Other Forms of Conquest: A Discussion of Houseboy, Mission to Kala and Waiting for the Rain

By

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Research Article

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ABSTRACT

The unfolding discussion of Houseboy and Mission to Kala supposes that these texts lay bare the sufferings of the colonised under the French whilst Waiting for the Rain exposes the effects of British colonialism on the colonised. This supposition stems from the notion that colonialism employs two forces which are, firstly, the naked force where the colonised is bottled into submission. He is forced to accept the powers of the coloniser through threats and the use of power. These are painful ways of taming the colonised into submission. The other way is that of using elaborate (mental) apparatus meant to imprison the mind such as education, religion and many other policies that will cause the colonised to be part of the society (mental bondage). In other words, this force leads the colonised to believe that everything done by white people is always good. By using terror to quell any revolutionary uprising, the colonisers reinforce fear and submission. Therefore, this study seeks to find out how the three selected texts fictionalise this colonial conquest.

Keywords: Colonial conquest, submission, subjugation, mental and physical bondage, colonial subject, Houseboy, Mission to Kala and Waiting for the Rain.

INTRODUCTION

To get a good grasp of the issues under discussion it seems adequate to define colonialism and the colonisation process. The process of colonisation involves one nation or territory taking control of another nation or territory with force or by acquisition. Colonialism, which Albert Memmi (1965, 65) correctly describes as "one variety of fascism" is based on economic privilege, despite suggestions of more noble goals of religious conversion or civilisation. Its key tools are racism and terror. Racism is ingrained in every colonial institution and establishes the "sub-humanity" of the colonised, fostering poor self-concepts in the colonised as well.

The process of colonisation has been dealt with in depth by the revolutionary Frantz Fanon in two of his books Black Skin White Masks (1986 [1967]) and The Wretched of the Earth (1982 [1967]). In Black Skin White Masks, Fanon investigates the extreme alienation of the colonial subject. He clearly states that principally colonialists' subjugation and violence have caused this alienation. He says of alienation that results from the theories of colonisation:

No one would dream of doubting that its major artery is fed from the heart of those various theories that have tried to prove that the Negro is a stage in the slow evolution of monkey into man. Here is objective evidence that expresses it (p.17)

These various theories, Fanon (1986, 180) says, are racist and are put daily into practice by the white man. To paraphrase, the black man is automatically classified, imprisoned, primitivised and decivilized putting the subject in a frame, fixing him as the picture frame does to a picture (Fanon 1986, 32). The fixing results in the dilemma it poses on the black man: 'turn white or disappear' (p. 100). Therefore, the black man is black in relation to the white man (p. 110) resulting in his double consciousness as is highlighted by W.E.B Dubois in The Souls of Black Folk (1989 1903, 5) "It is a peculiar sensation this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of the other's (p. 5).

This alienation ultimately splits him (the colonised) - the reason why I see him as a fragment or as being fragmented with an inferiority complex. He begins to see the mother country's cultural (p. 18) standards as the new (though still alien) basis of seeing. According to Memmi (1965), the coloniser's rewriting of history to his glorification removes the colonised from history. The colonised child is taught not his history, but the unknown settings of the coloniser's history. The colonised become "divorced from history". Thus, the need for the black man to embark on a decolonising process and Fanon (1986) rightly suggests the ways to do so which the texts
under discussion might have considered. *Black Skin White Masks* (1986,30) is, however, not all about its author being an 'exterminating angel' but helps the black man to free himself from the arsenal of complexes that has been developed by the colonial environment.

The *Wretched of the Earth* highlights and questions colonial domination which begets cultural problems and its resultant ambiguities (p. 174). These culminate in violence and the pitfalls of national consciousness (p. 119-165). The colonized is degraded, brutalized and his dignity denied as he sees or is denied entry into the coloniser's world of luxury while he wallows in extreme poverty, he is excluded and peripheralized. The good thing about Fanon as he argues in *The Wretched of the Earth* is that he advocates that the colonized must seek to free himself. Thus, he urges the colonized to question his being peripheralized 'by absolute violence (p. 29). Only violence indicates Fanon (1986, 29), is able to free 'the native from his inferiority, his despair and inaction,' it makes him fearless and restore his self-respect.

Therefore, it is evident from the above that the colonised is fragmented. He is stripped of any sense of direction and identity as he is alienated. He is an object as he is at the mercy of the coloniser. In other words, he is pacified by being colonized as is suggested by the District Commissioner in Achebe’s (1985,148) *Things Fall Apart* who is going to write a book entitled "The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger". In line with this, the three texts under discussion’s key theme(s), therefore, are that of the dilemma that the colonized black man found himself heavy to contain, the dilemma of being a colonial object under colonialism.

Having been paralysed and crippled by colonialism, the black man is left to his own means. Colonialism harrowingly failed to locate the place for the black man. On one hand, one is told to scorn his 'primitive', 'inferior' African way that they should strive 'to be white' yet on another hand, the colonizer fails to recognise or accept the uprooted man. Hence the colonized is marooned and alienated as is presented in *Wide Sargasso Sea* where V.S Naipaul (1989, 29) remarks that an order has collapsed and some people are 'marooned'... a world that appeared simple is now to be diseased and is no longer habitable (Naipaul, ‘Dog's Chance’ p29). Thus, this becomes the major preoccupation of three texts in discussion, a presentation of a deracinated colonised with no sense of direction and identity.

