

**Authors**

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## Africa beyond the Western Imagination

*Actual Africans would live in villages designed by economist Jeffrey Sachs.*

*Those villagers would wear wholesome hand-made ethnic clothing, dance to wholesome ethnic music and during the day they would grow food communally and engage in things called income-generating activities.*

*For our own protection, American peacekeepers and Nato planes would surround the villages - making hearts and minds happy and safe.*



That and more is in Binyavanga Wainaina's latest piece on how the Western world thinks about Africa and the inhabitants of that continent. The perspective is part satire, part indictment of Western-centric worldviews and part proclamation of African agency in these changing times. Readers will recognize more than a shade of Wainaina's classic How to Write About Africa essay in Granta.

Research assistants are encouraged to read the piece in its entirety; surely we can all take a break from cleaning data on the "income-generating activities" sections of our survey.

*Picture from the BBC article with the caption: "Should Madonna be Africa's president?"*  
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