, USA, Israel, on a training ship to West Africa.

During her fieldwork on humiliation in Africa, the author travelled alone and had only a very limited amount of funds available for her fieldwork. Funds did not allow for stays in hotels, meals in Western style restaurants, or routine use of expensive transport such as taxis. Both in Europe and in Africa the researcher depended on finding people who would house her, and help with transportation in regions where public means such as buses would not suffice or be unsafe. In Africa she travelled for months, often on overcrowded rusty buses under breathtaking circumstances, with a backpack containing only her computer, and her digital audio and video equipment; there was no room in her bag for clothes or other personal things. Wherever she was welcomed into a house she was therefore depending on receiving help with basic personal needs.

Furthermore, she had no office facilities, and could not afford expensive hotel business centres for communication or for making interview appointments. In many cases, if available, she was generously offered some communication facilities by her hosts, such as use of telephone, or sometimes even Internet access.

Thus she moved from home to home, on the average every week to a new place, for almost a year in Africa (also in Europe, only there for longer periods of several weeks or even months in one place), always looking for new hosts who would kindly house her and give her the invaluable opportunity to get involved in their lives and acquire an understanding of their perspective on life, an opportunity that hotel rooms would have foreclosed.

She thanked her hosts in many different ways; by buying food and contributing to other expenses, sometimes by buying bits of furniture or contributing to the costs of a wedding, in Somalia participating in what is called quaraan (small amounts of money are given); as a result, she did not feel she was being exploitative, and, furthermore, she used the available funds in ways that were in many aspects more useful than spending it on hotels.

She managed, under these circumstances, to carry out 216 major interviews with people from all segments of national and international society including key opinion leaders, along with hundreds of less formal encounters; she succeeded in recording more than 100 hours of interviews on audio tape, 10 hours of digital video film, and extensive notes that she would take during an interview or the same evening.

On reflection, it was beneficial for the research that limited funds foreclosed the often-used approach to fieldwork from hotels. The researcher immersed her entire being into the field much more than it would have been possible with the retreat of a hotel in the backhand. Anthropologists often join their field in similarly all-encompassing ways; yet, they often do not frame the relationship with their 'objects' of research in equal terms. An anthropologist in a remote area researching a group of indigenous people presumably is much more of a detached

observer then the author was in her fieldwork. When she interviewed genocide survivors, for example, she could not stay detached. Perhaps if she had met the same person in a centre for refugees in Norway, the situation would have been slightly different, since the interviewee would then receive asylum or therapy in return. Yet, the author met people in Africa, who had no inclination and no reason to expose their most hurting feelings to a strange Western lady who had nothing to offer. She therefore had to enter into a relationship between equals with her interlocutors and had to meet the suffering of the other as a suffering universal to all human beings.

During the first weeks in Africa, the researcher detected that traditional Western interview approaches actually humiliated her interlocutors and violated their dignity as human beings. She subsequently developed an innovative methodology for fieldwork that conveyed respect to interlocutors and avoided humiliating them. A methodology that proved to have distinct advantages over more formal questionnaire or tightly controlled and impersonal interviews in which the interviewer remains aloof at a great psychological distance from those who she is interviewing. That methodology involved a kind of ‘reflective’ conversation in which the researcher gently confronted participants with narratives and specific questions raised by the historical records. Furthermore, she generally did so only after making an effort to win their trust and their sense that the researcher could understand their experience – in some cases by living among them and, where appropriate and strategically or ethically necessary, by sharing something of her own background and the way it allowed her to empathize with aspects of what they were telling her.

After adopting the new approach the researcher learned to what extent ‘usual’ Western attempts to collect valid data in other cultures, such as Africa, may be futile and humiliating. The author received numerous descriptions of how appalled Africans are; these comments may be summarised as follows: ‘You from the West, you come here to get a kick out of our problems. You pretend to want to help, but you just want to have some fun. You have everything back home, you live in luxury, and you are blind to that. You arrogantly and stupidly believe that you suffer when you cannot take a shower or have to wait for the bus for more than two hours! Look how you cover our people with dust when bumping childishly and arrogantly around in your four-wheel drive cars! Look how you enjoy being a king, while you would have nothing in your country! All what you want is having fun, getting a good salary, writing empty reports to your organisation back home, in order to be able to continue this fraud. You pay lip service to human rights and empowerment, but you are a hypocrite! And you know that we need help - how glad would we be if we did not need it! And how good would it be if you were really to listen to us once, not only to the greedy among us who exploit your arrogant stupidity for their own good!’<sup>1</sup>

Sam Engelstad, UN’s Chief of Humanitarian Affairs, and, on several occasions Acting Humanitarian Coordinator in Mogadishu in 1994, confirmed the African view; he wrote to the author: ‘During my own time in Somalia in 1994, humiliation was never far from the surface. Indeed, it pretty much suffused the relationship between members of the UN community and the general Somali population. In the day-to-day interaction between the Somalis and UN relief workers like ourselves, it enveloped our work like a grey cloud. Yet, the process was not well understood, and rarely intended to be malevolent.’ Engelstad adds that ‘Among the political and administrative leadership of the UN mission, however, humiliation and its consequences were far better understood and were frequently used as policy tools. Regardless of intent, it was pernicious

and offensive to many of us' (personal communication from Sam Engelstad, 28th September 1999, quoted with his permission).