**Houseboy** and *Mission to Kala* lay bare the sufferings of the colonised under the French whilst

*Waiting for the Rain* exposes the effects of British colonialism on the colonised. The French colonial policy adopted what is known as the French assimilation policy while the British mainly practiced indirect rule. That is where they would build upon existing structures (bureaucratic) to exert their rule, that is, through chiefs, village heads and kraal heads. Assimilation involves those who are colonised being forced to conform to the cultures and traditions of the colonizers, Gauri Viswanathan in his essay "Curing Favour: The Politics of British Education and Cultural Policy in India 1883 - 1854" in the *Oxford Literacy Review* (p. 85-104) points out that "cultural assimilation is... the most effective form of political action". She continues with the argument that "cultural domination works by consent and often precedes conquest by force". Paulo Freire (2012/ 1970) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* seconds this view. According to Freire (2012/ 1970), cultural invasion, which serves the ends of conquest and the preservation of oppression, always involves a parochial view of reality, a static perception of the world and the imposition of one world view upon another.

It implies the 'superiority' of the invader and the inferiority of those who are invaded, as well as the imposition of values by the former, who possess the latter and are afraid of losing them (p. 129). In cultural invasion it is essential that those who are invaded come to see their reality with the outlook of the invaders rather than their own: for the more they mimic the invaders, the more stable the position of the latter becomes. For cultural invasion to succeed, it is essential that the invaded become convinced of their intrinsic inferiority (p. 122).

Therefore, colonizing governments realized that they gain strength not necessarily through physical control. Thus, mental control is implemented through a central intellectual location, the school system. This school system is being interrogated by the three texts in discussion. Before delving into the texts, themselves, it is of paramount importance to take a glance at what is colonial education, its impacts and implications.

Kelly and Altbach (1984, 1-5) states that "colonial schools sought to extend foreign domination and economic exploitation of the colony". Walter Rodney (1981, 263) agrees with this view of the role education played in producing Africans to serve the colonial system as it creates black elite to succeed it and perpetuate its political and economic interests. He says:

Education is crucial in any type of society for the preservation of the lives of its members and the maintenance of the social structure... The most crucial aspect of pre-colonial African education was its relevance to Africans in sharp contrast with that which was later introduced (that is, under colonialism...) [The main purpose of the colonial school system was to train Africans to participate in the domination and exploitation of the continent as a whole.... Colonial education was education for subordination, exploitation and the creation of mental confusion and the development of underdevelopment (p.263).
What is apparent from the above and in colonial education as a whole, is that, the process is an attempt to strip the colonised people away from their indigenous learning structures and draw them towards the structures of the colonizers.

The ultimate goal of the colonial education might be deduced from the following statement by Macaulay Thomas B. (2007, 11) in “Minute on Indian Education”:

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.

This is as far as colonialism through the school system, lacks respect for the existing systems of the colonized and sees education as important in facilitating the assimilation process. The impact of such a system can be realized in the colonized's lack of identity and a limited sense of their past-indigenous history and customs once practiced and observed slowly slip away. The colonized became hybrids of two vastly different cultural systems. Thus, Ngugi (1981, 17) asserts that the process "annihilates a people's belief in their names, their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves."

It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from them, The individual's sense of self-confidence is shuttered. Ngugi (1981, 18) argues further that;

"... Education: far from giving people the confidence in their ability and capacities to overcome obstacles or to become masters of the law governing external nature as human beings tends to make them feel their inadequacies and their ability to do anything about the conditions of their lives" ("The Global Education Process" p. 18).

These elements are harmful; there is urgent need to eliminate them through decolonisation.

According to Ngugi (1981, 21) decolonisation can be achieved if people unite and cease to see their "own experiences as little islands that are not connected with their processes". (The Global Education Process). People must unite to achieve decolonisation. Education should not be a "means of mystifying knowledge and hence reality but should boost the identity of the liberated people and unite previously isolated individuals". This makes a lot of sense but one cannot be absolute about it as there are many ways people can and are adapting to tackle alienation and colonisation in general.

Education as a means of conquest in Mission to Kala

In Mission to Kala Mongo Beti, through the narrator Medza reveals the effects of colonial education on the colonized. I agree with Eustace Palmer that Medza is unreliable as a narrator. Eustace Palmer (1972) reads the novel as follows:

Mission to Kala then is neither an attack on education nor on western civilisation, rather, it is a brilliant satire directed at all those half-educated chaps who feel that because of a partial exposure to western ways they have a right to feel superior to those of their brethren who still live the tribal life.... It is Jean Marie's personal weaknesses, his condescension, arrogance and stupidity, which Mongo Beti subjects to rigorous criticism by means of his comic art.

