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**WEST MEETS ITS “OTHER”
IN BARBARA KINSOLVER’S NOVEL
THE POISONWOOD BIBLE**

İpek DOĞANGİR

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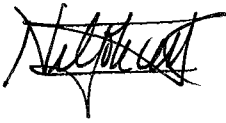
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This work is dedicated to my new-born nephew, Tuna.



ÖZET

“Güç” hayatın her alanında varolmuştur. Hayatımız “güç ilişkileri” doğrultusunda şekillenmiştir. Güç toplumun en küçük biriminde, ailede başlar. Ataerkil bir toplumda güç babanın elindedir, baba evin reisi olarak kuralları koyar ve ailenin diğer üyeleri babanın koyduğu bu kurallar doğrultusunda hareket eder. Dünyada da, ailede olduğu gibi, emperyalizm, gücü elinde tutar. Batı, ataerkil toplumdaki aile babası gibi emperyalizm yoluyla doğu üzerinde güç uygular. Çünkü Batı’nın kendisini ifade edebilmesi için karşıtı olan Doğu’ya güç uygulaması ve onu küçük görmesi gerekmektedir. Bu nedenle, eğer bir ulus zayıfsa, kendi bağımsızlığını kazanmamışsa, emperyalizmin baskısına maruz kalır.

Bu çalışmanın amacı gücün aile ve de ulus üzerinde nasıl uygulandığını Barbara Kingsolver’in The Poisonwood Bible adlı romandaki misyoner bir ailenin Congo’da yaşadıklarını analiz ederek, babaları Nathan’ın aile bireylerine uyguladığı kötü muameleleri ve tıpkı bu muameleler gibi Batı’nın da Kongo’yu nasıl suistimal ettiğini göstermektir.

ABSTRACT

“Power” is seen in every fields of life. Our life is shaped through power relations and we are positioned through these power relations. The exercise of power begins in the smallest part of the society which is the family. In a patriarchal society father holds the power, he sets the rules and the family members obey his rules. They live under the authority of their father. In the macrocosm we observe the practise of power through imperialism. The West, just like the father of the family, exercises power over the East because in order to define itself the West needs to degrade its opposition the East. As a result, if a nation is weak, that is to say, if it does not achieve its indepenence, it becomes subject to oppression of an imperial power.

In this study my aim is to demonstrate the exercise of power in the family and in the nation by analyzing Barbara Kingsolver’s novel The Poisonwood Bible in which Kingsolver portrays a missionary family’s adventure in the Congo; abusive attitudes of Nathan, their father, towards family members and the abusive attitudes of the West towards the Congo.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABAKO	Alliance des Bakongos
ANC	Armée Nationale Congolaise
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MNC	Mouvement National Congolais
UN	United Nations
U.S.	United States



INTRODUCTION

Colonies are firstly established in order to provide raw materials for the burgeoning economies of colonial powers. However, with the expansion of Europe the term colonialism is used in order to define the cultural exploitation of the Europe developed in the colonies. Thus colonies are institutionalized and although many ealy civilizations have colonies and they perceive their relations with them to be one of a central imperium in relation to a periphery of provicial, marginal and barbarian cultures with European colonialism the hierarchy between the colonizer and the colonized is deepen.

Throughout the history the East becomes subject of the West. The West sees itself superior, it holds the power and defines itself through suppressing its other, the East. The West achieves its power not alone by force but also by consent. Westerners see the colonized as primitive, childlike and under the name of civilizing they impose their own values, beliefs and ideas by means of school, church, family, media and political systems which are all ideological state apparatuses. This way Europe justifies imperialism as a distinctive kind of political ideology.

In this respect this study aims to demonstrate the West's exercise of power over the East. Therefore this study refers to Gramscian notions of hegemony and Althusser's decription of ideology. It points out Marx and Engels views on how the world around us shape our ideas. Additionally Edward Said's anaylsis of the Orient is pointed. Edward Said in *Orientalism* examines the construction of the Orient in European thinking. He points out that the knowing the Orient is a way of maintaining power over it. Foucault suggests that there is an interrelation between power and knowledge. He explains how knowledge shapes power. Throughout this study these philosophers and their ideas are described in order to clarify the Wests practises of power.

The first chapter defines colonialism and imperialism, how the West justifies its actions, how imperialism leads the way to capitalism, how their ideologies to the East. In relation to these the significance of hegemony in achieving imperial power is presented. Gramsci's hegemony description is given. Marx's and Engel's arguments about how the ideologies are formed is analyzed.

The second part of the first chapter focuses on the results of colonialism, the emergence of postcolonialism as opposed to colonialism. Postcolonial theory is examined and its relation with poststructuralism is characterized. We see how poststructuralism defines itself through postcolonialism.

In the third part of chapter one represents the Belgian colonial rule; how Belgians use force in certain fields during their ruling; what reforms do they do in the Congo. The hardships the Congolese have under the Belgian rule are described in detail. The administrative system, educational system, agricultural system, and the practice of forced labor in the Belgian Congo is analyzed. Moreover, after Belgians rule U.S. becomes the colonial power in the Congo thus, I demonstrate the United States' colonial rule in the Congo.

The second chapter explains poststructuralism, the emergence of it, the significance of Saussure's structuralism theory in defining poststructuralism. In this chapter, Derrida's deconstruction theory is described, the binary oppositions are illustrated. Foucault's knowledge and power link is emphasized. In relation to postcolonial theory colonial discourse is analyzed. Colonial discourse defines the colonized as primitive, barbar and the colonizer as civilized hence, Europe sees the world through these Eurocentric statements.

The second half of chapter two analyzes the binary distinctions in Barbara Kingsolver's novel The Poisonwood Bible in which a missionary family goes to the Congo in order to enlighten the Congolese. When they go to the Congo they all carry with them the Western ideologies which value the White over the Black. Hence, in

this chapter the Western gaze is described, and through analyses of the characters certain binary distinctions are explained.

The third chapter examines the disintegration of the Price family in The Poisonwood Bible and the disintegration of the independent Congo in the macrocosm. Nathan's patriarchal troublemaking parallels to the white man's exploitation of the Congo. Thus this part sheds light to Nathan's abusive behaviours towards his family and the U.S. evil behaviours towards the Congo's national leader Lumumba, the U.S. conspiracy in the assassination of Lumumba. We see how the faith of these two are intermingled.

Chapter four focuses on the central theme of this study the West's false representations of the East. We observe the Price family's preconceptions of the Congo before they start to live in the Congo and shattering of these prejudices in the Congo. The Price girls and their mother, Orleana through their experiences in the Congo discover the reality about the Congo rather than the Western representations. They begin to see the evil side of the imperialism, how the Westerners destroy Africa under the cover of enlightenment. As their ideas about the Congo change they go through a change and realize their own self. They lose their faith in Jesus, democracy and civilization. They begin to see the world from a different perspective and seek forgiveness.

