

Resistance And Colonial Discourse In Maishe Maponya's The Hungry Earth

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Abstract

This paper investigates resistance and colonial discourse in Maishe Maponya's play *The Hungry Earth* to reveal the role that imperialism played in South Africa to dominate oppress and silence the African people. For this purpose, the theoretical framework of postcolonial theory is adopted throughout the paper to reveal how imperialism and apartheid regimes have dominated and subjugated Africans for a long period and shed light on the sufferings of Africans, especially mine workers. Using a postcolonial theory, this article makes the African sounds heard even if their sounds are voices made by their boots purposely used to create their discourse.

Keywords: Apartheid, colonial discourse, oppression, regime, subjugation.

1. Introduction

Different factors influenced different African peoples and societies, as Southern Africa witnessed the emergence of many movements in reaction to the apartheid regimes dominating Africans for a long period. Lands, for example, in white colonies were taken from Africans and given to Europeans. In response to these hegemonic actions, some chiefs organized rebellions against British colonial authorities. As assured by Ian Steadman (1981), black South African theatre is not pure literary work, but is a kind of politically steeped literature:

"It is more than a genre, a movement or a posture based on ethnicity. The label expresses more important notions of identification with a set of values. These values fall under the

rubric of the Black Consciousness movement, and they define an attitude to the nature and function of performance in southern African society. Most black theatre is really a proletarian theatre which dedicates itself to the depiction of life lived as a black man; and in South Africa, that has to do with politics and ideology" (p. 2)

The playwrights believed that "Postcolonial theatre can be more extensive than the relatively isolated circumstances of written narrative and poetry" (Lokangaka & Sarinjeivi, 1996, p. 3). The performance of these plays functions as an anti-imperial tool. Postcolonial literature in general and postcolonial drama in particular resists imperialism and its effects. Stephen Slemon considers these plays as "It is a form of cultural criticism and cultural critique mode of misidentifying whole societies from the sovereign codes of cultural organization and an inherently dialectical dream native of the intervention in the hegemonic production of cultural meaning" (Helen Gilbert & Joanne Tompkins, 1996, p. 3).

The work of early South African playwrights, such as Gibson Kente, is very important in the time of development of black drama. Although his work is different from the works of successors like Maishe Maponya, Lewis Nkosi, and Bongeni Ngema, Kente is considered the founding father of black township theatre. Through his plays, Kente connected with local audiences; not only by entertaining them with laughter, music, and dance, but also by dealing with social issues such as crime, poverty, and apartheid. The question of displacement caused by the apartheid laws is also addressed by Kente (Okwui & Achebe, 2001).

The Western influence on African drama evidently appeared in Maishe Maponya's works. In particular, Maponya used some Brechtian elements in his writings; "Two decades earlier Brecht thought of adding new elements giving birth to a new aesthetics and noticing the importance of creating a new theatrical language being concerned with engaging the theatre audience with the action taking place on the stage" (Wittenberg, 2008, p. 10).

With that being said, Maponya engaged his audience using his actors, as the audience has an important role to perform on the stage. In doing so, he reveals the black culture buried by the white settlers, where the restoration of black consciousness is very much in the same spirit as that of Ngugi. Against this, this paper argues that concerning post-colonial violence, the change of the discourse on Africa resists the dominant discourses propagated by Europeans and taken up by Africans, justifying European colonialism and continued unequal relations. The conceptual framework adopted in this study is provided in the following section.

2. Conceptual Framework

Postcolonial theory is largely concerned with giving dominated and oppressed people their voices and identity back. Resistance, therefore, is one of the main conceptual concerns of this theory. Simon During explains “The postcolonial desire is the desire of decolonized communities for an identity” (Ashcroft et al., 1989, p. 125). Edward Said is considered the founder of the postcolonial theory, as his book *Orientalism* (1978) established the scientific approach to this theory. In *Orientalism*, Said paid great attention to the misrepresentation of the East in the Western works and the colonial discourse embedded within their canonical works.