Her view is valid in that she brings in a new reading of the novel as indeed organic education should enable one to transcend alienation. However, there is also the other view that Beti is using satire to pour scorn on colonisation and colonialism with all its attributes. These attributes include colonial education and western civilisation. Pauro Freire (2012/1970) gives a clearer picture of this situation when he talks of the limit-situation, an oppressive situation where men are reduced to things (p.75) being objects rather than subjects (p.16) who cannot name the world (p.61). Instead, they perceive their state as fated and unalterable. Therefore, the satire is not only on not so fully assimilated chaps like Medza but also on the things that made him become the fool that Palmer says he is. Thus, Mission to Kala could be read as an attack on western colonial education and civilisation and the resulting alienation and acculturation it caused the colonized man.

This attack is exposed when Beti uses Medza the narrator- hero of the text. Jean-Marie Medza is portrayed as a "silly posturing, opinionated schoolboy, with his classroom clichés and inflated sense of his own self-importance," to take Palmer's words on Medza, as that is what he is, as he is the result of a system that made or failed to make him. Medza is irresponsible, snobbish, short sighted and as deluded as ever and condescending. His alienated nature is primarily reflected in the nature of the language he uses. He is addicted to
clichés and stock phrases. When describing a girl Zambo had brought him he says:

My God, how lovely she was! Her cheekbones stood out just far enough; her nose was small and pert, her mouth proud as well as sensual. Her whole personality breathed that air of calm, detached assurance which is only to be found in those girls who know what they want and can reflect on many past occasions when they got it: or it seemed to me at the time... no country peasant; you could tell her a mile off as a real emancipated city-girl. (p. 70). I was as nervous as a partisan about to raid a strongly held enemy position. Before leaving, I swallowed a stiff dose of whisky, which burnt my throat and stomach. (Mission to Kala p. 9).

As Palmer rightly observed, Medza's style is infected with a lot of jargon from his reading of cheap fiction and his uncritical assimilation of bits and snippets from his master's lessons and conversations. Instead of Beti using Medza's clichés and stock phrases to expose the latter's essential hollowness of the mind, rather he uses them to satirise colonial education and the hollowness of colonisation. F.K Omorogie (2002) agrees when he argues that colonial education did more than corrupt the thinking and sensibility of the African, it filled him/her with abnormal complexes which de- Africanised and alienated him her from the needs of his/her environment. He continues with the argument that colonial education has thus dispossessed and put out of control of the African intellectual the necessary forces for directing the life and development of his society. Therefore, in Mission to Kala Medza's role model is French American (Picarro). He cannot make decisions in relation to the needs of his society nor have a new vision relevant to African society:

Then, to make my ideas more intelligible, I decided to illustrate them with an example. I found myself (somewhat to my surprise) telling these simple people about New York... It was child's play to describe New York, probably because my only knowledge of it derived from cinema (Mission to Kala p. 65).

In the above quotation, it is evident that colonial education taught Medza everything that is irrelevant to his African life because after this explanation he thought the people would understand him but:

I imagined that my audience would be galvanised by the picture I conjured up; but in fact: I went to all this trouble for nothing... No; the really astonishing thing; which still bothers me in retrospect, was that America left these simple-minded people stone-cold indifferent. (Mission to Kala p. 65).

This shows that people did not understand what he was saying, as the concepts he was ex amplifying as well as the examples he was giving, were alien to them. Therefore, Beti seems to be suggesting that "to expose a boy to an alien system of education is to cut him off from his roots in the tribe, to rob him of all that is good and beautiful and valuable and render him unfit, not only for tribal life but for any kind of life at all". In addition, Mission to Kala also exposed the mental subjugation of the colonized by colonialism echoing Freire's views on cultural invasion. This is evident in the text when a certain old man is persuading Medza to tell them, "What do the whites teach you?" He asks or persuade Medza:

Listen: it doesn't matter if we don't understand. Tell us all the same. For you the whites are the real people, the people who matter, because you know their language. But we can't speak French, and we never went to school. For us you rue the white man-you are the only person who can explain these mysteries to us. If you care for us at all, my son, do this thing for us. If you refuse, we've probably lost our chance of ever being able to learn the white man's wisdom. Tell us my son. (Mission to Kala p. 65).

As Freire puts it, cultural invasion involves the superiority of the invader and the inferiority of the invaded as it serves the ends of conquest and the preservation of oppression. It always involves a parochial view of reality, a static perception of a world and the imposition of one worldview upon the other. Thus, the people of Kala by confessing that the whites are the real people they imply that they are unreal therefore inferior. This feeling is because of the conditioning they suffered under colonialism. Thus, they are also fragmented as they are slowly but surely being persuaded to abandon their 'primitive' way and race for modern western civilisation. This, however, cannot be taken too far as I would also concur with the view that the Kalans are actually held up by the author as wiser and superior to Medza (Palmer 1972). Medza comes to Kala with the whole set of preconception about the people of Kala and himself. He sees and thinks of them as savages. This can be noted in his comment on the game that he sees the Kalans at, on his arrival. He is overweening, condescending and arrogant. In his view, the people of Kala are at the emotional and mental
stage of children 'six' or 'so', they are not only mentally retarded as it were; they are also technologically regressive, living in a bygone age. However, the Kalans' warmth and hospitality shock Medza. In Kala, Medza learns of the strength and warmth of personal relationships that was so conspicuously lacking in Vimili. Zambo is in good books with his father whilst Medza's father ruled his household with an iron fist and hardly communicates with his sons.

