ETHIOPE JOURNAL

OF ENGLISH, LITERARY AND CULTURAL STUDIES

JOURNAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES, DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY, ABRAKA

ETHIOPE JOURNAL OF ENGLISH, LITERARY AND CULTURAL STUDIES: JOURNAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES, DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY, ABRAKA

Volume 2, No. 1, MARCH 2024
ISSN: 0795-5413

Published by the Department of English and Literary Studies, Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria

ISSN: 0795-5413

Designed and printed by DEBBICHUKS Printing and Computer Services, Kwale, Delta State, Nigeria. Tel: +2348039580583

EDITORIAL NOTE

The Ethiope Journal of English, Literary, and Cultural Studies (ISSN: 0795-5413) is an interdisciplinary journal that explores topical and generative issues in English linguistics and literary and cultural studies. We recognise that African humanities research is both problem-based and knowledge oriented, and we aim to provide a platform for scholars to analyse and theorise Africa in a way that is generative, conversational, and decolonial. Specifically, the journal focuses on both the analytical and theoretical approaches to knowledge production in the context of Africa and the Global South. We want to curate papers that are hinged on African indigenous paradigms and approaches or that seek to extend, reimagine, or contextualise current theoretical or analytical approaches in English language studies and literary and cultural studies.

We invite papers that dwell on all aspects of English language studies, including phonetics/phonology, semantics, syntax, discourse analysis, pragmatics, stylistics, ESL, ESP, etc. We also welcome papers that theorise literary and cultural texts, including film, still and moving images, music and dance, photographs, cultural objects, spaces and places, society and social formations, and other relevant corpora. While we accept purely analytical essays, we encourage authors to focus on theorising the texts or data they engage with. In particular, we welcome theoretical conversations that implicate postcolonial subjecthood, ecocritical approaches (especially postcolonial ecocriticism), feminism and gender studies, new trends in linguistics, object-oriented criticism and approaches, and other generative approaches to knowledge production. Authors are encouraged to do original theorisation rather than adopt extant theoretical frameworks. They may also extend the scope of extant theories and approaches based on the material they present and discuss.

Furthermore, papers with interdisciplinary approaches are also welcomed. We recognise that knowledge production is an elastic phenomenon, and that bright ideas might implicate various fields. Interesting multi-modal, eclectic, or collaborative research is encouraged in this journal.

JOURNAL POLICY

The Ethiope Journal of English, Literary and Cultural Studies is published biennially by the Department of English and Literary Studies, Delta State University Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria. All papers submitted to this journal will undergo double-blind peer review before publication. Published papers are well-researched, original, and data-driven.

Contributors are to submit an e-copy of their manuscript for assessment and publication to ethiopejournal@delsu.edu.ng or ethiopejournal@gmail.com. Such manuscripts should be original and not under consideration for publication elsewhere and should not have been published in any other journal.

The submitted manuscript which should not exceed 7000 words should be typeset in MS Word Times New Roman Font 12, with double line spacing. The first page should include the title of the manuscript, name(s), and institutional affiliation/address, abstract (not more than 250 words and with not more than six keywords). Manuscripts should conform to the current APA or MLA style sheet. Author(s) of published papers will derive the benefits from peer-review of contributions by seasoned scholars, global visibility, and receipt of hard copies as well as soft copies of their papers.

The papers in this edition of the journal cut across disciplines in cultural, and media studies and sub-disciplines in English and literary studies. The contributors include seasoned and renowned scholars of international repute and young astute scholars with a burning desire to excel in academics. It is pertinent to note that the journal accepts contributions from scholars and researchers across the globe. We believe that articles in this volume will be of immense interest to researchers and students.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

1.Dr. Odingowei M. Kwokwo, Department of English and Literary Studies, Niger Delta University, Nigeria.

2.Doutimiye Agunza, Department of English and Literary Studies, Niger Delta University, Nigeria.

3. Prof. Moses O. Ayeomoni, Department of English, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State.

4.Ayomiitan E. Bankole, Department of English, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State.

5.Abdullahi Umar Evuti, Department of English, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, Niger State.

6.Ebenezer Oluseun Ogungbe, Department of English, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, Niger State.

7. Dr. Emmanuel, Ogheneakpobor Emama, Department of English and Literary Studies, Delta State University, Abraka.

8. Anita Erhuvwu Maledo, Department of English and Literary Studies, Delta State University, Abraka.

9. Dr. Goodluck, Chinenye Kadiri, General Studies Department, Use of English Unit, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

10.Ejiro Rita Enisire, Department of English and Literary Studies, Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba.

11. Aishatu, Abdulsalam, English Department, IBB University, Lapai, Niger State, Nigeria.

12. Dr. 'Abinye Titus-Green, Department of English and Literary Studies, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt

13.Tamunoiyowuna Andrew-Jaja, Department of English and Literary Studies, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt

14. Aghogho Agbamu, Department of English and Literary Studies, Delta State University, Abraka

15. Ozioma Ezeleagbo Ejechi, Department of English Studies, University of Port Harcourt

CONTENTS

THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN COLONIALISM AND MODERNITY IN WOLE SOYINKA'S *DEATH AND THE KING'S HORSEMAN* AND NGUGI WA THIONG'O & NGUGI WA MIRI'S *I WILL MARRY WHEN I WANT*

by

Ozioma Ezeleagbo Ejechi

Department of English Studies, University of Port Harcourt

Email:ejechiozi@gmail.com

.

