

Acknowledgments

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A Special feeling of gratitude goes to my loving parents, sisters and brother who have been a source of inspiration and strength, all along this path.

I am very pleased and honored to dedicate the fruit of my efforts to my grand-parents who have recently passed away.

This work is also dedicated to some of my relatives who have supported me and believed in me.

YASMINE

This work is lovingly dedicated to my mother, and my dead father whose encouragement and support will never be forgotten. To my beloved brothers, all my family from near and far, and all my friends.

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Abstract

This work explores the representation of the concepts of Appropriation and Abrogation in Camara Laye's *The Dark Child* (1953) and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Weep Not Child* (1964). This comparative study aims to provide an insight into the colonial effect on the indigenous African identity and land, they explore the themes of the cultural values, and exploitation, they also illustrate how these natives have resisted and struggled to preserve their cultural identities in the face of colonial pressures. To achieve our purpose, we have relied on Homi K. Bhabha's theory *The Location of Culture* (1994) by using some of his concepts such as 'Mimicry', 'The Third Space' ...etc. In the first chapter of the dissertation, we have examined the occurrence of Appropriation in Camara Laye's autobiographical novel *The Dark Child*, and Ngugi's *Weep Not, Child*, they analyze the protagonists negotiation with colonial education and its impact on traditional values, highlighting the tension between assimilation and cultural preservation. In the second chapter, we have dealt with Abrogation in the two novels, emphasizing on the characters' confrontation with similarly cultural and political dilemmas. We have concluded that this two African works share many affinities, and the study of the two writings demonstrate a dynamic interplay between adaptation and resilience.

Key words: Appropriation, Abrogation, indigenous, African identity, cultural identities, colonial pressures, Mimicry, The Third Space, colonial education, traditional values.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	i
Dedications	ii
Abstract	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Introduction	1
a. Review of Literature	2
b. Issue and Working Hypotheses	5
c. Methodological outline	6
Methods and Materials	7
a. Methods	7
1. The Post Colonial Appropriation	7
2. The Post Colonial Abrogation	8
b. Materials	9
1. Biographies	9
• Biography of Camara Laye	9
• Biography of Ngugi Wa Thiong’O	9
2. Synopses	11
• Synopsis of The Dark Child (1953)	11
• Synopsis of Weep Not, Child (1964)	12
Results	14
Discussion	16
Chapter one : Appropriation in Camara Laye’s The Dark Child(1953) and Ngugi Wa Thiong’O’s Weep Not Child (1954)	16
a- Appropriation in Camara Laye’s The Dark Child(1953)	16
1. Cultural Interaction	16
2. Tradition Vs Modernity	20
b- Appropriation in Ngugi Wa Thiongo’s Weep Not Child (1954)	22
1. Language Appropriation	22
2. Cultural Appropriation and Education	25
3. Economic Exploitation	29
4. Land Appropriation	30

Endnotes.....	33
Chapter Two : Abrogation in Camara Laye’s The Dark Child (1953) and Ngugi Wa Thiong’O’s Weep Not Child(1964)	36
a- Abrogation in Camara Laye’s The Dark Child (1953)	36
1. Native Norms Rejection	36
2. Personal Growth and Change.....	38
a- Abrogation in Ngugi Wa Thiong’O’s Weep Not Child (1964).....	41
1. Political Resistance	41
2. Assertion of Cultural Identity	43
3. Armed Resistance	44
Endnotes.....	47
Conclusion.....	49
Bibliography	51

Introduction

Post-colonial theory is a literary theory that deals with literature produced in regions that experienced colonial rule, it explores the effects of colonialism on the colonized nations focusing on cultural, political, and identity struggles. The Europeans succeeded in controlling the Africans by claiming that they came to Africa to spread civilization, and to contribute to the development of the continent. Through these false promises, all the African lands and properties were under the control of the colonizer. The colonized people were just simple workers for the interests of the colonizers and their families. African children were educated in ‘colonial school’ where their minds were controlled because they taught them that the African traditions and language were inferior comparing to the colonizer’s culture.

Camara Laye and Ngugi Wa Thiong’O are among many African writers who choose to use their pens to express the corruption, exploitation, and the injustice that their countries had experienced due to colonialism. In addition to this, they tried to give vivid images about their way of life, the traditions of their societies, and how much they were attached to their land and culture.

Our research is a comparative study, which is divided into two parts, the first one is interested in Appropriation and Abrogation in Camara Laye’s *The Dark Child* (1953), the second one focuses on Appropriation and Abrogation in *Weep Not, Child* (1964). This study aims to show the Affinities that are presented in both African works through the characters journey’s, and it sheds light on their struggles to maintain their identity and cultural values despite the hard conditions they lived in. Appropriation refers to the process by which colonized people adopt and adapt elements of the colonizer’s culture for their interests like language (French or English), to communicate with the foreigners, and to be understood when they write about their life and experiences.

We have also education that was a tool for empowerment to challenge and resist colonial rule. On the other hand, Abrogation involves the rejection of some elements that push the Africans to replace their customs and traditions by the western culture and western way of thinking, such as the colonial ideologies and narratives that portray Africans as marginalized or inferior, they also reject the imposition of Western religious beliefs, particularly Christianity.

Ngugi and Laye use the colonial language to narrate events rooted in their African contexts. Through their works, they engage in complex negotiations between adopting useful aspects of the colonial legacy, and rejecting those aspects that undermine their cultural autonomy. In order to better develop our issue, this study relies on Homi K. Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994) to understand the dynamics of identity, culture, and power in colonial and post-colonial contexts.

a- Review of the literature

Our reading of some of the literature written on Camara Laye's *The Dark Child* (1953) and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Weep Not Child* (1964) revealed that these works have been studied and analyzed from different perspectives, receiving a lot of critical attention.

To start with, Kodundo Allan's article "*Navigating the Spectrum of Autobiographical Writing: A Critique of Camara Laye's The African Child (2017)*" handled this novel from a literary and linguistic perspective, by examining Laye's portrayal of different aspects.

According to Allan (2017), most African countries, including Guinea, aimed to maintain a unified tribe with its traditions and heritage, as reflected in Laye's autobiography.

When Laye attended a French school, he faced a sort of colonial education under a class division and hierarchy where he remained resilient against the Western educational system as a rebellious native African who ought to preserve his identity. In addition, Africa was a source of spirituality as the author affirms through the memoir; a traditional Africa used to be

connected with spiritual beings and symbols as ‘ Laye’s father represents a black snake, he is considered to have mythical powers ’¹

The autobiography in the vision of the critic concludes with a sense of fulfillment as he successfully captures his African identity and cultural heritage, creating a universal experience that resonates across cultures.

Another critical attention to Laye’s work is provided by Ari Bagus Panuntun and Lysa Osmani in their work “*Romantic Primitivism and Literary Neocolonialism in Camara Laye’s Novel L’enfant Noir*” (2023). This article starts by examining the viewpoint of romantic primitivism in Camara Laye’s novel ‘as it gives insight into the beauty of guinea’s nature, with the depiction of its native people living a harmonious and peaceful life’². In fact, it does not mention the colonial government atrocities. Rather, it emphasizes on the idea that Africa is strongly linked to its ancestral and cultural beliefs and spirituality as it represents the cornerstone of primitivism.

However, Panuntun and Osmani delve into the phenomenon of literary neocolonialism by stating that publishers from colonial countries used to publish literary works from colonized countries for their political interests. They claim that, during the 1950s, African writers faced difficulties in publishing their works.

This fact led them to rely on French publishers like Plon. This was evidently for Plon’s benefit in creating an exotic literature about Africa ; going through different phases, the title was changed from "L’Enfant de Guinée" into "L’Enfant noir" to appeal more to French readers and emphasize black identity. Additionally, the author's name was inverted from Abdoulaye Camara to Camara Abdoulaye for easier recall by Western readers though it reflects a lack of understanding of African cultural identity. ‘The omission of "Abdoul" from the surname aimed to maintain a romanticized view of Africa in the novel and avoid associations with Arabic names’³.

Having reviewed some critical perspectives on Camara Laye's autobiography *The Dark Child*, which explores his childhood in Guinea, now we shift our focus to Ngugi Wa Thiong'O's *Weep Not, Child*, a novel set during the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya.

In the article entitled *Futility of Violence in Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's Weep Not, Child*, R. Rajini Beulah Shobika (2021) argues that violence is not a solution to any problem, it makes the situation worse and more complicated, it is an act that brings no results other than negative ones that harm the individual, society, and the country. She expresses all the violent manifestations that had been presented in the novel reflecting the harsh realities of colonial Kenya, and its impact on individuals and communities, 'Once Jacobo compelled the strikers to return to their work, Ngotho was very much angry and he started attacking Jacobo and it initiated a riot. As a consequence of it, Ngotho was expelled from his job and the land'⁴

Ngotho's experience of losing, and facing harsh living conditions under the colonial rule leads him to exhibit violence, other acts can be presented by the evil effects of the Mau Mau rebellion on Njoroge's education 'Njoroge was sent out of school in order to be investigated by the police.'⁵

The second article entitled *Theme of Exploitation In Ngugi Wa Thiong'O'S Weep Not Child* by Esac Sayyad Shaikh and Dr. Shahaji Rajaram Karande (2023). It explores the theme of exploitation against the British colonial rule in Kenya. T.N. Dhar comments 'In *Weep Not Child*, the weep not child is at the center of the novel for he has the fear of being exploited at the hands of others'⁶. Njoroge witnesses the injustice faced by his family and community under the colonial rule, this made him fear exploitation, as he is an African especially through missionary education.