Therefore, by portraying the Kalans in this light, Beti is being more than realistic. They might seem savages to Medza who is corrupted by colonialism's education and assimilation tendencies but they are better off than Medza and the likes he represent. Although they are without their own weaknesses, they are at least in touch with their roots. However, the fragmentation and fragmentary nature of colonialism does not spare them as they are seen as keen on adopting the 'real things', the things of the white people. Here, Eustace Palmer's comments that the Kalans "are not idealised: they are very much like ordinary human beings, not the ideal" are very relevant and true. Therefore, the colonised is sent on a Journey of self-discovery having seen that this is how hollow he is. Through the structuring of the novel as picaresque, Medza the picarro, goes on a journey, where Beti uses this journey motif to foreground Mission to Kala not as a mission to recover Niam's delinquent wife, but as a mission of growth and discovery. The hero, Medza acknowledges many truths about himself, his upbringing, his education and his so-called rustic cousins. This technique is efficient in that it brings out the point that the colonised is really fragmented and has ideas about himself. Thus, he is sent on this journey of moral, emotional and psychological development to regain his sense of direction and identity.

The question that remains to be asked, however, is that, what next should he do after realising that one is alienated? For Medza, after having been bullied, exploited, duped and exposed, faced with the superiority of these rustic Kalans and fully aware of his own inadequacies, he becomes a rebel. He rebels against his background, against the educational system, which has reared him and against his father. Beti seems to suggest that rebellion is the only way out in keeping with Fanon when he advises the use of violence to restore self-dignity and respect. This is evident in Medza's fight with his father.

'Ah, the hell with my luggage,' I said to the world at large and walked to the road in a very leisurely fashion, watched by everybody, including the Kala delegation. I went off in a solemn and dignified fashion, without a single backward glance at my native village. I was leaving, it was all over. I have never returned from that day to this. A nous la liberte ', I murmured to myself (Mission to Kala p 179).

In as much as in the above quotation, Medza gains his self-confidence and was able to change his father's attitude, the sorrowful progress in his later life smacks of more confession than before. His life "turned out to be a life of endless wandering"(p.181), seeking for true purity that he will never find.

Nevertheless, Beti could be argued to be presenting rebellion as one way of trying to confront fragmentation in a bid to gain a sense of direction and identity. The agency is placed in Medza's hands, as it should be. In accordance, Freire (2012/1970, 24) also argues that, "to surmount oppression, people must first critically recognise the causes of the oppression so that through transforming action they can create a new situation". Medza attests to this when he says he is grateful for the journey to Kala as it "enabled me to discover many truths" (p.181), and:

Not at least among these was the discovery-made by contact with the country folk of Kala, those quintessential caricatures of the colonized African - that the tragedy which our nation is suffering today is that of a man left to his own devices in a world which does not belong to him, which he has not made and does not understand. It is the tragedy of man bereft of any intellectual compass, a man walking blindly through the dark in some hostile city like New York. (Mission to Kala p. 181).

However, in the above, it is clear that Medza is pouring his heart out on "the absurdity of life" (Mission to Kala p.183). Life for the colonized is so absurd that he does not and cannot find direction and make sense of it all. The only hope is that at least he has been able to recognise that there is a problem. Therefore, there could be a chance of the reinvention that Freire (2012/1970, 49) sees as enabling the "colonised to become more of a recreator than a spectator. As knowledge emerges only through invention and reinvention, the colonised is then able to reject to be objectified and be projected to the status of a thing".

**Colonial conquest in Houseboy**

In Houseboy, Ferdinand Oyono also expresses the ills of colonialism and colonisation when he lampoons the French assimilation process that stripped the African colonized of any sense of direction and identity. Thus, Toundi, the protagonist, laments "Who are we black men who are called French" (Houseboy p.1). F. K. Omoregie (2002, 23) also supports this fragmentation of the colonized when he says:
Oyono in *Houseboy* and *The Old Man and the Medal*, portrays colonialism as undermining and suppressing indigenous culture and its institutions. The alternatives colonialism provides for these are schools, stores, roads and hospitals... structures that the colonialist use to impose and consolidate their own culture on the colonized thereby altering the African culture.

This is in line with Cabral's (1980.142) view that for its own security imperial domination requires cultural oppression and the attempt at direct or indirect destruction of the essential elements of the culture of the dominated people. In the same manner, Freire (2012/1970, 129) attests that cultural invasion's imposition of values by the coloniser who possesses the colonised is afraid of losing the latter.

Clariying on the view that hospitals were used to impose and consolidate imperial culture on the colonized, Toundi confesses that:

All I knew about the hospital were the discoloured walls that had once been yellow, I glimpsed over the top of the hibiscus hedge as I went to the market. There are two places that terrify the natives ill Dangan. One is the prison and the other is the hospital. Everyone sans it "The Blackman's Grave". (*Houseboy* p. 117).