Abstract

This research examines the complex relationship between modernity and colonialism in African dramatic literature through a comprehensive analysis of two seminal plays: Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975) and Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii's *I Will Marry When I Want* (1980). By employing two distinct theoretical frameworks, namely Biodun Jeyifo's theory of "counter-discourse" and postcolonial theory, this study explores how the introduction of modernity disrupts entrenched traditional African values and practices, as portrayed in the selected plays. It meticulously scrutinizes the ramifications of colonialism's imposition of modernity on African communities and dissects the agency and resistance exhibited by African characters in navigating the intricate terrain between colonialism and modernity. Incorporating Jeyifo's theory allows for a nuanced examination of subaltern voices and their role in challenging dominant colonial narratives, whereas postcolonial theory provides a broader context for understanding power dynamics and identity in the colonial and postcolonial eras. These two approaches enhance the research's analytical depth by allowing a nuanced exploration of the characters' dialogue and overarching themes within the plays. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to a deeper understanding of the multifaceted impact of modernity and colonialism on African societies and individuals. The study sheds light on strategies employed to reclaim cultural heritage and agency in the face of these formidable forces.

Keywords: Plays, Subaltern, Counter-Discourse, Modernity and Colonialism, Postcolonial Agency.

Introduction

This paper posits that colonialism and modernity are irrevocably entwined and exert a profound influence on the fabric of African societies. It investigates the intricate interplay between modernity and colonialism in African dramatic literature, specifically within Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975) and Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii's *I Will Marry When I Want* (1980). Employing two theoretical approaches, Biodun Jeyifo's concept of "counter-discourse" and postcolonial theory, this study aims to dissect how the introduction of modernity disrupts traditional African values and practices while also scrutinizing the ramifications of colonialism's imposition of modernity on African communities. Additionally, it seeks to illuminate the agency and resistance exhibited by African characters, as they navigate the intricate terrain between colonialism and modernity.

The expansive canvas of modern African literature unfurls intricately within the crucible of colonialism- a dynamic historical epoch wherein European powers exerted formidable influence over the diverse fabric of indigenous African societies. It is imperative to navigate beyond the oversimplification that posits all modern African literature as solely derived from this historical backdrop. Rather, the nuanced interplay between colonialism and African societies emerges as a pivotal focal point in the rich discourse of scholars within the academic realm. In the crucible of academic debate, scholars fervently engage in discussions that probe the intricate dialectical relationship, questioning whether colonialism acted as a catalyst or an impediment in shaping Africa's trajectory toward modernity. Within the multifaceted realm of modern African literary works, diverse themes, perspectives, and influences converge.

One could contend that modernity is fundamentally characterized by a rejection of antiquity, representing a departure from the traditional modes of contemplation of the cosmos that pre-modern societies had long adhered to. In essence, modernism signifies a radical break from the established paradigms of pre-modern thought. This departure is notable for its emphasis on rational

self-reflection and rejection of mythic or supernatural explanations of reality in favour of empiricism and scientific inquiry.

The introduction of modernism into Africa, commencing at the turn of the 20th century, was intrinsically bound to the colonial project. European colonial enterprises perceived African cultures as anachronistic and in dire need of transformation. This perception was manifested in the introduction of Western systems of governance, education, religion, and socioeconomic structures, all of which were underpinned by modernist ideologies. In the corpus of African literary criticism, Jeyifo emerged as a prominent scholar whose perspective on colonialism as an integral component of modernity significantly shaped the discourse. Jeyifo contends that colonialism is not merely an extraneous force, but rather an integral part of modernity itself. In this regard, colonialism has emerged as a harbinger of modernity, introducing new modes of thought, governance, and economic systems to African societies.

However, it is essential to acknowledge the nuanced critiques and objections raised from Jeyifo's perspective. Scholars like Olaniyan(2018) and Dowden (2008) argue that such a perspective tends to efface the pernicious and exploitative aspects of colonialism, portraying it as a necessary precursor to Africa's modernization. They argue that Jeyifo overlook the grave injustices, violence, and dispossession that colonialism often entailed.

This paper is situated at the nexus of these discourses and seeks to offer a rigorous analysis of the interconnectedness between colonialism and modernity in African literature. By selecting two seminal plays, *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975) and *I Will Marry When I Want* (1980), authored by three luminary African playwrights, Wole Soyinka and Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii, respectively, we embark on a comparative exploration that uncovers the manifold ways in which colonialism and modernity intersect, clash, and coalesce within African literary imagination. Through this critical endeavor, we aspire to contribute to a deeper understanding of the enduring legacies of colonialism in Africa and its profound influence on the continent's journey to modernity.

Modern African literature has emerged in the crucible of

colonialism. What this means, among other things, is that the men and women who founded the tradition of what we now call modern African writing, both in European and indigenous languages, were, without exception, products of the institutions that colonialism had introduced and developed in the continent, especially in the period beginning with the Berlin Conference of 1884–85 and decolonization in the late 1950s and the early 1960s. African literature had, of course, been produced outside the institutions of colonialism. The existence of oral literature in all African languages and pre-colonial writing in Arabic, Amharic, Swahili, and other African languages is ample evidence of a thriving literary tradition in pre-colonial Africa.

