



Gut Response

Perhaps I need to discuss my considerable reservations about sharing my 'gut response' piece to [this tweet](#).

First - and biggest issue - is that I am white woman living in the UK. The Black Feminists I follow are already sick to the back teeth of white people 'analysing' their experiences when they are more than competent to do this themselves. Their analysis would be much more powerful than anything my own gut is likely to contribute because they understand this stuff from the inside and have to live it every day. It's their voices that need to be heard, not mine, particularly and especially since the offending tweet was posted the day after [this](#).

Certainly, Nick Kristof's tweet raises the spectre of the 'White Saviour in Africa' yet again. I didn't know who this man was, posting a photograph of a 13-year old rape victim confronting the police in Kenya. I'd never heard of him. My immediate reaction concerned the use of her photograph (never mind if it was a 'back of the head' shot) which meant the girl can be identified. Where are the concerns for her protection? She's already been victimised by a rich man and now she is being used as a means to build another rich white man's journalistic reputation as "the reporter who's done more than any other to change the world".

Even if Kenyan culture (of which I know absolutely nothing) regards a 13 year old rape victim as fully competent to give her consent to publicity in such circumstances, I doubt she could truly understand that her photograph would then be tweeted to the 1.5 MILLION followers of this particular White Saviour. Nevertheless, as a white woman, my assumptions could be underestimating her - I can't know - but if I don't know, I can be absolutely certain Nick Kristof doesn't know either. Regardless of how important affluent New York white culture might think this man is, his 'knowledge' can only ever be superficial and second hand. He can have no conception of the potential and very serious consequences his unconsidered actions might have for the girl herself or her family because he's never had to live it. He, of course, will have moved on to his next big 'story' by those consequences arrive.

If nothing else, this brings home to me the validity of the arguments made by Black feminists about the white colonization of African women's experience and it leaves me feeling ashamed. The thoughtless, self-promoting behaviour of both Ensler and Kristof can be far better deconstructed by those who understand this at far greater depth than I ever could and therefore, they have considerably more to offer our collective understanding than anything I could write.

All I do know is how I feel about a white male "Indiana Jones of our generation of journalists" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicholas_D._Kristof tweeting and illustrating his 'stories' by using 13 year old rape victims in this way.

It's just plain wrong.