

As they dance, Martin looks intently at Jane and remarks, "You know you're a fascinating little savage," then forcefully kisses her. She in part reciprocates, but on remembering Tarzan, she pulls away.

“When Hearts Beat Like Native Drums:” Music and the Sexual Dimensions of the Notions of “Savage” and “Civilized” in *Tarzan and His Mate*, 1934.

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Since the advent of sound in film, music has provided a vital counterpoint to the stunning visuals and electrifying action of Hollywood productions. Offering more than a tangential backdrop of auditory color, music plays a significant role in creating and defining the images portrayed in film. Though the part music plays in shaping these images is often overlooked, its powerful influence on the North American general public’s understanding of peoples, places, and ideas as they are constructed by Hollywood cannot be underestimated. Of the many Hollywood films made about Africa, perhaps the Tarzan films are some of the most pervasive in creating stereotyped notions of African peoples, geography, and social organization. An examination of the portrayal of Africa and Africans in one of the Tarzan films provides a window into how music has been used to generate these stereotypes and calls into question the degree to which these (mis)conceptions, under the same or different guises, have survived into the twenty-first century.

*But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than Venus, or those pamper’d animals
That rage in savage sensuality*
—William Shakespeare, *Much Ado about Nothing*

*The wild dance maddens in the van; and those
Who lead it, fleet as shadows on the green,
Outspeed the chariot, and without repose
Mix with each other in tempestuous measure
To savage music, wilder as it grows.*
—Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Triumph of Life*

Introduction

The 1934 film *Tarzan and His Mate* was made during the film production period immediately following the era of silent films. With the innovation of sound, film producers concentrated on either making musicals or films that focused on action and dialogue. Musical underscoring was still in its early stages of development. *Tarzan and His Mate* belongs to that genre of film that highlights action and dialogue and uses music sparingly and only at strategic moments. By virtue of its absence for the majority of the film, when music does appear its contrast to the action and dialogue is compelling and its potency to convey images and communicate through multiple layers of meaning is all the more striking.

The 1991 MGM/UA home video release of *Tarzan and His Mate* is described as the "restored uncut version" of an "epic story of jungle romance" in which "Tarzan, the handsome, strong King of the Apes and Jane, the beautiful sophisticated English girl, prove that social barriers disappear when hearts beat like native drums." The promise presented here of viewing additional controversial footage censored from the original picture highlights a more explicit sexual dimension to the film than the 1934 release was allowed to display. Similarly, the linkage of "jungle romance" with "native drums" associates the African environment and African instruments with the flirtatious interaction between a man and a woman. The suggestion that the jungle provides a setting in which love overcomes the social barriers between Tarzan and Jane not only articulates the class consciousness and social stratifications inherent in the film, but also insinuates that the jungle is a context in which love is given free reign to conquer all obstacles in its path.

Against this backdrop of sexual innuendo the film's characters use the terms "civilized" and "savage" to differentiate between themselves and all things African with which they come into contact. At certain points in the film they discuss the merits of civilization and describe the behavior and accouterments necessary to maintain a degree of civility especially as these objects pertain to romantic love. Despite the negative connotations they as the "civilized" associate with the term "savage," on occasion they also reveal an ambivalence to the notion of "savage" particularly as it pertains to sexual interaction between men and women.

In this study I explore the sexual dimensions of these notions of "savage" and "civilized" as they are portrayed in one specific Hollywood film, *Tarzan and His Mate*, and as some North American audiences might subsequently perceive them. Of prime concern is the way both African and European music is used to shape and define these notions. The concepts of "savage" and "civilized" will be discussed through an examination of specific scenes that use the musical elements of singing, drumming, and dancing to articulate qualities of these terms. Featured prominently within the musical framework of these scenes are the nonmusical complementary elements of race and clothing that will also be considered because of the

fundamental part they play in communicating and sexualizing the notions of savagery and civility. Finally, I investigate the way these musical and nonmusical elements link the film's construction of the ideas of "savage" and "civilized" to the feminization of the African continent and to the compelling desire of some to venture forth to plunder and conquer her.

The Development of the Notions of "Savage" and "Civilized"

The potent terms "savage" and "civilized" are generally considered by contemporary scholars to be outmoded and derogatory and as such do not figure in twenty-first century academic discourse. Consequently, before discussing scenes in the film that articulate the European characters' depictions of these notions, it is important to explore their origins within the European context in order to gain a better understanding of their use in *Tarzan and His Mate*.

As early as the Middle Ages, "savageness" was a European concept used to create the distinction between cultivated (tame) and uncultivated (wild) land and behavior within a given European culture. By the sixteenth century most uncultivated land and peoples had been brought under submission by more dominant, "developed" European groups to the extent that not many savages of this description remained in Europe. As a result, the "European notion of savagery was exported, along with its ambiguities, and transferred to non-Europeans [so that] by the nineteenth century it was a routine concept in descriptions of Africa" (Pieterse 1992:31).

This transference of the notion of savagery to non-Europeans coincided with the birth of colonial expansion and added a new racial dimension to the descriptions of "savage" and "civilized." In the Oxford English dictionary the civilized condition is defined as "a developed or advanced state of human society." As evidenced in their writings and actions, Europeans involved in colonial expansion clearly saw themselves as coming from an advanced culture of civility and racial superiority and traveling to racially inferior peoples and untamed places that needed a civilizing influence.

With respect to characteristics of the "savage," eighteenth- and nineteenth-century explorers and missionaries wrote about Africans' "indolence," their "unbridled passions," and their "cruelty" or "mental retardation" (Mudimbe 1988:13). The tendency of Europeans to group these and other negative features under the rubric of "savagery" not only served as a means of further distinguishing cultural differences between themselves and savages, but also expanded "savage" into an over-arching concept used to reinforce the belief that all of these elements existed in every African. In describing the "syndrome of savagery" assigned to all Africans in these writings, D. Hammon and A. Jablow comment:

The basic attitudes which arbitrarily relate these essentially unrelated qualities—paganism, nakedness, cannibalism—

are those which assign all cultural differences to the single category of savagery; and one trait as it distinguishes a savage from a European becomes an index to the existence of other traits which are part of the syndrome (quoted in Mudimbe 1988:49)

As contact with savage peoples and places increased during the colonial era, Europeans began to define "savagery" in relation to a social evolutionary scale that began with primitivism, moved to savagery and then on to barbarism, and finally progressed to civilization. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, this evolutionary approach developed into the belief that savagery was an "inner disposition common to both civilized and primitive humanity—in a word, the thesis of the Wild Man within" (Pieterse 1992:37). This understanding led in turn to the notion of savagery as an "image of the instinctive." Because this interpretation reconnected Europeans to the savage through the unconscious, it gave rise to a European attitude of ambivalence towards the savage. Commenting on this ambivalence in European writings about Africa, psychiatrist Dominic Mannoni observes:

The savage . . . is identified in the unconscious with a certain image of the instincts. And civilized man is painfully divided between the desire to "correct" the "errors" of the savages and the desire to identify with them in his search for some lost paradise (a desire which at once casts doubt upon the merit of the very civilization he is trying to transmit to them). (quoted in Pieterse 1992:38)

Inspired perhaps by eighteenth century Rousseauan notions of the "noble savage," early twentieth century notions of savage began to take on an entirely new quality—one of admiration. Artists like Gauguin, Matisse, and Picasso drew artistic inspiration from non-European peoples and cultures traditionally thought of as savage. Eventually "wild" was transformed into a term of honor and avant-garde artists presented themselves as "new savages" to the extent that wildness equaled the unconscious, and became the "well-spring of inspiration," the "muse of innovation," and the "antipode of the bourgeois" (Pieterse 1992:39).

The association of savagery with positive elements deep within the European unconscious coupled with the assumed beneficial effects of European colonization eventually gave rise to stratification in the notion of savagery. The "noble savage" and the "good savage" were those who had been colonized, while what I term "raw savages" were those untouched by civilizing influences. At the same time, in this milieu a similar hierarchy became more pronounced within the notion of "civilized." On one level "civilized" referred to all that is European and to all persons of European descent. On another level Europeans in Africa made a point of distinguish-

ing between one group of Europeans as commoners and another group of Europeans as the upper class or aristocrats who represent the height of civilized sophistication and refinement.