The title of the research project indicated that three groups had to be interviewed, namely both conflict parties in Somalia and Rwanda/Burundi, and representatives of third intervening parties. These three groups stand in a relationship that in its minimum version is triangular. In case of more than two opponents, as is the case in most conflicts, it acquires more than three corners. Both in Somalia and Rwanda/Burundi representatives of the "opponents" and the "third party" were interviewed. The following people were included in the "network of conversation":

- Survivors of genocide were included, that is people belonging to the group, which was targeted for genocide. In Somalia this was the Isaaq tribe, in Rwanda the Tutsis, in Burundi also the Hutus. The group of survivors consists of two parts, namely those who survived because they were not in the country when the genocide happened - some of them returned after the genocide - and those who survived the ongoing onslaught inside the country.
- Freedom fighters (only men) were interviewed. In Somalia these were the SNM (Somali National Movement) fighters who fought the troops sent by the central government in Mogadishu from the north of Somalia; in Rwanda these were the former Tutsi refugees who formed an army, the RFP (Rwandese Patriotic Front), and attacked Rwanda from the north in order to oust the Hutu government which carried out the genocide in Rwanda in 1994; in Burundi these were also Hutu rebels.
- Somali warlords who have their retreat in Kenya.
- Politicians, among them people who were in power already before the genocide and whom survivors secretly suspected of having been collaborators or at least silent supporters of perpetrators.
- Somali and Rwandan/Burundian academicians, who study the situation of their countries.
- Representatives of national non-governmental organizations who work locally with development, peace and reconciliation.
- Third parties, namely representatives of United Nations organizations and international non-governmental organizations who work with emergency relief, long-term development, peace, and reconciliation.
- Egyptian diplomats in the foreign ministry who deal with Somalia; Egypt is a heavy weight in the OAU.
- African psychiatrists in Kenya who deal with trauma, and forensic psychiatry. In Kenya many nationals from Somalia and also Rwanda/Burundi have sought refuge, both in refugee camps, but also on the basis of private arrangements.
- Those who have not yet been interviewed are masterminds of genocide in Rwanda, those who have planned the genocide. Many of them are said to be in hiding in Kenya, and other parts of Africa, or in Brussels and other parts of Europe, or in the States and Canada. Some are in the prisons in Rwanda and in Arusha, Tanzania.

## **Some Examples of Possible ‘Stories’ that Can Be Included in the Book**

*A White Woman Alone in Africa - Innovative Fieldwork* may be organised in several chapters that are formed around ‘stories’ that are complemented with textboxes that address issues such as methodology and cross-cultural encounters.

In the following such stories will be presented. The first story is presented in some length, while the subsequent ones are presented as short snapshots that require expansion in order to form chapters. The chronological order of the episodes is reversed – I begin with recounting my experiences from 1999 in the Great Lakes region, because they are somewhat more worked through already, and then turn to 1998 and my stay in Somaliland followed by some experiences connected with Somalia in Nairobi. Please see the dissertation thesis for more ‘stories’ and contents for textboxes ({Lindner, 2000 8465 /id}).

### **Two Women in an Empty Plane in the Middle of Africa**

A day in January 1999. I come to the airport in Nairobi. It is not hot and not cold, just a little damp and lukewarm. I search for an announcement of my plane to Bujumbura, the capital of conflict-ridden Burundi. There is no sign of my flight, no display that witnesses its departure. I ask around. ‘Yes,’ somebody gives me the confirmation, ‘your plane leaves from gate so-and-so.’

I go to the gate and wait. Yet, nobody else waits at the same gate! Perhaps I am just too early?

The Yomo Kenyatta airport is quite well-known to me. I have arrived here and left from here several times. I have admired its gift shops with their soapstone figures and other lovely artistic products from the region that I adore. Now I begin to walk back to the gift shops and desperately concentrate on admiring their display. In other words, I grow more and more anxious and start fearing that my flight does not exist after all. What should I do? How could I find out more? Should I just continue waiting, or should I do something more decisive?

