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## Humanitarian Governance and the Politics of Celebrity Engagement

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Humanitarian governance represents a distinctive form of power that blurs care and control, emancipation and domination (Barnett, 2011; Malkki, 1992: 34). A moral imperative to alleviate the suffering of others, driven by sympathy and compassion, is an expression of power that reinforces social hierarchies. This tension within humanitarianism raises key concerns for both scholars and practitioners alike. Is humanitarian governance more about ensuring order than about changing lives? This essay will advance the argument that humanitarian action, rather than fundamentally transforming lives, seeks to alleviate the immediate suffering of others. This humanitarian sensibility ensures order by returning populations back to a state of normalcy, which ignores the structural conditions underpinning the immediate forms of violence. Relations between humanitarian actors and the recipients of humanitarianism become inherently hierarchical through the everyday practices of care and control. Therefore, humanitarianism serves a dual function, and a distinctive answer to this question becomes mired in complexity.

This argument will be made in reference to celebrity humanitarianism in Africa. Through this case study, I will illustrate how claims to alleviate suffering by celebrity humanitarians reflect attempts by the neoliberal world order to control and ensure order in the 'chaotic' continent of Africa. Whilst the involvement of celebrities in humanitarian governance often stems from a sincere interest to change the lives of distant strangers, it nevertheless perpetuates hierarchies between the Global North and South and racially distinguishes between 'saviours' and 'victims', endorsing a 'white savior industrial complex' (Cole, 2012; Scott, 2015: 451).

This essay will begin with a brief discussion on the meaning of 'humanitarian governance', 'order', and 'changing lives'. Secondly, I will explore the historical links between colonialism and humanitarianism, and how this logic is manifested in celebrity engagement with modern humanitarianism. Furthermore, the inherent connection between celebrity humanitarianism and the neoliberal world order will be explored, and how this reflects the maintenance of order in the wider field of humanitarian governance. Through this analysis, I will argue that celebrity humanitarianism represents a relevant case study for assessing the goals and implications of humanitarianism. By reducing populations to wounded bodies, humanitarianism ignores the structural conditions that cause and exacerbate suffering (Müller, 2013a: 64). It also reproduces social hierarchies that echo the colonial past. This case demonstrates how humanitarian governance strives to change lives, but nevertheless becomes implicated in the preservation of order.

### Terminology of Humanitarianism

Firstly, it is imperative to elucidate key terms within the study of humanitarianism. 'Humanitarian governance', as defined by Fassin (2007), is 'the administration of human collectivities in the name of a higher moral principle that sees the preservation of life and the alleviation of suffering as the highest value of action' (Fassin, 2007: 151). Fassin (2007) illustrates the power of governance in its ability to manage and control, driven by a moral imperative to treat the symptoms of suffering populations (Barnett, 2013: 382). Traditionally, humanitarian action attempts to remain apolitical and within the confines of emergency relief (Barnett, 2013). Increasingly, however, humanitarianism has expanded in its activities and the range of actors has diversified. Therefore, changing the lives of vulnerable populations is an underlying goal of humanitarian governance, insofar as practitioners extend their services towards

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development and human rights.

Furthermore, how is order conceptualised? 'Order' means 'to set or keep in order or proper condition; to adjust, arrange, or carry on according to rule; to regulate, direct, conduct, rule, govern, manage' (Shakespeare, 1597). This interpretation of 'order' relates to the hierarchical nature of humanitarianism, insofar as humanitarian actors regulate, govern, and manage vulnerable populations when they attempt to alleviate suffering. This form of order produces social hierarchies between the benefactors of aid and its receivers (Barnett, 2013: 389; Mostafanezhad, 2013a: 489). But 'order' also implies the establishment of rule and authority out of chaos. It relates to the notion that humanitarianism responds to states of anarchy, disorder, and exception. Humanitarian governance in this sense functions to bring order and normalcy, or 'submission', in order to govern over suffering populations (Ilcan & Rygiel, 2015: 336; Redfield, 2005: 328). As I will argue, celebrity humanitarianism, in its quest to change the lives of distant others, ensures order through hierarchies and by reproducing submissive objects in favour of a neoliberal world order.