The relationship between colonialism and modernity has also been contested. The standard interpretation is that colonialism is the vehicle that brings modern values and institutions to the colonized world. Indeed, historians such as Niall Ferguson (2004) continue to promote the idea that Britain not only "made" the modern world but has no reason to apologize for the world that was made. Others, such as William McNeill, reinforce such sentiments by suggesting that we must "admire those who pioneered the [modern] enterprise and treat human adventure on earth as an amazing success story, despite all the suffering entailed" (3). Questions consisting of who this "we" is and whether "we" must celebrate the successes (of some) despite the suffering (of others) form the nub of postcolonial, and other, criticisms.

Historical Connections of Modernism and Colonialism in Africa

Modernity is perceived as the most critical rejection of antiquity. The end-in-view of human life was presented by the ancients and many classical authors as the peaceful contemplation of the cosmos and the place of human beings within such a cosmos. This was understood, if accepted, as a desirable objective, although its realization as a way of life was greatly doubted. It was equally believed that no art or science could serve effectively as a channel for the realization of such lofty objectives. Arising from our inescapable finitude and limited proclivity for the rational and commonsensical, the occurrence of such a life of pure contemplation, among those navigating the

historical connections of modernism and colonialism in Africa, was deemed wholly a matter of chance.

Modernism provided a radical departure from a worldview that canvases the possibility within human beings to regulate and evaluate their beliefs by rational self-reflection; free themselves from interest, passion, tradition, and prejudice and autonomously "rule" their thoughts; and determine their actions as a result of self-reflection and rational evaluation, an evaluation the conclusion of which ought to bind any rational agent. Robert Pippin states that "Modernity, as the name suggests, implies a decisive break in an intellectual tradition, an inability to rely on assumptions and practices taken for granted in the past" (10 – 11). Pippin submits that 'such a break" was preponderant with "the determinate insufficiencies of pre-modern institutions" (11). Such a view of pre-modern thought (as dogmatic, insufficiently self-conscious, and unable to explain or account for its possibility) provided the earliest attempt to make modernity Hegel's idealism. Modernism was promoted as "the achievement of full self-consciousness' (Pippin, 11).

It was introduced into Africa at the turn of the twentieth century with the emergence of colonialism and the consequent integration of micro-economies of distinctive African communities to the economic imperatives of global capitalism and imperialism emerging from the uterus of European metropolises. Before the imposition of formal colonialism in the late 19th century, there was a long history of interaction between Europe and Africa described by David Kerr as "the informal or mercantilist phase of imperialism" (16). During this phase, the relationship between colonizing powers and African societies was characterized by exchange facilitated through trading companies. For instance, European colonial powers, such as the British East India Company, engaged in trade for resources, often establishing economic ties with African regions. This economic interaction influenced the dynamics of cultural contacts, where there was a perceived 'relative equality.'

An example of this 'relative equality' in cultural contacts can be seen in the exchange of goods, ideas, and even language. African societies in the process of trading, had opportunities to introduce

aspects of their culture to the colonizers, and vice versa. This exchange, while not entirely void of power imbalances, suggests a more reciprocal engagement than the later stages of colonialism. However, it is crucial to note that this 'relative equality' was often limited and didn't negate the underlying exploitative nature of colonial relations. The economic interests of the trading companies were intertwined with the broader colonial project, setting the stage for more complex power dynamics in subsequent phases of colonial history. Together with the noxious incidence of the slave trade, Europeans fostered the myth of African cultural inferiority. A predictable European temperament, nurtured mostly by European observers towards Africa, was to treat her "either as a tabular rasa without any tradition or as a source of primitive, atavistically obscene rituals which indicated its inferiority to the supposed rationalism of European culture" (Kerr, 18).

Armed with Count Gobineau's vociferations that in the Negro is "the absence of any intellectual aptitude," and Lucien Levy – Bruhl's distinctions "between the 'logical' mentality of 'civilized' societies and the 'urological' mentality of 'primitive' societies" (Wauthier, 258, 259), it was instinctual for European technocrats, educators, and bureaucrat-professionals to draft the perimeters of the new society they were building in Africa with the tenets of European modernism as the foregrounding premise of colonialism. It is because of the above that Jeyifo (608) describes colonialism as "the all-encompassing cultural project of modernity, in Europe and outside Europe." Jeyifo asserts that "in Europe, this project goes by the name of the 'civilizing process'; outside Europe, it generally went by the name... of 'the civilizing mission" (608).

Postcolonial theory and Biodun Jeyifo's "Counter-Discourse"

The choice of postcolonial theory as the theoretical framework for this research is grounded in its aptness to interrogate the complex interplay between colonialism and modernity within the selected plays, *Death and the King's Horseman* by Wole Soyinka and *I Will Marry When I Want* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii. This section provides a comprehensive justification for the selection of the

postcolonial theory and integrates it with Biodun Jeyifo's counter-discourse as an overarching framework and elucidates its relevance to the objectives of the study.