In *Tarzan and His Mate* the dialogue and interaction between the European characters combined with their responses to Africans and the African environment, brings to the fore these varied levels of savage and civilized. Like other films of this genre, the simultaneous attraction and repulsion the European characters express toward the notion of savagery blur the boundaries they have constructed between themselves as the “civilized” and others as the “savage.” In fact, rather than clarifying distinctions between the notions of savage and civilized, the film obscures and complicates them by internalizing them within the European characters. As a result, in attempting to portray the savage as the “other” the filmmakers are actually indirectly projecting images from the “self” (see Dunn 1996: 150). The film thus comments on the notions of “savage” and “civilized” as they exist within European cultures and as seen through the eyes of the film’s European characters rather than commenting on these notions as they exist within African societies and as the film’s African characters experience them. As Jan Nederveen Pieterse writes:

Images of Africa and of blacks in western cultures must be interpreted primarily in terms of what they say about those cultures not what they say about Africa or blacks. It is not that they do not convey any information regarding Africa or blacks, but that this information is one-sided and perverse. (1992, 232–34)

In *Tarzan and His Mate* the European characters clearly abhor what they consider to be the barbaric and violent qualities associated with raw savagery as embodied in African warriors and the inhospitable nature of the African environment. On the other hand, those elements of savagery, which conjure up the “natural” state of humanity and notions of “paradise lost,” evoke within the European characters a peculiar fascination. As we shall see, nowhere is the appeal of these aspects of savagery more apparent than in the implied sexual relationship between Tarzan and Jane and in the sexual tensions between Jane and the other European men, and between the European men and the feminized African continent. Heightened by the inferred liberation to freely express sensual emotions within the context of the savage jungle, these tensions wind their way in and out of the plot like a tropical vine, intensifying the interactions and propelling the film forward. Placed within varied African and European musical frames at strategic points in the story, African and European expressions of the elements of race, clothing, singing, drumming, and dancing serve to foreground these sexual dimensions. In doing so these elements articulate the European characters’ perceptions of the notions of “savage” and “civilized” as they relate to gender within themselves and within the African landscape.

Plot Summary of *Tarzan and His Mate*

In the film *Tarzan the Ape Man* Jane Parker comes from England to Africa to accompany her father and Harry Holt in their pursuit of ivory treasure. When their party first encounters Tarzan they treat him as an enemy and try to kill him. At the end of the film he is considered their friend after he saves them from a group of violent dwarves. Jane's father dies. Harry, who has fallen in love with Jane, returns to civilization without the ivory or the girl, and Jane, who has fallen in love with Tarzan, stays behind with him in the jungle.

Tarzan and His Mate takes place one year after the first story. Harry has returned to Africa and is joined by his recently impoverished womanizing friend Martin Arlington. They are on a two-fold mission—to use Tarzan to help them find the mysterious elephant graveyard where the ivory treasure still lies, and with various objects representative of sophisticated society, to woo Jane back to civilization and back into Harry's arms. As they set out to find Jane and the ivory, their party consists of numerous African porters led by a foreman, Saidi, who is the liaison between the Europeans and Africans. Their journey requires them to cross the towering, sacred Mutia escarpment, which strikes fear in Africans because they consider it forbidden territory. On their way they encounter fierce African warriors, identified as cannibals, who pursue them and kill some of their porters. Then, as they approach the top of the Mutia, giant hairy apes attack them. Announcing their arrival with their signature yodeling calls, Tarzan and Jane, accompanied by their sidekick Cheetah, appear just in time to rescue the group. Tarzan is obviously in control of the apes and asserts his authority over them so that the party can proceed and he and Jane can accompany them on their journey. Ordering him around in a friendly manner, Jane is clearly in charge of the monosyllabic Tarzan when it comes to interacting with her European friends and making plans for the journey to the graveyard. Harry is still overtly smitten by Jane, and Martin too is immediately attracted to her. She then becomes the center of attention in the film, receiving advances from all men of European descent as they attempt to lure her into various romantic entanglements. But alas, all calculated attempts to woo Jane away from Tarzan and back to Harry, or to Martin, or to civilization, fail. She makes it clear that she belongs to Tarzan and that she will stay in the jungle with him forever. Romantic scenes depicting the happiness of Tarzan and Jane in their jungle paradise are interspersed with action-packed scenes of Tarzan, armed only with his knife, rescuing Jane from crocodiles, lions, leopards, and rhinos.

A misunderstanding develops between the four of them when Tarzan refuses to lead Martin and Harry to the secret location of the elephant graveyard because his dead elephant friends are there. Having just learned from Harry that elephants go to the graveyard to die, Martin shoots and wounds an elephant so it can lead them to the graveyard. Tarzan and Jane, disgusted with Martin's actions, leave them to carry on alone. When Harry

and Martin eventually find the elephant graveyard, Tarzan and Jane arrive with a herd of elephants in an attempt to thwart their plan. Martin then claims that he has changed his mind about taking the ivory. Early the next morning Tarzan goes fishing and Martin shoots him, telling the others that he saw Tarzan being eaten by a crocodile. Meanwhile Tarzan is rescued by a hippo and is nursed back to health by his ape family. Believing Tarzan is dead, a despondent Jane resigns herself to returning to civilization with Harry and Martin who decide to take the ivory after all. On their way they are attacked by another group of African warriors identified as the men-who-eat-lions. These warriors enlist a large pride of lions in their assault on the group. In the furor that follows, Harry, Martin, and Saidi are killed along with all of the African porters. During the battle Cheetah fetches Tarzan to come and save Jane. Tarzan arrives and rescues Jane with his herd of elephants that in turn annihilate the lions. Finally, Tarzan and Jane ride off into the sunset on the back of an elephant proclaiming once more their undying love for each other “always.”

Main Title Music and End Credit Music

As mentioned previously, *Tarzan and His Mate* is reflective of films made during the advent of sound productions in which music is used sparingly because action and dialogue were thought to provide enough impetus to carry the film forward. The only European-composed music is found at the film's beginning and end, and all other music is source music that is allegedly African. Like many films of this era, *Tarzan and His Mate* has a theme song that plays during the main title credits. This theme song was also used in the film's precursor, *Tarzan the Ape Man*. It is an unpublished piece entitled “Voodoo Dance,” written by George Richelavie and arranged by Fritz Stahlberg and P.A. Marquandt (Mergetel n.d. (a):1). Because it sets the stage for the film, the song alludes to the European composers' impressions of Africans and the African landscape. An examination of its style and unconventional harmonies suggests how these elements are used to evoke a mood of disorientation and chaos. One contributing factor to this mood is the relationship between three sustained notes that form the foundation of the piece: a high tone, the tritone interval below it, and a low note an octave below the initial note. To some European ears, the use of the tritone interval as the focus of the song could have the effect of obstructing a sense of a tonic center or home which, in turn, has the potential to convey a sense of restlessness.

The tritone has an interesting history in European classical music. Beginning from medieval times the tritone has been considered unstable and was rejected as an offensive consonance. Because it divides the octave perfectly in half it has also assumed the role of the most ambiguous interval. The tritone has been called the “devil” in music and was either forbidden or subject to strict limitations until the early part of the twentieth century.

In nineteenth-century Romantic opera the tritone regularly portrayed the ominous or evil (New Grove 1980:155). Because they were writing in the early part of the twentieth century we might presume the film's composers were familiar with the portentous nature of the tritone in European classical music and opera. It is impossible to know, however, whether they consciously used the tritone in their composition because of their knowledge of its history or simply because its aural qualities created the effect they desired. Nevertheless, in an examination of the film's title music it is worth remembering the stigma surrounding the tritone interval, keeping in mind its auditory history and the possible subliminal effects its qualities could have in conveying unappealing images of Africa to the musical audiences at that time and even today.

In "Voodoo Dance" the tritone forms the basic melodic pattern over which other short bursts of melody are layered. Horns begin outlining the tritone dissonance by slowly playing each note separately. The speed is then doubled as an overpowering timpani drum is added, providing a steady, underlying, four-beat "THUMP-thump-thump-thump" rhythm. As the intensity builds, trilling flutes, squawking oboes, and swelling trombones are added, playing as if independent of each other. The music finds no resolution but ends on a sustained tritone that leaves the listener suspended. The dissonant frenzy of the piece combined with the centrality of the tritone could be interpreted as creating the impression of Africa is an ominous place of mystery, adventure, danger, and chaos—a savage land without a unifying center. Similarly, the prominence of the drum and the notion that the music is depicting an African dance—both associated with "juju" and "superstition" in the film—serve to further reinforce the association of the elements of drumming and dancing with the raw, unbridled aspects of "savagery."

In stark contrast to the main title music, the end music is a European-composed orchestral piece written in the familiar Hollywood style of that era. With its sweet harmonies evoking romantic sentiments, it is presumably meant to reflect the love that Tarzan and Jane have for each other. The song is entitled "My Tender One" and was written by Dr. William Axt for the MGM production *Eskimo*, filmed a year earlier (Mergetel n.d. (a):1). It was used for the endings of the three successive Tarzan films as well. The music is very short and seems to begin in the middle of a song, creating the impression of the climactic ending of a refrain. It is rendered by violins played with exaggerated tremolo, and swelling brass and horns that rise to sustain a deeply satisfying musical sigh as Tarzan and Jane ride off into the sunset on the back of an elephant. Civilized monogamous love is depicted in the film as being one man and one woman who are true to each other "always." Reflecting these amorous convictions through its conventional harmonies and lack of dissonance, this short passage of music serves as a final reminder to the viewers that Tarzan and Jane have chosen to live their life together in the savage jungle because it is there that their true love is given free reign to express itself.

The Yodelling Calls of Tarzan and Jane

The signature yodelling calls of Tarzan and Jane may also be interpreted as portraying different elements of the notions of savage and civilized. The source of Tarzan's trademark call is the subject of debate among Tarzan fans. Johnny Weissmuller, who plays Tarzan in this film and a number of its sequels, claimed to have invented the Tarzan yell, saying he was a champion yodeller as a child. Other reports indicate that MGM sound technician Douglas Shearer recorded Weissmuller's call and electronically enhanced it with a variety of effects, including a hyena's yowl played backwards, a camel's bleat, the pluck of a violin G string and an opera singer's high C, all timed a split second apart. Computer experiments conducted by Samuel Marx at a later date illustrate that the yell was indeed electronically enhanced and that it was actually palindromic—sounding the same forwards as backwards (Potter n.d.:3) (Mergetel n.d. (c):3).