In this study Barbara Kingsolver's novel The Poisonwood Bible is selected because Kingsolver as a white American portrays Africa from a different point of view. She does not present the Congo from a single one-sided perspective, she instead uses five narrators and although her narrators are white American, they do not narrate the story only from Western perspective. Indeed the narrators tell their experiences in the Congo both through Western gaze and Eastern gaze. They not only express how they see the Congo but also how the Congolese see them.

1.POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES

1.1 The Analysis of Colonialism

Colonialism can be defined as the conquest and control of other people's land and goods. Colonisers settle in a new country and try to form a new community connected with their own state. While forming a community in the new land, they re-form the communities that existed there already. This process involves "a wide range of practices including trade, plunder, negotiation, warfare, genocide, enslavement and rebellions" (Loomba, 1998, p. 2).

While talking about colonialism we are to mention imperialism as well because colonialism and imperialism are often used interchangeably. "Both colonialism and imperialism involved forms of subjugation of one people by another" (Young, 2001, p. 15). Similar to colonialism in imperialism there is conquest and domination of a land or a nation, one nation has extends its domination over one or several neighbouring nations. However, Edward Said makes a distinction between imperialism and colonialism. He defines imperialism as the practice, theory, and the behaviours of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory and colonialism as the consequence of imperialism; it sets in settlements on distant territory. In other words, imperialism is the ideology, colonialism is the practice. Imperialism is the process which leads to domination and control. What happens in the colonies as a result of imperial domination is colonialism. Hence the "imperial country is the metropole from which power flows, and the colony is the place which it penetrates or controls. Imperialism can function without formal colonies but colonialism cannot" (Loomba, 1998, p. 7). A geographical distinction can also be made as to the sources of these concepts: "Imperialism signified an ideology and a system of economic domination, identified with the USA; colonialism, by contrast, emphasized the material condition of the political rule of subjugated peoples by the old European colonial powers" (Young, 2001, p. 27).

Imperialism is characterized by the exercise of power either through direct conquest or through political and economic influence that effectively amounts to a similar form of domination: both involve the practice of power through facilitating institutions and ideologies. Typically it is the deliberate product of a political machine that rules from the centre, and extends its control to the furthest reaches of the peripheries: “think of the Pentagon and the CIA in Washington, with their global strategy of controlling independent states all over the world in order to defeat communism or Islamic resistance and further US interests” (Loomba, 1998, 5).

Imperialism was always a product, and always addressed to global power politics. Main European colonial powers gained military strength and started to compete. U.S, Germany and Japan entered as imperial powers. It was perceived that the identity of the nation-state was in a substantial way bound up with its grander imperial identity. Colonies were systematically administered in order to function as a market for industrial manufactures and a source of raw materials. Governments tend to appropriate colonies just in case colonies can be useful later and in the meantime they want to prevent any other power acquiring the colonies.

These actions are “all justified by a translation of Christianity’s missionary zeal into a mission to submit the rest of the world to the modernity of Western civilization” (Young, 2001, p. 28). This way all nations become within the reach of Western capitalism. All these facts helped systemization of the colonial structure into the dominant ideology of imperialism.

The growth of European industry and finance-capital is accomplished through colonial domination, so we can say that imperialism is the highest stage of colonialism. Colonisation is synonymous with taking over territory, appropriating material resources, exploiting labour and interfering the political and cultural structures of another nation. Lenin suggests that imperialism is a stage of the development of capitalism. He implies that the growth of finance-capitalism and industries in the Western countries have created plenty of capital. Since labour is limited at home, this money all cannot be invested and although the colonies are

short of capital they are rich in labour and human resources. "Therefore capital needed to move out and subordinate non-industrialised countries to sustain its own growth. Lenin thus predicted that in due course the rest of the world would be absorbed by European finance capitalists. This global system was called imperialism."¹ As a result, colonial expansion led the way to capitalism; without colonial expansion the transition to capitalism would not have taken place in Europe. To the Europeans, colonialism provided the grounds upon which capitalism developed often at the expense of upsetting the inner balance of the colonised territories and their populations:

Although European colonialism involved a variety of techniques and patterns of domination, penetrating deep into some societies and involving a comparatively superficial contact with others, all of them produced the economic imbalance that was necessary for the growth of European capitalism and industry. (Loomba, 1998, p. 4)

Capitalism replaces all previous social formations all over the world. Imperialism has divided the world into metropolises and satellites, and their relationship was marked by the unequal development of capitalism itself, and the dependency of the latter upon the former. Hence we live in a single world capitalist system that structures both the development of some countries and the underdevelopment, or dependency of others. Today's world is divided into 'advanced' capitalist countries and 'underdeveloped' ones because of the manner in which each of them became capitalist.

Other than imperialism race is another concept that is to be mentioned in analysing colonialism. Race is particularly related to the rise of colonialism because through dividing human beings into distinct groups colonialist powers establish a dominance over subject peoples and justify the imperial activity. Colonialism was the means through which capitalism achieved its global expansion.

¹

In the early twentieth, Lenin and Kautsky gave a new meaning to the word "imperialism" by linking it to a stage of the development of capitalism. For further information, see Lenin, V. I. (1947) *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House.

Racism made this process easier, and through racism the labour of colonised people was appropriated. Race and racism are the basis on which unfree labour is pressed into colonialist service.

Moreover, race thinking and colonialism have the same goal, to draw a binary distinction between civilized and primitive. Europeans think that the hierarchization of human types is necessary. European race thinking introduced a hierarchy of human variations by turning the fact of colonial oppression into a justifying theory.

“Although race is not specifically an invention of imperialism, it quickly becomes one of imperialism’s most supportive ideas, because the idea of superiority that generated the emergence of race as a concept adapted easily to both impulses of the imperial mission: dominance and enlightenment” (Ashcroft et al., 2000, p. 116-117) . Racial improvement approves the civilizing mission of imperial ideology, which encouraged colonial powers to take up the white man’s burden and raise up the condition of the inferior races who were portrayed as child-like. Thus the assumption of superiority supported by racial theory could pursue its project of world domination with impunity.

With the rise of European imperialism and the growth of Orientalism in the nineteenth century, the need to establish such a distinction between superior and inferior finds its most scientific proof in the doubtful analysis and taxonomy, the science of classification, of racial characteristics.

Ideologies of racial difference were intensified by their incorporation into the discourse of science. Science claims to demonstrate that the biological features of each group determined its psychological and social attributes. In 1735 Linnaeus² made a distinction between *homo sapiens* and *homo monstrosus*; by 1758, John Burke in The Wild Man’s Pedigree divided the first category into the following:

²

Linnaeus’s *System of Nature* (1735) which inaugurated a system of classifying plants that is still current, was born of a new totalising conception of the world.