Later I will be ashamed of my naivety. How could I not know that embargos often are circumvented! Embargos may make planes officially head for directions they in reality do not fly to, or may make flights take off that officially do not exist altogether. Burundi had been put under embargo by its neighbours for failing to build democratic structures, and although this embargo was in the course of being lifted during these days, the plane perhaps still was following some kind embargo routine. Or perhaps the cargo on board had paid for the flight so that paying passengers were not really needed? How could I naively believe that word and world always are linked to each other?

**Reflections on Culture Differences in Perception and Evaluation of Situations (*in a separate textbox*)**

When I later will reflect upon my reaction I will admit that it was perhaps my German upbringing that got in the way, an upbringing that heralds the congruence of word and world, because it is rooted in the Prussian ideology of the obedient underling who ought not to express resistance by unlinking word and world. This ideology teaches underlings moral indignation at the mere possibility of not doing what one says or is told, or not saying what one does; this is called 'lying.' Imaginary German tourists would, had they been in my place, perhaps have gotten self-righteously upset at Africa and identified it as a reason for 'the failing of Africa' that 'these people' 'cannot do what they say,' or 'say what they do.' Some of these imaginary German tourists would not easily have access to the idea that unlinking word and world may not always be morally 'bad,' but may, in some cases, be quite an effective strategy for resisting oppression. When reflecting upon this I feel the breath of the 'authoritarian personality' that Adorno<sup>2</sup> described and I shiver: The Holocaust would perhaps not have happened if Germans had shown more civil disobedience, or at least less obedience! Here I am, in Africa, at Yomo Kenyatta airport, researching Holocaust and genocide, and I am confronted with fragments of evidence, deeply embedded in me, that relate to exactly this topic.

Or is it my protestant upbringing that plays a role? I learned that God sees into my soul and knows all my thoughts and that I cannot hide anything from Him; lying to God would be 'useless' since he would not be fooled. Did this make me learn a very stringent attitude towards such concepts as honesty and lying? I more than once have encountered people with a catholic upbringing who did not seem to have the same stringent approach to the link between what I think, what I say, and what I do. Max Weber's writings about the protestant ethics come to my mind and I feel that this, also, could be relevant for my present situation in Africa.<sup>3</sup>

All this reminds me how important it is for cross-cultural encounters to learn humility and abstain from arrogant self-righteousness. Yes, I can have an opinion on whether I agree with the embargo against Burundi and whether I think that circumventing it is 'good' or 'bad,' however, whatever my opinion is, I have to be careful with judgements and evaluations that betray but my own upbringing.

This incident is therefore yet another lesson in cultural difference. It is not the first time that I almost curse my upbringing that makes its pupils learn and believe that reality and words ought to hang together and actually do hang together. At several crossroads in my life I had paid a high price for my naivety and had found that people from other parts of the world are quicker at suspecting that words and reality may have more complicated relationships than straight parallelism or coherence. I conclude to myself and fellow 'products' of the same upbringing: 'Do not assume that reality and words always hang together! Do not get disappointed when they don't! Just observe and learn!'

*(End of textbox)*

At the last minute, just when I am about to give up waiting, A. arrives (I do not expose her real name here). A. is a young twenty-three years old elegant, kind and brilliantly sharp Burundian woman. We speak to each other; yet, we do not surpass the level of common superficial conversation.

This changes slightly when we are about to enter the plane. A. is being subjected to difficult interrogations, her purse is searched, and she is asked to pay a fine. I help her through by going back again and again, insisting that I want to accompany her. She finally is allowed to enter the plane and thanks me.

When we see the plane, we are astonished. It is a large Boeing 707, half cargo, half filled with passenger seats, with only two passengers turning up, me and A.

There we are, two women passengers alone in a huge plane in the middle of Africa. One woman hilariously white skinned, without even the slightest tan that most other white-skinned people would have tried to acquire, and the other woman with a beautiful dark golden glow over her skin.

We choose two seats in the very middle of the plane, surrounded by empty seats on all four sides; we sit next to each other.

We talk during the whole journey. A. tells me about her Swiss friends whom she met by chance, and who decided to support her so that she could carry out the studies in Nairobi that she just finished. She tells me how she came to know these friends, how they declared her to be their quasi-adoptive daughter and systematically helped her to put her life together.

I feel that it would be too intrusive to ask her why she is in need to put her life together. I feel that I have to be patient and that the time will come when it will be more suitable to ask intimate questions. Now I merely admire her intelligent way of speaking, her slender and warm beauty, her elegant bearing, and her gracious manner.

However, I cannot avoid catching a glimpse of scars on her skin. This alarms me. I am accustomed, through my medical training, to noticing scars on other people's bodies, and I am used to assuming that they are caused by accidents. The fact that it may be much more likely that they stem from genocidal killings is relatively new to me.