On close analysis, the Tarzan yell starts from a tonic, rests on a minor third, and returns to the tonic. It is interesting to note that some interpretations of the aural effects of the minor third connect it with savagery. In 1915 anthropologist Frances Densmore described the minor third as a "haunting" interval, commenting that "explorers [told] of savage tribes who sing only the minor third" (Densmore 1915:194). As with the stigma surrounding the tritone, it is impossible to know whether or not the composers consciously used the minor third to link Tarzan's yell with notions of the savage. What is significant about his call is the association of its primal scream quality with notions of the savage to express not only Tarzan's dominance over African animals and over his jungle terrain, but also his sorrow. Tarzan's call often announces his arrival so that the viewers hear him before he is seen. It establishes his overpowering presence before his physical appearance is able to dominate. He uses his yodel to call off the giant apes who attack Martin, Harry, and their party at the beginning of the film; he uses it to call on his elephant friends to help him rescue Jane; he uses it when he is wrestling lions and crocodiles; he uses it to alert Jane that he is coming to her rescue; and he uses it to express his great sorrow after burying Cheetah. The call does not seem out of place within its jungle setting, yet imagining how it would be deemed inappropriate within a "civilized" English setting illustrates that its fundamental association is with "savage" environments. At the same time, it connects Tarzan to those aspects of savagery that conjure up notions of uninhibited expression. For contemporary North American audiences, a further association of Tarzan's call with primordial notions of the jungle is demonstrated in that the yodel is abandoned but the gut-wrenching, primal scream quality of the call is retained in one of the most recent dramatic depictions of the Tarzan epic, *Greystoke, the Legend of Tarzan Lord of the Apes* (1983). On the other hand, it was Tarzan's yodel that was maintained in one of the latest comic spinoffs of the story, *George of the Jungle* (1997). What is evident from these two examples is that whether the Tarzan nar-

rative is portrayed through drama or comedy, some kind of powerful call is necessary for signifying Tarzan and for linking him with his primitive environment and his dominion over it.

Furthermore, as to the yodelling qualities of the call, it is unlikely that during the early 1930s the composers of *Tarzan and His Mate* were cognizant of the prominence of the yodel in the singing style of groups like the BaAka of the Central African rainforest, and consequently did not consciously base Tarzan's yell on a specific African style of expression. In a similar vein, because awareness of the Tarzan yodel is so pervasive in contemporary North American popular culture, it is safe to say that most modern audiences are more familiar with the Tarzan yodel than with BaAka singing. The irony here lies in the fact that Hollywood has so profoundly impacted contemporary audiences' notions of Africa that they are more likely to associate the concept of "African" yodelling with Tarzan than with the BaAka.

In contrast to Tarzan's call, Jane's yodelling call is operatic in its vibrato and brightness—perhaps linking it with some aspects of the music of the civilized—and it is expressed in two different ways. The first call rests on the tonic, the major third, and then the tonic. She uses this call to announce her arrival and to attract the attention of others when she is not in trouble. Her second call is quicker and shorter than the first, resting on the tonic, the minor third, and then the tonic. This is the call she uses when she is in distress and needs Tarzan to come and rescue her from some predicament involving wild animals. That Jane has developed her own call signifies that she too has entered the uninhibited realm of the savage and has learned one form of communication within that domain. With respect to the romantic relationship between Tarzan and Jane, their calls not only tie them to the savage, primal elements of the jungle and the domination of their environment, but also signify a private bond of communication between them and the lack of inhibition they share with one another.

The Element of Race

An examination of issues of race as they are portrayed in the film fleshes out elements of the notions of savage and civilized as they are embodied in the film's characters, distinguishing between African and European concepts of savagery and civility and laying the foundation for the exploration of the sexual dimensions of these terms. The majority of the scenes discussed below occur during those sparse moments in the film when music provides a backdrop to the dialogue and subsequently colors the quality of the interaction.

In *Tarzan and His Mate* Africans provide a wild and strange ambience to the film and serve as a backdrop that blends into the mysterious jungle terrain. In line with Nigerian J. Koyinde Vaughan's critique of the portrayal of Africa in film, in this film as in others, Africans are portrayed

as “savage tribes behind inaccessible forests” who engage in “strange rituals a thousand years old.” The African landscape then provides the “exotic backcloth, a reservoir of wild animals and painted ‘natives,’ in which the inhabitants play a negligible role” (1960:85) (see also Ukadike 1994: 16). Africans in the film are not portrayed as individuals but rather as a homogeneous group that is unintelligent, superstitious, and expendable. Similarly, Africa is depicted as a dangerous, inhospitable place that harbors great treasures ripe for plundering.

As explained previously, the film depicts two levels of savages distinguished only by those among them who have been colonized and those who have not. Africans who serve as porters and servants to the European characters fall under the rubric of “colonized savages.” Those who live in the jungle and have little contact with Europeans except to wage war on them are depicted as “raw savages.” The raw savages are characterized as violent cannibals or lion eaters whose prime activity is attacking others. The colonized savages are characterized as “lazy, slow and superstitious heathen” who must be periodically whipped into action (see Dunn 1996: 159). The only African who speaks is Saidi, the foreman of the porters who is a liaison between them and the European characters. His simple monosyllabic utterances, actually more articulate than those spoken by Tarzan, interpret to Harry and Martin the thoughts and actions of the porters and other Africans. In turn, Saidi commands the porters to carry out the instructions of Harry and Martin, whipping them when he is ordered to do so. All the porters except Saidi are considered expendable. At one point when a porter refuses to continue the journey because of his fear of the Mutia escarpment, as distant drumming signals the dangers that lie ahead, Martin shoots him as an example to others who might rebel. Harry reprimands Martin, saying, “A whip would have done just as well.” Martin answers with regret, “Perhaps you’re right. He could’ve carried 150 pounds of ivory.” While the drumming here acts as a reminder of the porters’ link to the ominous nature of savagery, the drums’ connection with superstition also plays a part in dehumanizing Africans and contributes to a portrayal of them as expendable beasts of burden valued for their ability to transport ivory treasure. Their loss is only regrettable in relation to how much merchandise they could have carried had they lived.

Saidi, portrayed by African-American actor Nathan Curry, is the stereotypical strong, silent, unintelligent, loyal servant who eventually gives his life for Harry and Martin. He is the good savage who proves to Harry and Martin that he has been sufficiently influenced by civilizing factors because he does not fall to the ground screaming in fear like the other porters upon hearing “juju” drums or on sighting the sacred Mutia. In the screenplay for the MGM film *Trader Horn* (1931) whose producers also oversaw *Tarzan and His Mate*, Saidi’s equivalent Renchero is described as “a huge black” always just behind the main character following “as noiseless, as unobtrusive as a shadow” (Schayer 1929:2). This prototype African servant/bodyguard for the European adventurer is found in many films

about Africa from Saidi in *Tarzan and His Mate* to Kanuthia, the servant of Denys Finch-Hatton in *Out of Africa* (1985).

As indicated by the emphasis that the screenplay of *Trader Horn* places on the *blackness* of the main character's servant, within the African context "black" becomes one of the signifiers of the notion of "savage," which is equated with all things African. This overt racial dimension to the distinctions Europeans make between themselves as "civilized" and non-Europeans as "savage" is a direct result of the early transference of the notion of savagery from European to non-European domains. Similarly "white" becomes one of the signifiers of the notion of "civilized" and is equated with all things European. This distinction between black and white as it pertains to the notions of savage and civilized factors prominently in *Tarzan and His Mate*, especially in reference to Tarzan.

As opposed to the labeling of all Africans as savage because of their blackness, when elements of savagery are directly related to Europeans or to Tarzan who is of European descent, it is the whiteness of these characters that obscures the distinctions normally made between savage and civilized. As a result, an ambiguity in European attitudes toward savagery arises. The ambivalence this ambiguity fosters is illustrated by Jane's comments on her initial encounters with Africa and with Tarzan in the film *Tarzan the Ape Man* (1932). When she first arrives in Africa Jane tells her father, "From now on I'm through with civilization. I am going to be a savage just like you." Apart from prophesying her destiny, Jane seems to be calling forth an alleged positive notion of the savage that implies liberation from the confining aspects of civilization. She has come to the jungle to be free. Later on after her abduction and release by Tarzan, she comments to her father, "I thought he was a savage, but he wasn't. . . . He was happy." Her father responds, "He's not like us," to which she replies defensively, "He's white." Here Jane equates savagery with something undesirable, the state of unhappiness. On the other hand, while Jane's father's dismissal of Tarzan attempts to fix Tarzan in the realm of the savage, Jane's defense of Tarzan is an effort to justify her attraction to him by linking him to the civilized through his race. Thus, savagery that is normally associated with blackness is annihilated by Tarzan's whiteness, which serves to elevate him from the baseness of raw savagery to the realm of civility. In Jane's eyes the positive qualities of savage as they relate to Europeans are personified in Tarzan and she finds herself inexplicably drawn to them as they are embodied in him and his jungle environment.