- a. Wild man. Four footed, mute hairy.
- b. American. Copper coloured, choleric, erect. Hair black, straight, thick; nostrils wide; face harsh; beard scanty; obstinate, content, free. Paints himself with fine red line. Regulated by customs.
- c. European. Fair, sanguine, brawny; hair yellow, brown, flowing; eyes blue; gentle, acute, inventive. Covered with close vestments. Governed by laws.
- d. Asiatic. Sooty, melancholy, rigid. Hair black, eyes dark; severe, haughty, covetous. Covered with loose garments. Governed by opinions.
- e. African. Black, phlegmatic, relaxed. Hair black, frizzled; skin silky; nose flat, lips tumid; crafty, indolent, negligent. Anoints himself with grease. Governed by caprice. (Loomba, 1998, pp. 115,116)

The pseudo-scientific format simply enforces the ideology of European superiority. Scientific discussions of race extended and developed earlier negative stereotypes such as savagery, barbarism, and excessive sexuality.

Science attributes racial characteristics to biological differences such as skull and brain sizes or facial angles, or genes, and insists on the connection between these factors and social and cultural attributes, as a result it turns 'savagery' and 'civilisation' into fixed and permanent conditions. From the eighteenth century scientific racism hardened the assumption that race is responsible for cultural transformation and historical development. Nations are often regarded as the expression of biological and racial attributes.

Nations are often regarded as the expression of biological and racial attributes. Certain values are attributed to the nations through ideology. Ideology does not only refer to political ideas. It includes all our beliefs, concepts, and ways of expressing our relationship to the world. Ideologies that are generally accepted in a society reflect and reproduce the interests of the dominant social classes. For instance, a factory worker "the fruits of whose hard labour are appropriated daily by his or her master still believes in the virtue of hard work or being rewarded in heaven" (Loomba, 1998, p. 25). These beliefs both persuade workers to continue to work and blind them to the truth about their own exploitation. Thus they reflect the interests of their masters, or of the capitalist system. Similar to this, a battered wife may believe that single women are more vulnerable to danger therefore she

to work and blind them to the truth about their own exploitation. Thus they reflect the interests of their masters, or of the capitalist system. Similar to this, a battered wife may believe that single women are more vulnerable to danger therefore she does not rebel against her situation. That's why ideology hides the real state of the oppressed classes and their exploitation.

However for Louis Althusser, the French theorist, ideology is not just a case of the powerful imposing their ideas on the weak: "subjects are born into ideology, they find subjectivity within the expectations for their parents and their society, and they endorse it because it provides a sense of identity and security through structures such as language, social codes and conventions" (1984, 37).

Similar to Althusser, Marx and Engels emphasised strongly that our ideas come from the world around us, that "it is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness."³ All our ideas, including our self-conceptions, spring from the world in which we live. Althusser explores further the dialectic between ideas and material existence. He examines how ideologies are internalised, how human beings make dominant ideas their own, how they express socially determined views spontaneously. Gramsci, the Italian theorist, suggests that ideas are transmitted by means of certain social institutions. He claims that the ruling classes achieve domination not by force or coercion alone, but by creating subjects who willingly submit to being ruled. Althusser explains that force is achieved by 'Repressive State Apparatuses' such as the army and the police and consent is enforced by means of 'Ideological State Apparatuses' such as schools, the church, the family, media and political systems. These ideological apparatuses help to reproduce the dominant system by creating subjects who are ideologically conditioned to accept the values of the system. Moreover Althusser is interested "in how subjects and their deepest selves are 'interpellated', positioned, and shaped by what lies outside them. Ideologies may express the interests of social groups, but they work through and upon individual people or 'subjects.'" ³

³ Althusser, L. (1971). *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. B. Brewster. New York: Monthly Review Press. pp. 218-219.

Althusser suggests that subjectivity is formed in and through ideology therefore, ideology is the system of ideas that explains a society.

According to Marx, ideology is the mechanism by which unequal social relations are reproduced. The ruling classes rule as thinkers and producers of ideas hence, they determine how the society sees itself. Marx refers to this misrepresentation of meaning and social relations as “false consciousness, or a false view of one’s true social condition, something that has a coercive power over the subordinate classes.”⁴

Marx and Engels in The Communist Manifesto suggested that “the bourgeoisie . . . draws all, even the most barbarian nations into civilization, it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e. to become bourgeoisie themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image” (Loomba, 1998, p. 129).

Mainly hegemony is the weapon of the U.S. colonialism; much more masterfully used than the Europeans. Initially hegemony refers to dominance of one state within a confederation. It is now generally used to mean domination by consent. This meaning is invented by Gramsci, in the 1930s. Hegemony is the power of the ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interests of all. Gramsci examines how the ruling class contributes its own interests in society. He suggests that domination is achieved not by force alone but by more subtle and inclusive power over the economy, and over state apparatuses such as education and media, by which the ruling class’s interest is presented as the common interest and thus comes to be taken into granted.

Moreover hegemony is useful in order to describe the success of imperial power over a colonized people who may far outnumber any occupying military force, but whose desire for self determination has been suppressed by a hegemonic

⁴ Marx, K and Engels, F. (1976). *Collected Works* (vol. 5:36), London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Hegemony is important because it denotes the capacity to influence the thought of the colonized through by far the most sustained and potent operation of imperial power in colonized regions. "In colonies, consent is achieved by the interpellation of the colonized subject by imperial discourse so that Euro-centric values, assumptions, beliefs and attitudes are accepted as the most natural and valuable matter"(Ashcroft et al, 2000, p. 116-117). The inevitable consequence of such interpellation is that the colonized subject understand itself as peripheral to those Euro-centric values, while at the same time accepting their centrality

One of the most striking contradictions about colonialism is that it both civilise its other and fix them into perpetual otherness. Colonial desire is articulated in relation to the place of the Other. Fanon's image of black skin/white masks is:

A doubling, dissembling image of being in at least two places at once which makes it impossible for the devalued, insatiable *evolué* (an abandonment neurotic, Fanon claims) to accept the coloniser's invitation to identity: 'You're a doctor, a writer, a student, you're different, you're one of us'. It is precisely in that ambivalent use of 'different' – to be different from those that are different makes you the same- that the Unconscious speaks of the form of Otherness, the tethered shadow of deferral and displacement. It is not the Colonialist Self or the Colonised Other, but the disturbing distance in between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness- the White man's artifice inscribed on the Black man's body. It is in relation to this impossible object that emerges the liminal problem of colonial identity and its vicissitudes.

As Fanon describes ideologies formed by the Westerners explain a society. A person born into a society acts according to these structures and his or her identity is shaped by the social codes and conventions. As a result black people are conscious of their position in the society. They realize the distance set by the institutions or ideologies.