Indeed these institutions are "The Blackman's Grave" as Toundi who passed through them never lived to tell his story. It is ironic that the hospital exposed colonial domination rather than solace and healing as it should in normal circumstances. This, therefore, is in keeping with the absurdity of the colonisation process in its turning things upside down. The hospital; a place to provide and maintain life actually kills those who visit it to seek help.

Ssensalo (1984, 100) in "The Black Pseudo-Autobiographical Novel" comments that "*Houseboy* embodies another specialized form of the pseudo-autobiography: the simulated diary". It is through this diary that Ferdinand Oyono exposes the brutality of colonialism to Toundi and the colonized in general. As diaries are usually personal records not meant for the public eye and only do so posthumously, Oyono’s Toundi does not survive to recount his own story. Instead, there is a double narrative via an anonymous narrator. It is my argument therefore, that this technique is very efficient and effective as it reveals everything that the writer goes through in the hope that there is secrecy so they will not hesitate to pour their heart out, together with other appealing contributions of the autobiographical mode of writing. In his expose’, Oyono is influenced or derives his style of writing from the slave narrative. As in America where slaves were stripped of their African names and given those of their masters, Africans in Africa encountered a similar experience during the process of colonisation. As explorers renamed the continent in honour of their kings, queens and other heroes, the Africans looked on as the continent took on a European identity. Natural phenomena like rivers, mountains and lakes exchanged their African names for those dispensed by the colonizing powers.

This process of 'finding and civilizing' the continent includes the people as well as the natural resources. After being told of their 'pagan' nature, they were persuaded and sometimes threatened into an acceptance of Christianity. Colonial civilization brought with it new tags for the African, euphemistically referred to as 'Christian names'. Against such a background, names in Houseboy are significant and should be looked at closely. Toundi runs away from home and joins the French Catholic missionary school at Dangan because the colonizer told him he was inferior. There he changes his name to Joseph and is stripped of his African identity as he acquires a new identity. The pseudo-Frenchman that he becomes further splits him. In place of the manhood he would have achieved had he stayed at home and gone through the initiation ceremonies, Toundi accepts the role of a permanent child, thus, the title of the book *Houseboy*. In agreement, Ssensalo (1984, 103) also argues that the name 'Joseph serves the same function in the novel that the slave names in the slave narratives served. It symbolized the distance between Toundi and the other African workers at the Residence, the extent to which he is attached to his French masters and the fact that he has fully accepted the role assigned to him". In other words, this name alienates Toundi and reduces him to a quasi-slave status he never frees himself from, so he dies Joseph, the Commandant's boy.

Oyono also employs the theme of violence to bring out the fragmentation of the colonised by colonialism. Kofi Awoonor ( ) argues that "the French... inflicted upon their colonial subjects a senseless type of brutality that defies explanation". It is this brutality and lack of human feeling that Toundi and other colonised in Toundi’s diary are meted with. For example, when Toundi is sent with a note to take to Monsieur Moreau by Madam Decazy, he finds the latter in the process of punishing two Africans suspected of stealing from a white man (*Houseboy* p75-6). Toundi’s summary of the situation is indicative of the colonialists’ attitudes towards the people that they had supposedly come to administer justice to: "Janopoulos was laughing. M Moreau panted for breath. The prisoners had lost consciousness"(*Houseboy* p76). In as much as these three sentences demonstrate Ferdinand Oyono’s economy of language as well as the control he uses in the expression of his anger and rage, they subtly bring out his main point: "his bitter denunciation of colonial rule" (Abiola Iri)

In this view I take sides with Corti (2000) who disagrees with Kibera (1983,137) who argues that “Toundi is a strongly myopic character who will-fully cuts himself off from African history and faults Oyono for a limited satirical approach which seeks to show that no African is capable of reacting intelligently". Instead, Oyono’s articulation of the connection between oppressive colonial structures and the incidental domestic violence and
abuse is particularly remarkable. Toundi’s downfall was as a direct result of his own neurotic participation in the colonial system in line with Fanon’s remarks that "the colonised is hysterical". Toundi is so disoriented to be blamed for his demise but the system that made him. Given that the inevitably alienated world of the colonised person entails individual neurosis as well as pervasive social disorder which can best be understood with reference to the interpersonal aspects of particular situations, the critical problem posed by Houseboy would seem to inhere in what Simon Gikandi () describes as Toundi’s "inexplicable attachment to the characters responsible for his demise." However, Toundi is not to blame but the psychological abuse he suffered at the hands of his colonisers. Thus, Corti (2000) is right when she argues that, "Toundi is neither stupid nor disloyal but an individual whose judgement is impaired by the effects of traumatic abuse" (p.137). She goes even further to cite Judith Lewis Herman who clarifies the matter further by attesting that 'psychological trauma is an affliction of the powerless." The traumatized individual is one whom 'the whole apparatus for concerted, coordinated and purposeful activity" may be compromised and suggests that Toundi’s behaviour is more humanly comprehensible than it may appear at first glance. Therefore, Toundi’s many responses correspond to symptoms typically observed in patients suffering from traumatic abuse (Herman quoted in Corti 2000).