At the beginning, Njoroge did not want to become like his father, to work for the whites. He took education as a means to a better life for him and his family. But later, things turned out

in another way that is his favorite book 'the Bible' influenced him by changing his vision as the writers said 'Soon he became a slave to the western values that cut him off from his native roots'. He began to believe in the idea of brotherhood between the whites and the blacks, he do not consider the colonizer as an enemy. The writers reveal the exploitative nature of the colonial education with its impact on the minds of Kenyan children 'They act as agents of the British in exploiting their own people for their materialistic gains. They are at once the exploited as well as the exploiters.'⁷

b- Issue and Working Hypotheses

In this comparative analysis, we aim to investigate the manifestation of appropriation and abrogation within the childhood narratives presented in each of the two novels of Camara Laye's *The Dark Child* (1953) and Ngugi Wa Thiong'O's *Weep Not Child* (1964). Our goal is to comprehend the ways in which colonial entities enforce their cultural beliefs and standards, resulting in the diminishment of the original identity and self-determination of the main characters. Moreover, we will examine the methods by which these individuals confront these obstacles, highlighting the enduring spirit of African societies as they seek to recover their cultural heritage.

To examine the above issues, this study will rely on Homi Bhabha's theory of *Location of Culture* (1994), in which he explores the complexities of identity resulted from the dominance of the west and the resistance of the colonized through hybridity and mimicry. This seeks to refute the established East-West divide by highlighting the significance of hybridity and imitation in the process of forming identities, and the concept that rejects this identities which are derived through the colonizer's one often as a way of resistance.

c- Methodological outline

At the methodological level, this dissertation is undertaken using the IMRAD system. The introduction provides a general idea about the topic. It includes our review of previous literature, and states our issue and working hypotheses. The methods section explains the concepts of Appropriation and Abrogation developed by Homi Bhabha in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994). Then we have the materials part that provides the autobiographical elements of Camara Laye and Ngugi Wa Thiong'O followed by the synopsis of *The Dark Child* (1953) and *Weep Not, Child* (1964). In the results section, we emphasize on our findings. In addition to the discussion section, which is divided into two chapters, the first chapter is concerned with exploring the issue of Appropriation and Abrogation in *The Dark Child*, whereas the second chapter discusses Appropriation and Abrogation in *Weep Not Child*. Finally, the conclusion restates the most relevant ideas in our work.

Methods and Materials

a-Methods

This section aims to highlight the theoretical basis of our work. We focus on Homi Bhabha's concepts 'Appropriation' and 'Abrogation' in his work *The Location of Culture* (1994), which has a profound impact on post-colonial theory. In this book, the concepts are not directly mentioned, they are intricately woven throughout Bhabha's discussions of colonial discourses.

1. The post-colonial Appropriation

Bhabha's concept of 'mimicry' is a key concept and a form of Appropriation. It refers to the process through which colonized people imitate and mimic the cultural practices, the norms, and the behaviors of the colonizers. 'Mimicry represents an ironic compromise'⁸.

The writer suggests that 'mimicry' is not a genuine or a straightforward acceptance of the colonizer's culture, but it is a strategy of survival, it is ironic because it may appear as a form of assimilation, it also contains elements of resistance, so it is represented as a multifaceted process. This means that when the colonized people adopt elements from the colonizer, they also modify those elements, creating something new, they only take what benefit them, and serves their interests. Another concept is 'Third Space' it represents a zone where new cultural meanings emerge through the interaction of diverse cultural elements, Appropriation plays a role in this process by adopting and adapting elements from different sources to construct their identities. It is not the existence of two cultures, but the space where they interact, mix, and give rise to a new cultural forms, it allows the interaction between the colonizer and the colonized, the appropriation of the colonizer's language, traditions, and culture mixed with the colonized one's to create a new space. The writer defines the 'Third Space' as a concept that cannot be easily defined, it shapes the ways in which meanings are understood, this highlights

the role of language. Bhabha suggests that within this concept, cultural signs can be appropriated by different groups, and translated across cultural contexts. Appropriation plays a role in this process by adopting and adapting elements from different sources to construct their identities.

“It is that ‘Third Space’, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricated and read anew”⁹

The post-colonial Abrogation

In *The Location of Culture*, the concepts of ‘Cultural Agency and Resistance’ are closely related to the theme of Abrogation. It involves challenging the systems that were established by the colonizer such as knowledge, identity, and authority. “The process of historical revision and the production of political and cultural agency emerge through a discursive time-lag; in the contingent tension between the social order of symbols and the ‘desubjected’ scansion of the sign”¹⁰. The writer discusses how this agency involves the ability of marginalized groups to assert their voices within colonial and post-colonial contexts. He uses the idea of time-lag which suggests a gap between the production of historical narratives, and the emergence of this agency, this can contribute to the process of ‘Abrogation’ by providing an opportunity to reinterpret the established symbols.

Then Bhabha argues ‘I don’t think they know what they will do, or that they have any plan of action except of resistance to invasion of their religion and their faith’¹¹. In this sentence, the colonized’s resistance can be seen as a form of Abrogation, by resisting the imposition and defending their cultural and religious beliefs, they are challenging the authority of the colonizer.

b-Materials

1. The autobiographical elements:

- **Biography of Camara Laye**

Camara Laye is an African Writer, who was born and raised in the old city of Kouroussa; northeastern Guinea, in 1928, and passed away in Senegal in 1980, making him one of the first African writers from the sub-Saharan region to become well-known worldwide. He attended government and Quranic schools in Kouroussa before moving to Conakry to the technical college Poiret School, then with the help of scholarships, he was able to continue his education at Argenteuil; France. In 1953, he released his first book, entitled "*L'Enfant noir*," which was translated then to "*The Dark Child*." His novel is considered as autobiographical since it depicts his own childhood's experiences in guinea, which portrays the life in a traditional African township, by skillfully combining the dignity and tremendous beauty of that nostalgically grieved past.

In 1954, he published his second book "*The Radiance of the King*" which explores the journey of a male through the jungle to meet an African king, with interpretations ranging from the pursuit of God to an exploration of the unconscious mind or quest for self-discovery. After serving as an engineer for two years upon his return to Guinea in 1956, he went on to lead a Ministry of Information research center. He wrote many short stories for magazines like *Présence Africaine* and *Black Orpheus* during the course of the following ten years.

- **Biography of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o**

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o is a Kenyan novelist and playwright. He was born in Kenya, in 1938, and considered one of the most celebrated living African novelists, as he has also developed a reputation as a post-colonial theorist and has taught at universities worldwide.

Ngugi grew up in the period of the Mau Mau Uprising, during which two of his brothers were killed, and his mother was tortured. These traumatic events influenced his writing and post-colonial philosophy. He studied at Makerere University in Uganda, and among his earliest books; *“Weep Not Child”*, and *“The River Between”*. After graduating in 1963, he pursued a Master's degree at Leeds University in England but left before completing his thesis. In 1977, he was called for arrest after his political plays and novel *“Petals of Blood”* gained renown, since he attempted to involve the audience directly, making his political messages more threatening to authorities. .

Though Ngugi was released from prison in 1978, he lost his academic position, and his family was harassed, forcing him to live in exile in Europe and America. During this time, he taught at Bayreuth University and Yale University. In 2004, Ngugi and his wife returned to Kenya on tour, only to be assaulted in their home in what is believed to have been a political attack. Moreover, he was harassed in San Francisco, and since then, the author has published prolifically, including memoirs and essays. Ngugi currently holds a post as Distinguished Professor in Comparative Literature and English at the University of California, Irvine, and has been awarded numerous literary honors and holds fourteen honorary degrees from prestigious universities. In recent years, he has been considered a frontrunner to win the Nobel Prize for Literature.

2. Synopses

- **Synopsis of *The Dark Child* (1953)**

Camara Laye's *The Dark Child* (1953) is an autobiography that narrates chronologically about the author's youth. It begins with the protagonist's early encounter with his father's spirit guide and follows him as he matures and gains additional knowledge from his friends and family. Throughout the story, his life changed and he had to adjust to his new surroundings, he went then to see his relatives in Tindican, and had grown accustomed to the modest lifestyle of the neighborhood and his family's desire for him to become a farmer.

As the boy ages, he starts going to school. At first, he attends Muslim schools, then French ones; where he faced racial bullying. However, while he appreciates his academic and religious learning, he also highlights and maintains the value of his traditional African education, which includes rites of passage like circumcision. These rituals mark the transition from boyhood to manhood, strengthening his relationships with his peers. For him, the experience is more than just demonstrating his bravery or earning adult privileges, it is about feeling a deep connection to his community. This aspect of his upbringing holds the most significance for him as a foreigner. Laye travels to Conakry, the capital of Guinea, to continue his education, with the help of enchanted elixirs and talismans, he safely reaches his destination and stays with relatives, and eventually develops a romantic interest in Marie; a girl. Despite facing academic challenges, he succeeded to graduate and earns the opportunity to continue his education in France. However, he must gather the courage to announce the news to his parents. The story ends with Laye on an air plane, holding a map of Paris, feeling a mix of sadness and anticipation; between his departure and after his mother and father consent to him leaving.