5

Bhabha, H. K. (1994) ' Remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche and the Colonial Condition', in P. Williams and L. Chrisman (eds) , *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory*, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 117.

is shaped by the social codes and conventions. As a result black people are conscious of their position in the society. They realize the distance set by the institutions or ideologies.

For black people experience of colonialism is a racial experience, and it creates a 'community blood', and a 'collective personality of the black people'. African civilisation is described in terms of precisely those supposed markers of African life that had been for so long reviled in colonialist thought – sensuality, rhythm, earthiness and a primeval past. According to Senghor, Africans 'belong to the mystical civilizations of the senses', and for Aimé Césaire, these civilisations are communal and non-individualistic in nature. Césaire claims that these communal societies were fundamentally democratic, anti-capitalist, courteous and therefore civilised. It is Europe which is barbaric (Loomba, 1998, p. 212).

Up to this point we analyze colonialism, imperialism how these two interact, how imperialism leads the way to capitalism, how imperialism benefits from racism, how ideologies form racial differences and what happens as a result of the these identifications. What about postcolonialism? Is it the aftermath of colonialism? What does it examine?

1.2 Results of Colonialism

Postcoloniality is a relatively small, Western style, Western trained group of writers and thinkers, who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery. In the West they are known through the Africa they offer; their compatriots know them both through the West they present to Africa and through an Africa they have invented for the world, for each other, and for Africa. (Loomba, 1998, p. 246) Arif dirlik calls postcolonialism a child of postmodernism. He argues that David Harvey and Frederic Jameson have established an interrelation between post-modernism and late capitalism that can now be extended to postcolonialism. In other words if post- modernism is, the cultural logic of late capitalism, then postcolonialism is complicit with the latter. Both post-modernist

and postcolonialists celebrate and mystify the workings of global capitalism. Even the 'language of postcolonialism . . . is the language of First World post-structuralism'. Therefore, postcolonialism, which appears to critique the universalist pretensions of Western knowledge systems and 'starts off with a repudiation of the universalistic pretensions of Marxist language ends up not with its dispersal into local vernaculars but with a return to another First World language with universalist epistemological pretensions' So Dirlik modifies Appiah's critique to suggest that postcoloniality is the condition of the intelligentsia of global capitalism (Loomba, 1998, p. 216).

As Loomba quoted in Colonialism / Postcolonialism Stuart Hall points out that "post-modernism does not signify a completely new epoch or absolute rupture with the modern era. It is the current name we give to how several old certainties began to run into trouble from about 1900s onwards"(1998, p. 216).

Postcolonialism deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies. Postcolonialism has a clearly chronological meaning, describing the post-independence period. However, the term is used by literary critics to discuss the various cultural effects of colonization. The term post-colonial was first used to refer to cultural interactions within colonial societies in literary circles. The term has lately been used to signify the political, linguistic and cultural experience of societies that were former European colonies. Post-colonialism/ postcolonialism includes the study and analysis of European territorial conquests, the various institutions of European colonialisms, the discursive operations of empire, the subtleties of subject construction in colonial discourse and the resistance of those subjects, and differing responses to such intrusions and their contemporary colonial legacies in both pre- and post-independence nations and communities. It focuses on the cultural production of such communities, and it is also used in historical, political, sociological and economic analyses since these disciplines engage with the impact of European imperialism upon world societies. Post-colonialism examines the processes and effects of, and reactions to, European colonialism from the sixteenth century onwards, it also includes neo-colonialism of the present day.

The term neo-colonialism was invented by the first President of independent Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, in his book titled Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism. It suggested that although countries like Ghana had achieved technical independence, “the ex-colonial powers and the newly emerging superpowers such as the United States continued to play a decisive role through international monetary bodies, through the fixing of prices on world markets, multinational corporations and cartels and a variety of educational and cultural institutions”⁶ According to Nkrumah, neo-colonialism was more cunning and more difficult to identify and resist than the older open colonialism. He wrote “neo-colonialism is . . . the worst form of imperialism. For those who practise it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress” (1965, xi).

Neo-colonialism indicates a continuing economic hegemony which means that the postcolonial state depends on its former masters, and the former masters continue to act in a colonialist manner toward formerly colonized states. In the neo-colonial situation, the ruling class forms an elite that functions in complicity with the needs of international capital for its own benefit. Effective international control is achieved by economic means. Nkrumah claims that “the essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus political policy is directed from outside” (Young, 2001, p. 46). He suggests that neocolonialism represented the American stage of colonialism, that is an empire without colonies. Neocolonialism is a continuation of traditional colonial rule by another means. It takes Hobson’s account of imperialism as the model which is a system of economic exploitation in which the metropolitan center carries away the resources of the boundary and meanwhile encourages it to consume its manufactured products in an unequal, unbalanced system of exchange. Nkrumah thinks that investment does not have any benefits in

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Nkrumah, K. (1965) *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, London: Nelson, p. x.

development of the less developed parts of the world. Investment under underdevelopment countries. He agrees with Lenin and writes that “the result of neocolonialism is that foreign capital is used for the exploitation rather than for the neocolonialism increases rather than decreases the gap between the rich and the poor countries of the world” (Young, 2001, p. 47). Nkrumah points that trade agreements, foreign aid, the operation of international US –controlled organizations [the World Bank the IMF], Christian evangelism, the Peace Corps, or control of the media all establish and maintain control.

Postcolonialism attacks the statu quo of hegemonic economic imperialism, and the history of colonialism and imperialism, but also signals an activist engagement with positive political positions and new forms of political identity. Postcolonialism shows the perspective of tricontinental theories which analyse the material and epistemological conditions of postcoloniality and try to struggle the continuing operation of an imperialist system of economic, political and cultural domination. (Young, 2001, p. 58). Postcolonialism does not support the new world system, it rather forms a critical response to its conditions.

1.2 The Colonial System in the Congo

The Belgians were among the most exploitive colonial rulers in Africa. Leopold II was the King of the Belgians. He ruled between the years 1865-1909. Leopold wanted to enrichen his country hence, he looked for a colony, and the Congo was colonized by Leopold II in 1885, he established the Congo Free State. Starting from 1904 the Belgium state was informed about the brutal treatments of Leopold towards the Africans as a result, belgium possessed the Congo from Leopold in 1908. Leopold’s rule was especially wicked but many abuses continued even after direct Belgian rule began in 1908. The Congolese had no tradition of national unity. The country was huge and culturally diverse. The African population was divided by geography and ethnolinguistic differences, and

colonialism, by introducing new inequalities, greatly intensified the divisions. The colonial system did not prepare the Congolese for independence.