According to Edward Said, postcolonialism is based on what he considers the false image of the “Orient” created by the Europeans. Said explains “The Orient as such is a purely European invention and orientalism as a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the “Orient” and “most of the time” the Occident” (1978, p.2). Said also affirms “Because of Orientalism, the Orient was not “and is not” a free subject of thought or action”.

In the same vein, Said continues “This is not to say that Orientalism unilaterally determines what can be said about the Orient, but that it is the whole network of interest inevitably brought to bear on any occasion when that peculiar entity the Orient is in question.” Said was convinced that “The Orient was Orientalized not only because it was discovered to be Oriental in all those ways considered commonplace by an average nineteenth-century European, but also it could be—

that is, submitted to being- made Oriental” (5-6). The textual analysis embraced in this study is furnished in the next section.

3. Textual Analysis

In *The Hungry Earth*’s play, Maponya is concerned with the restrictions imposed on Africans, how the regime deprived them of the right to enjoy their freedom on their land, and how they are sent to jail if they do not follow the rules. Usiviko explains the situation:

Most of us were requested to produce passes and permits. Those who failed to produce spent two weeks in jail and were deported to their respective homes on their release. This is the inhuman and unjust procedure to endorse the unjust laws that make another stranger in the land of his birth and rob him of his freedom to move wherever he wants. Is freedom not the law of nature? Then what? (Maponya, 1983, p.16)

Maponya’s *The Hungry Earth* intends its audience to visualize how the apartheid system systematically destroyed blacks with these passed laws, serving as major restrictions for blacks. Undeniably, after they died in ambiguous circumstances, a black man was arrested because he did not possess a pass, and Nelson Mandela, the leader of the African National Congress, a resistance group announced that the time has come for guns and nobody can end this oppression but revolution.

In *The Hungry Earth*, Maponya tries to separate his fellows from their identity under colonial oppression and resurrect a pre-colonial identity with its culture, traditions, and history. Throughout the play, Maponya describes the bad conditions of work for black men and women. He is concerned with their sufferings, their struggle to survive, and their extreme poverty. Blacks were deprived of the right to live with their families, as they could not have a place to stay. In response to these bad conditions, comes a kind of nostalgia for the old days of a generation earlier, appearing clearly in Matlhoko’s words:

You remember when we started here way back in the 50’en we were still young boys you could hardly, only xhosa speak Sesotho of course I did not trust you. Yoo! Who could trust a xhosa lad anyway? They laugh you remember we thought we

would work ourselves up, bring our families down here and buy a (Buick master road) but here we are now still struggling and about to die (Maponya, 1983, p.20)

In most of the histories of revolutions, revolution always starts with masses of workers who try to release themselves from domination; armed revolution will be their last chance for salvation from the imperial powers. The Marxist Workers Tendency wrote in 1982:

The revolution will be a workers' revolution or it will be no revolution at all.....unless armed struggle is developed as the struggle of the working masses, as an expression and extension of their organized strength, their social aims, and their need to change society (Armed Struggle and Democracy: The Case of South Africa, 1982, p.1).

The Hungry Earth introduces the voice of the rebellious workers in South Africa, the voice of the working class, and the masses that refuse domination, humiliation, slavery, and subjugation. For these workers, Africa itself has become a hungry earth that eats its people. This movement burst in South Africa and was essentially a movement of the working class majority in the country; organized and unorganized, young and old, men, and women.

In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha argues that Fanon recognizes "The crucial importance, for subordinated peoples, is of asserting their indigenous cultural traditions and retrieving their repressed histories. These repressed memories push the natives to reject their present situation and to rebel against the hegemony of their oppressor" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 9).

To retrieve the history of the oppressed people, their voices must be heard. In *The Hungry Earth*, the voice of the singing warrior rings out:

Stand up all ye brave of Africa

Stand up and get to battle

Where our brothers die in numbers

Africa you are bewitched

But our black blood will flow

To water the tree of our freedom (1983, p.10).