With Fassin's understanding of 'humanitarian governance', and the dual meaning of 'order', it becomes evident that profoundly changing the lives of those suffering may be the goal of humanitarianism, but it is often not realised in practice. How can we conceptualise the extent to which lives are transformed by humanitarian action? I believe that 'changing lives' refers to the positive transformation of suffering populations into thriving communities that become empowered rather than vulnerable, and are able to overcome both the symptoms and causes of their suffering. As evident in the case of celebrity humanitarianism in Africa, lives may be altered temporarily through the provision of aid. However, without understanding the complexities and conditions behind suffering, a profound change in wellbeing is unlikely. Indeed, humanitarian governance strives to change lives and alleviate suffering, but in practice, approaches that reduce populations to voiceless masses devoid of history and politics reproduce colonial hierarchies and ensure submission. Through sentiments of compassion, celebrity humanitarians become the mediators between the neoliberal world order and Africa (Scott, 2015), and in doing so transform 'ungovernable peoples into governable populations' (Reid, 2010: 391).

## Colonialism, Compassion, and Humanitarianism

The control of 'ungovernable peoples' through humanitarian governance reflects a historical connection to colonialism, charity, and compassion. Indeed, exploring the motives that drive humanitarian action is necessary in order to understand why this form of governance continues to ensure order through attempts to change the lives of suffering populations. It is imperative that humanitarianism's colonial roots are explored in order to analyse modern forms of humanitarian power. Indeed, there is an inherent connection between emancipation and domination (Barnett, 2008: 1-2), wherein 'the trope of humanitarianism itself has been emblematic of international orders from colonial empires' (Edkins in Ek, 2006: 371). Furthermore, colonialism can also explain the ways in which celebrities engage in humanitarian activities in the postcolonial nations of Africa (Biccum, 2016: 6).

As Lester (2002) argues, the origins of humanitarianism stem from cultural encounters with 'distant strangers' in the colonial world (Hyndman, 2000: 88; Mostafanezhad, 2014: 113; Scott, 2015: 451). In Great Britain, humanitarian sensibilities were expressed through abolitionism (Lester, 2002). Through sentiments of sympathy, compassion, and charity, members of British society expressed a disdain for the plight of suffering populations, which reflected what they deemed a moral superiority as enlightened peoples to aid the common humanity (Barnett & Weiss, 2008: 19; Calhoun, 2009: 3; Everill & Kaplan, 2013: 2; Feldman & Ticktin, 2010: 5; Mostafanezhad, 2014: 113; Nyers, 1998: 16; O'Sullivan, Hilton & Fiori, 2016:3; Pupavac, 2010). This sentiment was vital to the pursuit of colonisation. Furthermore, the missionary figure was invaluable to the imperialist ventures of Europe. Their mission, to educate native peoples in the enlightened ways of European life, created social perceptions about the White man's role in Africa. Indeed, 'western travellers and missionaries were often portrayed as heroes of civilization and freedom, the champions of the enlightened world in their crusades against barbarism' (Repo & Yrjölä, 2011: 46). This hierarchy, formed from a desire to change the lives of others, reflects the modern-day relationship between celebrity humanitarians and recipients of aid in Africa.

Indeed, the hierarchies of charity cast celebrity humanitarians such as Bob Geldof and Angelina Jolie as arbiters of

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morality and heroism, whilst vulnerable populations are represented as silent, suffering bodies (Agier, 2010; Calhoun, 2009: 7; Rajaram, 2002; Turner, 2015: 5). The act of giving is an act of power. Humanitarian governance establishes power relations with the receivers of aid, who must therefore accord with a universal depiction of 'naked life', a suffering figure of humanity (Agier, 2010: 31; Ek, 2006: 368; Rajaram, 2002). Refugees become clear examples of how humanitarian representations and celebrity encounters reduce suffering populations to 'a wounded body – to biological life rather than political subjectivity', in order to 'appeal to compassion' (Turner, 2015: 5). This contemporary representation of the suffering object of humanitarianism continues to echo and express the inherent 'connection between racism [and] colonialism' (Ek, 2006: 369). Significantly, this link must remind practitioners of humanitarianism that 'humanitarian governance exists only because of the existence of compassion, care, and concern for others', however, 'the desire to emancipate and protect the welfare of others can also lead to new forms of domination and configurations of power' (Barnett, 2013: 394). Therefore, when assessing the case of celebrity humanitarianism, the history of colonialism must be interrogated for the ways in which it reinforces the notion of a White 'altruistic saviour' (Müller, 2013b: 479) and its claim to speak and act on behalf of the 'savage, backward and dangerous' populations of the 'dark continent' (Repo & Yrjölä, 2011: 46).