- **Synopsis of *Weep Not, Child* (1964)**

Weep Not, Child (1964) is the first novel of the Kenyan author Ngugi Wa Thiong’O, and the first English language novel to be published by an East African, it holds significant importance in African literature. This work set during Kenya’s struggle for independence from British colonial rule, it explores the themes of education, colonialism, identity, and the effects of oppression and exploitation on individuals and societies.

The story follows a young boy named Njoroge dreams of bettering his life through education, he believes that it is the key to save himself and his family from the difficult conditions they are living in. As Njoroge pursue his education, the political situation in Kenya became worse due the land issue, Ngotho (Njoroge’s father) have a deep connection to his ancestral land, for the Gikuyu people the land represents a means of survival, identity, and dignity, when it was taken by the British this pushes them to participate in a strike to recover their properties, and to have high wages, but it was failed when the chaos increased during the clashes between Jacobo and Ngotho, with the police intervention. Jacobo is a wealthy landowner who represents betrayal as he sides with the British government to maintain his position, he was against those fighting for Kenya’s independence because he benefits from the exploitation of the Africans.

The collapse of the strike shows not only the futility of Ngotho’s attempts to resist the colonial system peacefully, but also the growing unrest within the community, this leads to the Mau Mau rebellion, and the lives of Njoroge’s family begin to get harder because Ngotho is left jobless. This leaves him broken physically and emotionally especially when his son Boro sees him as weak and submissive, Boro believed that armed resistance is the only way to fight the British, so as the Mau Mau rebellion grows in strength, he involved in the movement. The colonial government imposes harsh measures to suppress the uprising of this movement which

leads to violent confrontations between the British authorities and the insurgents, Njoroge becomes isolated from his family, as his ideals of education and peaceful progress seem disconnected from the harsh realities around him.

The tension between the colonizers and the Mau Mau movement reaches a climax when Boro decides to assassinate Mr. Howlands the British settler who symbolizes the oppression of the Kikuyu people, having taken their lands, and enforced colonial rule. Boro's decision is an act of both personal vengeance, and political resistance, however this act has a negative effects on Boro's family, his father was arrested and severely beaten by the colonial forces. Although Ngotho is not directly involved in the murder of Howlands, but his status as a leader of the Gikuyu, his participation in the labor strike, and the fact that his son was part of the Mau Mau makes him a suspect in the eyes of the authorities. During his interrogation, he refuses to reveal any information about the Mau Mau fighters, the torture leaves him physically broken, and eventually dies. Throughout the novel, Boro was captured by the authorities, and killed leaving Njoroge feels isolated and disillusioned as he was forced to abandon school due to financial and political pressures, this make it impossible to focus on his studies.

At the end of the novel, Njoroge lost all hope and faith in the possibility of a better future, he contemplates suicide as a solution, because he feels responsible for not fulfilling the expectations placed on him as the hope of the family. However, his mother stopped him, and encouraged him to live for the sake of the family suggesting that it still be a future for him even if it is filled with hardship.

Results

This part of our dissertation sheds light on the important findings reached throughout our comparative study of the two novels as we attempted to discuss the theme of Appropriation and Abrogation in Camara Laye's *The Dark Child* (1954) and Ngugi Wa Thiong'O's *Weep Not Child* (1964). We relied mainly on the theoretical concepts of 'Mimicry' 'The Third Space' and 'Cultural Agency and Resistance' developed by the Indian scholar Homi K. Bhabha in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994) that are central in our comparative study.

One of our major findings concern the affinities in the two works. Both works explore African experiences under colonialism, and its impact on individual lives and societies, *The Dark Child* expresses the influence of French colonialism in Guinea, *Weep not Child* deals with the effects of British colonization on Kenya. Both the protagonists (Njoroge in *Weep Not Child* and Laye in *The Dark Child*) face many challenges related to education and tradition trying to find their personal and social identities within the colonial environment. The second finding deals with the important role that education plays in both works, for Njoroge it represents hope for better future, and a way to save himself and his family from the bad conditions they were living like injustice and exploitation. Laye's education is seen as a bridge between his traditional African world, and the modern colonial world.

In addition to this, the protagonist's fathers represent a strong connection to traditional values serving as symbolic figures of cultural continuity. This is shown in Njoroge's father's deep attachment to his ancestral land, and in Laye's father's work as a blacksmith (in traditional Malinke society, a blacksmith is also a guardian of ancestral values, his work is seen as a sacred act).

The third major finding concern the divergences. Our analysis shows that both works examines the impact of colonialism, but in different ways: *Weep Not Child* focuses

on the political, economic, and social consequences of the British colonial domination that takes the ancestral lands of the Gikuyu people reducing them to laborers on what was once their property. Ngugi's novel focuses on the violent and oppressive aspects like the involvement of Njoroge's brother Boro in the Mau Mau rebellion movement with many Africans that saw the armed resistance as the only way to reclaim their property and dignity. Whereas in *The Dark Child*, there is an internal form of resistance manifested in the psychological and emotional struggles experienced by Laye due to tension between traditional African life, and the changes brought by French colonialism. There is also difference in their cultural context; Ngugi's novel is about the Gikuyu culture of Kenya, while Laye's novel draws from the Malinke culture of Guinea. In addition to this, *Weep Not Child* offers a tragic end with Njoroge's despair as his dreams of education are crushed by the harsh realities of British colonial rule, he lose hope in his future and the freedom of his country especially after his father's death and his brother's struggle. In contrast, *The Dark Child* has a more hopeful ending, Laye leaves Guinea for France to pursue hid education, and he looks forward to his future marking a transition into adulthood.

Discussion

In this stage of our research, we will study appropriation and abrogation in terms of their representation in both Camara Laye autobiography *The Dark Child* (1953), and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's novel *Weep Not Child* (1964). We attempt to analyse how these concepts are portrayed in the narratives and how they affect the protagonists' journeys, cultural contexts and life, relying on Homi K. Bhabha's theory "*The Location of Culture*".

Chapter One: Appropriation in Camara Laye's *The Dark Child* (1953) and Ngugi Wa Thiongo's *Weep Not, Child* (1964)

a-Appropriation in Camara Laye's *The Dark Child* (1953)

The term Appropriation involves the adoption of some elements from one culture by another, by keeping the balance between one's own culture and the foreign one. Thus, this concept of appropriation will be presented in our section through the protagonist's navigation between his African identity and western culture; it discusses the cultural interaction that highlights the tension he undertakes while seeking for a French education aimed at molding him into a submissive African boy. In addition to the conflict between his traditional life in Kouroussa and the influences of modernity in Conakry, as portrayed through the contrasting ways of life in these two environments.

1. Cultural Interaction

Bhabha in his book '*The Location of Culture*' addresses the idea that a culture has never a fixed place, it's rather unstable since it covers the binary opposition between the colonizer and the colonized, he discusses his theory through various concepts such as Hybridity, Mimicry, The Third Space and many other concepts. However, according to him, it becomes difficult to assert one definitive identity, because it takes cultural diversity and challenges the dominance

of one culture or dialect, and points out that ‘the question of cultural difference faces us with a disposition of Knowledges or a distribution of practices that exist beside each other.’¹² Dealing with the concept of ‘hybridity’ the term refers to the negotiation of identity and the cultural resistance resulting from colonial power as it is relevant to Camara Laye’s life. Camara Laye was born into the Malinke tribe of Guinea; he grew up in a family with solid ties to Islamic and cultural values. He started attending school at a very young age in his hometown Kouroussa, after attending the Koran school; he afterwards transferred to the French one; where his journey towards education began to manifest.

His path towards a foreign education is somehow directed towards a series of struggles that would apparently provide much resilience to survive. Once he enters the primary school, he refers to the strict punishments he receives by the teacher, whenever they interrupt him for any reason, they would be sent to the blackboard ‘their nightmare’ he claims, where they have to ‘take the chalk and really work if they were to avoid a beating’, and if they make one downward stroke in a different height from others they would be required to do extra lessons on Sunday or be sent during recess to the first grade for caning. He then narrates,

This was how things were in the primary grades. There were fewer beatings in the upper classes; other kinds of punishment, no more pleasant, took their place. I underwent a vast variety of punishments in that school, and only one thing did not vary my anguish. One’s love of knowledge had to be very strong to survive these ordeals.¹³

This quotation indicates the protagonist’s adherence and consideration to the value of education, and all the challenges he has to face under the will of expanding his knowledge. In this sense, he has to resist all the hardships and punishments in the shadow of the missionary education; what gives a broader understanding of his integration to the new educational system despite its significant unethical behaviors and racist intentions towards the Guineans.