I feel that I have to give A. something from me, from my life, from my background, from my suffering, before I can dare to ask her more about her life. I talk about myself to A., who I am and where I come from. I tell her the story of my father who lost one arm, part of his body, because he, being a young adolescent and at the same time soldier, did not want to be an oppressor but a friend of those his country had conquered, and how he was severely punished. I recount how I grew up in my father's head, in his imagination of the farm he was due to inherit, but lost when the part of his country where this farm was located was handed over to another country, and he had no more home, no place to go back to. I describe how this fate deeply wounded him, how he never really smiled for decades. I share with A. how I grew up in my so-called 'refugee-family,' always feeling like a guest in my environment, feeling foreign, never being at home. I explain how I later tried to live and work in as many cultures as possible in order to acquire a gut feeling for how human beings in different cultures define and handle life and death, love and hatred, peace and war. I conclude by explaining how all this led up to my current research project on humiliation.

A. is astonished that European history is so full of suffering. For her Europe is part of the West and thus the land of the rich and lucky. She is surprised to hear about European suffering. Our talk becomes more personal, more detached from prejudices; more focusing on us as persons with our own experiences within difficult environments.

*We move from seeing at each other as objects outside of ourselves, to bonding into a common standpoint and looking at the world together.*

I observe how we enter into the warm resonance that I have encountered with so many other women around the world, with intelligent, curious, and brave women from all cultures and age groups. This resonance soon lets me forget that there is a visible difference between us, that I am a Western woman, with long blonde hair with more than pale white skin, and she a beautiful brown-skinned woman; that there is furthermore quite an age difference between us; and that we, supposedly, need special skills in communication since we stem from different cultures. I feel, as so often in similar situations, that alleged cultural differences are minimal, and that a common attitude towards life connects us in a way that possible rifts or differences become rather insignificant. It seems that we share the same ratio of emotional and intellectual contents in what we say, the same ratio of sincere conversation and laughter, the same ratio of superficial and deep exchange, that we have a rhythm in our conversation that makes us feel comfortable, and that we, in short, do have deep sympathy for each other.

We do not see any stewardess or other airplane personnel until we are served food. We are served fish. My friend A. turns pale and stiff, not much, just enough so that I can notice it. She continues our conversation in a less relaxed manner and is, quite obviously, caught by thoughts that she does not express to me.

I ask her very carefully and gently about my observations. She explains, at first hesitantly, then more fluently: 'Fish repulses me, because the bodies of my parents were thrown into the river and I have nightmares about their bodies being eaten by fish. I escaped being raped and killed only because my tormenters got into a fight among themselves.'

I remember having heard and read how girls were raped, how sticks were put into their vagina and how they were killed by pushing those sticks into their bodies. Here I sit with A., who narrowly escaped this fate, and I am struck by the feeling that my situation is unfathomable: this gentle, graceful girl, how can she recount the atrocities she has lived through with such calm softness? How come that only her scars speak openly?

We have still about one hour to fly and we talk about nothing but genocide, humiliation, and what happened to her and her people. A. shares with me many insights. She has strong opinions about what Western helpers should do and what they should stay away from.

Bujumbura comes closer. As a pilot of small airplanes I sense the pilots actions. I am astonished about the steep approach to Bujumbura airport.

Again, how naïve of me to be astonished. Of course, I quickly tell myself, what may be called low intensity warfare is going on in the hills around the capital! Hutu rebels hide there! Only the

capital itself is under the control of the Tutsi ruling elite. If I were the pilot, I also would avoid the hills and dive down into the capital as steeply as I can!

When we arrive in Burundi A. and I are close friends, we feel that we know each other for years. We try to care for each other's trip to town and introduce each other to our welcome parties.

A. has several orphaned children from her family to take care of – to whom she is the nearest surviving relative – and to whom she was on the way back from Nairobi where she just passed her last exams. Later A. will write to me long texts in which she expresses her opinions on her country, history, politics and a better life. Again a year later she will get married and I will contribute with a gift.

### **Reflections on Methodology (*in a separate textbox*)**

Should I, at some point during the journey, have taken out a questionnaire on humiliation and asked A. to tick on alternative answers to its questions? Should I have framed the situation as 'data collection'? Was I 'collecting data' from a genocide survivor?

One answer would be yes. Of course, I was collecting data; this was the very reason for me being in the plane.

However, framing the situation as 'data collection' would violate the relationship that A. and I had built up, a relationship of friends. Framing the situation as 'data collection' would turn A. into an object of my studies, into a 'means,' and not an 'end' (Kant). I would abuse the confidence A. had offered to me.