Humanitarian governance is driven by a desire to change lives, but nevertheless ensures order. As this analysis of colonialism illustrates, attempts to achieve the former necessarily produce the latter. Celebrities who engage in humanitarian action often do so out of virtuous desires to alleviate suffering. However, beneath this benevolence is a historical relationship of power that ignores the politics and histories behind the suffering bodies; rendered voiceless by the celebrities who assume their universal narrative of plight. Furthermore, the comparison between modern humanitarianism and colonialism extends beyond the similarities between celebrity humanitarians and missionaries (Biccum, 2016: 6). As the next section will demonstrate, celebrity humanitarianism also reflects the domination of the neoliberal world order in humanitarian governance, a dynamic not dissimilar to the imperial empires of the colonial past.

## The Neoliberal World Order

Humanitarianism actors can strive to change the lives of vulnerable populations through a genuine will to alleviate the suffering of a common humanity. However, on closer inspection, celebrities who engage in humanitarian action are often motivated by the promise of increased brand exposure and improving their image (Biccum, 2016: 11; Mostafanezhad, 2013a: 486-7). This argument is premised on the notion that humanitarianism represents a 'continued expansion of neoliberalism' that employs celebrities and high profile figures as mediators between a neoliberal system and the vulnerable and anarchic populations of the Global South (Mostafanezhad, 2013b: 319; Scott, 2015). This is not to conclude that celebrity humanitarianism, or the wider field of humanitarian governance, is driven by the sole purpose of dominating 'dangerous' populations. Rather, as humanitarians engage in practices that attempt to change the lives of others, they nevertheless become imbricated in power relations that reflect a contemporary world of capitalism, commodification, and global inequality (Biccum, 2016: 1; Chouliaraki, 2012: 4). As Kapoor (2016) effectively demonstrates

'not only are humanitarian celebrities deeply immersed in capitalism but their charity work is entangled within it and unquestioningly promotes it... yet what they fail to realise (or admit) is that it is this very capitalism that is so often the root cause of the inequality they seek to address through their humanitarianism' (Kapoor in Biccum, 2016: 7).

This illustrates that humanitarian governance is driven by the desire to alleviate the suffering of others, but nevertheless reinforces hierarchies and inequalities that allow global powers to maintain domination over 'insecure' populations.

Furthermore, modern humanitarianism has experienced a significant expansion of actors, from international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), to military and state actors, to wealthy individuals and high-profile celebrities (Daley, 2013: 376). Much of this humanitarian engagement comes from Western actors, however this is not to deny the prevalence of non-Western humanitarian action and South-to-South engagement (Hyndman, 2000:3). Nevertheless, most aid comes from Western governments and organisations, which reflects the influence of neoliberal ideologies and practices upon the humanitarian sphere. The neoliberal world order reveals the dominance

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of Western powers and their prescription to deregulated and liberalised economics, capitalist development models, and democratic governance (Ganti, 2014: 91). This invariably affects the delivery of humanitarian assistance to countries and regions that are the objects of neoliberal control. Indeed, humanitarian governance from this perspective could be seen as an attempt by the neoliberal world order to manage 'disorderly' populations in 'anarchic' regions of the world. The militarisation of humanitarianism illustrates how Western powers are engaging with countries deemed threats to international peace and security. Africa, the continent so deeply affected by the interventions of the colonial era, has again been implicated in neoliberal, neo-imperialist ventures to secure and control 'unruly' peoples and their governing systems (Ilcan & Rygiel, 2015: 339; Repo & Yrjölä, 2011). Therefore, humanitarianism, under the guise of this neoliberal world order, transforms 'the inert and dependent (feminine, infantile, Black) African horde into dynamic self-governing individuals, specifically (masculine, mature, White) neoliberal subjects' (Repo & Yrjölä, 2011: 53). As Müller illustrates (2013), this sentiment reflects the Western approach to famines, wherein the security threat was not to starving populations, but to a neoliberal world order and its 'war on terror' (Müller, 2013b: 478).