However, despite the numerous obstacles he is gone through, he still believes that all the sacrifices he makes count when it comes to acquiring knowledge and reaching his objectives. He remains consistent until the end of every school year to receive certificates that would eventually celebrate his achievements. He declares,

That's how it was with our teachers, at any rate, when things were at their worst, and it is understandable enough that we could scarcely wait to finish school and receive that famous certificate of studies which proclaimed us 'learned'.¹⁴

In this sense, Bhabha explores the idea of 'negotiation' to show the ongoing political struggles, and criticizes it as a movement that is continuously rearticulating the conflicts, without seeking for a change or solution, and argues that 'by negotiation he attempts to draw attention to the structure of iteration which informs political movements that attempt to articulate antagonistic and oppositional elements without the redemptive rationality of sulfation or transcendence'.¹⁵

Throughout the narrative, we can notice how the French authority tries to impose new educational norms for the purpose of supplying the native African identity and traditions, and a way to maintain its rule over them. Laye narrates about his experience during the second year until the fourth in school, being exploited as a laborer by the French school; those instructions are about sweeping the school yard and working in the kitchen garden. As mentioned in the following passage,

For the second-year students, the customary punishment was sweeping the school yard. It was then that we comprehended how truly spacious that yard was, what an enormous number of guava trees it possessed. It seemed to us certain that the trees had been planted there for the specific purpose of littering the ground, for certainly we never received any of the fruit. In the third and fourth years our punishments was to work in the kitchen garden.¹⁶

Besides Laye's experience as a laborer, he works as a cow's farmer; and undoubtedly this is all for the school's financial interests, instead of providing good learning conditions and comfort

that any educational institution may offer. Therefore, whenever a farmer has an aggressive cow, the school authorities will negotiate beneficially on them at a lower cost, since the entire farmer's main focus is having his cow sold. Laye claims,

This last task was no sinecure. The herd we tended was famous for miles around. Did a farmer have a vicious cow, it inevitably ended up in our herd. There was a good reason for this; the farmer, desperate to be rid of the beast, would accept almost any price, and the school authorities were only too anxious to take advantage of such a windfall. So the real reason was stinginess, and the result was that our school owned the most complete collection of sly, ornery creatures in existence.¹⁷

As Laye becomes overwhelmed by the harsh circumstances he endures, he immediately reports it to his father .And in a discussion between the school director and the parent, he mentions,

When school was recessed that afternoon, my father arrived. As he had said he would, he went immediately to the director who was in the yard with the other teachers. Without bothering to say "Good-day", my father asked, "Do you have any idea what's going on in this school?"

"Why, of course I do" the director answered. "Everything's proceeding as it should."

"Then the older boys are supposed to whip the younger ones and steal their money? Are you blind, or is that really your intention?"

"Why don't you stay out of what doesn't concern you?"

"Doesn't concern me? Is it no concern of mine that my son is treated like a slave?"

"It most certainly is not".¹⁸

What is cited above ultimately shows that Laye is also a victim of brutality, and reveals the underlying intentions of the French educational system more specifically. He is mistreated by the older boys, thereby, making him in a situation of extortion to maintain his physical well-being, but the director has not admitted those scenes and has acted inappropriately with the father instead.

After that incident, Laye proclaims being praised of his father's courage at confronting the director, typically as a traditional value to preserve their pride inherited from their ancestors. Conversely, when he has heard people uttering about him ,he has projected directly towards his

father blaming him the reason for being expelled , thus, his strong appropriation and adaptation to the French educational acknowledgment has significantly influenced him, as asserted in the following quote,

I walked proudly beside him to our concession. But later I felt much less proud, when walking by myself in the city, I heard people say as I passed “look there’s the boy whose father beat up the director in the school yard”. It seemed to me lucky if it should end with no more than my being expelled from school, I hurried back to my father “Why did you have to fight with him? I’ll never be able to go back again!”¹⁹

2. Tradition vs Modernity

Camara Laye is embarking on a new stage in his life as he heads towards Conakry, where he will encounter new and enriching phases. On the way to Kindia, Laye describes his journey and expresses his fascinated feelings while capturing the essence of the view from the window. His perceptual thoughts about nature have radically changed and has become more captivated by the natural resources and landforms, as referred in,

The next day I continued my journey. But a complete change had taken place. Was I getting acclimated already? I do not know. But my feelings about mountains had changed, so much so that from Mamou to Kindia I did not leave the window for a moment. I was enchanted with the succession of peaks and precipices, torrents and cascades of water, wooded slopes and deep valleys. Water gushed and flowed everywhere, animating everything. It was a wonderful spectacle.²⁰

Once reaching Conakry in the evening, the protagonist seems to be more enchanted with the new landscape; the way he describes its beauty widely reflects his appreciation for the new area; he refers then to the peninsula; an island in Conakry that attracted him the most from afar, claiming that it is a ‘huge shining flower floating on the sea, with the water that shone softly like the sky but unlike the sky in its quivering animation.’²¹

Upon his arrival, Laye has the chance to meet one of his uncles, called Mamadou who has greatly welcomed him in his house. He has deeply felt comfortable, experiencing the new European lifestyle, and is afforded all the good living conditions that anyone needs to get in his

life; including a large room with a soft bed to rest in. But the nostalgic memories of his traditional rural life and family in Kouroussa have suddenly fulfilled his mind. In this context, modernity does not lead him to a complete break from his past, rather, it reinforces his need to remain connected to the values that have shaped him, as highlighted in the following lines,

That was the first night I had passed in a European-style house. Was it the unfamiliarity, or the humid heat of the town, or the fatigue of two days in the train that kept me from sleeping? Yet it was a very comfortable house; the room I slept in was large, and the bed soft, softer than any I had previously slept on. Also I had been welcomed as warmly as if had been a son of the house. In spite of this, I missed Kouroussa. Once again I saw my mother and my father, my brothers and my sisters, my friends. I was in Conakry and yet I wasn't. I was really at Kouroussa, but no I was in both places.²²

According to Bhabha, the notion of hybridity opens up in a dimension of mixedness, where the construction of a political object that is new, is not able to trace our originality but produces an in-between culture. This challenge lies in 'conceiving of the time of political action and understanding as opening up a space that can accept and regulate the differential structure of the moment of intervention without rushing to produce a unity of the social antagonism or contradiction.'²³

Moreover, Laye often makes a visit to his parents each vacation. Every time he arrives home, he notices a progressive change on their huts, especially his particular one, this gives a clear insight on how the European style has impacted his family, through their building-way and decoration techniques that have initiated a shift from traditional into modern. He cites,

Each time I went home for my vacation I found my hut newly plastered with white clay. My mother could hardly wait to show me the improvements she had made from year to year. Originally it had been like the other huts but gradually it began to acquire a European look. I say began to, for the resemblance was never exact.²⁴

Yet, he is keenly aware of the changes not only because they have made the hut more comfortable, but even more because they are tangible proof of how much his mother loves him. He is very impressed and pleased by his mother's extraordinary work, and all the efforts she

has made to reproduce something similar, that is almost the same to the European constructions.

He expresses,

“What do you think of it?” She would ask. “It’s wonderful». And I would give her a great hug, which was all the thanks she expected. It was indeed wonderful. I didn’t suspect how much trouble she had taken to create-out of the simplest materials-her modest imitations of European comforts.²⁵

The exposure to modernity gives Laye a new perspective, yet it also deepens his appreciation for his cultural roots. He does not reject the benefits of modernity but incorporates them into his identity in a way that does not alienates him from his heritage. In fact, his ability to navigate between these two worlds; modernity and tradition illustrates his resilience and adaptability in the face of the external pressures. His experience in Conakry becomes a testament to his ability to blend the new with the old, forming a modern identity that is solidly rooted in the values of his ancestors.

b-Appropriation in Ngugi Wa Thiong’o’s *Weep Not, Child* (1964)

1. Language Appropriation

In Post colonialism, the appropriation of language refers to the use of the colonizer’s philosophical and linguistic tools that were borrowed and adopted by the colonized societies, its writers, and scholars.

Ngugi Wa Thiong’O initially wrote in his native language (Gikuyu) to promote his cultural heritage. However, in the 1970 he made a decision to shift to writing in the colonizer’s language (English) as a way to reach a global audience such as *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) and *Weep Not, Child* (1964).

After his imprisonment due to his political activism, he believes that writing in English will allow him to communicate more effectively about the political issues and injustice in Kenya,

to raise awareness of African issues, and to gain recognition as a writer. He felt that Africans were a lonely part of the world, and that no one heard anything about them, so he wanted his message to reach as many people as possible to tell them about his country and its customs, and about the harsh life they are living due to colonialism.

Later, Ngugi chooses to return to his native language as a tool for resistance and rejecting any element that belongs to the colonizer, in addition to reconnect with his cultural roots as he believes that language is a crucial part of culture and identity. This was clearly shown in his work *Decolonizing the Mind* (1986), which is a collection of essays about the important role of language in national culture, history, and identity.

The Indian scholar Homi K. Bhabha in his work *The Location of Culture* (1994) refers indirectly to the theme of Appropriation by using some theoretical concepts like hybridity and mimicry.

Hybridity is a sign of productivity that means taking elements of the colonizer's language and repurpose them. It refers to the blending of cultures that results when different cultural elements interact due to many reasons like colonization as Bhabha suggests in his work “ an initiatory interstices; an empowering condition of hybridity; an emergence that turns ‘ return ’ into reinscription or re-description; an iteration that is not belated, but ironic and insurgent. ”²⁶ This refers to the formation of a new culture and identity due to the mixture of the colonizer and the colonized ones, not as a repetition but as a redefinition in order to give a new meaning to it. Through this idea, Bhabha emphasizes that language appropriation is not just about adopting a language, but transforming it into something new that can give importance to the marginalized people and their cultural values, and can show how language had become a means of empowerment in post-colonial contexts.