Before leaving for fieldwork, I had developed a semi-structured interview guideline addressing questions such as: Can humiliation lead to war, to Holocaust, genocide and ethnic cleansing? Can humiliation lead to international terrorism? What is humiliation? What happens when people feel humiliated?

However, when I started 'applying' it, I detected that this approach actually humiliated my interlocutors. It precisely turned them into 'objects,' into 'specimens' on which to do research. It instrumentalised them.

I became aware that this is what also happens in Western settings, however, that research data in the West often are being paid for, at least indirectly: students are obliged to offer their services to research, patients or refugees expect therapy or asylum in return for their willingness to talk about memories they rather would forget.

I realised that in my case, where the interviewee has no reward other than the contact with the researcher during their encounter, the researcher may not be provided with any valid data, if she is not entering into an authentic and non-humiliating dialogue with her interlocutors.

This is why it was of utmost importance to conceive of what happened between A. and me as a conversation between two persons, two human beings. Sharing our life histories in a warm,

authentic and reflective dialogue that did not humiliate A., was the only way to seek valid knowledge, be a morally responsible researcher, and a human being at the same time.

This approach characterised all my data collection: I entered into dialogue with people who, I was acutely aware, knew much more about the subject I wanted to examine than me, namely about feelings in war and genocide, especially feelings of humiliation. I considered them as the experts.<sup>4</sup> I became more aware of the social relations I actually form by entering the scene as a researcher.<sup>5</sup> I entered into authentic dialogue.<sup>6</sup> Being authentic meant to disclose my biography. I had to explain to my ‘informants’ why I was in Africa and how the project idea had developed. I had to reveal that I had been deeply formed by the aftermath of World War I and II in Europe. Reflexive dialogue covering the same basic topics with many different people and faithfully capturing their beliefs and feelings was thus the new method that I developed. And these dialogues had to be conducted with humility and authenticity.

*(End of textbox)*

### **Through Rebel Territory to a Party**

In January 1999 I meet the Chancellor at the German Embassy in Bujumbura. He advises me not to take the minibus through rebel areas to Rwanda, and, if I did, I would have to do this at my own risk; embassy personnel, for example, would not get permission.

I take the minibus. I am the only white person. About twenty people are squeezed into a small vehicle; nobody talks, I am never addressed. Unapproachable, closed faces around me – not hostile, just very controlled. A concentrated, intense, enforced emptiness is written in these faces, expressing a desperate attempt to look ‘normal.’

Perhaps, I think, this is how fear looks when one cannot escape, when one is compelled to make this journey. The driver drives so fearfully fast so that the greatest danger does not seem to come from rebels but from a road accident. Passengers tell him to calm down: otherwise nobody would survive; the occasional car-wreck along the road speaks its own language.

The bus leaks; the weather is stormy, cold, and it rains; everybody gets wet.

After a day of such travelling through forests and hills, after having passed lengthy controls at the border between Burundi and Rwanda the bus (not we, since no ‘we’ feeling had developed on this journey) arrive in Kigali where the passengers disappear almost within seconds in all directions.

### **Reflections on Trauma (*in separate textbox*)**

I believe I got a glimpse of the ‘survival strategies’ that my co-travellers, who – unlike me – are forced to subsist under continuous traumatic circumstances, employ in this situation, survival strategies that include ‘dissociation.’ And dissociation leads to the ‘speechless terror’ that I so often observed. *(To be expanded)*

*(End of textbox)*

**Reflections on Method (*in separate textbox*)**

This minibus trip was an informal ‘application’ of the ‘method of focus group,’ only that the ‘unsaid’ and the ‘unspeakable’ was what was communicated. *(To be expanded)*

*(End of textbox)*

It is dark, I am wet and freezing; I find a hotel, simple and not luxurious; however, expensive. From there I phone Norwegian People’s Aid. Many had spoken very highly about M. S. (again, I do not expose real names here), whom I had phoned from Norway earlier, in 1998. He is not in Rwanda when I arrive, but O. B., in the middle of a dead-line for a report, takes a minute and explains to me that there are three Norwegians in Kigali, that she had forwarded my email that I had sent from Norway to them, and that she recommended to me to get in touch with Ø. O., an investigator at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

I phone him, and an hour later I stand in the middle of a high-level reception, with all important people of the Tribunal present, in a compound in the hills of Kigali, there where streets are not paved and four wheel drive cars seem indispensable.

Here I am, an hour ago freezing and wet in a minibus through rebel area, now, suddenly, in the middle of all the important Tribunal people I need to interview. My backpack is filled to the top with my computer and video camera, no space for cloths. I have only one outfit that I wear every day, a beautiful Western African traditional dress. Here I am, in the middle of a luxurious party, and I am one of the most elegant and striking guests at the party with my one meter long blonde hair, white skin, tall and slender body shape, in elegant high quality African cloths!