In this sense, the theme of violence and psychological abuse to the black man’s psyche that is so central to the slave narratives and other autobiographical writings is also the main topic of Oyono’s Houseboy. The novel attacks and ridicules the racial prejudice and brutality suffered by Africans at the hands of the colonialists. Of particular importance is the colonialists’ attitude that the African is not quite a human being and every attempt must be made to deprive him of his basic humanity and/or manliness. The African is always referred to in animal terms and when his humanity is conceded it is always as ‘boy’.

Instead of Houseboy being an expose' of "the folly of the African who hopes to find happiness and contentment in the material world of the European" Kibera (1983, 137), it is actually highlighting the helpless state of the African. Taking Corti’s (2000) words on Toundi, that ‘... the character resembles a rabbit helplessly immobilized by the headlights of a rapidly approaching car'. In this instance, colonialism is that which has caused paralysis in Toundi, thus, he sees his abusers as his ‘benefactors’. This tendency, Herman, quoted in Corti, said is consistent with abused children - the victim identifies with the oppressor.

The theme of greed is also used by Oyono to highlight the fragmented nature of the colonized and his persisting search for direction and identity. Oyono uses the sugar incident not so much to highlight the greediness of Toundi, but to highlight the colonialism's peripheralization of the colonized, that Fanon talks about. Palmer (1972, 106) correctly points out that "Toundi’s troubles started with his greed. The dispute between him and his father at the beginning of the novel comes about because on the eve of his initiation he runs off in pursuit of the lumps of sugar the white man throws to the Black kids, ‘like throwing corn to chickens’ (Houseboy p10). Toundi is taunted by being shown the colonizer’s world of luxury while he wallows in extreme poverty. He feels excluded and peripheralized, thus, the urge to want and enter that world. This is so because he is also told that his African world is inferior and for him to become human he has to be ‘greedy for the white man’s way of life’. In his aspirations to live as a white man he learns reading, writing, French and eventually decides to write a diary. He does not want to be inhuman thus he chooses to be white (Fanon Black Skin White Masks “The black man wants to be white”).

The irony of it all is that instead of him attaining humanity, his adoption of white things actually brings his demise. Thus, Palmer (1972, 107) correctly argues that "He [Toundi] is the embodiment of his continent's folly: a blind running after the promises of the white man's material benefits which, when seen in their proper perspective, prove to be nothing more substantial than ‘lumps of sugar’ to the African”. True to a certain extent the above might be, as I am under the greatest persuasion to see Toundi’s love of white man's things as nothing more than a traumatized colonized who is trying to do what the colonizer told him would make him human. Therefore, the Blackman's total acceptance of the white man's world is because there is no other choice and no other way to gain his battered humanity. His blind devotion to his master leads him not to security and well-being but to destruction and in Toundi’s case he dies, a tragic end.

In rounding up, a close examination of Houseboy suggests indeed, that Toundi’s story is essentially the account of an institutionally established pedagogical disaster. Therefore, Toundi is incarcerated and tortured not because of anything he has done but because his white masters find it convenient to project their own guilt onto a scapegoat. Furthermore, the punishment his father metes out on him has more to do with Oyono using such incidents as scathing satires, which are primarily directed at the colonial regime. Toundi’s benighted parent is not so much a representation of the African father, an example of the kind of person whose son would be most likely to seek asylum in an alien community. He is also the result of the colonial making an individual Corti (2000) describes at length as glutinous and Oyono’s symbol in the depiction of interpersonal problems peculiar to the colonial context. Therefore, in Houseboy, Oyono, through Toundi, shows how colonialism uses both physical and psychological abuse to subjugate and render the colonized worthless. The colonized is peripheralized and is taunted to desire 'to be white.' Toundi realises that he is more and far away removed from his people, thus, his lament ‘what are we black men who are called French’ (Houseboy p4) in touch with Beti’s Mission to Kala where hope for the African is dim. Maybe the only hope for the African is to be decolonized, thus, Toundi laments that if only he had not ran away from home.
Colonial conquest in *Waiting for the Rain*

Charles Mungoshi in *Waiting for the Rain* brings out the fragmented colonized through the characters of Lucifer, Garabha, Japi and even the Old Man. Mungoshi highlights how colonialism destroyed the colonized. Lucifer feels alienated from his homeland and because of his colonial education. Colonialism also denied the colonized the right to cultural development and self-expression and set up a state of siege that is justified with theories of cultural assimilation. Thus, old Mandengu and Garabha's drums with uncle Kuruku's *ngundu* (traditional hat) become symbolic vestiges of an African culture besieged by colonialism (Vambe, 2005).

According to Flora Weit-Wild (1993, 187-189), *Waiting for the Rain* highlights this cultural alienation due to the type of education Africans received and how other people reacted to colonisation and its effects. Lucifer is alienated from both his home and culture. It is the western education that he received that estranged him. This estrangement led into feelings of disgust and hatred. He loathes his society's backward way of living, backward beliefs, the restriction of the individual through the traditional community and the "failure" of his parents' lives. In a symbolic gesture, Lucifer smashes the bottles of protective medicine the family has prepared to safeguard him on his journey. In the same way, Dambudzo Marechera refused to undergo the traditional cleansing ceremony after eight years of exile and suspected attacks of the avenging spirit (*ngozi*) (Weit-Wild 1993, 188 and Tirivangana 2012).