The number of university graduates was small, and the overall level of university education was one of the lowest in Africa. (Gibbs, 1991, p.76) During the colonial period education was the province of the religious missions, some of whose operations were subsidized by the state. Among them the Roman Catholic mission were the most important. The Catholic church was open to Congolese participation. Congolese males were permitted to study at Catholic seminaries, as a preparation for the priesthood. By 1960 five hundred Congolese had completed seminary education. The church seminaries were equal to advanced study, a university degree. However, that there was not any regular university training was a serious problem, because it prevented the Congolese from participating in politics. Politically important studies such as law and journalism were closed off to the Congolese. "The educational system limited the possibilities for African political leadership and helped maintain the colonial system (Gibbs, 1991, p. 57). The primary aim of the education was to train Africans for tasks that would be useful to European enterprises. Usually these were positions of a clerical or lower level administrative nature. Secondary education was limited to Africans who were to serve as clergymen, teachers, or army petty officers. No Africans attended universities or studied in Europe until the 1950s. Secondary and university education were not made available to Africans early enough to permit them to develop a large cadre of capable administrators to take over the country at independence. Although education was expanded after independence, it never was able to meet the nation's needs. There were too few teachers, and few of these were properly trained. From 1968 through 1972, the government attempted to provide free primary and secondary education. Fees were introduced in 1972, but students were permitted to attend schools even if they were unable to pay (Kaplan, 1998, p. 176-177).

Most Roman Catholic missionaries, themselves Belgians, shared the view of the colonial authorities that they had a civilizing mission. To that end Belgian

Catholic missions were given a partial monopoly over education, and comparatively large numbers of priests and nuns of many different orders established a fairly dense network of churches, schools, clinics and hospitals, and other institutions. For the missionaries the measure of success was the number of persons converted and baptized. Very large numbers were indeed baptized. Although impossible to measure, conversion was estimated to have affected deeply those converted: “for the most part, priests came prepared to teach but not to learn, to lay down Catholic theory and practice and to extirpate all elements of the pagan” (Kaplan, 1998, p. 164).

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The missionaries saw no true religious content on fetishism, a religious practise common among the natives of the Congo. Fetishism had been seen as idolatry in its most evil form.

For them “to keep, as sacred, wooden figures and small bags of medicines instead of worshipping God, the Father in heaven, appaered outrageously heatenish” (Ekpebu, 1989, p. 139). They emphasized that it was only a selfish magic, and it was difficult for them to reconcile themselves to such practices. After all, they had come to the Lower Congo, self- sacrificing and with no desire for personal gain, to spread the Gospel. Among the Whites the common view was that the Congo totally lacked religion. Bentley, the English missionary, declares that “people of the Congo, as we found them, were practically without religion. There is no worship, no idolatry in fetishism, only a dark agnoticism, full of fear, helpless and hopeless” (Ekpebu, 1989, p. 139).

Colonialism not only exploits but also dehumanises and objectifies the colonised subject, as it degrades the coloniser himself. Césaire explains this by a equation: colonisation = thingification. In colonised people’s soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its cultural originality. When imperialism” (2002, p. 239). Therefore religion must of course have been affected

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“Fetishism implied that African people were too immature to perceive the world correctly; intellectual error led them to the moral error, in Christian opinion of Idolatry” (Ekpebu, 1989, 139).

by what happened to society in general. With colonization public aspect of the religious cult disappeared.

Religion lost its social dimension and was reduced to a system of magic to deal with disease. When the political system was destroyed, the traditional religion lost its social character. It was simply too intimately implicated in the political hierarchy to survive. "Disease and illness, high mortality, extreme insecurity, violence and oppression, led to a situation in which fetishism became more of a traditional medicine than a religion" (Ekpebu, 1989, p. 140).

When the Whites went to the Congo, in the name of civilizing the Congo they not only destroyed the Congolese culture, but also took advantage of the Congolese. In theory Belgian rule seems to be not coercive, on the paper Congolese population take part in government. For instance, "the native chiefs legally held power within their jurisdictions, and the administration was expected to rule with respect for native custom" (Gibbs, 1991, p.56). However, in practice the chiefs were manipulated by the administration continually. Beginning in 1917 chiefs subordinated the administration, and they helped implementing colonial policy such as tax collection and crop cultivation. Thus the chiefs were the instruments of colonial rule. That is to say, although administration seemed to give the Congolese role in its government, the Belgians ruled the Congo according to their own purposes. We even see the reminiscence of Leopold's rule.

When the Belgian government annexed the Congo in 1908, it accomplished some reforms. To begin with, during Leopold's rule there was no real bureaucracy, under Belgian a colonial bureaucracy was established for the first time in the Congo. In 1911 a Colonial School was founded in order to train administrators. Next, the court system was strengthened.

Belgian administration also developed the colony's economic potential. The transport system grew. "During the period 1911 - 59 the length of railroad network increased almost five fold, while the road system expanded more than twenty fold"

As a result of the economic developments the Congolese population increased. The colonial state, the private companies, and the Catholic church formed new social services. Education and health care advanced. Medical problems brought under control. Primary schools, ultimately Catholic, expanded and a large amount of the population achieved basic education.

However Belgian rule was not always benevolent, even though Belgian administration claimed to be non-violent, in fact we observed force in Belgian rule. To begin with, the tax system was an instrument of coercion. Starting from 1910 the Congolese were obliged to pay a regular money tax to the government; the Congolese were often forced to work for the Belgian companies in order to raise enough money to pay the taxes. This way Belgians increased the supply of labor and made the Negroes get used to work. Next forced labor was widely practiced, and indeed it was mandated by law. "The Congolese were required to provide up to sixty days of labor per year constructing roads, bridges, and other infrastructure projects. Sometimes the Congolese were conscripted for additional labor beyond the required sixty days" (Gibbs, 1991, p. 52). Despite these measures, the supply of labor remained insufficient hence, the administration arranged mass labor migrations. They transferred workers to areas where labor was in short supply. After forced migrations, workers were brought to large camps. In those camps there were hard labor and unhealthy conditions.

Force was also employed in agricultural policy. The colonial government continued the Leopoldian policy, forced peasants to sell their cash crops to state-run agencies, which bought the crops in low prices and then resold them at the higher market prices. "In 1917 the colonial government issued a series of ordinances requiring peasants in several regions to cultivate cotton, manioc, yams, rice, and corn" (Gibbs, 1991, p. 53). After world War I such requirements were extended. Especially mandatory cultivation was enforced by the state, the state collaborated with concessionary companies to force cultivation of cash crops. Thus the peasants' standard of living was reduced.

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During the Great Depression of the 1930s conditions got worst, an agricultural crisis occurred in the Congo. Palm oil, copal, and cotton prices declined in the world. The Belgian companies were affected by the depression as well. Stock values of the Congo based companies crashed. Therefore repressive work practices increased. Movement of the population was kept under strict control, and Africans were not allowed to leave their villages or work camps without permission. As Gibbs quoted in The Political Economy of Third World Intervention “according to Jewsiewicki, a truly ‘totalitarian’ level of political control was established during the 1930” (1991, p. 54). During the Second World War forced labor of all kinds increased. In the postwar era, mainly in the 1950s, economic conditions improved. This was one of the most prosperous period in history, and the Congo benefited from this prosperity. The mineral exports raised local incomes, and developments of import caused industrialization. The Congo began to establish small-scale manufacturing.