Postcolonial theory proves invaluable for dissecting the historical and ideological dimensions of colonialism, enabling a critical examination of its impact on African societies. This lens unravels layers of colonial hegemony within the selected plays, exposing the imposition of modernity as an integral facet of this control. The exploration extends to how colonial powers sought to reshape African identities, values, and traditions, central themes within the plays. Furthermore, emphasizing hybrid and conflicted identities, postcolonial theory becomes instrumental in deciphering the complexities faced by African characters navigating the intersection of traditional values and modern influences. Characters in the plays, caught between the colonial and indigenous worlds, embody these hybrid identities, and postcolonial theory provides a robust framework to unravel their struggles, choices, and transformation.

A core tenet of postcolonial theory, the examination of power dynamics and resistance, becomes central to scrutinizing the agency exhibited by African characters in response to colonialism and modernity. By focusing on subaltern voices and counter-narratives, the study uncovers instances of resistance and resilience within the plays, shedding light on how marginalized voices challenge dominant colonial ideologies. Therefore, postcolonial theory's inherently global nature facilitates comparative analysis, situating African experiences within the broader context of postcolonial studies. Drawing on scholars like Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, and Frantz Fanon, the research connects African narratives in the selected plays to global discourses on imperialism and resistance. This enriches the academic discourse on postcolonialism by offering a comprehensive perspective transcending geographical boundaries.

In conclusion, postcolonial theory aligns seamlessly with the research objectives to interrogate the representation of colonialism and modernity, analyze their impact on African communities, and dissect the agency and resistance of African characters. Its capacity to

deconstruct colonial hegemony, explore hybrid identities, examine power dynamics, and provide a global perspective renders it the most suitable theoretical framework for this research, ensuring a nuanced and comprehensive analysis of the selected plays in a postcolonial context.

In addition to utilizing postcolonial theory as an overarching framework, this research also integrates Jeyifo's theory of "counter-discourse" as a complementary analytical tool. Jeyifo's theory offers valuable insights into how subaltern voices can subvert dominant colonial narratives and ideologies. This section provides a justification for incorporating Jeyifo's theory into the research methodology and highlights its significance in enhancing the analysis of *Death and the King's Horseman* and *I Will Marry When I Want*

Jeyifo's theory of "counter-discourse" dovetails seamlessly with postcolonial theory. While postcolonial theory broadly examines power dynamics, identity, and resistance, Jeyifo's concept of "counter-discourse" hones on how marginalized voices engage in active resistance through alternative narratives. By integrating this theory into the methodology, this research aims to delve deeper into the specific ways in which African characters in the selected play challenge colonial and modern ideologies through counter-narratives and actions. Furthermore, this theory places a strong emphasis on subaltern perspectives, highlighting the importance of giving voice to those historically silenced by colonial powers. This research recognizes the significance of amplifying the voices of African characters in plays that represent subaltern positions. Jeyifo's framework allows for a more nuanced analysis of these characters' agency and their role in disrupting colonial and modern narratives imposed on them.

One of Jeyifo's central themes is how counter-discourse can serve as a means of preserving and revitalizing indigenous cultures and values. In the context of this research, Jeyifo's theory helps examine how African characters in the plays utilize their agency to resist the erasure of traditional values and practices brought about by colonialism and modernity. By analyzing their counter-discourses,

this research can better reveal the characters' efforts to reclaim and safeguard their cultural heritage.

Incorporating Jeyifo's theory extends the analytical horizons of this research. It enriches the methodological framework by providing a more nuanced lens through which to interpret the characters' actions and dialogue within the plays. This, in turn, enhances the researcher's ability to draw multifaceted conclusions about the impact of colonialism and modernity on African communities and strategies employed by individuals to navigate these challenges. By integrating Biodun Jeyifo's theory of "counter-discourse" into the research methodology alongside postcolonial theory, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive and multifaceted analysis of *Death and the King's Horseman* and *I Will Marry When I Want*. The two theoretical frameworks examine a deeper exploration of subaltern voices and their role in resisting dominant colonial and modern narratives, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness between modernity and colonialism in selected plays.

In his essay “In the Wake of Colonialism,” Jeyifo initiates a profound exploration of the complex, contradictory, yet fundamental articulation between colonialism and modernity. (Caliban, 71). He chronicles a traditional Irish wake and African wake, as it typically involves feasting and merrying. Jeyifo invokes this comparison because, “they seem to be particularly apt for analogizing the relations between colonialism and modernity” (72), which is the subject matter of his essay. Jeyifo argues that we are now in a postcolonial age but similarly in an epoch further on from modernity, in an era of postmodernity. He asserts that if he is right about this, then, “Postcoloniality is a wake that we, the formerly colonized, hold over the death of colonialism, just as postmodernity might in this light also be seen as a wake for modernity' (72).

Jeyifo goes further to tackle this question by reporting some reflections he had while reading and researching. He informs us about how modernity and colonialism are interrelated when he strongly affirms that those who were not deemed educable or “civilizable” provided the stereotypes that were later applied to the

"natives" in the colonies. Indeed, when we say "later applied," it has to be qualified because, at a certain historical moment, both projects – the "civilizing process" and the "civilizing mission" become parallel and directly continuous with each other" (609). The "civilizing mission" is a broad ideology that combines four main ideals; enlightenment ideas, Christian/evangelical ideas of predestination, racist ideas about white superiority and liberalism. All of these ideals played a significant role in our understanding of British imperialism before 1939. The "civilizing process" centered on charges in the division of labour the consolidation of political authority, and the monopolization of physical power. This process was not linear, and consistent. The multiplicity of social groups, as well as varying and uneven sources of change, have created a variety of social behaviors and formations. "I do not see this as a source of legitimate social heterogeneity but rather a different phase in the course of the hegemonic formation of the Western habitus" (Elias, 248).