The origin of the black consciousness movement lies in the late 1960s, primarily under the leadership of Steve Biko. It was not restricted to blacks, but included also those who, in apartheid terminology, were called colored “black and white” and Indians “people of South Asian decent”. The plays produced by the movement express their message with vitality and vigor, and the black community became the protagonist of the new theatre. Boyce argues that “the audience recovered its traditional role as part of the theatrical event, which is non-existent in the modern Western theatre” (Boyce Davies, 2008, p.182).

Maponya like other writers in the movement faced a lot of obstacles at the beginning of the performance of his career. The author and his actors were punished to prevent them from performing since they were considered anti-white and their works reveal the cruelty and inhumanity of the white settler.

Another significant contribution to the development of black theatre in South Africa is the plays of Athol Fugard. Fugard declares that “His theatre is a theatre of defiance,” “I try to relate the very real issues of today to my plays, and perhaps you could describe it as “theatre of defiance”. “Yes, my object is to defy. I am protesting against the conspiracy of silence, about how the man lives and what happens to groups other than ours”. Fugard exposes the destructive toll that apartheid exacts on the human dignity of both blacks and whites (Wittenberg, 2008, 149).

The theatrical language employed in all of the black consciousness works comprises dance, movement, music, and poetry; elements rooted in traditional South African oral literature; to emphasize the African Heritage which the Europeans tried to eliminate. In *Task and Masks: Themes and Style of African Literature*, Lewis Nkosi (1981) proclaims “The relationship between language and national cultures cannot be strongly emphasized. Like other people, black Africans possess a rich and living heritage in philosophy, ethics, religion and artistic creation, and the deepest roots embedded in the rich soil of African language”. He adds “This effort to

repossess tradition would mean not only the opening of the syntax rigid frame, disclosing metaphysics from proverbs and poetry, but also extracting social philosophy and habits of moral thought from the rhythm, imagery, sometimes from the very circumlocution of native African speech" (1981, p. 3). Maponya believes in the power of theatre to affect, change, spread, and raise awareness among the people of what the regime is doing to them, and to people who belong to groups other than their society. Torn between two languages, English and the indigenous language, African theater has overcome this problem in part by focusing on body language, gesture, songs, and dances; all of these theatrical tools are used by African playwrights to emphasize their African identity regardless of the language they use on stage. This new visual and artistic grammar is a liberating tool of expression in black South African theatre's attempt to achieve self-affirmation and bring consciousness to the African people (1983, pp.153-162).

Maponya introduces his readers to the gumboot dance, which is a symbol of South African mine workers and the absent African culture that Maponya strives to return to life. The gumboot dance is developed from traditional African roots to become a part of urban South African working-class culture. The practice began with rural laborers who came to work in the gold mines of Witwatersrand in South Africa, bringing with them strong traditions of rhythm, song, and dance. Facing oppression and hardship in the mines, including punishment if they talked to each other while working, they were forced to adapt and create new forms of communication and entertainment. The fact that many ethnic groups and languages existed side by side also contributed to developing the dance through the shared language of rhythm and music. Silenced by force, they invented a dance with an emphasis on body language used instead of words- a kind of- African voice or form of expression that can be heard everywhere. This dance is still popular in South Africa, reminding people of their oppressed grandfathers and the horrible days they lived in the colonial periods. In *The Hungry Earth*, the defiant sound of the miners' boots is carried on the wind; continuing their dance represents their resistance to the silence that is imposed on them and the bad conditions of their work. Matlhoko in *The Hungry Earth* listens to the angry wind and tells Beshwana

“But their anger cannot go beneath this earth. It is quite there. A traditional gum-boot dance with song” (1983, p.17). The audience also becomes involved in this dance, as if announcing their readiness to struggle and rebel against the imperial powers.