**Reflections on the many kinds of humiliation inflicted by colonisation (*in separate text box*)**

In Burundi I visited and admired the workshops of Senegalese tailors. What drew me to the Senegalese tailors? In Burundi, as in other parts of Africa, Senegalese tailors stand for a non-Western African style, namely beautiful West African clothes.

I admit that I feel personally ashamed that colonialists left behind a legacy of bad taste in so many African countries (obviously particularly there were they succeeded in converting the population to Christianity).

In Somaliland, two hours after arrival, I had bought a Somali dress with a veil (under which I were hiding my video camera) that I wore every day all day until I left and gave it away; in Somalia every woman wears such clothes.

It is totally different in Kenya, where a selection of dull Western cloths of an especially outdated style fills the stalls. Upon arrival in Kenya, as in Somalia, I bought an African style costume in a shop for African heritage, elegant and beautiful, produced in West Africa. I did not wear anything else for the coming months; it was to become my ‘working uniform.’

I believe it promoted my cause tremendously, because it made people curious. Nobody wore African clothes in Kenya (not in Rwanda and Burundi either). My dress foreclosed any superficial immediate categorisation of me. There was this white blonde woman with long hair, alone, in a beautiful African dress, and not in the usual dull skirt, jeans, and T-shirt: This woman could neither be a Western diplomat, nor a normal tourist, and least of all could she be a worn-down backpacking Western drug addict. Who was she?<sup>7</sup>  
(*End of textbox*)

Ø. and L., his Lebanese wife, take unparalleled care of me. And, it is a tremendous opportunity for me to become acquainted with Deputy Prosecutor Bernard Aho Muna from Cameroon, and all the other experts, and start learning about the workings of the Tribunal.<sup>8</sup>

Curfew is at eleven o'clock and Swiss A., from the Tribunal, leaving the next day for a week, offers me his studio for that period.

We share a room and he talks for hours before falling asleep. Being an expert on German history, he educates me on the humiliation thesis in Germany: 'In 1933 the Germans were not necessarily all for Hitler, but in 1940, when he took the Alsace after only three weeks of fighting and thus "healed" the humiliation of Versailles, nearly 100 % of the population, even the communists, were behind him. For the subsequent "peace accord" with France, Hitler used the same train railway wagon in which the humiliating Versailles Accords had been signed in 1919!'

Here I am, freshly arrived in Rwanda, after a journey through rebel area invited to a luxurious party and now sharing a room with a Swiss expert on my topic of humiliation and its significance for German history!

Next morning I wake up to a sunny day in the 'Swiss village' in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. I go out and find that not only the Swiss village, the whole city centre of Kigali honours Rwanda's reputation of being the Switzerland of Africa: clean, neat, orderly; with a population of highly cultured, aristocratic demeanour, many speaking French and/or English elegantly. This style, I tell myself, connects Kigali and Bujumbura – both after the 1994 genocide Tutsi-dominated – except that Kigali is hilly, while Bujumbura stretches along the flat shores of the deepest lake of Africa, as I had been proudly told, or even the deepest of the world, Lake Tanganyika. But this style also connects to Hargeisa, where a Somali nomad, in his traditional cloths, using a long stick, would stride as measuredly, and majestically as many of the inhabitants of these two cities. And similar to Bujumbura, Kigali also hosts excellent French or Italian cuisine that, admittedly, only the very rich, for example expatriates, can pay for.

The Tribunal gives me the opportunity to meet the whole of Africa, learn about African's opinions about their own continent, and understand more about the Great Lakes region in a larger regional context. I meet, for example, M. D., Senegalese lawyer with sparkling intelligence and passionate aristocratic bearing - again somebody with a French so sophisticated that few in France would be able to reach this level - who is appalled that people in the neighbourhood where he was born had four meals per day when he was young, but hardly have two meals today - what can be done? I meet F. T. from Mali who together with V. P. from France becomes part of the common ground that I find with women in Africa concerning the specific difficulties women face worldwide. Both, M. and F. include me into their daily lives and I thank them for that. I meet also

N. Z. from Brazil who brings me together with Rwandese intellectuals of the highest calibre. I meet R. K., a lawyer from Uganda, English speaking, with whom I sit for many extremely interesting and intense hours; he recommends to me the very interesting writings of Deepak Chopra. I also meet C. B., legal officer from Cameroon, who worked in Somalia and Angola and suggests that humiliation is of elementary relevance in both cases. Here is an African elite at work that is so similar to intellectuals in other countries that I feel compelled, more than ever before, to categorise all of us together as one kind in one common global culture, a culture that bridges differences of nationality, skin colour or ethnicity. Even more, this global intellectual elite even shares the same problems, namely that its women pay an often painfully high price in their personal lives because their intellectual independence requires too much from a partner, namely an innovative egalitarian relationship instead of simple old-fashioned ranking and domination that is difficult even for men of the same intellectual elite group.