Jeyifo maintains that colonialism from a European perspective brings about civilization to the African people. He also castigates the stereotypes associated with those who were not "educable." He insists that the relationship between colonialism and modernity is a foundational one and that various debates about it should be revisited. He argues that colonialism and modernity are internally linked, meaning that one would not exist without the other. He says: "Rather than continue to focus on which process, the internal or the external… we should see both as two sides of the same coin." (77). This interrelation between colonialism and modernity can only be seen if we embrace or acquire the perspective and attentiveness of those who were remunerated for the transition to economic modernity, whether they were victims of primitive accumulation in Europe – the peasants who were driven off the land and became proletarianised – or the slaves and peons of the colonial plantations in America and everywhere in Africa and Asia (77).

He maintains that the African culture was affected tremendously and negatively in the "civilizing process" he anchored this on Cabral's ideological orientation where he avers that "it could also be productively deployed for exploring those instances where

the "civilizing process" in Europe met significant resistance" (610). The symbolic implication of Olunde in Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* exemplifies that modernity, colonization, and European cultural practices were not successful in Africa as they met "significant resistance'. Jeyifo is arguing for a more essential relation between colonialism and modernity. Since they are "like day and night and there are no organic necessary connections between them' (611). This is also highlighted in Aime Cesaire's essay, *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950). He is saying that colonialism and modernity share a relationship, but they are not the same because one seeks to "brutalize and de-civilize both the colonizer and the colonized" (611). The relationship they share according to Jeyifo is "it is very fraught, very problematic relationship" (612) and this claim is supported by another scholar Paul Gilroy, in his book The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness.

Jeyifo raises what he terms "objections". The first which he says "under-specifies and under-theorizes the relationship between modernity and colonialism" (81). He insists that "modernity had to await the end of colonialism for there to be the possibility of its consummations' (81). He goes further to say that colonialism and modernity are indistinguishable. The second objection that Jeyifo raises is the extended argument that modernity came to the society through colonialism and for this reason "took on the aspect of an alien, external force which produced many alienations, many negative and corrosive anti-modern ideas and attitudes" (82). This view also admits a crucial relationship between the two.

Jeyifo insists that "colonization, in its classical and neoliberal forms, applies to all parts of the globe – precisely because it is at the root of modernity and continues to be part of its enduring legacies, inside and outside Europe" (84). In this study, the primary objectives are to examine the complex portrayal of colonialism and modernity in *Death and the King's Horseman* and *I Will Marry When I Want*. Additionally, this study aims to conduct a detailed analysis of how the introduction of modernity disrupts long-standing traditional African values and practices, investigate the far-reaching consequences of colonialism's imposition of modernity on African communities, and

analyze the agency and resistance displayed by African characters as they navigate the intricate relationship between colonialism and modernity.

Analysis of *Death and the Kings Horseman* and *I Will Marry When I Want*

The interplay between modernity and colonialism in Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* exposes the arrogance and pretense inherent in the so-called civilizing mission. The narrative exhibits a disjointed structure as it transitions abruptly from Britain's involvement in a large-scale war in Europe, presumably World War 2, to the introduction of a warship in Lagos, Nigeria – a British colony. The statement by Jane, Pilkings' wife, further underscores this abrupt shift, as she declares, "war is here." The narrative then introduces sporadic occurrences, such as the occasional passage of a "rare convoy of fighter jets" and a recent incident involving a ship explosion in the harbor (52). These measures appear designed to intimidate the simple and unsophisticated colonists, indicating a deliberate strategy rather than a speculative guess.

Much of the time, electronic propaganda machinery was used. Kerr notes how Britain, during the opening of hostilities in the Second World War, used radio, TV, and film in the colonies "to explain British war policy to the colonial audience... The purpose was to use film as a propaganda weapon to win the hearts and minds of the African civilian population' (28). We learned from what Olunde told Jane that many of the reports were false. He said,

> In your newsreels, I heard defeats, thorough murderous defeats described as strategic victories. Do not forget that I was attached to hospitals all the time. The hordes of your wound passed through these wards. I spoke to them…. They spoke terrible truths of the realities of war. (55)

Olunde's assertions approximate what Gilbert and Tompkins call" Historical Recuperation,' which is one of the dominant preoccupations of post-colonial plays. This involves 'telling' "the other side of the conquering whites' story to contest the official version" (12). Olunde's assertions also exemplify a subterranean

counter-discourse.