Likewise, in an early scene in *Tarzan and His Mate* when Martin and Harry discuss the relationship of Tarzan and Jane amid a backdrop of African singing and dancing, Martin comments to Harry, "So your lady turned you down for a sort of wild man from Borneo, eh? It's a bit fantastic isn't it? A well-bred English girl living in the tree tops with a glorified native ape-man." Harry retorts, "Tarzan's as white as we are." The African singing, dancing, and drumming that provide the backdrop for this scene once

again function as a constant reminder to Martin and Harry of the savage character of the humans and landscape that surround them, and present an aural contrast to their struggle to articulate the qualities of civility as they strive to confine Tarzan's character to one domain or the other. By linking Tarzan to European civility through his whiteness, Harry is actually defending Jane's reputation. The suggestion that Jane had taken up with a person connected to savagery, which is racially linked to blackness, bordered on miscegenation or worse. The only way Harry could dispel that notion was to emphasize Tarzan's whiteness and therefore his connection to civilization.

Another feature of the racial dimensions of savagery in this scene is also revealed in Martin's remarks grouping Borneo with Africa. By connecting these two geographical areas and their peoples, Martin illustrates how the European characters do not see Africans as having any individual features that distinguish them from others deemed to dwell within the savage realm. Instead the European characters homogenize the notion of savagery to encompass different groups of non-European peoples.

During a scene in which the African porters are singing in the background while the European characters are sitting around a campfire, Harry and Martin are trying to entice Jane back to civilization. Harry reminisces about the good old days in an aristocratic London club. Implying that the porters' singing is unappealing and at the same time questioning their humanity, Harry remembers times at the club when they used to sit "with real people" as they listened to music. Jane ponders his comment: "Real people . . . I wonder . . ." Martin chimes in: "Well, at least the men are civilized." Jane challenges him: "Does that make them any better?" Martin replies: "For women. Men never get a proper sense of values 'til they've been about a bit." Martin throws away his cigarette and Cheetah picks it up and begins smoking it. Jane laughs and points to Cheetah: "Look at Cheetah (she laughs again). There's your civilization for you."

In this scene, the contrasting backdrop of the African porters singing around their own campfire once again serves as a reminder of the constant presence of the savage environment and peoples while the characters discuss notions of civility. Here they make distinctions between the two levels of civilized. Martin and Harry have already established that Tarzan is connected to civility through his whiteness. However, in their eyes he is certainly not allied to the British upper class, and it is this class distinction that Harry and Martin use to try to entice Jane to change her mind about staying in the jungle with Tarzan. They assume that if she realizes that Tarzan as a lover has negligible links to civility and in reality is no better than a commoner, she will want to return to a place where there are "real," "civilized" men. Instead she turns their comments around and questions the whole notion of upper-class civility, using Cheetah as a foil to make some civilized habits such as smoking appear ludicrous.

The Element of Clothing

As with the issues concerning race, a discussion of how clothing is used in the film brings to the fore those aspects of savagery and civility that highlight their sexual dimensions. The majority of the scenes discussed occur during those moments in which music plays a significant role in shaping these notions and works as an aural complement to the way clothing visually embodies them.

In this film more than in any other of the Tarzan series, nudity and the degree to which clothing covers European and African male and female bodies created controversy at the time of the film's release. Clothing also plays an important role in the film because Harry and Martin use it to try to woo Jane away from Tarzan and the jungle. It becomes the symbol that represents the best of civilization to the European characters. Consequently, as a complement to the music in this scene, clothing becomes a striking visual signifier of the sexual dimensions of the notions of savage and civilized as the European characters and the filmmakers understand them.

Nudity is displayed in two scenes in the film. In the opening scene, against a backdrop of manual laborers singing as they unload cargo, Martin has just arrived and he and Harry walk from the dock to Harry's quarters discussing their impending journey to find ivory. Harry is teasing Martin about the affair Martin has had with a French woman on the boat. As they make their way, bare-breasted African women and African men wearing only small pieces of cloth around their waists are pictured both in the foreground and the background. Shortly thereafter, as Martin takes a bath in Harry's room, Africans wearing elaborate feathers and singing and dancing in the distance are visible through the window. When Martin lowers himself into the bathtub the bare side of his hip is seen. Meanwhile, in the foreground African porters carrying Martin's luggage enter the room wearing only a small covering below the waist with flaps at the front and back that leave the sides of their hips exposed. In a later scene Jane plunges into the water to go swimming with Tarzan and he playfully rips off her evening gown as she jumps. An eight-minute underwater ballet sequence follows in which Jane is completely naked as she and Tarzan explore the depths and chase each other in circles.

Before the film was released to the general public, the Hays/Breen censors cut the nude swimming scene as well as that section of the first scene in which Martin is lowering his nude body into the bathtub. They also cut a segment in which Jane surfaces from the swimming scene and one of her breasts is exposed (Mergetel n.d. (b):4; Creed 1987:3). The fact that European female breasts and exposed European male hips were cut from the film and that African female breasts and exposed African male hips were not cut illustrates that the censors thought African nudity was harmless and European nudity was sexual. Because Africans were not portrayed as individuals, African nudity involving both sexes within the same scene

is portrayed as part of the ambient backdrop of the homogeneous savage environment along with the African singing and dancing taking place as these scenes unfold. On the other hand, European nudity, especially as it pertains to Tarzan and Jane and their implied sexual relationship, is dangerous because it ventures too close to the suggestion of uninhibited savage sexuality for the comfort of the civilization-minded censors.

In a similar vein, the film's release among North American viewers created quite a stir because of the revealing nature of the outfits worn by both Jane and Tarzan. Jane wears a small bra-like top that exposes her midriff. On their hips both she and Tarzan wear flaps at the front and back joined only by a string at the waist that leaves their sides and hips exposed. Because of public outrage over these skimpy outfits, in the film's sequels Tarzan wore longer loin-cloths and ultimately shorts and Jane was fully clothed in safari suits (Elber 1997; Creed 1987:3). Eventually, even Cheetah and his simian siblings were required to wear body stockings to meet production code requirements that forbade the exposure of the "sex organs, male or female, child or animal, real or stuffed" (Haskell quoted in Creed 1987:3). A June 1998 *Times Herald-Record* article providing a retrospective of actress Maureen O'Sullivan's career upon her death recounts O'Sullivan's later thoughts about public reaction to the scanty outfit she wore as Jane when she was nineteen:

It started such a furor. . . . Letters started coming in. It added up to thousands of women objecting to my costume. In those days they took things seriously. I was offered all kinds of places where I could go in my shame to hide from the cruel public ready to throw stones at me. It's funny. We were unreal people, and yet we were real.

Twenty-seven year old Olympic swimmer Johnny Weissmuller was chosen over other well-known actors to play the part of Tarzan specifically for his physical appearance. For the brevity of his costume Weissmuller received more praise than condemnation from local critics at the time. In an article published in the *New York Evening Post* Thornton Delehanty raved about his "perfection" and "his magnificently proportioned body, his catlike walk, and his virtuosity in the water." John S. Cohen, writing in the *New York Sun*, called him the "movie maiden's prayer for a cave man, ape man, and a big fig-leaf-and-bough-man," saying he was "built like a Greek statue" (quoted in Fury n.d.:6). Producer Sol Lesser described Weissmuller's face as "sensual, animalistic, and good-looking," a face that "gave the impressions of jungle . . . outdoor life" (quoted in Fenton 1967: 167). The sexual implications of Weissmuller's costume are clearly articulated by actor Denny Miller who portrayed Tarzan in 1959:

[Tarzan is] more accessible than other heroes we have. . . .
You don't have to have ray guns or run around with an "S" on

your chest. . . . You just take off most of your clothes. . . . in fact Tarzan is kind of a cross between Dr. Doolittle and Chippendales. . . . There hasn't been that much male beefcake on screen until "Baywatch" came along. (quoted in Elber 1997)

Miller's simultaneous comparison of Tarzan to a children's storybook character and a male stripper illustrates how Tarzan's outfit highlighted the underlying innocence and overt sexuality of his character that made him so appealing to Jane and the North American female viewers.

Judging from public reactions to the costumes of both Tarzan and Jane, it is clear that the filmmakers deliberately capitalized on the overt sensuality their costumes implied through the subtle juxtaposition of African and European nudity. Toying with the notion of the civilized enjoying the nudity that belonged in the realm of the savage challenged notions of proper "civilized" behavior and appearances. It may be surmised that this approach created discomfort in the general public because it aroused in them their own simultaneous attraction and revulsion to things "savage." Their subsequent vehement protests may then be interpreted as an attempt to maintain a clear divide between their notions of savage and civilized in order to keep these concepts in their proper place.

Saidi is the only African who wears European shorts that are presumably a signifier of his colonized savage status. Although the majority of Africans are portrayed as wearing very little clothing, the porters wear earrings, necklaces, and various rings and bones that pierce their mouths and ears. The African warriors, on the other hand, are all elaborately decorated with one group sporting white paint designs on their heads and faces and the other group wearing what appear to be large curved hippo teeth in a circle around their heads and piercing their mouths and ears. The warriors brandish spears and shields and wear decorative grass or feather anklets and armbands. In wearing the bones and teeth of animals they have killed, the warriors are portrayed as being enmeshed in the violence of their own environment. With their exotic adornments and their aggressive behavior they also become visual representatives to the European characters of the strange, inhospitable, and terrifying nature of the savage African environment the Europeans are attempting to conquer, dominate, and plunder.