*(this is not a finished chapter, it needs to be expanded)*

### **Genocide Survivors**

During my stay in Rwanda and Burundi in 1999 I am presented with many terrifying stories related to the 1994 genocide, often several each day. For example: A young Tutsi, I choose to call him Charles, was in Kigali during the genocide in 1994. A Hutu friend of his hid him in his house. Whenever Hutu militia came to search the house for Tutsi, Charles got into a hole that was dug in a rubbish heap in the garden. There he stood, only his nose poking out, covered by a plastic sheet, for hours, until the soldiers went away. This went on for weeks. During this whole time his Hutu friend had to participate in the Tutsi killing outside in the streets, in order not to be killed himself; and his Hutu friend was telling everybody, that Charles was dead, in order to protect him. Even Charles's family believed that he was dead, until only a few days before they themselves were killed. His grandmother was already old, almost 90, and weak. She was locked into a room with a hungry dog, which ate her.

*(this is not a finished chapter, it needs to be expanded)*

### **Chained Man in Gabiley**

On a Friday (the Muslim holiday) in December 1998 I travel outside of Hargeisa to pay a visit to a chained man, highly educated, but traumatised, in the neighbouring city of Gabiley. People, who are traumatised by the brutalities of the war, who would need psychological or psychiatric help, and, because this is lacking, are (quite literally in some cases) chained like animals in their houses since their families are afraid that they may wander off into the desert and not find their way back again.

I do this together with J. D. from VetAid, an old Somali hand who once worked closely together with this man and considers him his friend. Driving with J. through the Somali semi-desert for one day is extremely educating. While he reminds me that one has to avoid mines, he explains everything to me, from the problems with 'enclosures' [fences protecting patches of cultivated land that hinder pastoralist mobility] to the fate of big agricultural projects, and last but not least the reasons why livestock currently can not be exported to Saudi Arabia. We travel together with

a Somali friend and visit her father in Gabiley, welcomed by his new wife. This is an occasion that gives me the chance to understand how it feels to live in a traditional house with a courtyard and several rooms around it. It gives me also a closer insight into the difference between the Western ideal of a marriage as eternal bond, and the Somali reality of a man marrying several women, either at the same time, and/or sequentially (something that is increasingly becoming a Western reality also).

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### **Business in Africa, or My Last Two Days in Somaliland**

During December 1998, I talk to a stranded businessman, a seasoned Englishman, who introduces me to the advantages and especially the pitfalls of doing business in the region. Later, from Nairobi, I will help him to be released: He had a quarrel with Somali businessmen and is kept in Somaliland in a hotel during the court case; I witness how he is stopped when he approaches the gate of the hotel.

From his detention the prisoner helps me to fly from Somaliland to Nairobi, at the end of December 1998, together with the crew of the Russian plane that had been grounded in Hargeisa for months. I get very short notice that a plane is coming to get them (and me) out. I had booked myself into a hotel during the last day of my stay in Hargeisa because I wanted to have a warm shower before travelling. I am just standing under the shower when the message comes that the plane will be at the airport in half an hour, one day earlier than expected. One of my Western expatriate friends rushes me to the airport in his car. Outside of Hargeisa, in the middle of nowhere, suddenly my driver and my guards, the freedom fighters, appear in their car. I had paid them and had said good-bye to all of them before disappearing into the hotel. They speed, get ahead of my car, stop my car, and, with their weapons in their hands, tell me that I have to pay more to them. I do. I am impressed that they honour even me, the insignificant researcher, the Somali way, keeping an eye on me from the moment I say good-bye and 'disappear,' finding out where I am and within minutes following me when I leave to the airport, holding me up, and asking for money!

I quickly become part of the Russian (and Ukrainian) team of six. I feel very fortunate to be able to share their flight in a small plane from Somaliland to Nairobi and learn how these non-Western expatriates survive in Africa. I am extremely impressed by the level of psychological training for such a team. I had always been intrigued by Russian knowledge and use of psychology and here I see it at work under extremely adverse circumstances: This team of engineers and pilots uses intricate psychological methods to keep the team together, to balance moods, and to ensure that nobody 'freaks out.' All these measures are spelled out to me in great detail by the English-speaking member of the group (with the help of some Russian, that I had studied twenty years earlier).