We also gathered from the conversation between Jane and Olunde that the British warship contained chemical weapons that could exterminate the whole population. For this "the captain blew himself up with it deliberately...." (*Death*, 52). To Jane, "there was no other way to save lives. No time to devise anything else. The captain took the decision and carried it out" (*Death*, 52). However, it is ironic to learn that Jane's husband would stop Elesin from committing suicide or self-sacrifice by instructing Amusa "to arrest the man and lock him up." (*Death*, 33). Says Pilkings to the Resident: "some strange customs they have sir. It seems because the king is dead, so an important chief has to commit suicide. (*Death*, 47). In Jane's assessment: "However clearly you try to put it, it is still a barbaric custom...it is feudal (*Death*, 54). The condemnation of long-standing African (Yoruba) cultural practices by the Pilkings appropriately conveys what Gayatri Spivak describes as "the epistemic violence of imperialism, its attack on other culture ways of knowing and representing themselves" (61). An essential tool for interrupting and resisting white colonial self-perpetration is language, notably Pidgin English, and other non-verbal languages, like drumbeats. These linguistic forms are strategically employed to disrupt or obscure the white man's psyche. It highlights the broader theme of cultural domination and how colonial forces sought to reshape the cultural landscape of the colonized regions.

For instance, the white man brought to Nigeria (Africa) his "hand-cranked gramophone, with which he plays a tango" (*Death*, 23). This introduction of Western cultural elements, such as the gramophone playing a tango, symbolizes the imposition of foreign values and cultural expressions. The act underscores the intrusion of Western influences into the traditional and indigenous fabric of Nigerian (African) societies, showcasing the clash between external cultural impositions and the local ways of life. Moreover, the European club houses what Soyinka describes as "a portion of the local police brass band with its white conductor" (*Death*, 45); and is reputed for an "orchestra waltz rendition (which) is not of the highest musical standard" (Death, 46). However, pilkings feel

psychologically disturbed by African drums. In the words of Pilkings, “I am getting rattled. These bloody drums are likely to have an effect. Do you hear how they go on and on? (*Death*, 27). As the drumming persists, “Jane gets up suddenly, restless' (*Death*, 30). Jane, being an outsider to the cultural context, is unable to fully comprehend the deep cultural significance of the drumming, and it contributes to her unease and restlessness besides, she “thought all bush drumming sounded the same' (*Death*, 27), it would take Joseph, their domestic servant, to interpret the language of the native drums to them.

Equally, the white man brought his superior artifacts of European technology for reckoning time. However, Jane uses these items to disparage one of Africa's traditional ways of understanding the passage of time, particularly using the moon. When “the clock in the residency begins to chime” and Pilkings “looks at his watch then turns, horror-stricken, to stare at his wife”, to announce that: “it is midnight. I had no idea it was that late”; Jane's retort is: “But surely...they do not count the hours the way we do. The moon or something" *(Death*, 50).

A missing nugget in the European civilizing mission was the humility of acknowledging in many instances by the whites that there were equally superior items and practices of culture in Africa, as could be found among Europeans. Olunde's assessment of the morbid Euro-centrism of the colonialist contains the cyst of this self-centeredness when he tells Jane: “You believe that everything which appears to make sense was learnt from you” (*Death*, 54).

A key incident involves the egungun, a variant of the Yoruba ancestral masquerade. They were purportedly arrested by Sergeant Amusa, for stirring a riot in town. While Amusa “treats Egungun with respect” *(Death,* 25) because he understands them to be the corporeal version of departed ancestors, Mr. Pilkings strips the egungun masquerades of their paraphernalia as mere “juju' (*Death,* 25). On confiscating the egungun costumes, the Pilkings' adopt them as costumes for an English “ball.” The stage direction indicates that even the Prince of England “is quite fascinated by their costume and they demonstrate the adaptations they have made to it...They

demonstrate the dance steps and guttural sounds made by Egungun. Everyone is highly entertained by the Royal Party, especially those who lead the applause (*Death*, 46).

Thus, the white colonialists, while acknowledging the intrinsic beauty of many African cultures, would be driven by the audacity of the imperial might and the so-called superiority complex to disparage these cultures because they did not emanate from Europe. This is the crux of euro-centrism–that is, the insistence on Western cultural authority and the episteme that underlies it. Cultural authority and superiority are maintained or legitimated by constructing "other" cultures, which they deem inferior. The inferior then stands as a mirror through which the West can assuredly and unmistakably construct its superiority. That is, through a subtle operation of binaries such as "we and them", "the colonizer and the colonized," and "black and white". Samir Amin notes that, as a culturist phenomenon, "euro-centrism...claims that imitation of the Western model by all people is the only solution to the challenge of our time" (Eurocentrism, 3). This is the mindset that pre-occupies Mary Kingsley's assertion that: "The African has never made an even fourteenth-rate piece of cloth or pottery" (669).

Since the exclusive agenda of modernism consists in the destruction of the culture of the "natives" and the forceful insemination of that of the whites, it resonated, again, with Olunde's comments to Jane, that: "I discovered that you have no respect for what you do not understand" (*Death*, 51). Thus, at the cultural and religious levels, especially through the instrumentality of schools, churches, press, and audio-visual media, the civilizing colonial missions diffused new attitudes which were contradictory and richly complex models (when assessed critically) especially in the context of culture, spiritual values, and their transmission.

Instead of unifying the people and culture of Africa, colonialism both lacerated and shredded the culturally unified and religiously integrated grids of most African traditions. It is evident from the text that colonial culture provided the plank for trivializing the whole traditional mode of life and its spiritual framework. This new culture also provided reasons for the undermining of "un-

Europeanized" or ambivalent individuals. These "unconverted" or "confused" Africans constituted an emergent intermediate space described as "marginality" by Samin Amir. According to him: "Marginality designates the intermediate space between the so-called African tradition and the projected modernity of colonialism" (Accumulation, 5).