In the scene in which Harry and Martin try to lure Jane back to civilization, they tempt her with music and varied adornments for her body that they believe will appeal to the civilized woman. In their persuasive performance, as the African porters' singing supplies a primal ostinato in the background, Harry embodies the charming aspect and Martin the sexual aspect of the male seducer. Tarzan does not figure into the scene initially, as he is off building a sleeping place in the trees for him and Jane. Harry and Martin have brought the very finest examples of civilized accouterments they can find—the latest Paris evening gowns and dresses, as well as hats, high heels, silk stockings, perfumes, and makeup. Harry is anxious for Jane to try on the clothes because he assumes that once she does she will real-

ize the folly of living crudely in the jungle and come back to him. Martin seems to be of two minds. He obviously enjoys the revealing nature of her present outfit, yet is curious to see what she would look like in an evening gown. He asks Jane, "Wouldn't you like to get all dressed up again?" Then he looks admiringly at her exposed hips and legs and remarks, "Not that I have any complaints on that score." Jane coyly readjusts her skimpy flap of leather as if trying to modestly cover herself and replies assuredly, "Why, I had this specially designed for me."

Against a contrasting backdrop of singing African porters maintaining a subtle awareness of their savage context, Martin and Harry take Jane to the tent in which the items are displayed. Her delight is obvious as she runs from one gown to the next feeling their textures and exclaiming "Lovely!" and "Gorgeous!" In a suave manner, Harry presents her with various accessories, trying to convince her that nothing in Africa even compares to her beauty: "There's no jungle flower with a perfume like this Jane." Meanwhile, Martin makes suggestive comments, "Eyebrow pencil . . . lipstick . . . indelible . . . it won't come off when you're kissed . . . I brought all the allurements," he remarks as he hands her what appear to be satin undergarments. When Jane tries on a hat and looks in the mirror Harry observes that the hat makes her look like the Jane Parker he used to know. Jane replies, "Makes me feel like her." As we shall see, while Jane begins trying on the clothes, they gradually transport her from the realm of the savage and its foreign music to the civilized European world of sophistication with its familiar music.

As she is dressing in the tent, Martin remarks to Harry, "She's priceless! A woman who's learned the abandon of the savage, yet she'd be at home in Mayfair." Martin's comment reveals his ambivalence to the notion of savage as he sexualizes it and then elevates it by associating it with the highest class of the notion of the civilized, the suburb of Mayfair in London where the British aristocracy kept apartments and entertained lavishly. When Jane presents herself in a satin dress, Martin remarks seductively that she's the first woman he's had to "coax *into* an evening gown." Cheetah then appears dressed in various accessories and Jane begins to laugh. Once again Cheetah's antics caricature what is considered sophisticated in civilized society and suddenly make it all seem ludicrous to Jane.

When Tarzan arrives, his reaction to the European clothes and music brings the savage and civilized face to face in their interpretation of what is deemed "foreign" in musical tastes, in their approach to covering the body, and in their approach to the body as a sexual object. As suggested above, while the scene unfolds, music mirrors Jane's visual transformation. The African porters who provided the background music as Jane shed her leather bikini for a Paris evening gown have stopped singing and can be seen in the background watching curiously. Harry has brought a gramophone and Jane's transformation is complete as European dance music plays. The savage environment and its inhabitants are temporarily overpowered by the fantasy of civility the music and the clothing have cre-

ated. Tarzan tugs a little roughly at her shoulder strap and it falls off. Jane rebukes him and he continues to look her up and down curiously as he feels her dress. Jane, slightly amused at his reaction, explains to him, "These are clothes. Women wear them because they hope men will like them. That's why I wore these, Tarzan. I thought you'd like them." He starts lifting her dress looking for her legs. Harry and Martin watch Tarzan's investigation intently. Jane demurely holds down the bottom of her gown so Tarzan doesn't lift it too high. She sticks out her leg to let Tarzan feel her silk stockings. "These are stockings," she explains. As he bends down and feels them he repeats, as is his custom, the last words of her previous remark, "Like them?" Tarzan strokes her leg some more and states emphatically, "Like them." Martin chimes in: "Something provocative about the feel of silk. Always was. Same curiosity as we had about the phonograph." Tarzan stands and begins sniffing Jane's neck. "It's perfume," she explains to him. Then she looks over to Harry and Martin and remarks, "I think Tarzan approves."

In their attempt to seduce Jane, Harry and Martin bring the sexual dimensions of the notions of savage and civilized into direct confrontation. On one side, in stark contrast to the Africans singing in the background, Harry and Martin appeal to their own understanding of the highest level of civility through the invocation of French fashion and British aristocracy. With the tactile seductions of sensuous silk, erotic perfumes, and indelible lipstick thrown into the mix, the ultimate question is whether or not these allurements can entice Jane. To complicate matters, Martin struggles with his own ambivalence to notions of savagery. While some elements of savagery repulse him to the point of killing, the sexual dimensions of savagery fascinate him. If his notion of "savage abandon" refers to uninhibited sexual freedom, then he is suggesting that even for him, with his reputation as a womanizer, it is difficult to find within the civilized realm the sexual liberation he desires. The implication of Martin's perspective insinuates that the term "savage" is synonymous with "sexual," and that for him "sexual abandon" appears to only be available for Europeans deep within the savage jungle. Yet he also wants the prestige and status offered in the high life of the British upper class. For Martin the best of both worlds is embodied in Jane's sexual freedom in the jungle and her knowledge of social graces honed in the upper class social circles of Britain. This is why he is so attracted to her.

On the other side, the African porters gaze with incomprehension at the antics of the civilized; Tarzan seems unimpressed by the visual and tactile elements of the seduction and by the civilized music; and Cheeta's pantomime pours cold water on the performance. Their combined responses infer that those who inhabit the realm of the savage do not need expensive European clothing or European dance music to seduce or create sexual appeal. But what of Jane's reaction to it all? Whether the magic of the civilized seduction has worked or whether it has failed is soon made evident. After dancing only once with Martin and not at all with Harry, Jane

submits to Tarzan's desire to carry her away to the treetops, leaving Harry and Martin behind. The scene that follows the next morning in which she swims naked with Tarzan further illustrates her preference. Luxurious clothing or the latest English popular music has not swayed her. Her ultimate decision is to be free of these trappings and to stay behind with Tarzan and enjoy her sexual freedom within the savage realm.

The Element of Unaccompanied African Singing

Much of the African footage in this film is comprised of out-takes from the earlier MGM film *Trader Horn* (1931) shot in Africa. This footage was used to embellish all of the MGM Tarzan sequels that followed (Hay 1991: 112). It is therefore safe to assume that some of the African music heard in the film is also from the *Trader Horn* expedition. Since no individuals in the film are ever seen singing when the singing occurs, it is unclear whether the unaccompanied singing segments are actually out-takes from the *Trader Horn* expedition or whether, as was proposed with Tarzan's yodel, the producers electronically manipulated these out-takes to achieve the sound they desired, or whether they are the original creations of the film's composers.

Unaccompanied African singing occurs as a backdrop in five scenes depicting three types of circumstances in the film: when Africans are involved in manual labor; when they are journeying on foot; and when they are sitting around a campfire in the evening. In each of these scenarios the singing is used to provide a contrasting African ambiance to a scene in which the dialogue or action taking place in the foreground comments in some way on savagery or civility. Some of these scenes were discussed in the previous sections on race and clothing and will be discussed further in the sections on drumming and dancing.

The same or a similar song is used in some scenes, and the singing is depicted as either helping Africans counter the drudgery of work and travel, or as providing them with entertainment, or as warding off fear. In each scene the singing is brief and repetitive and is sometimes performed in unison, as a solo, or in a call-and-response style with a soloist singing strongly above the lower chorus of male voices. None of the texts is in English, and because the words are not always discernable it is difficult to determine in which language the songs are sung. Due in part to the brevity, poor sound quality, and narrow pitch inventory of many of the songs, often insufficient material exists to propose whether they are indeed pieces of African music taken from the *Trader Horn* outtakes. Musical qualities evident in some of these songs such as repetition, call-and-response singing, a pentatonic pitch preference, and polyrhythms, together with song contexts that involve work, travel, and entertainment, are consistent with what is known today about some styles of African singing; but without documentation from the filmmakers themselves it is impossible to determine the

songs' likely origins. Therefore, any comments on the songs' authenticity are mere speculation and should not be considered in any way definitive. However, the focus of this discussion is not to determine whether or not the songs are original African music but to analyze the way in which African music has been used by the filmmakers to create images of Africa and Africans that relate to the concepts of savagery and civility and their sexual dimensions.

The first scene in which singing is heard occurs at the beginning of the film when Martin's boat arrives at the dock. As voices sing in unison a short repetitive refrain, African laborers can be seen in the background loading and offloading boats. One voice is heard singing an octave above the other voices. The refrain, illustrated in figure 1, comprises a three-note phrase repeated over and over, at a slow tempo.

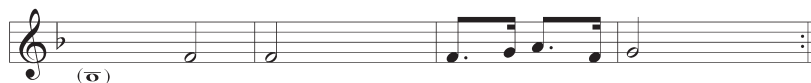


Figure 1.