Bhabha said ‘the hybridity of the colonial space may provide a pertinent problematic within which to write the history of the postmodern national formations of the West’²⁷

This highlights how the interactions between the colonizer and the colonized led to many complexities in cultural and social contexts, colonization often imposed the colonizer's language on native populations leading to a transformation in the way language was viewed and understood, it became both a tool of power and resistance. Ngugi Wa Thiong'O adapt the English language to include indigenous experiences and perspectives, creating a new hybrid literary voice that serves to reclaim their identity and rights.

The second concept is 'mimicry', which refers to the process by which the colonized people imitates aspects of the colonizer's culture, this imitation is never a perfect replication, and it is marked by differences that create a space of resistance. Bhabha argues in his book *The Location of culture* 'To the extent to which discourse is a form of defensive warfare, mimicry marks those moments of civil disobedience within the discipline of civility: signs of spectacular resistance'²⁸. He explains that the language and cultural norms imposed by the colonizer are not just for assimilation, but also strategies for maintaining power and control, mimicry serves as a mirror that reflects the limitations of the colonial authority and exposes its nature, this shows that the power of colonial discourse is dependent on the cooperation of the colonized.

Mimicry is closely related to language appropriation as it is the primary source through which colonial power is reinforced, the colonized are required to learn and use the colonizer's language for communication, governance, and education.

However, this can carry subversive meanings because while adopting and adapting the colonizer's language, they appear to comply with colonial norms but with their own meanings and perspectives. As Bhabha said 'The metonymic strategy produces the signifier of colonial mimicry as the affect of hybridity – at once a mode of appropriation and of resistance, from the disciplined to the desiring'²⁹ he said that mimicry is a strategy that involves the imitation of the colonizer's culture or behavior producing a hybrid identity. This represents in one hand

a form of appropriation by adopting their language as a means of communication, power, and influence, resistance; in the other hand, it represents a form of resistance.

Mimicry reveals something in so far as it is distinct from what might be called an *itself* that is behind. The effect of mimicry is camouflage, in the strictly technical sense. It is not a question of harmonizing with the background but, against a mottled background, of being mottled – exactly like the technique of camouflage practiced in human warfare³⁰

This highlights the idea that mimicry is not just copying, but an act that creates a complex identity, it disrupts and destabilizes as it is marked by differences because it is never a perfect imitation. Bhabha said that mimicry is a camouflage, this refers to the colonized people's blending with their surroundings to avoid detecting them, or sometimes it involves resembling them to be accepted.

Unlike appropriation, abrogation refers to the rejection or abolition of laws, customs, traditions and beliefs by an external culture or by the native culture itself. However, in our work this will be manifested through the main character's rejection of his traditional values and customs as he becomes increasingly influenced by western culture, and takes a gradual distancing from his roots. Additionally, he undergoes a personal growth and change as his decision to pursue education abroad distances him from his heritage and leads him to stand against his family.

2. Cultural Appropriation and education

In *Weep Not, Child*, the theme of appropriation was manifested through various means including the imposition of Western education, and Christianity through characters like Njoroge, Ngotho, and Mr. Howlands. In this work, the colonial education was seen as a double-edged sword which means that it is positive and negative at the same time, it may achieve a benefit, but in return they will lose a lot “Yet, what if he failed ? That would be the end of all.

What was the future without education?”³¹ Njoroge views education as a means of empowerment, and escape from oppression, he suggests that Mr. Howlands is wealthy due to his knowledge, and that his education contributes to manage the country. If he gets education they will be equal, and he will be capable to confronts him to regain the rights of the Kenyan people and their lands ‘If Njoroge could now get all the white man’s learning, would Ngotho even work for Howlands...?’³²

He believes that by becoming educated, he will gain the intellectual tools needed to challenge the injustice faced under the colonial rule, and it enables him to understand the world better, including the systems of power imposed by the British colonizer. He hopes for a peaceful solution to gain freedom using his knowledge like negotiations and direct speeches.

Ngotho’s family plays a crucial role in supporting Njoroge’s education either financially or by motivating and encouraging him, because they saw it as a means to escape poverty, and achieving freedom from colonial oppression. Ngotho works for the British colonialist, Kamau works as a carpenter, and Nyokabie was the first one that suggests that Njoroge should attend school “Here at last was a son who might be a credit to the family. Here was a son who might eventually be a match for Howlands and the Jacobos and any others who at all despised him.”³³

It is depicted as a tool for cultural appropriation because the African children were taught to view their own culture as inferior, education, religion, and political systems represents the imposition of the colonial values, their thinking, and the way of living, this leads to the loss of Kenyan cultural identity while appropriating the minds of the younger generation to see life in different way that is the superiority of the colonizer’s culture, traditions, and language. This created a sense of inferiority among the colonized, making them feeling marginalized, and strangers in their own country.

But he believed that the best, the really excellent could only come from the white man. He brought up his boys to copy and cherish the white man's civilization as the only hope of mankind and especially of the black races.³⁴

This quote shows that true knowledge, morality, and progress are embodied by the white man's civilization, African children were taught European history, literature, and values in the colonial school that is why they believe that African culture is primitive. It leads to the erosion of African identity as people begin to reject their own cultures in favor of the colonizer's one to gain acceptance and success, this schools were designed to produce Africans who would serve the interests of the colonial powers.

Njoroge and other characters in the novel experiences this psychological impact of colonialism. They grapple with the pressure to conform to colonial expectations while also dreaming for freedom and a return to their own ways of life, and values 'A knowledge of English was the criterion of a man's learning'³⁵ under British colonial rule, English was the language of administration, education, and governance, therefore mastering English became necessary for anyone who wanted to succeed.

This language became a sign of social status, dividing those who had access to education from those who did not, it was associated with prestige, intelligence, and superiority, it became a tool for cultural domination as it aims to assimilate Africans into Western culture, and a key to accessing better economic opportunities. Njoroge and his family believed that if he learned English, he would be able to get a good job which improves their financial situation, but this creates barriers between those educated, and the majority who were excluded from this opportunities because they lacked of English knowledge 'Education for him, as for many boys of his generation, holds the key to the future.'³⁶

Education reflects power, and hope for the community's future for Njoroge, he understands that it is a means to escape the exploitation and bad conditions they are living,

it offers progress that he needs to reclaim the land that was stolen, through education he can get a good job, and challenge the colonial system, that is why he was the source of pride for his family, because they saw in him the embodiment of their dreams. At the large scale, education represents the hope of building a new Kenya by transforming it from a colonized nation to a self-sufficient and independent continent. ‘‘Education is the light of Kenya. That’s what Jomo says.’’³⁷ Education was the light that would lead Kenya out of darkness and injustice, that is what Jomo Kenyatta says, this Kenyan nationalist leader plays a key role in in Kenya’s fight for independence, he emphasizes the role that education plays in the development and liberation of the nation, it also unifies the Kenyans, helping them understand their shared identity. Njoroge wants to be educated with great determination or he is somehow forced to be educated as it was the only way to escape from their bad living conditions, and improving the country’s conditions.

He knew that for him education would be the fulfilment of a wider and more significant vision – a vision that embraced the demand made on him, not only by his father, but also by his mother, his brothers and even the village.³⁸

The struggle for land, and the pursuit of education are complementary efforts. This land was the primary means of livelihood for the Gikuyu people because most of them were farmers, it is also connected to their cultural identity as it was the symbol of heritage and stability. Without land, there is economic instability and cultural dislocation the Africans will be exploited for hard work, their culture and traditions will be lost, and this will lead to the deterioration of their psychological and living conditions. But, to obtain land and freedom, they must first get education to be able to confront their enemy with the same weapon they took from him, provided that they use it for their interests ‘Njoroge pondered this and wished he had been in a position to right the situation. Perhaps education...’³⁹

3. Economic exploitation

In Ngugi's *Weep Not Child*, the economic exploitation was shown through various characters and situations depicting the harsh realities faced by the Kenyan people under the colonial rule. The colonizers exploited the labor of the indigenous people to build their wealth, they benefit from their resources and hardworking. The novel illustrates how colonial rule imposes unfair working conditions on African workers like Ngotho who struggles as he works for Mr. Howlands, they were forced to work long hours under harsh conditions for low wages, his son Kamau also works as an apprentice carpenter for low salary 'Njoroge did not want to be like his father working for a white man, or worse, for an India.'⁴⁰

The novel shows unequal distribution of wealth, which is a clear example of economic exploitation. the British settlers live in luxury and comfort, whereas the indigenous people lived in poverty this was shown clearly in the description of Jacobo's house 'The place looked like a European's house'⁴¹ Jacobo is a wealthy land owner who is portrayed as a traitor to his people for aligning with white settlers to maintain his position. Mr. Howlands made a strategy, which is to benefit from the division among the colonized to maintain its dominance, this tactic ensures that the blacks will occupy with their conflicts among themselves, and forgot the main issue which is the injustice of the colonizer in which they live 'Mr. Howlands felt a certain gratifying pleasure. The machine he had set in notion was working. The blacks were destroying the blacks. They would destroy themselves to the end.'⁴²

Jacobo was considered as a traitor in the eyes of the blacks because he betrayed the struggle for independence that Africans are fighting for in his collaboration with the colonial authorities 'Haven't you planted men to watch Ngotho's movements and report on them?'⁴³. He works closely to Mr. Howlands who gave him security and favor him over others, he gains his high status and wealth by helping the colonizer to maintain control over the population, and this is what made him hated by his people. Displacing Kenyan people from their ancestral lands

without giving importance to their rights or needs is a direct form of appropriation, this land that represents the African history and identity was stolen from them this made them feel the loss of the most precious thing they possessed with the feelings of inferiority and marginalization, 'Education is everything'⁴⁴ Ngotho said. Yet he doubted this because he knew deep inside his heart that land was everything. This highlights how exploitation and displacement led to new economic order that serves the British's interests, the colonial government imposes taxes on the African population, despite their low wages and lack of economic opportunities, Africans are required to pay taxes to the colonial administration.