Gayatri Spivak explains “There is no space from which the subaltern subject can speak”, as she inspects “the absence of a text that can “answer one back” after the planned epistemic violence of the imperialist project” (2006, p.36). Similarly, when Beshwana in *The Hungry Earth* tries to talk to Jannie “a white miner”, Jannie replies “I didn’t ask your opinion. Do you want to argue with me when I tell you to work?” (1983, p.17) Also, “The story of colonialism which Spivak reconstructs is of an interactive process where the European agent in consolidating the imperialist sovereign self, induces the native to collude in its subject(ed) formation as other and voiceless” (2006, p.36)

Maponya’s theatre tries to prove to the world that Africans are aware of the traditional, cultural, political, and social problems of their society and wish to effect a revitalization of the culture after colonialism. *The Hungry Earth* focuses on the resistance against the inhuman activities managed by the regime throughout long years of oppression. It reveals the bad conditions of the African mine workers. Now that the black workers suffer from disease, hunger, poverty, and bad conditions, this play is very much concerned with conveying the pathetic conditions of African society during the apartheid regime. It demonstrates the extent to which blacks were dehumanized; In the opening scene of the play, Maponya introduces the reader to the angry masses; the actors take positions and sing:

Wake up mother Africa

Wake up

Time has run out

And all opportunity is wasted

Wake up mother Africa

Wake up

Before the white man rapes you

Wake up mother Africa (8).

By these words, Maponya announces that it is time for cultural, social, and economic revolution. The play reveals the fact that under the apartheid regime, the black natives were seen as a cheap labor force for various industries, the most important one was the gold mining industry. Many black South Africans were enslaved to work in the gold mines, where they were denied their basic rights and needs. The regime treated them as if they were animals, having no right to complain or ask. They were also deprived of their basic rights and prevented from expressing their feelings or themselves. Maponya exhorts his fellow South Africans to resist, to claim their place, and not to let the hungry earth swallow them, saying:

We will rise up

Bleeding through the days of poverty

We will fight hard

We will rise up

Dying in the stubborn hungry earth

We will fight hard

We will rise up

And we will sing loud (1983, p.6).

Now, the natives announce their revolution and confirm that they are ready to fight, and they will never allow their hungry earth to swallow them. They are trying to find a place of equality in the social, and economic world of the whites. Matlhoko announces "Those were the ugly days lived by our great grandfathers. The days of ISANDLWANA and the days of UMGUNGUDLOVU. The days when our forefathers fought hard for what was theirs, for mother Africa" (10).

Frantz Fanon in "The Wretched of the Earth" does not regard the culture of the colonized in Africa as "African culture" at all! On the contrary, the culture of the colonized is for him a starkly colonial projection, bespeaking a colonial logic that, from the standpoint of the colonized masses themselves,

cannot be reduced except through the destruction of colonialism itself" (Fanon, 1963, p.169).

The long years of silence led the Africans to rebel against domination and hegemony. The colonial powers sieged the colonizer in one static image; he is just a black voiceless object. The colonial powers never allowed the colonized to represent themselves; they imprisoned them in the colonial discourse that they could not get rid of even after long years of liberation. Now, the time has come to free them after long years of domination. In this spirit, in *The Hungry Earth*, Beshwana addresses the colonizer:

Beshwana: You are a stranger, a foreigner. By your labor you merely repaid your debt to our country, your debt to the country that extended its hospitality to you for two hundred years.

Umlungu: and why do you want to kill us today? What right have you to look upon yourselves as citizens and upon me as a foreigner? (1983, p.9)

In The Archaeology of Knowledge, Michel Foucault (1972) tries to capture in a discourse the set of things said in a topic, in all its interrelations, and transformations. Foucault explains that documentation can be a very efficient technique of power used to fix and objectify people and that this is what the imperial powers try to do all the time. The natives are treated like slaves that can work without wages awful as dumb objects that have no feelings and no demands and are always ready to obey their masters. Long years of oppression, humiliation, and subjugation led these silent objects to start armed resistance against the colonizer who had enslaved them for years.