Although the dominant voices are singing unison pitches an octave apart, the sound is thickened by other voices singing slightly below or above the dominant pitches in a cross between a spoken and sung voice. To the North American ear it could have the effect that some of the voices are singing "out of tune." It is interesting to note that, in the background music during Martin's bathing scene (figure 7) the main chorus in the call-and-response singing that accompanies the drumming and dancing echoes the final four pitches of this refrain. While this music and its probable origins as African will be discussed in more detail in the drumming and dancing sections to follow, what is pertinent here is the significance of the similarity between the two pieces of music. If the drumming and dance scene does indeed contain music taken from the *Trader Horn* outtakes, one suggestion for the similarities between these two selections is that the film's composers might have taken this pitch sequence from the dance music scene, and slowed it down to create an "African" sounding work song for the purposes of establishing the ambiance they desired for introducing the audience to the African environment in the opening scene. Apart from the ambiguities of the song's origins, the drudging and lackluster way in which it is sung and the vagueness of its tuning to North American ears, creates for the North American viewer a first impression of African singing as dull (sung slowly and without enthusiasm), simple (lacking harmony or rhythmic complexity), out of tune, and boring (constantly repeated)—characteristics that resonate with the "syndrome of savagery" described earlier.

A short while after this first scene, when Harry, Martin, and their party of porters are making their way through the jungle toward the sacred

and feared Mutia escarpment, the porters sing a song in a slow tempo and in free rhythm. The soloist lines out a call answered by a chorus of porters (figure 2). This sequence is repeated once.



Figure 2.

African music here is used by the filmmakers to paint a mood of foreboding and to complement their portrayal of the danger of the African environment (symbolized by the Africans' fear of the Mutia escarpment) as well as to provide musical accompaniment to highlight the difficulties the European characters encounter in penetrating the savage land as they travel (enduring heat, hacking their way through jungle foliage, and crossing dangerous rivers). The filmmakers also create the impression that compared to civilized Europe, the realm of savages, signified by the qualities of their collective singing within the context of their cruel environment, is peculiar, strange, and unpleasant. These negative sentiments about Africa and Africans, through impressions of their music, are most clearly articulated by the European characters in the following scene.

In this next scene, the European characters directly comment on the African singing as it occurs. Just as they approach the Mutia, one of the porters is heard singing a slow, mournful, haunting solo. With a slightly high-pitched nasal vocal timbre the soloist sings in a slow, free rhythm a series of gradually ascending notes with pitches blurred by the manner in which they are sung as one pitch is slurred into the next (figure 3).



Figure 3.

Referencing the music, with foreboding Harry remarks to Martin, "I don't like the sound of that chant." Martin replies, "I've hated it for days." Harry warns, "This is different. They're frightened by something." Suddenly, upon seeing the Mutia escarpment, all of the porters scream and fall to the ground—all with the exception of Saidi. Harry knowingly says to Martin, "Juju . . . that's why they're frightened." Martin responds, "Well, we aren't going to lose time just because they are afraid. Come on, Saidi, get 'em going." "Yes, bwana," Saidi replies, as he begins whipping the ground to startle the porters to their feet. It is at this point that Martin shoots one of the porters who refuses to go on. As they resume their journey to the Mutia, the sombre solo begins again in a manner suggestive of a funeral wail.

In this scene, the European characters unequivocally link savagery as it is expressed in African singing with superstition and witchcraft (*juju*). Through their comments they also openly belittle and express their loathing for these elements and for Africans themselves. Furthermore, Martin takes this opportunity to demonstrate his attempt to dominate the savage environment and its peoples by killing one of the porters. In doing so he provides an example to the other porters that he will not tolerate what he considers nonsense and he will not allow any person or thing to thwart his mission to find ivory.

As a prelude to the scene during which Martin and Harry attempt to woo Jane back to civilization with the gifts they have brought her, the porters can be seen sitting around campfires swaying back and forth (each movement marking out a half note), as they sing a short, repetitive, overlapping, call-and-response refrain (figure 4).



Figure 4.

As the porters sustain their last note, the soloist, using the same type of nasal vocal timbre described earlier, begins singing an octave higher than the chorus, slurring one pitch into the next. This sequence is sung once, and as the dialogue between the characters begins the music fades to the background. This repeated sequence continues throughout the scene, suggesting perhaps a looping of the recording by the producers to provide a consistent background of singing for the dialogue. Because the scene takes place in the darkness of the night, as the cameras turn to focus on the European characters gathered around their own campfire, few visual indications place the scene in the jungle—with the exception perhaps of the clothing of the European characters. The backdrop of the porters' singing, therefore, functions as a constant aural reminder of the present reality of the savage environment in which the Europeans find themselves. It also provides a striking contrast of savagery to the dialogue between Harry, Martin, and Jane as they discuss the refinements of civility and reminisce about their experiences of social functions in upper-class British society.

The Element of Drumming

As with the scenes involving unaccompanied singing, individuals are not seen singing or playing drums in the film with the exception of the final scene in which some drummers are briefly shown playing drums while perched in trees. Because the movements of these drummers are not coordinated with the sound, it is not clear whether they are actually playing the drums on the sound track or whether they were being used as props to simulate the drumming.

Drumming in the film is heard in two major scenes in which African warriors attack the Europeans and their party. The first scene takes place near the beginning when cannibals ambush the group as they approach the Mutia escarpment. The second scene takes place during the final battle at the end of the film when the group is overcome by the men who eat lions. In both scenes the drumming is primarily accompanied by singing but is initially heard alone in the distance acting as a signifier of the horror to come. Whenever the drumming is first heard, all of the African porters with the exception of Saidi draw back in terror, some falling to the ground in fright.⁷ The Europeans never show fear at the sound of drumming and they dismiss the Africans' reactions as foolish superstition. Instead, the response of the Europeans is to order Saidi to whip the fear out of the porters so that they can get on with their journey. As the sound of the drums draws nearer, the attacking warriors emerge from their hiding places to assault the group with spears and arrows. In both scenes people are running in every direction while the drumming and singing gradually increase in volume as the fighting intensifies. Ululating can be heard above the cacophony of gunfire, screams, and shouts, as people are killed and pandemonium breaks loose. So much commotion occurs in these scenes that the singing or the drumming taking place in the background is sometimes barely audible on the sound track, resulting in a muddled confusion of noise. At certain points in the action, however, the drumming manages to overpower the din of the battle. In both scenes, what can be heard of the drums at these points does not delineate polyrhythms, as might be expected of African drumming, but instead they outline a unified two-beat or four-beat pattern.

As with sections of film footage, the drumming sequences are also most likely taken from the outtakes of the *Trader Horn* expedition. Despite the fact that the *Trader Horn* footage used in this film is authentic footage from Africa, the filmmakers thought it necessary to reshoot some of the *Trader Horn* scenes in America because the wild animal footage was not "wild" enough (Hay 1991:83). Given this approach to the visual elements of the film, it is conceivable that the filmmakers might have electronically manipulated the music and drumming (as they allegedly did with Tarzan's yodel) to complement the moods they wanted to create and the images of Africa they wanted to portray. As with the unaccompanied singing segments, without further information from the filmmakers themselves it is impossible to determine the authenticity of the drumming sequences.

What is important to this discussion is how the filmmakers used drumming to portray Africa and Africans as savage and sexualized.

In the first scene, as the party is attacked by warriors at the foot of the Mutia, the drumming that is heard outlines a quick repetitive THUMP-thump pattern (each thump equals one quarter note). A chorus of voices sings the refrain in unison (figure 5).



Figure 5.

This sequence is repeated over and over in a looped fashion, gradually increasing in tempo so that the pitches progressively rise as well. Eventually a high pitched, repetitive, call-and-response refrain is begun. In a fast tempo the soloist lines out a call and the chorus echoes the same phrase in unison (figure 6).

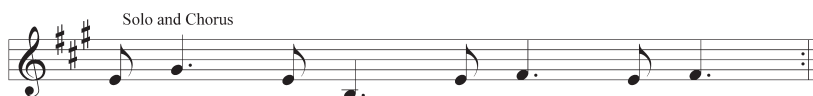


Figure 6.

The steady THUMP-thump drumming continues at a faster speed in this last refrain but seems almost disengaged from the singing since it is not exactly aligned with the rhythm of the voices.

In the final battle scene the drums outline a repetitive, four-beat "THUMP-thump-thump" pattern (the first THUMP receives two beats). The singing is barely audible, as the drumming takes precedence in this scene. This drumming pattern not only echoes a similar rhythm dominant in the American-composed main title music "Voodoo Dance," but is also reminiscent of the drumming that had already become a part of Hollywood's musical vocabulary in Western movies to signify the danger associated with Native Americans—a motif with which North American audiences would have been familiar at that time. During the drumming sequence, warriors are also pictured in trees (together with some drummers) blowing long horns that imitate the sound of lions. Jane, who describes the warriors as "the-men-who-eat-lions," explains that these horns are meant to attract the lions to come and kill the Europeans and their party.