The Congolese benefited from the economic expansion, they found new career paths, “they were employed as skilled or semiskilled laborers in many of the new industrial and transport projects” (Gibbs, 1991, p. 55). Social services improved, especially in the area of primary education. By 1959, most of the Africans received primary education. During the 1950s living conditions rised, Africans have their own cinemas, restaurants and new houses were built. However these improvements did not lead to any political changes. The colonial administration remained dictatorial and highly centralized. The leading colonial figure was the minister of colonies, he was part of the government in Brussels. The minister appointed the governor-general of the Congo and mostly the governor-general served below the minister. There were no representative institutions, and

the Congolese had no deputies in the Belgian parliament, they had no voting rights. The colonial government strongly suppressed most opposition, and “in 1954 there were some four thousand political prisoners” (Gibbs, 1991, p. 57). Authoritarianism was reflected in all areas of colonial administration. For instance, in teacher training colleges they taught the future teachers “to stress love . . . and respect for authorities” (Gibbs, 1991, p. 56)

To sum up many of the early abuses, forced labor and forced cultivation of crops continued during Belgian rule. As Gibbs quoted in The Political Economy of Third World Intervention in 1952, Fortune magazine wrote:

If the Congo was to be developed under white tutelage--the only way it would be developed in any foreseeable time--it would, nevertheless, have been developed by Bantu labor power.⁸ Consequently, the sum of Bantu productivity would have to be increased. . . . Belgian “native policy” is a consequence of these conditions and this line of thinking. In agriculture the problem was to get beyond subsistence goals . . . In cotton, the reform has involved compulsion. The government sets aside certain areas for cotton growing and assign quotas to the “peasants.” These they must meet --or risk a prison term. (1991, p. 57)

Belgian administration was following such an exploitation policy. An American diplomat describes the general atmosphere “the great preoccupation here is the making of money, to make it fast, and to make it for yourself, at no matter what cost to other. One feels that here every day” (Gibbs, 1991, p. 57-58).

Consequently we observed that the administration had enormous power over the Congolese. Belgians prevent the advancement of the Congo by controlling administrative and education system.

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By the end of the 1st millennium B.C., small numbers of Bantu speaking people had migrated into the Congo from the North West and settled in the savanna regions of the South. Aided by their knowledge of iron technology and agriculture, the Bantu speakers migrated to other parts of the Congo. From about A.D. 700 the copper deposits of S Katanga were worked by the Bantu and traded over wide areas.

Since the Congo was rich in mineral resources Europeans and Americans were willing to possess it, Belgians were aware of it that is why they accepted a co-opting foreign powers policy in the Congo. This was a strategy started by Leopold. Leopold brought foreign interests, especially British, into the Congo give them a share in his colonial project and by doing so he aimed to lessen potential opposition. After Leopold's death, the Belgian Congo continued to co-opt foreign capital.

During World War I British influence in the Congo increased. The Belgians feared of British domination, hence during the period 1917-1920 the Congo administration tried to reduce the foreign role in Katanga.

During the interwar years, the British power declined in the Belgian Congo, and the USA began to involve itself in the politics of the African continent and the Congo. American interests in Africa increased during the New Deal. In 1938 the State Department established a desk in order to check African developments full-time. Several U.S. government agencies showed an interest in the Belgian Congo. Private U.S. companies, traders showed interest in the continent. The Belgians annoyed by the American interest. In 1944 an American missionary analyzed the situation as follows:

There has been a great awakening [among Americans] to the tremendous industrial possibilities of the Congo There is a growing realization that the Congo will be the locale of a struggle between conflicting economic interests . . . [and] there are various interests now active in that territory which would be glad to see no development of American interests in that area. (Gibbs, 1991, p. 63)

That is to say the Congo was an arena for international competition among various economic interests. Namely those of the Europeans and Americans compete for the Congo. The Congo was rich in resources hence, imperial powers did not want other countries to influence it. As a result of the competition between America and Europe president Franklin D. Roosevelt attempted to end colonial rule in Africa. America followed an anticolonial policy. CIA reported the

American military activities in Africa as “the United States should justify its actions by promising the organization of a new, independent Africa . . . Africa for Africans! . . . An African Bolivar is needed . . .” (Gibbs, 1991, p. 64)

American anticolonialism was influenced by economic interests. Trade relations is a significant factor in American anticolonialism. In a State Department report, the U.S. interests in Africa was analyzed in detail:

Our traditional policy in the past with regard to Africa, as well as the Far East, has been that of the “Open Door” . . . Overseas trade will be more important than ever before to this nation in maintaining our vaunted standard of living . . . Our country will not be able to maintain our heretofore standard of living or even to approximate it unless we can produce more, export more, and help by overseas trade to all lands to raise the standard of living of backward peoples so that they may absorb more and more of the products of American agriculture and industry. . . . We have therefore the most vital national interest in this matter. In my opinion it is not sufficient that there be a condition of joint world leadership by Great Britain and the United States. . . . [The United States should not tolerate] agreements which would relegate *in any area of the world* American influence . . . to a secondary position. (Gibbs, 1991, p. 64-65)

Thus we understand that colonial issue was a fight for trade and investment. America meant to establish a free-trade regime. The USA wished to end colonialism and to open the underdeveloped regions to American exporters and investors.

When Roosevelt died in 1945 and the Second World War concluded, the USA changed its position on Africa. During the Truman presidency anticolonialism disappeared and the Cold War started to dominate America's policy in Africa. During that period the European countries were too weak to compete and America had no competitors in colonial enterprise therefore, the United States followed procolonial policy. The United States offered financial support for colonialism. American officials opposed independence, fearing that it would threaten the security of the minerals. “The USA provided aid through the Economic Cooperation Administration, which administered the Marshall Plan, while the Export-Import Bank and the (U.S. dominated) World Bank issued loans”

(Gibbs, 1991, p. 65). These pro-Belgian policies continued during the Eisenhower administration, they are even intensified. The Belgians were co-opting U.S. companies in order to prevent rising of anticolonialism. The Belgians encouraged American businesses to invest, on a small scale, in the Congo. In 1954, the Belgian embassy in Washington established an attaché for Belgian Congo affairs, he was charged with attracting U.S. investment. In 1955 an American trade mission traveled to the Congo at the invitation of the Belgian government to investigate investment possibilities. (Gibbs, 1991, p. 65) As a result American firms made direct investments in the Congo.