As previously suggested, imperialism dominated Africa for a certain purpose; its apparent mission was to civilize the savages while its hidden mission was to control the land and the wealth of the land. We can hear some black voices in *The Hungry Earth* speak for the sake of the colonizers, appreciating what they have done and attacking those who stand against their rule. For example, Sethotho says:

Sethotho: You speak of being robbed, you bastards?
 How can you say such things about Umlungu?
 Before he came you were savages singing
 onto the trees and eating bananas. You
 deserted your culture and allowed the hides
 and wood to rot in the fields...you lived like
 wild animals: now you can live like human
 beings (1983, p.8)

In his preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*, John Paul Sartre announces “the failure of the European mission of civilizing the unruly world and creating instead a colonial world infested with racism, prejudice, and violence. Fanon himself “confirms that colonialism is an instrument of systematic dehumanization” (1964, p.53). In other words, through discursive and violent measures, colonialism strived to undermine, degrade, and limit the colonized people’s appreciation of their humanity; once the colonized had internalized their prescribed inferiority, they would then accept domination.

Besides, Bhabha says that,

A barrel of gunpowder may be harmless or may explode, but you cannot educate it into household fuel by exploding little bits of it. How can you possibly teach great masses of people that they ought to be rather dissatisfied with a foreign ruler, but not much; that they should express their discontent in words and in votes, but not in acts; that they should ask from him this and that reform, but should on no account rise in insurrection against him? (1994, p. 184)

Maponya brings to life the cruelty of the mines which is the hungry earth that eats its children. He describes the workers’ horror when heavy rocks fall and crush some of them. Showing how cruel this earth is when it swallowed the miners with no mercy, and how hungry this earth is.

A woman hysterical and crying says:

Oh, how cruel this earth is, our men will never stop dying to feed this hungry earth. Today I have no place to stay.... My husband has died digging for gold which would help to prop

up the apartheid system....My man is eaten by the hungry earth (22).

One of the Africans admits that he helped create this monster that slaughtered the natives; and regrets at helping the colonizer achieve the imperial mission in Africa. Every colonial regime depends to some degree on the indigenous people themselves to help it feed its greed.

Matlhoko: I looked back into the tunnel where my brothers were being eaten by this hungry earth. I cursed the white man and questioned the very existence for God for it was my sweat and my bones and blood that made Egoli what it is today (18).

The white rulers deprived the Africans of their right to receive treatment in the same hospitals as whites. Hospitals were restricted for Europeans. Once again, Matlhoko says "When the two ambulances arrived, we limped towards them but only Jannie was allowed into the one. The other turned back because the two ambulances were for the white people only" (18).

This discrimination created an inferiority complex that Fanon refers to in *Black Skin, White Masks*. He recalls how he dealt with one black patient who was suffering from an inferiority complex. Ultimately, he concludes, the source of the illness was exterior to the man, and so to reassure the patient, to encourage him to be content with his life as it was, would be equivalent to the colonizer's message of "keep your place" (1986, p.98).

Fanon asserts that the colonized people rejected their real identity for the sake of the new one of the colonizer. For Fanon, this is because "if the black is overwhelmed to such a degree by the wish to be white, it is because he lives in a society that makes his inferiority complex possible, in a society that derives its stability from the perpetuation of this complex, in a society that proclaims the superiority of one race" (1967: 100). Fanon writes. After all, "That society creates difficulties for him." The patient if he wants to be cured, must stand up in opposition to it" (100). The words of Setholo prove this saying "Without even considering the

weight of the risk, I stood up passing the dead bodies of my brothers just to save this sole white man”(18).

Similarly, in *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Albert Memmie explains that “In colonialist mythology, the colonized is a litany of faults and inadequacies. He is unbelievably lazy at the same time this authorizes his low wages”. He continues “The colonized is asked only for his muscles; he is so poorly evaluated that three or four can be taken on for the price of one European” (1965, p.29). In Maponya’s play, the conversation between the Visitor and the workers reflects this:

Visitor: What does he pay you?

Sethotho: He gives me 50c.

Visitor: Tell when do you work?

Batswana: We start at 5am and knock off at 3:00 in the afternoon.

Visitor: When is your lunch?

Sethotho: We don’t go to lunch.