4. Land Appropriation

The British settlers appropriated the Kikuyu land. The main character Jacobo represents the collaboration between the Africans and the British colonizers, highlighting how the land that belongs to Ngotho and his ancestors was under the control of a white man named Mr. Howlands, so Ngotho shifted from a land owner to a simple worker for others, it is shown in "My father and many others had been moved from our ancestral lands."⁴⁵ This land was very important for the indigenous people because it is their source of livelihood, it represented their property and identity, as population growth increase, land's value as an investment continues to rise offering opportunities for economic development and security. Land holds profound significance for Africans, it is connected with their identity, spirituality, and community emphasizing collective rights over individual ownership. Unlike the colonizer's view who commodifies the land, and saw it as a means to rise their wealth, and a source of profit. It is even have value more than knowledge, for others, getting education without having a piece of land is nothing, in the context of colonial Kenya, working and having a salary without a piece

of land is not enough for true stability, it implies that land ownership provides freedom, wealth, and self-sufficiency which salary alone cannot offer.

The comparison of Ngotho and Mr. Howlands highlights the colonial reality, the British settler is wealthy and happy because he owns land, whereas the Kenyan population, even they are employed and earning wages they always feel inferior ‘they will learn that mere salary without a piece of land to cultivate is nothing. Look at Howlands. He is not employed by anybody. Yet he is very rich and happy. It’s because he has land.’⁴⁶ Ngotho was a ‘Muhoi’, this word derived from the Kikuyu language refers to someone who had lost his land due to the colonial land appropriation, then he is forced to work and live in his land but he does not own it, Ngotho shifted from being a landowner to a worker for Mr. Howlands.

This highlights the exploitation and dispossession faced by the Kikuyu people under colonial rule. ‘Jacobso owned the land on which Ngotho lived. Ngotho was a Muhoi. Njoroge had never come to understand how his father had become a Muhoi.’⁴⁷ The Africans thought that after helping the White’s in their wars, they would leave them, and return to their lands, but the British took the advantage of their going to the war and made their lands, and properties under their control.

Land Appropriation is a central theme in Ngugi’s *Weep Not, Child* it symbolizes the cultural and spiritual disconnection felt by many Kenyans. This dispossession reflects the broader struggle for identity and belonging because land is not just a property, but a connection to heritage and community that the Africans should serve and protect forever because for them it is considered as a gift from God. When the British colonizer took it, he destroyed their sense of belonging, and they felt that they had lost everything “All the land belonged to the people-black people. They had been given it by God. For every race had their country. The Indians had India. Europeans had Europe. And Africans had Africa, the land of the black people.”⁴⁸

The British were attracted to this land for its many bounties and natural resources as it is ideal for farming or settlement and for its natural resources.

The Black people were taken to help in the First World War, when they returned back they found that the British colonizer has taken all their properties and lands. They put them under their control, and forced the black women to pay high taxes as Nguni said “It grew up here, but working...working on the land that belonged to our ancestors.”⁴⁹

The land holds deep significance for Mr. Howlands too as it represents his sense of power, and stability, he cultivate the land for profit, for it is the source of economic wealth and a symbol of economic prosperity. His notion of land ownership is wrapped up in ideas of domination and authority, owning all the lands of Kenyan people allows him to control over the Kenyan population by establishing economic dominance, and influencing social structures ‘His minds was always directed towards the shamba. His life and soul were in the shamba.’⁵⁰ In contrast with Nguni who considers land as a sacred connection to his ancestors, and his identity.

Mr. Howlands feels a great happiness at the thought of leaving the shamba to someone, it signifies a sense of continuity and legacy has (a Swahili word that refers to a piece of agricultural land in Kenya). His connection to the kikuyu land is profound, as he invested his life into it, after the death of his eldest son Peter, he placed all his hope on Stephen, the idea that his youngest son Stephen might carry this legacy and take care of it brings him a sense of fulfillment. He wants his son to appreciate the land, and the efforts he had invested in it ‘Not that Mr. Howlands is demonstrative. But the thought that he would have someone to whom he could leave the shamba gave him a glow in his heart.’⁵¹

Endnotes

¹ Allan,2017,p.8

² Panuntum and Osmani, 2023, p.64

³ Panuntum and Osmani, 2023, p.69

⁴ R.Rajini Beulah Shobika, 2021, p.127

⁵ R.Rajini Beulah Shobika, 2021, p.127

⁶ T.N Dhar, 2023, p.749

⁷ Esac Sayyad Shaikh and Dr. Shahaji Rajaram Karande, 2023, p.751

⁸ Homi K.Bhabha, 1994, p.86

⁹ Homi K.Bhabha, 1994, p.37

¹⁰ Homi K.Bhabha, 1994, p.205

¹¹ Homi K.Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 162.

¹² Homi K.Bhabha, *The location of Culture*, 162

¹³ Ibid, 80.

¹⁴ Ibid, 82.

¹⁵ Homi K.Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 26.

¹⁶ Ibid, 80-81.

¹⁷ Ibid, 81.

¹⁸ Ibid, 90.

¹⁹ Ibid, 91.

²⁰ Ibid, 146.

²¹ Ibid, 147.

²² Ibid, 147-148.

²³ Homi K.Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 25.

²⁴ Ibid, 169.

²⁵ Ibid, 170.

²⁶ Homi K.Bhabha, *The location of Culture*, 227

²⁷ Homi K.Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 250.

²⁸ Homi K.Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 121.

²⁹ Homi K.Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 120.

³⁰ Homi K.Bhbha, *The Location of Culture*, 121.

³¹ Ibid, 100.

³² Ibid, 16.

³³ Ibid, 104.

³⁴ Ibid, 115.

³⁵ Ibid, 44.

³⁶ Ibid, 44

³⁷ Ibid, 38

³⁸ Ibid, 39

³⁹ Ibid, 41

⁴⁰ Ibid, 44

⁴¹ Ibid, 18

⁴² Ibid, 97

⁴³ Ibid, 97

⁴⁴ Ibid, 39

⁴⁵ Ibid, 25

⁴⁶ Ibid, 41

⁴⁷ Ibid, 13

⁴⁸ Ibid, 57

⁴⁹ Ibid, 26

⁵⁰ Ibid, 29

⁵¹ Ibid, 31.

Chapter Two: Abrogation in Camara Laye's *The Dark Child* (1953) and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Weep Not Child* (1964)

This part is concerned with the characters of the novel that have deep relation with the concept, it is expressed through the refusal of the colonizer's exploitation, and the colonial education system, as they tried to erase the African culture, customs, traditions, and language to replace them by the colonizer's ones to create a people who serve their interests.

1. Native Norm's Rejection

Throughout the story, the main character becomes more interacted with new societal Norms and practices, notably contrasted to his African environment upbringing, and cultural identity. It is forbidden in Kouroussa to make bonds with any female, especially if they have bad reputations, but he is such a tolerant figure who disregards those norms and behaviors. He even regularly receives young women in their home who, most of the time, end up ejected outside by his mother. He argues,

She was not interested in my men friends. They were my own affair and didn't matter. No, it was only the girls she inspected, and she was quick to note those she didn't like. I have to admit that I sometimes entertained young women of rather loose habits and slightly tarnished reputations. But how could I forbid them to come? Did I even want to? They might be a little more worldly wise than was necessary, but they were generally the most amusing. My mother thought otherwise and she always came straight to the point "What are you doing here? If I see you here again I'll tell your mother. I've warned you!"¹

He would stand before her, wondering if his mother has really any reason to disapprove of her. He argues that he does not always know since he has lived in Conakry most of the year, and he is not versed in all the gossip of kouroussa. In contrast, he opposes such attitudes of a judgmental society, that all the matters it involves is centered on spreading rumors.

As he ages, he wants to develop and explore romantic relationships and deep love affairs in all sense of freedom without the necessity to conceal his inner emotions. In this regard, those

marginalized customs and traditions do not permit such conducts, neither his mother whom he considers oppressive.