However, celebrities who engage in humanitarian activities do not overtly endorse this securitised, neo-colonial approach. Rather, celebrity humanitarianism seeks to change lives through altruistic sensibilities. Nevertheless, compassion, sympathy, and pity are sentiments not devoid of politics. Celebrities such as Angelina Jolie, Bob Geldof and George Clooney may possess genuine humanitarian values and aspire to alleviate the suffering of vulnerable populations, but they also have their personal brands to endorse (Biccum, 2016; Mostafanezhad, 2013a: 486-7). This reflects the commodification of people and objects heralded by the neoliberal age, insofar as celebrities themselves become fetishized commodities who sell their image to global consumers (Daley, 2013: 378). As celebrities engage in particular humanitarian practices that reinforce narratives about Africa and suffering populations, they reflect a 'marketized philanthropy' that glamorises poverty and inequality and reifies the White, American celebrity as the saviour of "poor, Black Africans" (Müller, 2013a: 64). Indeed, seemingly apolitical forms of humanitarian governance practiced by celebrities reflects 'a type of hegemonic control that underwrites capitalist penetration and liberal governance' which unfortunately does not transform the lives of distant strangers but often exacerbates existing inequalities (Müller, 2013a: 75; Scott, 2015: 451). However, as I have argued throughout, humanitarianism is fundamentally about changing lives. It is here that my analysis diverges from much of the literature on celebrity humanitarianism. Humanitarian governance may ensure order through specific practices, but it will always be driven by the desire to promote human wellbeing. Therefore, when criticising celebrity humanitarianism and its relationship to the neoliberal world order, we should always consider the predominantly noble desires to alleviate suffering and improve the lives of others based on a common humanity.

## 'A Hungry Child Has No Politics'

The well-placed intentions of celebrity humanitarians should not be understated. Celebrities can positively influence policies and bring attention to humanitarian issues in an effort to change the lives of suffering populations (Biccum, 2016: 5; Mostafanezhad, 2014: 117). Indeed, the fact that celebrities such as Angelina Jolie and George Clooney have become global faces of the United Nations is symbolic of their power and influence in the realm of humanitarian assistance (Mostafanezhad, 2014: 114). However, their approach to humanitarianism 'leaves the structural conditions that have caused suffering not only unchanged but unrecognised, unanalysed and un-understood' (Müller, 2013b: 481). This section will illustrate how humanitarian governance is first and foremost about changing the lives of vulnerable populations; however, the narrow approach by many humanitarian actors continues to ignore the structural causes that prolong suffering. This approach reinforces simplified representations of suffering populations as feminised, infantilised, and racialized victims without history, politics, or agency (Manzo, 2008: 635).

Iconography is a pertinent example of how celebrity humanitarianism, and more broadly, popular perceptions of humanitarian governance, reify peoples of the Global South 'as ignorant, passive and helpless' (Manzo, 2008: 650). Consider the infamous picture of Angelina Jolie hugging a tied up, near naked, African child. It reflects the prevalent response to humanitarian contexts, wherein the suffering population, usually fetishized as 'women, children, and the elderly', are reduced to Agamben's 'bare life' that ignores personal, socio-political, economic, gendered, and racial diversity and constructs this bare or 'naked life' as the absolute victim of humanity (Agier, 2011: 183; Agier, 2010: 31; Ek, 2006: 368; Manzo, 2008: 647; Mostafanezhad, 2013a: 493; Müller, 2013a: 63; Owens, 2009: 567). Indeed, this

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simplification of suffering (Belloni, 2007), this persistent representation of voiceless, apolitical victims, reinforces order by reproducing hierarchies based on colonial sentiments and expressed through charitable acts. As Malkki argues (2010), 'childlike innocence is a way of making recipients of humanitarian assistance tabula rasa, innocent of politics and history, innocent (in the sense of not-knowing) about causes of war and enmity' (Malkki, 2010: 62; Müller, 2013b: 479). Therefore, just as victims of humanitarian crises are cast as apolitical, universal bodies without history, humanitarian practitioners themselves become unable or unwilling to assess the structural causes and conditions behind suffering (Rajaram, 2002: 247). This stems from a common narrative perpetuated in the humanitarian field that focuses on the compassionate desire to alleviate the immediate suffering of distant strangers (Müller, 2013a: 62). Humanitarian governance may be about changing lives, or at least attempting to improve the wellbeing of populations, but it simultaneously reduces people to neoliberal subjects malleable to the control of global powers.