In “Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization” Octave Mannoni suggests that colonizers must behave as they do: if they had behaved in a different way they would never be colonizers. After long years of domination, *The Hungry Earth* seeks authentication of the enslaved African subject in violence against the European masters. The chorus keeps singing “Wake up Mother Africa”; Africa has lost its consciousness for hundreds of years, and now the time has come to wake up from its enslavement, but this will never happen without armed resistance.

This is what underlies Beshwan’s announcement “Umlungu deserves to die: “Let us set out to catch him we will hang him from the nearest tree. They betrayed us servants must also be killed: let us kill the whole lot” (1983, p.8). Umlunguis, who is the white man stealing their wealth, their life, and their freedom, is the one who enslaved them, tortured them, and made them and their families starve to

death. He deserves to be killed; otherwise, he will continue his domination. Violence is the answer.

On the other hand, More (1994) confirms that “Fanon sees the situation of blacks as markedly different from the mythical and metaphysical Hegelian master and slave relationship”. He argues “In Black and White relationships, the master (white) never indicates an interest in the consciousness of the slave (black) what is important for the masters according to Fanon, is not recognition but the slave labor” (1994, p.5). The description in Maponya’s play of the place where the Africans work emphasizes that what the colonizer wants from the colonized is not recognition but oil.

In *The Hungry Earth*, a siren sounds. The lights fade for scene underground:

The mine workers gather at the cage to begin their night shift. The cage descends: it slows down to a shuddering halt, and they swarm out like ants to their various places of work. They stoop low, twist and turn to avoid the wooden props which pit their strength against the full weight of the rocky roof that presses down on their crouching heads (17).

Humiliation, degradation, and enslavement will lead to one solution which is armed resistance. One can quote the words of Nelson Mandela when he announced in front of his people and at the early beginning of a revolution in South Africa, “The more we are oppressed, the more we fight back; and he continued: 50 years of peaceful resistance did nothing, now it is time for guns .”

The resistance bursting out was not peaceful but it was violent, and the black people started their battle to regain their black consciousness. The natives witnessed murder and death and faced hunger and horror; therefore, in response to these conditions, as we might expect, was violent and terrible: As Matlhoko says:

Yes, we were forced to go down in Carletonville though we knew that this earth was hungry. Who could listen to our cries? Yes, never will I forget that bloody Sharpeville for I was there in 1960 when an anti-pass campaign was opened (1983, p.19).

The [Sharpeville massacre](#) which happened after a day of demonstrations against [pass laws](#) resulted in the deaths of 69 black Africans and contributed to deteriorating relations with the South African government. On 8 April 1960, the administration of [Charles Robberts Swart](#) banned the African National Congress (ANC) and forced the party to leave South Africa. After the ban, the ANC formed the [Umkhonto we Sizwe](#) (Spear of the Nation) which was the armed wing of the [African National Congress](#) to fight against apartheid utilizing [guerrilla warfare](#) and sabotage.

The world built by the colonist system considers all that is white to be good and all that is black is bad. According to them, the black lacks reason that will enable them to think for themselves. This appears clearly in *The Hungry Earth* when the Compound Manager says, "Yes sir, anything may happen- they are about to destroy everything- they are wild- come quickly" (1963, p.19). To throw off the shackles of colonialism, Fanon argued "Colonized peoples have no other choice but to meet the physical and emotional acts of violence of the colonist with a violence of the same magnitude, until the last become first" (1963, p.10).

In *The Hungry Earth*, Jannie, a white miner, does not do the hard physical work, but inspects the work face and gives orders only, as seen in his words "Tonight I want holes to be drilled here...and here...and here...and here". When Beshawan answers him "Sorry, master, this area may not be suitable, and besides, the rock seems wet. Immediately Jannie replies sharply "I did not want your opinion. Do you want to argue with me when I tell you to work?" (1983, p.17) Similarly, Usiviko addresses Umlungu and explains to him why all of the black miners hate him and want to kill him, saying:

You are about to leave this country with all the wealth we sweated our lives for. You underpaid us and celebrated when we were starving. You gave us mirrors and knives in exchange for cattle. You have never set foot on those vast tracts of land that are still in their virgin state (Maponya, P.9).