This fragmentation and eventual alienation is also evident in *Nervous Conditions* where Babamukuru and Nhamo exhibit alienation as they "dissociate themselves from the African tradition and ways in general". Babamukuru refuses to perform or attend the cleansing ceremony while Nhamo does not want to go back to his rural home and stays at the mission with Babamukuru. As it is argued that speechlessness is the ultimate expression of having lost one's tongue, one's identity - Nyasha and Nhamo (*Nervous Conditions* p200-207) could not speak their languages the same way Lucifer in *Waiting for the Rain* could not talk or relate to the family hinted in his poem (*Waiting for the Rain* p52-53). Commenting on this, Zimunya (1982, 91) attests that poems are a way used to bring out feelings of not belonging. Bantock (1971) cited in Zhuwarara (2001, 49) explains that *Waiting for the Rain* is characterised by isolation and unfriendly hostility of Lucifer like his literary disciple Lakunle in *The Lion and the Jewel* who believes education means dissociating one from the uneducated.

Furthermore, John and Betty are also alienated. Betty went against traditional belief values and falls pregnant out of wedlock. John's liking of the radio is symbolic of modernity, thus, he is alienated from his roots. Old Japi also highlights alienation, as she likes sugar too much. Old Man says, "Each time I see my wife Japi take in a handful of sugar I know how complete and final the white man's conquest has been" (p115). It is this powerful utterance by the Old Man that the reader is awakened to the debasement of the African colonized. The colonized is not given any chance but to look down upon his way because they have been termed savagery and backward. Thus, the Old Man laments that the people have been alienated by colonisation as they are playing the enemy's drum by drinking tea, giving praise to the enemy's gods, listening to the "talking box" is making sacrifices on the enemy's altar and giving children promises of sweets and biscuits when they cry, makes them know and bow to settlers' gods, alienating themselves from their gods and culture. Be that as it may, the question to be asked is that, is it really these people's faults. It is true when Zhuwarara (2001, 50) writes that ".... Mungoshi addresses... the state of the African family during the colonial period of the nineteen seventies". Lucifer's alienation, the family feuds and disintegration is not of their own making but the result of colonialism's brutality and inhumanity that failed the normal functioning of the family institute and that of individuals.

Lucifer's failure to relate meaningfully with all the members of the extended family together with the revulsion and alienation result from the poverty and desolation of the land that continue to take their toil (Zhuwarara 2001, 49). Although Lucifer could be argued to have completely broken (consciously) with tradition, I think his sitting in the car leaving to the city and "... tries to look at his country through the eye of an impartial tourist" is justified. His is a life of affliction, torment and desolation, a life that is so entrapping, as his is the crisis of a society whose cohesion is coming apart, let alone Manyene being a colonial creation.

To make matters worse Lucifer cannot look up to anyone as his parents' generation as is highlighted by Zhuwarara (2001, 50) is "deeply confused and powerless." The mere fact that Mungoshi presented three generations in conflict amongst and between themselves explains the fragmentation that is characteristic of colonialism. These generations "do not... perceive their material cultural and social situation in a uniform manner, neither do they understand the dilemma that they face in a similar way." However, all generations are aware that they are victims of a context in which they are/feel entrapped as colonial modernity is inhospitable and corrosive, taking Zhuwarara's words.

Vambe (2005, 53) correctly argues that the novel explores social, psychological, economic, cultural and political reasons for the breakdown of the African family in the period under colonial rule in Rhodesia. It also registers the alienation of the African characters from their environment, the surface fragmentation. Vambe's analysis of the Old Man and other issues pertaining to *Waiting for the Rain* in an article entitled "Myth and the Creation of National Consciousness," is particularly interesting. In as much as the Old Man is not idealised, Vambe's analysis building up on Zhuwarara's is worth considering. It is through the Old Man that the effects of colonialism on the colonized are presented. The Old Man is analytical and critical of the new ways and advocates for the beating of one's own drum. For example, the Old Man criticizes John's nationalism as he sold his brother...
Paul to the colonial forces and proceeded to take the latter's wife and house. John fights the white man and yet prays to the white man's gods. John's nationalism is contradictory in itself. However, this contradiction can also be traced, as the dilemma the colonized man is facing as it is the colonial values that influence the modes of the very African nationalist leaders who are fighting the system.

The Old Man sees this sense of hybridity as the very base of the loss by Africans as their own material interest would not be recognised in the new order as: "The snares they set; sugar, that talking box of yours, all those other things they have brought are your gods you have taken as your drum" (Waiting for the Rain p33). The Old Man simply means they have lost their roots, thus, they are not strong footed and are bound to loose.

This is true as Zhuwarara (2001, 58) contends as such when he discusses the effects of colonialism on the characters in Waiting for the Rain. The hybridisation of most if not all the characters in the novel results from:

Missionary - cum - colonial education which relentlessly criticises the African world View as backward, savage and primitive something to be either discarded or Outgrown in favour of colonial modernity... does not offer a viable and alternative Cultural or indeed spiritual have for the uprooted African who in the imperial scheme of things remains the other or subaltern (Zhuwarara 2001, 58).

