

narrative with shots of rioters expressing their impatience with an archaic monarchical system.

Lasri's distinct visual signature is evident in the frantic handheld camera shots that move with Majhoul, participating in his quest to recover his life. Lasri's camera is the camera of the revolution, documenting the urgency of expression and freedom of speech. Yet he offers no easy answers. The film ends as Majhoul is presented on TV3 as a political prisoner whose testimony will prove that Morocco has entered a reconciliation phase. But the screen goes black before he can say his name, implying that he is only one of many hundreds who experienced a similar fate, or worse. *They Are the Dogs*, ultimately, is an important contribution to the growing number of films and novels depicting the human rights abuses suffered by so many during the Years of Lead.

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DOCUMENTARIES

Peter Biella, director. *The Chairman and the Lions*. 2012. 46 minutes. Maa and Swahili, with English subtitles. Tanzania. Documentary Educational Resources. \$19.95.

"Men don't know much about lions anymore or how to kill them," laments a Maasai elder in *The Chairman and the Lions*. The documentary, directed by Peter Biella, an anthropology professor at San Francisco State University, finds inspiration in the research of its producer, Kelly Askew, a fellow anthropology professor at the University of Michigan. It follows the trajectory of Askew's article "Of Land and Legitimacy: A Tale of Two Lawsuits" (co-authored with Faustin Maganga and Rie Odgaard; *Africa* 83 [1], 2013), which examines poverty, property rights, and land conflicts in the Lesoit village. It also reflects, to a lesser extent, Askew and Odgaard's "The Lions of Lesoit: Shifting Frames of Parakyo Maasai Indigeneity" (in *The Politics of Identity: Emerging Indigeneity*, edited by Michelle Harris, Martin Nakata, and Bronwyn Carlson, UTS ePress, 2013), an exploration of song and ritual among the Maasai. *The Chairman and the Lions* has already received numerous accolades, most notably the 2013 Jury Award at the Zanzibar International Film Festival and the 2013 First Prize at the ETNO Film Festival for Ethnographic and Anthropological Film, and it was screened at a number of other prestigious film festivals.

Framed by the training of young Maasai warriors in the technique of lion hunting, the film gives voice to Frank Kaipai Ikoyo, who, at thirty-three, is the chairman of the Tanzanian village of Lesoit. He was elected at the unusually young age of twenty-six, due to his completion of primary school;

however, his nuanced understanding of the nation-state, paired with his appreciation for community processes, has made him successful in combating both the real and figurative lions that plague his people, including land grabbers, “bush” lawyers, unemployment, outmigration, and poverty. Within the confines of the film, Ikoyo faces land disputes over village property and an exploitative legal contract, along with the arduous job of persuading mothers to send their daughters to school.

Reflecting these subnarratives, *The Chairman and the Lions* is most successful in its deconstruction of the dichotomy between traditionalism and modernism. Indeed, the film convincingly demonstrates that these factors coexist in compelling and often contradictory ways. For instance, Ikoyo’s voice-over contextualizes the Maasai as a migrant people, and their permanent housing as a new development enforced by the national government. As encroaching farmers attempt to steal their land, however, the ensuing lawsuit calls into question the validity of Lesoit as a village. No longer just an argument about land, but now also a debate about legitimacy, Ikoyo responds to a suspected spy at the council meeting by first interrogating him, and then suing him for attendance without an invitation.

In a subsequent scene Ikoyo discusses the village’s decision to grant permission to an outside party to harvest their forest. In the process of carrying out his task, the contractor finds that some of the wood is substandard and pays Lesoit a sum that is decidedly smaller than what was initially promised. The chairman terminates the contract, but upon being sued by the contractor he considers an alternative proposal. However, he challenges one component of the new contract, which would involve the replacement of inferior trees with healthy ones. In speaking of a nearby tree he inquires, “What’s it worth? . . . And the shade it provides?”

While striking an appropriate balance between Ikoyo’s narration and relevant action sequences, *The Chairman and the Lions* demonstrates visible difficulty navigating the precarious space between the performative and the practical. Notably, Ikoyo and a village councilman, Juma Mriga, both served as producers for the film, a responsibility that inevitably forced them to be conscious of the direction of the narrative. This is best illustrated in a scene in which a lone Ikoyo gestures to Juma, who is standing outside the camera frame, and asks him to leave: “No, Juma. What you’re wearing isn’t good. . . . We don’t want it. You’ll ruin the film.” Juma appears, nonetheless, sporting a Manchester United blanket draped over his shoulders in customary fashion, and both men continue to look at the camera—or more appropriately, at those behind the camera—for approval. This is not the only instance in which a hyper-awareness of the camera distracts from the content of the scene. When Ikoyo and his council interrogate the suspected spy, general confusion persists as to where the accused should be situated, how he should be questioned, and ultimately, whom this spectacle is intended to benefit—the common good of the village or the narrative of the film.

Nevertheless, just as a postscript reveals that the main problems were resolved in a positive manner for the people of Lesoit, *The Chairman and*

the Lions demonstrates that though the Maasai may face what Ikoyo refers to as “different lions,” the techniques used to address them have persisted, and more aptly, their culture is believed to have sustained them to the present day.

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Julia Ivanova, director. *Family Portrait in Black and White*. 2011. 85 minutes. In Ukrainian and English, with English subtitles. Canada. Interfilm Productions. \$24.99.

In rural Ukraine, Olga NENYA is a foster mother to twenty orphans, among them sixteen biracial children who were abandoned by their Caucasian mothers because they represented unacceptable relations with African students in a society where 99 percent of the population (according to the 2001 Census) is white. Left in orphanages, these mixed race kids would likely have remained unadopted. The film’s opening features local neo-Nazis declaring that white people produce “imbeciles” when they mix with “sub-humans” (namely, anybody who is not white) and bragging that the police let them beat up black people with impunity. One African student, describing the high level of racism to which Africans are subjected, says, “Living in Ukraine as an African is quite difficult. [Skinheads] want to harass you, anytime they see you. They see us as people who shouldn’t be here.”

Hence, this is certainly not the ideal environment for these unwanted children. Yet because Ukraine is the only place they can call home, they simply do not have a choice. They live in a village, where their neighbors do not perceive them as “100 percent Ukrainians,” though these orphans can only think of themselves as Ukrainians. Sometimes they even adopt the local racist views on Africa and Africans, as is the case with Sashka, aged fourteen. He is certainly the most patriotic one in the family. He willingly tells how much he loves his homeland, and how much he wants to live there. He even turns out to be just as prejudiced as ethnic Ukrainians, especially against Arabs and Africans. He refuses to talk to blacks on the streets, declaring, “What would I have in common with those niggers! Those foreigners come in [to our country] to sleep with our Ukrainian chicks!” Ironically, a couple of years later even Sashka admits that he is aware of the racism and is getting tired of it. He knows that people feel that he does not belong there, which is why he hopes to leave Ukraine when he turns eighteen.

With Olga, too, it seems that the children have no choice, as she is the only one who volunteered to care for them. She took them in when they were just young toddlers, and raised them as the only mother the majority of them would ever know. Julia Ivanova followed this atypical family over the course of three years and offers a very interesting portrait of their