As Hegel asserts, what the master wants from the slave is only work. However, this relentless focus on the instrumentality and exploitation of the land and its people sparks a reaction. As a result, the Africans start to think of the land as it was in

the time of their fore-fathers before the invasion of the imperial powers as Matholko says:

When this land started giving birth to ugly days, things started going wrong from the moment of dawning and peace went into exile, to become a thing of the wilderness. Yes, we experienced the saddest days of our lives when Umlungu first came to these shores called Africa in his bloodshot dust-rimmed eyes; a total stranger from Europe. The garb he was dressed in, made him look like a jockey who had just had a fight with his horse for riding him for too long. We received him kindly. We gave him food. We gave him shelter. We adopted his ideas and his teaching (7).

Maponya tries to draw the attention of the audience to the political and ideological context of oppression in South Africa and the mines, as well as to the continued economic problems that the continent faces. In the prologue to *The Hungry Earth*, all of the miners die down and nobody cares about them:

Touched by our non-violent vibration

We will rise up

We will sing while we crawl to the mine

We will rise up

Bleeding through the days of poverty

We will fight hard

Dying in the stubborn hungry earth

We will fight hard (6).

The apartheid regime considered them as people, not in a position to consciously take action against their oppressor and life in general. Instead, they had to think, act, and behave the way they were dictated to by the apartheid system as though it was their property. Aimé Césaire explains what happened to the natives ruled by the imperial powers for many years, confirming “The colonized destroyed the corps of the natives, he has stolen their lands, and all of the agricultural development was oriented solely toward the

benefit of the metropolitan countries; about the looting of products and raw materials” (1995, p. 6).

Fanon used the terms “containment” and “negation” to analyze the colonial situation. Imperial containment, as described by Fanon, works on the physical, psychological, social, and economic aspects of the life of the colonized. Fanon labeled colonialism as an act of complete violence, an act that can only be confronted with revolutionary violence, i.e. the violence of liberation. The ultimate objective of such resistance is to change the political and economic reality of the colonized and to re-create a society that rules itself and that can rebuild itself. Matlhoko again expresses this powerfully:

Yes, my wish was misplaced for I was one of the Basotho who were driven by hunger and drought from the confines of their rugged mountains in those days it seemed as though the god of the white man from over the sea had stamped his feet in anger upon this land for the first time since its creation. Obviously many of us were coming to the mines for first time...the older men put the blame on the younger generation that had put their faith in the mystical gods of Europe foolishly forgetting the old and safe ways of the nation’s ancestors. (Maponya, 1983: 14)

The rule of violence extensively discussed in this article is a constituent part of Fanon’s concept of “anti-colonial freedom”. The colonized man finds his freedom through violence. Ernesto Laclau describes, the constitution of a social identity as an act of power:

If....an objectivity manages to partially affirm itself it is only by repressing that which threatens it. Derrida has shown how an identities constitution is always based on excluding something and establishing a violent hierarchy between the two resultant poles- man/woman, etc. what is peculiar to the second term is thus reduced to the function of an accident as opposed to the essentiality of the first. It is the same with the black white relationship, in which white, of course, is equivalent to human being. Woman and black are thus marks in contrast to the unmarked terms of man and white (Cited in: Hall, 1996, p.5)

In the same context, Achebe confirms “the colonialist mind is convinced that he knows his natives, this claim is to prove that the native is quite simple and that controlling this native and understanding him went together all of the time” (Achebe, 1975, p.5). Achebe explains that “thus in the heydays of colonialism any serious incident of native unrest, carrying as it did disquieting intimations of slipping control was an occasion not only for pacification by the soldier but also for an inquiry” (Ashcroft et al., 1995, p.58). The colonizer created “the man of two worlds” to prove that no matter how much the native was exposed to European influences, those influences would never truly be absorbed. The colonized might drop the mask of civilization at any moment and go back to the primitive nature of the Africans.