I Will Marry When I Want by Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii is a text on how this marginality is constituted or produced. While, consciously, navigating larger territories of proletarian concerns, this play unfurls the processes through which the "natives" (so-called) in Africa conceded large portions of the most important factor of their agrarian economy, land, to the reprehensible logic of development canvassed by neo-imperialists and their educated African allies. Kiguunda, a peasant farm worker with one and a half acres of land, possibly inherited from his ancestors, becomes entangled in a complex web when Ahab Kioi, a local director at the foreign firm where Kiguunda is employed, utilizes persuasive tactics to convince him to secure a loan from a commercial bank for a church wedding.

On Kiguunda's failure to pay back the loan, and its high interest rate, his one-and-a-half acre of land is seized by the bank and put out for public auction. He learns, at that moment, that Ahab Kioi is the chairman of the Board of Directors of the bank, and that he is equally the one who is to buy his (Kiguunda's land). This is the same land which Kiguunda has already reported to Wangeci, his wife that Ahab Kioi wants to buy from him for "a company belonging to some foreigners from America, Germany, and from... Japan which (manufacture) insecticides for killing bed bugs" (*I Will Marry*, 23 – 24). Kiguunda's auctioned land is used to build the so-called company that manufactures insecticides, under the directorship of John Ikuua. Soon, Ahab
Kioi's son, John Muhuuni impregnates Gathoni, Kigunnda's daughter, and denies his culpability. It is not long before Ahab Kioi is retrenched from the employ of the company where he works.

By losing his land to international middlemen, Ahab **kioi** and Ikuua, Kiguunda's family is eliminated from all forms of socio-

economic relevance. They are, inadvertently, drafted or conscripted into the swelling ranks of urban marginals now festering the urban areas of many independent African countries. The description of his house and income in the text speaks:

> Kiguunda's home, a square, mud-walled hut, the white ochre is fading. In one corner could be seen Kiguunda and Wangeci's bed. In another can be seen a pile of rags on the floor. The floor is Gathoni's bed and the rags her bedding. Although poorly dressed, Gathoni is very beautiful. On one of the walls, there hangs a framed title deed for one and a half acres of land... On one side of the wall there hangs kiguunda's coat, and on the opposite side, on the same wall, Wangeci's coat. The coats are torn and patched (*I Will Marry* 2).

We learn later from Wangeci that Kiguunda's income can only procure "thirty cents of cooking oil and half a kilo of sugar" (*I Will Marry*, 14). It is scarcely adequate for the purchase of salt (*I Will Marry*, 14) and 'tea leaves" (*I Will Marry*, 17). There is no land left anymore for Kiguunda and his children both for habitation and cultivation.

Ineluctably, there is a catalogue of complaints against emergent socio-political and economic architectonics of the post-independent Kenyan (African) society. These remonstrations reflect the failed utopia or expectations of the good life that was to follow the invention of modernity. Gicaamba, a character in the play notes that:

> Today, all the good schools belong to the children of the rich, big shops, big farms, coffee plantation, tea plantation, wheat fields and ranches, all belong to the rich, all the tarmac roads lead to the house of the rich. Good hospitals belong to them, so that when they get heart attacks and belly ulcers, their wives can rush them to the hospitals in Mercedes Benzes. The Rich! The Rich!! And we the poor have only dispensaries at Tigoni and Kiambu. Sometimes these dispensaries have no drugs, sometimes people die on the way or in the queue that lasts from dawn to dusk (*I Will Marry*, 58).

Apart from the lopsided distribution of infrastructures, several other institutions of liberal democracy are organized to the disadvantage of the poor. Many instances in the play demonstrate this. One of such is when Kiguunda and Wangeci threaten to take the Kioi's family to the law court for their son's impregnation of Gathoni. Ahab Kioi's reply is: “Did you say court of law? Run. Hurry up. We shall see on whose side the law is! Your side or our side! (*I Will Marry*, 79).

Another instance is when Kiguunda takes a loan from a bank which Ahab Kioi serves as the local Director. The loan is taken to execute a Christian marriage on the advice of Ahab Kioi. Kiguunda uses his one-and-a-half acre of land as collateral for the loan. On Kiguunda's failure to pay back the loan because of unreasonably high interest rates, both the land and the household equipment he bought were confiscated. The land is auctioned out by the bank and it is purchased by Ahab kioi. The land would become a site for an insecticide company.

A different but related case is the lack of safety standards and proper rewards for workers. There is a report, by Gicaamba, of the death of a young man because “the chemical dust accumulated in his body until the head cracked! Was he given compensation? He was summarily dismissed” (*I Will Marry*, 27). He confesses that since being “employed in that factory twenty-one people in that section have died. Yes twenty-one people“(*I Will Marry*, 28).

According to Gicaamba: According to a submission by Wangeci: “African employers are not different from Indian employers or from the Boer White landlords....They don't know the phrase “increased wages” (*I Will Marry*, 15). According to an analysis of the economy of the 'Third World' nations by Fidel Castro, “for every eight dollars an international multinational holding invests in the Third World, it reaps grossly twenty-four dollars. Why? Wages stand at a certain distance from labor' (Kenner and Petras, 263). As several decades have passed since these assertions were made by Castro, it could be surmised, that, Western economies' profiteering on the Third World, (so-called), presently, would be tripled.