*(this is not a finished chapter, it needs to be expanded)*

### **Somali Warlord**

In December 1998 I meet warlord Osman Ato in Nairobi. I had been told that 10 000 dollar would not get me to meet Ato, so I pay him a surprise visit. When I approach the place where he stays, I at first meet many children playing and remember that I had been told that he might have more than fifty children with different wives. I knock at the door and his wife opens. She says that he is in bed and could not talk.

He finally comes, a warrior radiating a degree of cautious alertness that 'normal' people would not be able to even imagine and that I have only met once before, in Hargeisa, when I spoke to M. B. C. Like with M. B. C. it is like meeting human history, meeting a man from former times, times that also existed in now peaceful Europe, where many more people's survival than today depended on the same kind of alertness.

This intensity seems to stem from being constantly on guard to not being killed, from incessantly being in a Machiavellian chess game and trying to come up with the pre-emptive strategy that gives yet another opening for not being shot by some enemy or worse, by an allied warlord. Just the preceding night quite a number of Ato's men had been killed in Somalia, I had been told. It seems to me that this man represents the psychological effects of being in an un-attenuated Security Dilemma without pause, a psychological state that in turn may make this person aggravate the Security Dilemma.

### **Reflections on International Relations Theory (*in separate textbox*)**

International Relations Theory<sup>9</sup> has coined the term Security Dilemma. Classical and Structural Realism see the world as being guided by 'anarchy' - anarchy as the 'state of nature' (Hobbes, 1962). In this context the Security Dilemma is unavoidable: 'I have to amass power, because I am scared. When I amass weapons, you get scared. You amass weapons, I get more scared' ... and thus an arms race and finally war can be triggered.'<sup>10</sup> Though International Relations Theory addresses relations between states, the same logic also reigns between groups; Posen, 1993, describes the effects of the Security Dilemma between ethnic groups and shows that the group who fears most goes to war (see also Roe, 1999).

We may ask to what extent the Security Dilemma is an all-compelling and inescapable logic, or whether it can, logically and practically, be heightened or attenuated. Indeed, one may expect that the fear that is central to the logic of the Security Dilemma will be intensified whenever the danger gets greater. The greater the danger, the greater also the fear will be, and this will encourage the development of a culture of even fiercer male prowess. Admittedly, and this is why the Security Dilemma is a dilemma, more male prowess may prove to be, on the whole, counterproductive and increase fear instead of diminishing it. This is because male prowess will tend to make the 'environment' more 'dangerous' for possible victims, who in turn will not survive, unless they also champion male warrior talents. In other words, the Security Dilemma gets 'worse,' if people develop a culture of aggressive competition, instilling more fear in their neighbours and thus setting off a vicious circle; and it may get 'better' wherever people try to co-operate. To use traffic as a metaphor: A culture of co-operation is when all agree to adhere to red and green traffic lights; a culture of war is when warriors fight their way through at every crossroad.

*(End of textbox)*

Ato explains to me: 'UNOSOM was the biggest humiliation ever. Especially when the house was attacked where elders had a meeting and it was said that it was a headquarters or something like that. When the Americans feel humiliated because their soldiers' bodies were shown in the streets, then they should ask, why. The killing of the elders was not good either. The helicopters, the bombing, this was humiliation.'

*(this is not a finished chapter, it needs to be expanded)*

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<sup>1</sup> See also Maren, 1997, and Hancock, 1989.

<sup>2</sup> Adorno et al., 1950.

<sup>3</sup> WeberWinckelmann (Ed.), 1978.

<sup>4</sup> Beynon, 1984, defines the Ford workers in this way (I owe this reference to Ragnvald Kalleberg).

<sup>5</sup> Argyle writes extensively about social relations, see Argyle & Henderson, 1990; Argyle & Cook, 1976; Argyle, 1994; Furnham & Argyle (Eds.), 1981; Argyle & Colman, 1995; Argyle, Collett, & Furnham, 1995; Argyle, 1992; Argyle & Beit-Hallahmi, 1975; Argyle, 1974; Humphrey & Argyle, 1962; Argyle, Furnham, & Graham, 1981. I thank Ragnvald Kalleberg for introducing me to this literature.

<sup>6</sup> Taylor writes about *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Taylor, 1990).

<sup>7</sup> P. Golde, 1970, writes about Women in the Field - Anthropological Experiences.

<sup>8</sup> 'Judge Louise Arbour (Canada) is the head of the Tribunal's Prosecutor's office, which also serves the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. The Deputy prosecutor is Mr. Bernard Muna (Cameroon), who deals exclusively with the Rwanda Tribunal' (United Nations Department of Public Information, 1998).

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Woods, 1996.

<sup>10</sup> Beverly Crawford at the Sommerakademie für Frieden und Konfliktforschung, Loccum, Germany, 20th – 25th July 1997.