The African drumming in these two scenes is used primarily as a leitmotif associated with the savagery of violent warfare and with what the European characters call *juju*, a term they use to refer to "superstitious" African beliefs that invoke fear and terror in the Africans. The drumming is also associated with chaos, confusion, and the savagery of eating lions

and killing humans. To North American ears the drum patterns may sound uncomplicated, reinforcing the simple qualities associated with savagery. For Harry and Martin the unknown and supernatural elements connected with drumming are perceived as both threatening to their domination of the African landscape and as a frustrating hindrance to their pursuit of ivory treasure. At the same time, they relegate the elements of African singing and drumming to that realm of savagery that they desire to bring under submission. In an endeavor to dispel “savage superstitions” and to assert their authority over the Africans and their savage environment, Martin and Harry use their rifles to kill or attempt to kill whoever gets in their way, including Tarzan. In the end, however, it is the jungle and its inhabitants that overpower and kill them.

When writing about Ernest Hemmingway’s narratives on the sport of trophy hunting in Kenya, Thomas Strychacz associates horns and rifles with phallic power that in turn represents the “toughness and prowess of the inner man:”

The hunt for trophies forces the lone white male to venture into the wilderness in order to bring back tokens of his power, metonymically incarnated in those huge phallic horns. (Strychacz 1993:38–39)

Apart from the fact that they are hunting ivory in order to amass great wealth, Martin and Harry are also carrying out their mission within a context of sexual tension between each of them and Jane. Pursuing ivory and Jane with equal vigor, it is easy to see how the treasure of Jane’s love and the ivory treasure buried deep within the savage African jungle become interlocked in their minds as one feminine entity, an entity they desire to conquer and dominate. As will be illustrated in the following section, Martin, who has been portrayed as a womanizer right from the beginning of the film, represents the male libido in his lust for Jane and for ivory. His linkage of “savage,” a term he normally associates with undesirable qualities, to the sexual sparks that fly between him and Jane becomes another telling indication of his ambivalence toward the notion and of the desire that fires his yearning for ivory.

The Element of Dancing

Both African dancing and European dancing as they are portrayed in the film present an interesting study in contrast when discussed together. African dance is depicted in the scene at the beginning of the film when Martin enters Harry’s room to take a bath. In the distance through a window in Harry’s quarters Africans can be seen singing and dancing, although for most of the scene Martin’s body obscures the audience’s view of the performance. African men with long feathers on their headpieces are seen dancing energetically while running at a moderate speed in a clockwise direc-

tion around a circle, hopping on two feet after every fourth step. Plainly dressed women are barely visible moving counter clockwise within the men's circle. Occasionally the dancers turn and face each other, vigorously moving their shoulders and torsos backwards and forwards as they move into the center of the circle and back again. Even though the rhythms of the singing and drumming on the sound track do not seem to be coordinated with the visual depiction of the dance movements, various elements in both the visual footage and the sound track suggest that they might be outtakes from the *Trader Horn* expedition. Dancing clockwise in a circle seems uncharacteristic of African dancing that is generally understood to move counter clockwise. Yet the women's counter clockwise movement, the men's long feathers (possibly ostrich), and the dancers' style of intricate and rhythmical shoulder and torso movement are evocative of some types of African ceremonial clothing and dance. Similarly, the way in which the singing is rhythmically overlapped with the polyrhythmic drumming together with its call-and-response format is also reflective of some expressions of African singing and drumming. In this sequence a short musical phrase is repeated over and over. The song is sung antiphonally at a quick tempo. The soloist lines out a call that is barely audible and the singers respond with variations of a basic chorus. Two variations of the choral response are illustrated in figure 7.

More than one drum undergirds the melody playing a complementary polyrhythmic accompaniment. This dancing, singing, and drumming con-



Figure 7.

tinues throughout the entire scene, although it is almost inaudible during certain parts of the dialogue.

As the scene unfolds, Martin walks over to the window and sees the dancers commenting, "Well, well . . . ha . . . ha . . . fresh from the Folies-Bergère, eh?" Harry explains to him that the Africans are performing "a ceremonial dance. Something to do with fertility." Martin smirks and asks, "Personal or agricultural?" to which Harry laughs and replies, "Both, I think. They'll be heading back country tomorrow."

The Folies-Bergère was a French cabaret fashionable in Paris in the 1920s. African-American performers such as Josephine Baker were popular entertainers among the French upper class. Baker's "Dance of the Savages," which she performed wearing only a handful of pink feathers, had already

made her famous at another cabaret before she joined the Folies-Begère. Martin's linkage of African dancing with the Folies-Begère places it in the realm of exotic spectacle performed for the pure entertainment of those belonging to the highest level of civility. Placing himself above the dancing in the realm of the civilized, he can look down on it and trivialize it as savage caricature.

The connection Harry and Martin make here between African dancing and fertility rituals also eroticizes the dancing by associating it with the sexual dimensions of the world of savages. Against this backdrop of the sexualized dancing and singing of the savage, as Martin takes a bath, he and Harry discuss Jane's peculiar relationship with the "glorified native ape-man" and talk about their notions of civility and their plan to lure her back to civilization. With the savage dancing providing a stark contrast to their discussion of Jane's choice to live in this harsh environment, their conversation centers on their confusion as to why she would want to reside in this strange world with Africa's version of the Folies-Bergère, when she could attend the real Folies-Bergère back in Europe among the cream of civilized society.

European dancing is depicted during the scene in which Harry and Martin attempt to persuade Jane to return to Europe. Martin sets up a gramophone to play some popular dance music of the time. Both Tarzan and Harry have departed temporarily to attend to other business, leaving Jane and Martin alone. As the music begins, the Africans who had been singing in the background gather around the gramophone. Martin shoos them away. From inside the tent where she is changing, Jane inquires about the commotion. Martin replies that it is the "Folies boys. Curious about the music." Jane emerges wearing one of the Paris evening gowns they brought for her. After commenting on her beauty, Martin takes her hand and kisses it, saying, "I believe I have this dance, Lady Jane." They jokingly mimic upper-class social graces as they move to the music. In their conversation they fantasize that they are attending an aristocratic British social event. Suddenly Martin looks intensely at Jane and remarks, "You know you're a fascinating little savage," then forcefully kisses her. She in part reciprocates and then pulls away, taken aback by the encounter. After they apologize to each other, Jane asserts that they should forget about their indiscretion as long as Martin remembers that the only one man for her is Tarzan. Just then Tarzan leaps from a tree near the gramophone and creeps stealthily forward, drawing his knife. At first it appears that he is coming toward Jane and Martin, and the look in their eyes reveals that they are not sure if he saw what just took place. Then it is apparent that he is creeping towards the gramophone. He bends over the machine listening, trying to discover the source of its sound. He tries touching the spinning record. Jane comes over to him and says, "There's nothing in there, Tarzan. That's music." "Music?" Tarzan questions. Jane explains, "Music like the natives make on their tom toms. This is a little bit more civilized." She demonstrates how the gramophone works by lifting the arm and stopping the sound.

Tarzan imitates her. Harry returns and is taken by Jane's appearance, "Jane, you'll be the talk of the town." Jane, pleased and giggling, says: "It's thrilling, isn't it." Martin, looking intensely at Jane, comments, "Music still has charms to soothe the savage . . . but I know a greater fascination." Jane, embarrassed by Martin's reference to their encounter, tries to diffuse the attention he is paying her by making a remark that assigns different meaning to his aside, "Yes, the jungle does grow on one doesn't it?" Martin, still staring at her and determined to dwell on their transgression, replies, "Only very lately on me." Harry, oblivious to the double entendre, cautions Martin, "Don't forget, Martin. There are dangers in the jungle too." Martin nonchalantly asserts, "Adds to the fascination." Before Harry has a chance to dance with Jane, Tarzan, showing disinterest in their conversation and antics, persuades her to retire with him to their treetop abode.

By calling the curious porters "Folies boys," Martin alludes to the scene described previously in which he links African dance to the Folies-Bergère. Perhaps because his mind is focused on the anticipation of dancing with Jane, he is reminded of the African counterpart to this European fertility dance that is about to take place. In contrast to the energetic and spirited African dancing pictured earlier, the controlled and subtle civilized dancing of Martin and Jane is then placed within the framework of a European mating ritual of the civilized variety. Referencing upper-class social graces as they dance to enjoyable music from their own culture maintains the refined quality of the ritual until Martin's ambivalence rises to the surface and his "savage" impulses get the better of him. His forced kiss with Jane is the only explicit sexual interaction in the entire film. The rest is implied. Linking the notion of "savage" to his fascination with Jane in the context of a kiss highlights once more Martin's association of savageness with free sexual expression. The gramophone, that ubiquitous representative of refined civilization, supplies a continuous stream of European dance music to dominate the musical soundscape. It thus provides the thread that maintains their waning connection to the expected behavior within the civilized mating ritual. It is not until Tarzan appears that they are pulled from their reverie. Jane's explanation to Tarzan of the European music clearly places it in the category of civilized expression over and above the base expression of African singing that had been taking place just moments earlier. When Martin associates European music with the power to "soothe the savage" he sexualizes once more the notion of savagery, insinuating perhaps that the civilized music helped to keep his own sexual impulses under control. His reference to knowing a "greater fascination," which implies his total infatuation with Jane, causes her to make a diversionary remark that has the effect of linking Martin's passion for her to the feminine embodiment of Africa. When she comments that the "jungle does grow on one," and he admits that it had only recently captured his heart, he is tying Jane and Africa together into one feminine entity. Harry's innocent remark warning Martin of the dangers of the jungle simply fuels Martin's excitement at the prospect of conquering both Jane and Africa. He

has been captivated by Jane and by the jungle's promise of sexual freedom and unclaimed treasure, so for him, the potential dangers of attempting to dominate both of them simply add to the thrill.