The people responsible for stultifying the post-independence expectations of good governance and transformation promised by

modernity are the emergent national bourgeoisie and elites. According to Fanon:

> These are the people who stepped into the shoes of the former European settlers: doctors, barristers, traders, commercial merchants, travelers, general agents and transport agents. From now on, they insisted that foreign companies should pass through their hands whether these companies wished to keep their connection with the country or to open it up. The national middle class now discovers its historic mission, that of the intermediary (122).

In a survey of its role in Africa, Kwame Nkrumah does note, polemically, that:

> The bourgeoisie as a whole cannot be seen in isolation from imperialism and neo-colonialism. While representing only a small fraction of the population, it is nevertheless a great danger to the African masses because of the strength it derives from its dependence on foreign bourgeois capitalism which seeks to keep the peasants and workers of Africa in a condition of perpetual subjection (63).

As it is aptly remarked by Gicaamba (who also doubles as the voice of conscience in the play), "European Kioi, Asian Kioi, and the African Kioi, what's the difference? They are clansmen, they know how to take from the poor" (*I Will Marry*, 90). We learn from Ikuua's flimsy self-adulation that: "Being a local director of foreign firms is not a very taxing job; what they want is just an African's name. All we are required to do is to be their watchmen" (*I Will Marry*, 59). Ngugi describes them as "the native ruling class and [the] international imperialist allies" (*Writers in Politics: A Re-engagement with Issues of Literature and Society.* 1997, p.26).

Conclusion

This study explores the intricate relationship between colonialism and modernity as depicted in Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* and Ngugi wa Thiong'o & Ngugi wa Mirii's *I Will Marry When I Want*. Through a comprehensive analysis, it unravels the multifaceted dynamics at play in the African colonial context. The

analysis sheds light on the colonial propaganda machinery which employed electronic media and misinformation during World War II to assert colonial authority. This juxtaposition of colonial narratives against the harsh realities of war exemplifies the theme of colonial deception. Resistance emerges as a central motif, with African characters challenging colonial ideologies through counter-discourse. The appropriation of indigenous cultural symbols for European entertainment and the disdain for African traditions by colonizers underscore the cultural hegemony imposed by colonial powers.

I Will Marry When I Want further explores post-independence disillusionment, emphasizing the economic exploitation and land dispossession perpetuated by an emergent national bourgeoisie in collusion with foreign interests. The study highlights how modernity often falls short of its promise, leaving the majority marginalized. The legacy of colonialism continues to influence African societies, shaping power structures and socioeconomic disparities. The study underscores the enduring relevance of these themes in contemporary discourse, echoing **Biodun** Jeyifo's call to re-evaluate the intricate connection between colonialism and modernity. It ultimately serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring impact of colonialism and the complexities of its relationship with modernity in the African context.

Works Cited

Amin, Samir. *Eurocentrism*. London: Zeal book, 1988.

Benedict, Binebai. "Literature and Identity: African and the Diasporic Experience". *The Dawn Journal*, 2(1): 2013.

Cesaire, Aime. *Discourse on Colonialism*. Paris: Editions Reclame, 1950.

Dowden, Richard. *Africa: Altered States, Ordinary Miracles*. PublicAffairs: NYC, 2008.

Elias, Norbert. *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners Vol. 1*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1969.

Ferguson, Niall. "Britain Should Apologize for its Colonial Past? On the Contrary." *The Telegraph*. 2014.

Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Harvard University Press, 1994.

De Gobineau, Arthur. *The Inequality of Human Races*, trans. Adrian Collins. New York, 1967.

Jeyifo, Biodun. "In the Wake of Colonialism and Modernity." *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*, edited by Tejumola Olaniyan and Ato Quayson, Blackwell Publishing, 2007, pp. 607-613. https://doi.org/10.3406/calib.2000.1391

Kerr, David. *African Popular Theatre; From Pre-Colonial Times to the Present Day*. London, James Currey, 1996.

Levy-Bruhl, Lucien. *Primitive Mentality*. Paris: University of France Press, 1947.

McNeill, William H. "The Rise of the West' after Twenty-Five Years." *Journal of World History*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1990, pp. 1–21. JSTOR.

Ngugi, wa Thiong'o. *Decolonizing the Mind*. London: Heinemann, 1990

Olaniyan, Tejumola. "The Affirmative, the Interstitial: Biodun Jeyifo and Inventory of Postcolonial Theory and Criticism." *Journal of the African Literature Association*, vol. 12, no. 1. pp. 1-7, 2018.

Pippin, Robert. *Idealism as Modernism: Hegelian Variations*.

Cambridge University Press, 1997.

---. Modernism as a Philosophical Problem. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1993.

Soyinka, Wole. *Death and the King's Horseman*. London: Eyre Methuen, 1975.

Spivak, Gayatri. *Can the Subaltern Speak: Reflections on the History of an Idea*. Columbia University Press, 2010.

Ngugi, wa Thiong'o and Ngugi, wa, Mirii. *I Will Marry When I Want*. Portsmouth, Heinemann Educational Books. 1982.

Spivak, Gayatri. *Can the Subaltern Speak: Reflections on the History of an Idea*. Columbia University Press, 2010.