2. CENTERS AND MARGINS

Post-structuralism emerged in late 1960s. It is a reading strategy, it asks questions about the text. Post-structuralism declares that a text has an infinite number of interpretations. Derrida, a major post-structuralist thinker, borrows the basis of his deconstructive strategy from structuralism. Ferdinand de Saussure is the father of structuralism. According to Saussure, the Swiss linguist, language is a system of rules which govern its every aspect. He argues that the relationship between the signifier, a sound image, and the signified, the concept to which it refers, is arbitrary. That is to say “words achieve their meaning from an association in the mind, not from any natural or necessary reference to entities in the world” (Loomba, 1998, p. 35). Each sign is itself the function of a binary between the signifier sound image of the word, and the signified, the concept or mental image that it evokes”(Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin, 2000, p. 23). Language is self-defined in this system. The sound image of a tree is a signifier and the concept of the tree is signified. The sound image made by the word tree does not make any tree-like quality, so there is no resemblance between the sound image and the concept. In other words meaning is not the identification of the sign with the object it arises out of the differences among the signs. The linguistic sign is defined by differences that distinguish it from other signs. For Saussure meaning in language resides in a systematized combination of sounds that chiefly rely not on any innate properties within the signs themselves but on the differences among these signs. Therefore, language is a system of signs in which “signs have meaning not by simple reference to real objects, but their opposition to other signs.

It is the concept that meaning in language is determined by the differences among the language signs that Derrida borrows from Saussure in formulating deconstruction. Derrida agrees with Saussure that language is a system based on differences, and the relationship between the signifier and the signified is both arbitrary and conventional. He declares that Western metaphysics is founded upon a classic fundamental error, the search for a transcendental signified, the ultimate truth which would be the center of meaning. According to Derrida, Western

metaphysics invented a variety of terms that function as centers. Each of these terms is self-sufficient and they are all transcendental signifieds. Western metaphysics has a desire for centers and Derrida names this logocentrism, the belief that there is an ultimate reality or a center of truth that can serve as the basis of all our thoughts and actions. In addition to that Derrida says that Western metaphysics is based on a system of binary oppositions. For each center, there exists an opposing center. We understand truth because there is its opposite non-truth, and in these binaries one element is privileged or superior to another while the other is unprivileged or inferior. We see that each superior concept defines itself by negating its opposite. Truth becomes self-sufficient because it negates non-truth. Hence in these binary oppositions, the second term is so suppressed that they become erased. These self-sufficient concepts function as a dominant partner of a hierarchical binary. Derrida thus turns Western philosophy on its head.

2. 1 Effects of Poststructuralism on Colonialism

Colonialism can only exist on the assuming of binary opposition into which the world was divided. The West sees itself as the center and everything that lies outside that center as the margin. The binary oppositions are very important in constructing ideological meanings in general and useful in imperial ideology. The center/ margin dichotomy has been “the attempt at defining what occurred in the representation and relationship of people, as a result of the colonial period” (Ashcroft et al, 2000, p. 36). The marginal indicates the limitations of a subject’s approach to power. The centre creates the condition of marginality. Imperialism marginalizes, the colonized people are marginalized. Since Western thought tends to see the world in terms of binary oppositions, binary oppositions establish a relation of dominance, and imperialism is a development of that tendency. Binary oppositions are structurally related to one another, and in colonial discourse there may be a variation of the one underlying binary rejoin in a text in numerous ways such as colonizer / colonized, white / black, civilized / primitive, advanced / retarded, good / evil, beautiful / ugly, human / bestial,

teacher / pupil, doctor / patient. A simple distinction between centre / margin; colonizer / colonized; metropolis / empire; civilized / primitive represents the hierarchy on which imperialism is based and which it actively makes constant. The term savage plays an important role in Eurocentric epistemologies and imperial/colonial ideologies. Marianna Torgovnik writes “that terms like primitive, savage, pre-Colombian, tribal, third world, underdeveloped, developing, archaic, traditional, exotic, non-Western and Other all take the West as norm and define the rest as inferior, different, deviant, subordinate, and subordinateable” (qtd. in Ashcroft et al, Post-colonial Studies, (2000), p. 209).

Euro-centrism is the process by which Europe and European culture is considered to be the normal, the natural, and the universal. By the eighteenth century, European culture as opposed to the rest of the world's cultures is constructed as superior and Europe strengthened its position. Then in the eighteenth century European colonization of the rest of the world is quickened, and in the nineteenth century it reached its climax. Through exploration, conquest and trade Euro-centrism is cultivated.

Imperial displays of power, both in the metropolitan centres and at the colonial peripheries, and assertions of intellectual authority in colonialist institutions such as schools and universities, and through the civil service and legal codes, established European systems and values as inherently superior to indigenous ones. (Ashcroft et al, 2000, p. 91)

European culture constructs and manages the Orient. In Orientalism the significant issue is knowledge, knowing the other is a form of authority. “Knowledge about the Orient is an ideological accompaniment of colonial power” (Loomba, 1998, p. 43). In Orientalism Edward Said examines the ways in which Eurocentrism not only influences and changes, but also produces other cultures. Said discusses Orientalism as the united institution for dealing with the Orient “dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing

it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism is a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.”⁹

Foucault investigates the contiguity of power and knowledge in order to explain in detail the ways in which knowledge modifies power. Foucault writes “all human ideas, and all fields of knowledge, are structured and determined by the laws of certain code of knowledge” (Loomba, 1998, p. 34). Knowledge transforms power “from a monolithic apparatus” gathered within the State into a “web-like

force which is confirmed and articulated through the everyday exchanges of know how or information which animate social life” (Gandhi, 1998, p. 74). As Sneja Gunew writes, “power is reproduced in discursive networks at every point where someone who knows is instructing someone who doesn’t know.”¹⁰

Studying the Orient helps the functioning of colonial power. In constructing the other, knowing the other provides one with power. As Ashcrofts writes, “the Orient is not an inert fact of nature;” it is rather a “phenomenon” established by “intellectuals, artists, commentators, writers, politicians and, more importantly, constructed by the naturalizing of a wide range of Orientalist assumptions and stereotypes” (Ashcroft et al, 2000, p. 168).

Therefore, the relationship between the Occident and the Orient [the West and the East] is a relationship of power, dominance and hegemony. Thus, according to Said, Orientalist discourse is the power established by the West over the Orient. Said’s main thesis is that Orientalism is “a political vision of reality whose structure promoted a binary opposition between the familiar [Europe, the West, ‘us’] and the strange [the Orient, the East, ‘them’] (Loomba, 1998, p. 47).

⁹ Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism: western Conceptions of the Orient*, London: Penguin (1991) p. 1.

¹⁰ Gunew, Sneja. (1990). *Feminist Knowledge: Critique and Construct*, Routledge, London.

From the eighteenth century onwards, “a complex Orient suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial, and historical theses about mankind and the universe” emerged under the general heading of knowledge of the Orient, and within the umbrella of western hegemony over the Orient (Ashcroft et al, 2000, p. 168).