In *The Hungry Earth*, Umlungu represents the voice of the colonizer, who cannot not believe that the natives have acquired European education, and begun to challenge Europe’s presence, and position in their native land, using the colonizer’s weapons to resist the colonizer. He addresses Usiviko and all of the natives:

What have I done to deserve your enmity? During the two hundred years I dwelt to you I taught you to live a better life. I brought amongst you the wisdom and fertility of Europe. Why is it then that you are after my blood, that you want to kill me and my family? (p. 9)

The colonial powers very often, in something like this way, represented the imposition of their culture as a gift. Raphael Dalleo reminds his readers of Hegel’s assertion that the African is outside history, that “Africa is no historical part of the world”; this, Hegel asserts, is simply because history is the story of “civilization”. (2006) In *The Hungry Earth*, Beshwana defends his people and his country, and proclaims that Africa has an important history before the presence of the colonizer:

How dare you curse my people like that! We blew the horns, we beat the drums and we sang the song Ngelethu Mawethu* it (the land) is ours, my people When this land was unknown to the white skins! Shit! We gave culture to the world. (8)

Similarly, in a speech at the Congress of Black African Writers, Fanon asserted that:

A national culture under colonial domination is a contested culture whose destruction is sought in systematic fashion. It very quickly becomes a culture condemned to secrecy. This idea of clandestine culture is immediately seen in the reactions of the occupying power which interprets attachment to traditions as faithfulness to the spirit of the nation and as a refusal to submit. This persistence in following forms of culture which are already condemned to extinction is already a demonstration of nationality; but it is a demonstration which is a throw-back to the laws of inertia (The Congress of Black African Writers, 1959).

Hegel called world history “A court of judgment, a world court, and he took Africans before that court and found them to be barbaric, cannibalistic preoccupied with fetishes, without history, and without any consciousness of freedom” (Stuart, 1998, p.41). In *The Hungry Earth*, Sethotho “the colonizer’s voice” says:

Sethotho: how can you say such things about Umlungu?
 Before he came you were savages swinging
 onto the trees and eating bananas. You
 deserted your culture and allowed the hides
 and wood to rot in the fields. You lived like
 wild animals, now you live like human beings.
 But no, you ungrateful creatures (1983, p.8).

As cited above, Umlungu himself tries to negotiate for his life.

The massacres and extreme violence that spread out in South Africa brought the idea of negotiation to the mind of the colonizer, as he wished to call a ceasefire that would enable him to regroup and regain his power. This echoes real history in South Africa when the apartheid regime proposed to free Nelson Mandela from his imprisonment if he agreed to calm down his people. Violence, however, is not easily controlled; Mandela faced the opposition of his people when he announced that he was ready to negotiate under certain conditions. The angry masses are not easily appeased on their land, which they do not wish to share. Mandela tried to

convince them to embrace peaceful resistance and electoral change, ultimately with success.

4. Conclusion

In a nutshell, even after independence, South Africa is marked by the ongoing practices of the colonial period, which led seamlessly into apartheid. South Africa is considered up to today a white colony where the black lead, but the white is still the only one authorized to write down the strategies of the country. Under these circumstances, one wonders whether post-colonial theory added something to South African literature. Did this theory succeed in analyzing the South African texts in a way that allowed people to rebuild their narratives? Are they still living in colonial conditions even in the post-colonial period? Vagueness still surrounds the usefulness of this theory in South Africa.

This article has raised the question of whether postcolonial theory succeeded in South Africa, and whether it succeeded in revealing the hierarchies and erasing the boundaries previously built. Do these narratives written after the end of colonialism reflect the new world, or are they just a kind of response to an appalling request that comes out from some governmental powers for a specific reason? What we are sure about is that negotiations and freedom seem doomed in these works to lead to a reassertion of domination and that only violence can grasp freedom.

At the same level, for example, negotiations in Palestine with the Israeli party have recently led the nation to nowhere, causing more and more violence, protest, and resistance. The hungry earth, accordingly, will never stop eating its people until it is free again, and the voices here and there that call for coexistence between black and white, colonized and colonizer are silenced.

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