At first, he has met a girl named Marie, his beloved one, who has moved later with her father at Bella's place for a vacation. Fanta is then his next favorite person to whom he wants to make a confession, and definitely could not go further with any of them, even if he has several opportunities being surrounded by other young women. He states,

As I grew older I became more passionate. I no longer had diffident friendships and sly love affairs. There were other girls besides Marie and Fanta, although at first they had been the only ones. But Marie was vacationing at Bela with her father and Fanta was my "steady". I kept a proper distance. Even if I had wished to go further and I did not; custom forbade it. The other girls were unimportant, but they did exist. Couldn't my mother understand? ²

He adds,

But this kind of treatment annoyed me. I complained of it to Kouyaté and Omar who were my best friends at the time. I'm old enough to take care of myself. I live in my own hut. But how can I call it my own if people can intrude every hour of the day and night? ³

In the above quote, we deduce Laye's feeling of frustration and annoyance of his mother's interference in all his personal matters, claiming that he is fully capable of assuming his own responsibility. His mother's strong connection to religion has emerged in her excessive feelings of doubt and fear about her son's contacts and meetings with girls. This is depicted in the way she barges in his hut and watching over him every day and night. He finds himself in a state of confusion, torn between his mother's affection towards him and the discomfort caused by her overreactions.

In fact, his parents also disapprove his friendships with other boys, particularly his former companions in Kouroussa, Kouyaté and Check. He claims that their bond is strengthened during

their high school years in different cities; Conakry, Popodra, and Dakar, where they have adopted new independent aspects and traits that contrasted with the ethical beliefs and traditional social practices of their community, while also challenging their parents' expectations. They have been exchanging each other many letters, sharing details about their daily school life, and even planning for meal times. He reports,

Our real friendship had not begun until after I had left to go school at Conakry and Kouyaté and Check were attending high school at Popodra and Dakar respectively. We wrote one another many long letters describing our school life and when holidays came we all met once more in Kouroussa. Soon we were inseparable. At first our parents were not too happy about our friendship. We would disappear for whole days, forgetting about our meals. Sometimes all three of us would turn up in the same concession so that at dinner there would be unexpected guests, such behavior was undoubtedly a little free, but our parents did not frown on our friendship very long.⁴

2. Personal Growth and Change

By the end of the autobiography, we notice the protagonist's personal growth and transformation resulting from colonial influence. Despite of all the struggles, he has overcome the tension between his cultural identity and the external culture. He returns to his homeland proudly holding his proficiency certificate. And, with one of his dreams successfully achieved, he expresses his honor with a delightful joy,

When I returned to Kouroussa with my proficiency certificate in my pocket and feeling, I must confess, a little swollen with success, I was greeted with open arms, with the same eagerness and affection that had awaited me at the end of every school year. This time I had a fresh sense of pride.⁵

Before leaving Conakry, he is given the opportunity to go to France in order to pursue his scholarship. At that time Laye does not hesitate to seize the chance by responding immediately without taking to consideration his parents' opinion, especially his mother.

His path towards ambition compels him to provide a prompt response to the director in the following day concerning his father's agreement while still maintaining it as a secret from his mother as he is not sure how to break the news to her. This passion for knowledge has engendered in him a profound sense of curiosity and interest about the foreign school's location to which he would be travelling as well as leading him in a realm of imagination. It is in Argenteuil, as confirmed in the letter received from the school leader of Conakry. He asserts,

When I returned my father showed me the letter the director had sent him. It confirmed my departure and named the French school where I was to study. It was at Argenteuil. "Do you know where Argenteuil is?" he asked. I looked it up in my dictionary and saw that it was only a few miles from Paris. "It's near Paris," I said. And I began to dream about Paris. I had heard about Paris for so long! Then my thoughts returned abruptly to my mother."⁶

Considering all of this, he associates his personal decision to a predetermined destiny, arguing that nothing could oppose or change it. His strong determination to leave pushes him to confront his strict mother, eventually leading her to reconsider her decision. He has begun referencing his previous academic experiences in Conakry to illustrate a fate she could not escape or prevent in the future. He affirms,

But now she knew that I would go away and that she could not stop me, perhaps she had known from the first. Yes, she must have guessed that this was a matter where there were wheels. They had taken me from the school in Kouroussa to Conakry and finally to France. All the time she had been talking and fighting against them she must have been watching the wheels going round and round: first this wheel, then that, and then a third and greater wheel, then still more, many more perhaps, which no one could see. And how could they be stopped? We could only watch them turning and turning, the wheels of destiny turning and turning. My destiny was to go away from home.⁷

Moreover, after reporting the news and discussing it with his mother, Laye observes her reaction torn between anger and understanding, whenever she perceives something related to a modern or colonial world, it abruptly comes to her mind that her son would be taken away to be alienated from their traditional way of life. In the other hand, Laye attempts to calm her while convincing her to understand the broader world. He communicates,

And my mother began to turn her anger on those who, she thought, were taking me away from her. But by now her anger was futile “those people are never satisfied. They want to have everything. As soon as they set eyes on something they want it for themselves”. “You shouldn’t malign them” I replied.⁸

Within few moments of introspection, the protagonist comes to understand and realize the emotional pain of leaving his native land and family, along with his psychological conflict. This reflects how indirect colonial strategies have effectively influenced Guineans, exerting a significant degree of power and control over them. He declares,

That was how my departure was arranged. And so one day I took a plane for France. Oh it was a terrible parting! I do not like to think of it. I can still hear my mother wailing. I can still see my father, unable to hide his tears. I can still see my sisters, my brothers. No I do not like to remember that parting. It was as if I were being torn apart.⁹

He is embraced and integrated into another phase in his life while leaving behind his native culture. The distancing from his cultural roots has left in him an intense feeling of sorrow, focusing on the dropping land of Guinea, and the image of his uncles at the airport, as he expresses,

I left for the airport with Marie and my uncles. Marie was going with me as far as Dakar where she was to continue her education. I got into the plane with her. I was crying, we were all crying. Then the propeller began to turn. In the distance my uncles were waving to us for the last time. The earth, the land of Guinea, began to drop rapidly away.¹⁰

Yet, the way he manages and endures the burden, reflects a form of resistance, by taking the bravery to sacrifice his crucial link to his African identity and heritage to fulfill the western dream. Meanwhile, giving his last assurance that he will be surely coming back to where he belongs. He affirms,

And when we landed she asked me “will you be coming back?” Her face was wet with tears. “Yes, I said yes”, I nodded yes again as I fell back in my seat, for I did not want anyone to see my tears. Surely I would be coming back! I sat a long while without moving, my arms tightly folded to stifle the sobs that wracked me.¹¹

At this point, the story ends with a sense of belonging to his identity. Camara Laye ultimately recognizes his connection to his roots and African heritage. Even if he is prepared to explore new opportunities in France, he would always carry his cultural identity

b- Abrogation in Ngugi Wa Thiong'O's *Weep Not Child* (1964)

This part is interested with the second concept of our research, abrogation refers to the rejection of the culture, language, and the norms imposed by the British colonizer. In Ngugi's work, this concept is expressed through the characters resistance to colonial oppression. This theme is embodied in the experiences of Ngotho and his family while facing land dispossession, injustice, and exploitation both in terms of their internal conflicts with colonial values, and their efforts to resist or reject this values in favor of their indigenous identity.

1. Political resistance

Ngugi's novel portrays the struggle of the Kenyan people to reclaim their land from British settlers, this signifies the refusal of the colonial authority that has seized their lands and rights. For characters like Ngotho the father of the protagonist 'Njoroge', land is sacred he has a strong connection with his land as it represents their heritage and identity, so to express his bad feelings of exploitation he participates in a labor strike which is a non-violent political resistance even without his wives consent, at the beginning he was afraid that it would fail because he would lose his job, and he will be excluded from his ancestral land. Later, after deep thinking he decided to participate to support the Gikuyu people in expressing the injustice and slavery in which they live. This highlights the moment when Ngotho decides to start his resistance, and to take an active role in it especially to show that the struggle is not just political, but it is personal and emotional also. Ngotho is one of the most prominent characters

experiencing abrogation, his deep attachment to his land represents a refusal of the colonial system that took it away from him, and his insistence on returning the land to its rightful owners reflects an abrogation of the colonial narrative of ownership and power.

All the black people will stop working. All business in the country will come to a standstill because all the country depends on our sweat. The Government and the settlers will call us back. But we shall say, No, no. Give us more money first. Our sweat and blood are not so cheap. We too are human beings. We cannot live on fifteen shillings a month...¹²

The purpose of this strike is to demand high wages, and to think of Black people as families who need food, clothes, and everything that provides an easy life. Also to show that they were not created to be the slaves of the Whites, they are humans like them who have their own land and rights. They express their anger and deep sadness because the British not only took their lands, rights, and men to participate in the First and Second World War, they also took the Blacks to work for them for small amounts while the profits and goods were taken by the Whites and enjoyed with their families.

The strike represents a collective effort by the African laborers, and an attempt to pressure the colonial authorities to increase wages, improve working conditions, and to reclaim the land that was taken from them. It serves as a call for dignity, justice, and equality, by refusing to work under unjust conditions the workers resist the notion that they are just tools for colonial profit.