Daley (2013) offers an appropriate example of this dynamic in the case of George Clooney and the Save Darfur Coalition (SDC). She argues that the approach taken by celebrity humanitarians and their respective organisations simplifies the conditions behind humanitarian situations, and therefore produces narratives that perpetuate global inequalities (Daley, 2013). In her analysis, she notes that both Clooney and 'the SDC ignored the complex history of Sudan, simplified the issues to racial and religious binaries of Arab Muslim perpetrators and black Christian victims' and that 'through the media and an advertising blitz, SDC reported fictional mortality data to support its claim of genocide in Darfur in its call for military intervention' (Daley, 2013: 382). As celebrities become self-designated experts on humanitarian crises, they produce narratives that reduce suffering to immediate causes, exacerbate existing divisions within target societies, and frame populations in ways which elicit the 'militarisation of Africa' by the Western world (Belloni, 2007; Daley, 2013: 382, 387; Mostafanezhad, 2013a: 495; Müller, 2013b: 472). Indeed, this case is not exceptional. Daley (2013) also offers the example of the celebrity-endorsed Kony2012 movement to illustrate how history and politics are ignored in order to appeal to a sympathetic, Western public. It becomes convenient for NGOs and celebrities to ignore these histories when it involves the negative consequences of colonialism and Western intervention (Daley, 2013: 387). Similarly, in framing famines in Africa, whether it be the Ethiopian famine of 1983-85, or the 2011 famine in Somalia, Müller (2013a) scrutinises the 'essentialist explanations' that conclude 'famine as a result not of particular couplings of power and human agency but of natural (biblical) forces' (Müller, 2013a: 66; Müller, 2013b: 470).

In their quest to alleviate suffering, celebrity humanitarians simplify the very populations they wish to aid. A desire to change the lives of others based on sentiments of compassion and pity are inherently hierarchical, despite intentions to bridge the gap in existing global inequalities (Chouliaraki, 2012: 2). It is important to recognise that simplifying populations also serves an instrumental value in order to deliver effective relief to suffering populations. However, when celebrities like Angelina Jolie and George Clooney endorse particular organisations, or engage in their own humanitarian work, they make powerful claims about the politics and agency of populations they are trying to assist and protect. In doing so, they reduce these populations to suffering victims in need of Western assistance and intervention. As Douzinas remarks (2013):

'in this way celebrity humanitarians... are instrumental in dividing the world into the 'humanity that suffers' and the 'humanity that saves'. This division creates the space in which the anti-politics of celebrity humanitarian engagement is being played out, as 'the defence of the "innocents"' and without 'the slightest interest in the collective action that would change the causes of poverty, disease or war' (Douzinas in Müller, 2013b: 479).

## Humanitarian Hierarchies and African Exceptionalism

Humanitarianism represents a myriad of dividing and contentious logics. On the one hand, humanitarian governance seeks to alleviate the suffering of others in an attempt to change their lives for the better. On the other hand, this giver/receiver relationship is inherently hierarchical and serves to ensure order amongst 'disorderly' populations and regions. An analysis of celebrity humanitarianism illustrates the ways in which governance produces and ensures order by classifying White, Western celebrities as saviours, and poor, African populations as victims. However, it must be emphasised that humanitarian governance is first and foremost about changing the lives of suffering populations. Nevertheless, 'however honourable the intentions of celebrities, the nature of their engagement with

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humanitarianism suggests that they form part of an emerging discourse' that reifies existing global inequalities and perpetuates African exceptionalism (Daley, 2013: 389-390; Müller, 2013b: 479). This final section of the essay will assess how colonialism, neoliberalism, and the simplification of suffering result in a strengthening of humanitarian hierarchies and reproduce notions of a 'childlike' and dependent Africa in need of Western intervention (Härting, 2008: 66; Repo & Yrjölä, 2011: 51).