Thus, from the above, the ideological dilemma of the Africans, according to Vambe (2004, 57), living under colonialism as concretized by the Old Man's quest for a 'pure' identity in a cross cultural society, is a significant aspect of the larger problems that inform the continent's discourse of cultural authenticity. However, the Old Man is not an exception himself from the effects of colonialism so he could be argued not to have much right to scorn others (Vambe 2005).

Garabha is also another character who brings out the entrapment and fragmentation as he is entrapped in the past yet colonial modernity continues to erode the values of that traditional African view. Zhuwarara (2001) argues that Garabha is a paradoxical figure as he is not only alienated from the colonial present but also from the traditional values belonging to the past. This paradox comes up because of the clash between the Colonial and African tradition, if that had not been the case all these characters would have been 'safe.'

Nevertheless, the Old Man and Garabha could be given credit as they seem a bit stable as they had their roots in their tradition. However, neither Lucifer's way of escaping from all this rot nor Garabha's and the Old Man's conservatism seem to be the solution out of the malaise generated and exacerbated by the colonial situation, instead, in Waiting for the Rain, Charles Mungoshi's delineation of, the social, cultural and psychic tensions and conflicts of a subjugated society whose identity is being steadily eroded by colonial modernity, no absolute solution is prescribed.

According to Zhuwarara (2001), as a novel that outlines the dilemma of a deeply troubled and bewildered people who are spiritually lost and still searching as their lives have become part of a journey without maps, it does not pretend to offer answers. The only thing that Mungoshi does is to throw the question to the reader. When it comes to which way one follows, the old traditional way that is being rendered useless like the Old Man or flow with the current as Lucifer but loses the self in the process, is all up to individual choice. To stand on the fence as Tongoona did (he prays neither to the God of the Bible nor to his ancestors) does not seem right either as it highlights the greatest point of alienation and confusion.

The above reading of the novel then leads one to the same conclusion that was reached by Bevelyn Dube (2006) in her article, "Mungoshi's ambivalent vision in Waiting for the Rain." She argues that "...none of the major characters in the novel has an adequate answer to the problem of the colonised black person." Zhuwarara (2001; 58) also captures this when he says that "neither the escapists and barely articulated vision of Lucifer or the strength of the cautious determined Old Man and the artistic offerings of Garabha can do much to alleviate the social malaise generated and exacerbated by the colonial situation." However, this does not render Mungoshi's vision pessimistic as Zhuwarara is persuaded to conclude. Mungoshi's vision, I am persuaded to take sides with Dube (2006, 177), is ambivalent. Here it is necessary to quote Dube's concluding passage as it clarifies the point I am making. She says:

... Mungoshi sees the various responses as they are, ambivalent, partly worth celebrating and partly tragic. To Mungoshi the writer, what is important is that these characters are not paralysed by the hostile environment. All of them (maybe with the exception of Japi) are characterised by movement forward in each of meaning in their lives. It is his search that; Mungoshi privileges. Identity formation, to the writer, is not something that has straightforward answers. It is an ongoing process which cannot be resolved by a specific solution. It is always in flux, hence Mungoshi's refusal to give specific solutions. The open-ended nature of the novel is a reminder that the issues being dealt with are open to debate. The way an individual perceives Lucifer or Garabha and the Old Man depends greatly on their experiences in life. (Charles Mungoshi: A Critical Reader 2006: 177).
While it is true from the three texts that colonialism fails to recognise the black man as a human being as Uncle Kuruku in *Waiting for the Rain* puts it: “Out there, where you are going, your heart is just the colour of your face: murky, dirty. And no amount of sleeping with the whitest of their women folk or any amount of eating at the same table will they ever make you clean enough in their eyes.” These writers do not just expose the dehumanising effects of colonialism and leave it there. They seem to suggest that a compromise should be reached. One should tap from the good in his or her traditions as in there are the roots that build a people as well as tap from the good in the invading colonial modernity. A very clear message from the texts is that one extreme standpoint does not seem to be the answer as it has its own contradictions and shortcomings. However, these solutions can be problematized, as the compromise seems to be in favour of the coloniser at the expense of the colonised.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, from the above, one can say that the other and far reaching means of conquest that were used by colonial masters or colonizers are that of the social, cultural, psychological as well as economic debasement of the colonized. This conquest was made possible through the colonial education imposed on the colonized as well as Christianity that uprooted him from his traditional ways of life. These apparatus helped in the alienation and acculturation, thus, fragmentation of the colonized. The colonized is grappling with a way forward even up to now. His situation smacks of that in Ngugi’s *The River Between* where Waiyaki confesses that colonialism is essentially bad. He says,

> If the white man's religion made you abandon a custom and then did not give you something else at equal value, you become lost (my emphasis). An attempt to resolution of the conflict would only kill you.... (*The River Between* p142).

This is very true, as decades after colonialism the colonized is still struggling to find direction in a world that is dominated mainly by the colonizer. Nevertheless, identity formation is a process of arriving and departing. It is not a perfect thing that one can safely say they have arrived at their identity, according to Bevelyn Dube (2006). Therefore, for the colonised, the struggle continues.

REFERENCES