The Government and the settlers had to be shown that black people were not cowards and slaves. They too had children to feed and educate. How could people go on sweating for the children of the white men to be well-fed, well-clothed and well-educated? ¹³

Mr. Howlands and Jacobo react strongly to this political movement, both men are aligned with British colonial rule and view the strike as a direct threat to their interests, their reaction show their desire to maintain control, and eliminate any danger that threatens this. They saw the strike as a significant challenge to their authority, and the worker's demands as an act of rebellion, so

they use violence to suppress it, and protect their interests ‘Mr. Howlands called all his men...He just warned them that if any man went on strike he would instantly lose his job.’¹⁴

Ngotho’s loss of his job after the failure of the strike in *Weep Not, Child* is a pivotal moment in the novel, representing his personal downfall and the negative consequences for the African workers. Ngotho’s sons must bear a greater burden to support the family, Kamau continue his apprenticeship as a carpenter, while Njoroge’s education becomes more critical as a possible way to escape this poverty, all the families hopes were put on him.

The strike failure reinforces the idea that resistance to the colonial system is futile, leading to widespread feelings of hopelessness and resignation, it also caused a divisions among the African population: some sided with the colonial authorities and viewed the strikers as troublemakers, others aligned with the Mau Mau rebellion, and saw the failure of the strike as evidence that peaceful means of resistance were ineffective.

2. Assertion of cultural identity :

Despite the pressure of the colonial rule, the characters in the novel strive to maintain their cultural practices and traditions, this express the rejection of the colonizer’s culture, the novel highlights the significance of traditional practices, and oral storytelling in preserving cultural wisdom and identity ‘You children! You never ask your father to tell you stories. Tonight he will tell you.’¹⁵

The family would gather every evening to tell stories, young and old men from the village would come to them to speak about everything especially about the first and the second world war, Ngotho’s wives also sit together to tell stories ‘All the sons of Ngotho with other young men and women from Mahua ridge were in Njeri hut. They usually went there to shorten the night.’¹⁶ The novel portrays the conflict between maintaining African cultural roots, and the pressure of adopting Western values, for Ngotho the land represents a deep connection to

cultural identity, his desire to reclaim it reflects his yearning to reconnect to his cultural roots, the conflict over land highlights the importance of traditional African values.

The assertion of cultural identity is also depicted through the use of Gikuyu language, Ngugi Wa Thiong'O's *Weep Not child* was written in English, but there is the inclusion of some Gikuyu words like the names of characters 'Ngotho', his two wives 'Nyokabi' and 'Njeri', the names of places like 'Kipanga' which is the local town, 'Nairobi', and 'Mahua village' in addition to some Gikuyu words and expressions such as 'Murungu' which refers to the white man, 'a shamba boy' which refers to the boy who works on a farm or plantation, and 'Kwa nini Bwana' which means 'why, Sir?'

Religion and spirituality are other aspects of cultural identity, the novel illustrates how some Africans embrace Christianity as part of their desire to assimilate to the colonial system, while others remain more connected to traditional African spiritual practices, this conflict shows the struggle to maintain African identity in the face of colonial influence. Characters like Njoroge experience a sense of dislocation, as the education they received from the colonizer are disconnected from their African heritage 'This was Mukuyu, God's tree. Now, you know that at the beginning of things there was only one man (Gikuyu) and one woman (Mumbi). It was under this Mukuyu that he first put them.'¹⁷

3. Armed resistance:

After the failure of the strike, Ngotho lost all his contact with his ancestral land, and everyone understood that these simple solutions would not help them to fight against the colonizer, so they turned to armed resistance "Boro stood and shouted, Never! Never! Black people must rise up and fight."¹⁸ It is depicted through various events, the involvement of characters in the Mau Mau rebellion is a violent form of resistance that represents their refusal to accept the colonial exploitation, and their decision to fight for their freedom. Mr. Howlands

did not give any attention to the resistance or its participants, he imposed new laws prohibiting movement at night, and imposing high taxes, Jacobo helped him a lot, he used to pursue Ngotho's family because he suspected that Ngotho was the leader of the Mau Mau, he also contributed to the division of the Gikuyu people. Mr. Howlands affirms,

Who were black men and Mau Mau anyway, he asked for the thousandth time? Mere savages! A nice word-savages: Previously he had not thought of them as savages or otherwise, simply because he had not thought of them at all, except as a part of the farm the way one thought of donkeys and horses in his farm except that in the case of donkeys and horses one had to think of their food and a place of them to sleep.¹⁹

Ngotho is a strong supporter of the Mau Mau movement, he does not directly take up arms, but his anger at the loss of his ancestral land drive him to support the rebellion, he sees armed resistance as a way to reclaim what was taken from his people. Their sense of injustice and exploitation was increasing, especially for Boro who could not bear what he saw, so he moved to the forest. Boro believes that peaceful methods such as strikes and negotiations, will not bring changes, he is deeply affected by the death of his brother Mwangi during the war, so driven by a desire to revenge, he becomes a leader within the Mau Mau, and represents a more aggressive approach to resistance. However his actions also lead to a terror within their own community, showing the duality of armed struggle. Having fought in World War II, and witnessed the hypocrisy of the colonial system pushes him to join the Mau Mau fighters, he organizes several attacks against colonial forces, and they sent many warnings to the colonizer “STOP YOUR MURDEROUS ACTIVITIES. OR ELSE WE SHALL COME FOR YOUR HEAD. THIS IS OUR LAST WARNING.”²⁰

They also created a chaos in the country to show their anger, and their rejection of the interference of the white men in the affairs of the black population, in addition to the exercise of their authority over them. Through these activities, they wanted that Mr. Howlands

understood that the blacks are united on one word, for one purpose which is to fight for freedom “I too would like to fight. I would love to carry a big gun like my father used to do in the Big War when he fought for the British. Now I would be fighting for the black folk.”²¹

Njoroge’s internal conflict shows the struggle that many Africans face between the belief in non-violent progress, and the harsh truth that the colonizers respond to the peaceful demands with violence, while he does not directly engage in this armed resistance, the effects of the Mau Mau rebellion deeply affect his life and future.

Throughout the novel, Njoroge is portrayed as a hopeful character, but by the end there is a profound disillusionment and despair after the events that he experiences, the police took him from school to interrogation about the Mau Mau, when he did not answer he was beaten severely, after that his father died leaving him alone with his two mothers ‘For Njoroge had now lost faith in all the things he had earlier believed in, like wealth, power, education, religion.’²²

By the end of the novel, Njoroge realizes that education alone cannot solve deeper problems caused by colonialism, and that wealth and power under colonial rule are attainable for most Africans, and are often associated with betrayal (as seen in Jacobo’s collaboration with the British) he begins to question the role of religion in his life because his prayers go unanswered, and he forces. He loses both his family and his dreams as he is forced to leave school due to financial struggles and political unrest, he found his self alone ‘He recalled Ngotho dead. Boro would soon be executed while kamau would be in prison for life. Njoroge did not know what would happen to Kori in detention. He might be killed like those who had been beaten to death at Hola Camp.’²³

Endnotes

¹ Ibid, 25.

² Ibid, 41.

³ Ibid, 13.

⁴ Ibid, 57.

⁵ Ibid, 26.

⁶ Ibid, 29.

⁷ Ibid, 31.

⁸ Ibid, 100.

⁹ Ibid, 16.

¹⁰ Ibid, 104.

¹¹ Ibid, 115.

¹² Ibid, 44.

¹³ Ibid, 44.

¹⁴ Ibid, 38.

¹⁵ Ibid, 39.

¹⁶ Ibid, 41.

¹⁷ Ibid, 44.

¹⁸ Ibid, 18.

¹⁹ Ibid, 97.

²⁰ Ibid, 39.

²¹ Ibid, 51.

²² Ibid, 50-51.

²³ Ibid, 52.

Conclusion

Through this research paper, we have sought to examine the concepts of appropriation and abrogation in relation to Camara Laye's autobiography *The Dark Child*(1953) and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's Novel *Weep Not Child*(1964) relying on Homi K. Bhabha's *The Location Of Culture*(1994).Our analysis is centered on the navigation and resistance between the native African identity and the western influence, more precisely depicting the way African people are assimilated to the colonial culture, who to some extent have been struggling to maintain their cultural roots. In doing so, we have explored the delicate balance between appropriation and abrogation in the context of colonial influence.

The result that has been reached in our work is that both Camara Laye's autobiography and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's Novel reflect the colonial impact on African community, land and heritage. Both authors have stressed on the importance of education and its role, but serving it for different purposes; while Camara uses education as a means of self-development and expanding his knowledge, Ngugi has revealed the protagonist's emphasis on education as a weapon tool to challenge colonial forces. Both narratives shed light on the impact of colonialism on African identity, though with varying degrees of intensity. Dealing with the dark child, the narrative draws on the internal conflicts he expresses as he struggles between his ancestral beliefs and traditions with western culture and educational system, facing the corruption inherent in the latter, this pursuit of western education has driven him away from his roots. On the other side, Ngugi has directly illustrated the tragic consequences of colonialism in Kenya, including its harsh, authoritative dominance over the land and its people. Additionally, both works examine how colonialism leads to the appropriation of local culture and abrogation of traditional practices, offering an important view on how cultural identity was shaped in post-colonial Africa.

In this dissertation, we have attempted to explore themes and issues that have not been extensively conducted in previous research. We believe that these works contain interesting hidden conceptual contexts, which continue to reflect present-day realities and resonate with contemporary issues in some locations, whether directly or indirectly. Therefore, we encourage future students and researchers to delve deeper in these two comparative pieces of work, focusing on other issues such as racial oppression or stereotyping, colonial exploitation and external influences, for both a better and further investigation.

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