Nigerian author Chinua Achebe believed that 'the West seems to suffer deep anxieties about the precariousness of its civilization and to have a need for constant reassurance by comparison with Africa' (Achebe in l'Anson & Pfeifer, 2013: 54). However, the West's engagement with Africa extends beyond this sentiment, reflecting a colonial sensibility to alleviate the guilt of the 'White Man's burden' and educate and enlighten peoples of the 'dark continent' (Chouliaraki, 2012: 4; Daley, 2013: 376; Repo & Yrjölä, 2011: 46). This has the serious implication of underestimating the agency of African leaders, who often use this colonial guilt and humanitarian aid for their own ends, but who also have a significant role in the delivery of assistance to suffering populations. Through this simplification that ignores African voices; celebrities, governments and organisations that do not consider 'the actual wants, needs, and desires' of Africans perpetuate this narrative of a 'chaotic' Africa replete with victims in need of rescue by White saviours (l'Anson & Pfeifer, 2013: 49). The reproduction of African exceptionalism and the saviour/victim hierarchy can be traced back to humanitarianism's colonial origins (Biccum, 2016: 7; Daley, 2013: 388; Mostafanezhad, 2013a: 489; Repo & Yrjölä, 2011: 48). The parallels between missionaries and explorers of the colonial era and modern-day celebrity humanitarians reflect the orientalist approach to Africa and its populations, as both missionary and celebrity embark on a noble adventure characterised by 'intrepidity, determination, courage, and moral worth' (Daley, 2013: 384). Indeed, Bob Geldof's engagement in the humanitarian response to the 1983-85 Ethiopian famine echoed this orientalism (Müller, 2013a: 67-8). His release of 'Do They Know It's Christmas?' was an expression of humanitarian benevolence that reduced Ethiopians to 'bare life' devoid of politics, history, and religion (despite Ethiopia being a predominantly Christian country). Indeed, Müller criticises how

'in the decades since the Ethiopian famine, the picture of Africa as a continent of suffering, as the archetypal place that requires charitable intervention... has been reinforced... by a combination of aid agencies, the media, and high-profile celebrity humanitarian engagement whose protagonists can cast themselves ultimately in the role of altruistic saviours' (Müller, 2013a: 67-8).

The politics, history and human rights of African populations are ignored whilst celebrity humanitarians engage in organisations and projects that only alleviate the 'manifestations' of structural issues (Daley, 2013: 390). Conceptualising the African body as a victim in need of protection reinforces the notion that Western intervention and assistance is a desired and unproblematic engagement with suffering populations (Härting, 2008: 61; Müller, 2013a: 75). Therefore, images such as Angelina Jolie embracing an African child, or of 'bloated bellies, skeletal limbs and haunting eyes', or 'the "AIDS orphan"', all come to reflect a common perception of Africa and the people within it, as a result of a humanitarianism based on pity (Manzo, 2008: 638-9; Müller, 2013b: 470). Celebrity humanitarianism, and the wider field of humanitarian governance, must accept its complicity in the reproduction of these global inequalities that continue to place Africa at the receiving end of intervention and charity. Nevertheless, however 'misguided or misplaced' celebrity humanitarian engagement may be, 'it cannot easily be construed as merely a mask for some nefarious purpose' (Harvey in Mostafanezhad, 2013b: 333). Celebrity humanitarianism in Africa represents a fundamental goal to change the lives of those suffering, however; in simplifying and depoliticising populations, humanitarian governance produces and ensures order by reinforcing saviour/victim and North/South hierarchies.

## Conclusion

This essay has produced several key insights for the study and practice of humanitarianism. Firstly, questioning whether humanitarian governance is more about ensuring order than about changing lives is highly complex and does not provide a simple answer. The case of celebrity humanitarianism in Africa has illustrated the ways in which sincere desires and attempts to change the lives of vulnerable populations remains the primary motivation of humanitarian governance. However, through an analysis of colonialism and neoliberalism, it becomes evident that sentiments of compassion are imbricated in relations of power between the benefactors and recipients of aid.

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Whether these hierarchies and the maintenance of order are intentional repercussions of humanitarian assistance is open to debate. Often, celebrities are unaware of the consequences of their actions. But all too often, celebrities become mediators or agents of the Western world as they engage with distant strangers of the Global South. By exploring the implications of celebrity humanitarianism, we can scrutinise their anti-political and simplified representation of suffering that reduce people to 'bare life'. This illustrates the reproduction of hierarchies between the West and Africa, and the saviour and victim in celebrity encounters with humanitarianism. This conclusion casts a shadow on the genuine attempts by humanitarian actors to alleviate suffering and promote human dignity. But by reflecting on the forms of power and politics that are present in all forms of social interaction, humanitarian governance can become critical of its own actions and work to improve the ways in which assistance is delivered. Therefore, 'What if celebrities who want to do more than simply rattle the fundraising tins... were asked to turn the spotlight on aid's failures instead of successes?' (Holman in Manzo, 2008: 646). Even more provoking, what if humanitarianism as a whole was to turn the spotlight on its own failures?

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