Conclusion

Tarzan and His Mate provides an interesting paradigm in which to explore the role of film music in bringing to light the sexual dimensions of the notions of "savage" and "civilized" as they were constructed by Hollywood in one specific film during the 1930s. As a product reflective of the stereotypes of Africa that prevailed during that time period, the concepts that emerged from this particular representation still have the potential to play a significant role in shaping North American public opinion about the association of "savagery" with Africans and the African continent, and the concomitant affiliation of "civility" with the inhabitants and lands of North America and Europe.

Throughout the film, music provides a means of bringing the notions of savage and civilized into confrontation, accentuating one or the other depending on which term one of the European characters is struggling to define. European music imitating African music prepares the audience for its African journey by creating a mood of danger and chaotic adventure at the beginning of the film. In one of the film's most prominent scenes, European dance music provides the setting for the scene of Jane's seduction by Martin and Harry, bringing their notions of savage and civilized behavior face to face. At the film's conclusion, European music carries the audience away on a note of reassurance that true love like that shared between Tarzan and Jane can conquer all obstacles despite a hostile environment, the threat of social barriers and pressures, infidelity, or death.

The African music that surfaces at strategic points in the film provides an exotic backdrop upon which Jane, Martin, and Harry piece together their perceptions of savagery and civility. For them, African peoples and animals blend together with African singing, drumming, and dancing into a homogeneous representation of raw African savagery that encompasses blackness, innocuous nakedness, caricature, sexual ritual, superstition, self-mutilation, and barbaric violence. The colonized Africans like Saidi and the porters represent to them a partially tamed version of all of these qualities grouped under the "syndrome of savagery." The African landscape, on the other hand, is transformed for Martin, and to a certain extent for Harry, into the feminine embodiment of an interior he must penetrate in order to possess its riches.

As the European characters carve out their definitions of savagery against themselves as the prototype of civility, Tarzan becomes an anomaly to them. Tarzan's upbringing and jungle environment link him to their notions of the savage but his whiteness connects him to their own civilized heritage. It is in his relationship to the African landscape that Tarzan's

connections to civility and savagery are more clearly articulated. Tarzan maintains a tie to civility by his dominion over the animals and the terrain of his savage environment, as well as by his lack of interaction with African people. He lives in the trees and has therefore symbolically risen above the savage earth and peoples beneath him. As Kenneth Cameron writes:

Tarzan's domain is in the air: the African earth, to which he sometimes descends, is a lower world inhabited by hostile animals and plants and black Africans . . . Swimming and swinging in the treetops both suggest a liberation from gravity and from earth. (1994:44)

Likewise Jane presents another anomaly to a cut and dried distinction between savagery and civility. Her upbringing and whiteness connect her to civility but her relationship with Tarzan and her revealing clothing, yodeling call, and liberated sexual behavior connect her to notions of savagery. Barbara Creed asserts that Jane's foray into the jungle is a symbolic return to the era of the "pre-feminine," and the era of the "tomboy." She explains that the term "tomboy," which currently means a girl who "romps" and "tumbles" like a boy, originally meant "harlot," the implied meaning being a woman who "romped like a boy" in terms of playing the active sexual role. Presumably social mores dictated that a "proper" wife would not be allowed to express sexual behavior in that manner, which is why harlots were hired to do so. The jungle environment requires Jane to behave like a tomboy in order to survive. She must "unlearn her feminine socialization: abandon her dresses, make-up, proper manners and lady-like ways" (1987:1). In doing so, Jane's active sexual role in her relationship with Tarzan arouses in Martin that ubiquitous ambivalence towards the notion of "savage," which gives rise to his admiration for the "abandon of the savage."

At the time of the film's release, the relationship between Jane and Tarzan, seen as combining aspects of the civilized and the savage, inspired one American review that highlighted its sexuality. *Time* magazine called the film a "wild, disgraceful, highly entertaining orgy of comic, sensual and sadistic nonsense" describing the jungle couple as "living together in natural frivolity, ignoring the precepts of Tsar Hays and obeying no civilized conventions except, perhaps, those of birth control . . ." (quoted in Mergetel n.d. (b):6). Some contemporary English language reviews of the film also focus on its sexual overtones. The film is described as having a "sexiness" which communicates "the joy of making jungle whoopee" (Zacharek 1997:5). Others proclaim, "What chemistry, what romance, what implicit torrid sexuality!" and at the same time liken the relationship of Tarzan and Jane to that of the biblical Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Traugott 1998:1; see also Creed 1987:4).

The sexual lens through which the relationship between Tarzan and Jane is viewed fixes its gaze on the African landscape as well. Critics of

Western colonial expansion assert that the colonial enterprise rendered the colonized land a female, maintaining that for the colonialist this projection of female sexuality to the land indirectly justifies the act of domination. As a result, Western expansion becomes connected to issues of sexuality (Shohat 1993:62). Carrying this idea further, others argue that if explorers to Africa are “manly” in their penetration of the closed spaces at the heart of the Dark Continent, then what they explore must be female (Torgovnick n.d.:15). This feminization of the African continent is evident at the end of the film *Trader Horn* (1931) when the protagonist watches the woman he loves sail away with a younger man. In his resignation to stay behind in Africa he comforts himself with the thought that “Africa doesn’t age like a woman.” Likewise, mirroring Tarzan’s sexual liaison with Jane, Martin and Harry become tied to the African landscape in the same manner through their desire to enter, conquer, and dominate it in search of ivory.

Presumably, modern audiences would disparage the use of the terms “savage” and “civilized” to differentiate between themselves and African lands and peoples. Some may consider the Tarzan films together with their music too irrelevant, antiquated, and innocuous to have significant impact on fashioning present-day images of Africa for North American and European audiences. The prevalence of contemporary Hollywood film renditions of the Tarzan story, Tarzan Web sites, fan clubs, video rereleases, and contemporary reviews and articles about Tarzan movies seem to indicate otherwise. This paper proposes that one should not underestimate the impact of early films such as *Tarzan and His Mate* in shaping views of Africa and its people in the minds of the North American and European general public. For some non-Africans, the film is part of that genre of movies that created their first cinematic impressions of Africa, its music and its peoples, and that likewise had a role in shaping their childhood fantasies of adventure and conquest. For other non-Africans, viewing *Tarzan and His Mate* from an historical advantage allows alternative readings to the film’s portrayal of the sexual dimensions of the notions of savagery and civility as they pertain to Africa. Rather than confining these notions to the African realm, exploring how they were ironically internalized within the European characters invites contemporary individuals to question the degree to which these same concepts and images might possibly exist within themselves and might subsequently be projected onto their own understanding of all things African. Perhaps it is therefore safe to say that concepts like “savage” and “civilized” still exist today and that they are simply disguised behind different terminology. The misconstrued images of Africa that continue to be perpetrated by some contemporary Hollywood films together with their music testify to the lack of progress that has been made in the transformation of these notions over the last seventy years. The fact that in some films, focus is placed on European characters who represent the upper class and who often have a deeper affection for and closer relationship to the African landscape and its animals than to African peoples—*Born Free* (1966), *Greystoke* (1984), *Out of Africa* (1985),

and *I Dreamed of Africa* (2000)—is one way in which various modern films have submerged and homogenized the characters and individual personalities of African peoples. In like manner, some other Hollywood films generate questionable notions of Africa through animated characters and actors dressed in animal costumes rather than through individual African people—*The Lion King* (1994), *George of the Jungle* (1997) Disney's *The Legend of Tarzan* (2001)—frequently using music as a potent tool for communicating these notions. The challenge then for contemporary filmmakers in the twenty-first century is to counter the dominant Hollywood practice of depicting Africa and Africans as exotic, savage, and primitive and to utilize the powerful resources of film music and its complementary components to define and shape notions about Africa in the way that Africans themselves perceive them.

NOTES

1. This description is found on the box cover of the 1991 video released by MGM/UA Home Video and Turner Entertainment.
2. Although it may be argued that the Greeks, Romans, and Chinese, among others, espoused notions of themselves as "civil" and those they set out to conquer as "savage" or "barbarian," for the purposes of this article I will restrict my discussion to these notions as they pertain to the interaction of Europeans and Africans.
3. In two separate scenes Jane is shown waking up in their treetop abode with Tarzan lying close by her. In both scenes she is not wearing clothes and is only covered by an animal skin. In the first scene their "dialogue" focuses on them proclaiming their love for each other and Jane reminding Tarzan that she is his "wife."
4. *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., s.v. "tritone."
5. Jane's nude body is actually that of Olympic swimmer Josephine Kim, who was the body double for Maureen O'Sullivan (Zacharek 1997:6).
6. Some of the songs illustrated in figures 1 through 7 have been transcribed using the exact pitches that are sung in the film. To facilitate reading, others have been transcribed using different pitches. In the latter illustrations the actual pitch of the first note is indicated within parentheses.
7. For a discussion of Saidi's behavior, see the section on "The Element of Race."

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