Orientalism forms the institutional constructions of the colonial other. “In this sense, its practice remains central to the operation of imperial power in whatever form it adopts; to know, to name, to fix the other in discourse is to maintain far-reaching political control (Ashcroft et al, 2000, p. 169).

Said argues that representation of the Orient in European literary texts contributed to the creation of a dichotomy between Europe and its others. In this dichotomy European culture is superior over other lands. Since Europe has knowledge about non-Europeans it maintains power over them. Hence the study of the Orient is a “political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between Europe, the West , us and the Orient, the East, them” (Loomba, 1998, p. 45) .

Said introduces colonial discourse studies by examining colonial power through using culture and knowledge. Through discourse analysis we can follow the connections between the visible and the hidden, the dominant and the marginalised, ideas and institutions. It allows us to see how power works through language, literature, culture and the institutions which control our daily lives. Said examines the ways in which colonial discourse functioned as an instrument of power, introduced what came to be known as colonial discourse theory. Discourse is always connected to the exercise of power.

Discourse is a system of statements within which we know the world. It is the system by which dominant groups in society establish the truth by imposing specific knowledges, disciplines and values upon dominated groups. As a social

formation it works to form reality not only for the objects it appears to represent but also for the subjects who form the community on which it depends (Ashcroft et al, 2000, p. 169). That is to say, colonial discourse is the complex of signs and practices that organize social existence and social reproduction within colonial relationships. As Foucault writes, in every society “the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by certain numbers of procuders whose role is to ward off its dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality.” Colonial discourse centralizes Europe in assumptions that are characteristic of modernity: assumptions about history, language, literature and technology.

The term modern was used in the medieval period to distinguish the contemporary from the ancient past. However modernity comes to mean more than that. It refers to modes of social organization that emerged in Europe from about the sixteenth century and extended their influence throughout the world in the wake of European exploration and colonization. As European power developed, this sense of the superiority of the present over the past turned into a sense of superiority over those pre-modern societies and cultures that were locked in the past. Thus European powers thought that they are to introduce modernity to the primitive and uncivilized people. The concept of modernity is therefore significant in the emergence of colonial disourse. Modernity is about conquest. “The emergence of modernity is coterminous with the emergence of Eurocentrism and the European dominance of the world effected through imperial expansion” (Ashcroft et al, 2000, p. 145). In other words, modernity emerges when the European nations start to establish their own dominance over the non-European world and starts to spread their rule through exploration and colonization. European culture constructs itself as ‘modern’ and the non-European as ‘traditional’, ‘static’, and ‘pre-historical’.

Hence colonial discourse is a system of statements that can be made about colonies and colonial peoples, about colonizing powers and about the relationship between these two. It is the system of knowledge and beliefs about the world

within which acts of colonization take place. Although it is generated within the society and cultures of the colonizers, it becomes that discourse within which the colonized may also come to see themselves. This creates a deep conflict in the consciousness of the colonized because of its clash with other knowledges about the world. Rules of inclusion and exclusion run on the assumption of the superiority of the colonizer's culture, history, language, art, political structures, social conventions, and the assertion of the need for the colonized, to be raised up through colonial contact.

In particular, colonial discourse depends on notions of race that begin to emerge at the very advent of European imperialism. Even in the late Medieval period, Europe pictured non-Europe as "the wild man who lived in forests, on the outer edges of civilisation, and was hairy, nude, violent, lacking in moral sense and excessively sensual, expressed all manner of cultural anxieties. He and his female counterpart were 'others' who existed outside civil society" (Loomba, 1998, p. 57). These images correspond with the construction of the 'other' in colonialist discourse. Through such distinctions the colonized is represented as primitive and the colonizer as civilized. That is to say, discourse regulate cognitive systems which control and delimit both the mode and the means of representation in a given society. Accordingly, whenever colonial discourse talks about the Orient it represents the Orient as the negative, underground image or impoverished 'Other' of Western rationality. In other words, Orientalism becomes a discourse when it begins to produce stereotypes about Orientals and the Orient "such as the heat and dust, the teeming marketplace, the terrorist, the courtesan, the Asian despot, the child-like native, the mystical East. (Gandhi, 1998, p. 77). Said tells us that these stereotypes approve the necessity and desirability of colonial government by establishing the position of the West as superior and the position of the East as inferior.

"Colonial discourse tends to exclude statements about the exploitation of the resources of the colonized, the political status accruing to colonizing powers, the importance to domestic politics of the development of an empire, all of which may

be compelling reasons for maintaining colonial ties” (Ashcroft et al, 2000, p. 43). It rather hides these benefits in statements about the inferiority of the colonized, the primitive nature of other races, the barbaric moral corruption of colonized societies, and therefore the duty of imperial power to reproduce itself in the colonial society, and to improve the civilization of the colony through trade, administration, cultural and moral improvement. The definition of civilisation and barbarism rests on the production of a difference between black and white, self and other.

In post-colonial theory “other” refers to the colonized people who are marginalized by imperial discourse. Colonized people are identified by their difference from the center. Here the center refers to the “West” and defines itself by negating its opposite the “East.” Said shows that this opposition is crucial to European self-conception: “if colonized people are irrational, Europeans are rational; if the former are barbaric, sensual, and lazy, Europe is civilization itself, if the Orient is static, Europe is seen as developing and marching ahead; the Orient has to be feminine so that Europe can be masculine” (qtd. in Ania Loomba, Colonialism/Postcolonialism, 1998, p. 47). This dialectic between self and other is derived from deconstruction, and it influenced the colonial studies.

Post-colonial theory acknowledges that colonial discourse rationalises itself through oppositions such as maturity / immaturity, civilisation / barbarism, developed / developing, progressive / primitive. Colonised culture is perceived childlike or childish, and colonialism is seen as a project which is concerned with bringing the colonized to maturity. “The child is constructed both as the ‘subject-to-be-educated’, the ‘subject- in-formation’, the subject in need of discipline” (Tiffin and Lawson, 1994, p. 173). To civilize: to make civil; to bring out of a state of barbarism, to instruct in the arts of life and thus elevate in scale of humanity. The child as primitive must learn to control his body as well as his spirit; he is in need of physical, moral, and intellectual discipline or training. As a result, the colonial subject is considered as “both a child of empire and a primitive, degraded subject of imperial discourse” (Ashcroft et al, 2000, p. 171). Likewise,

Ashis Nandy finds in colonial discourse a similarity between childhood and state of being colonised. In the West since the nineteenth century the study, discussion and general representation of Africa can be given as an example to this. In this regard, V. G. Kiernan's observations about the colonialism in Africa reveal that "the notion of the African as a minor took very strong hold. Westerners doubted whether natives had minds, or minds capable of adult growth. A theory became fashionable that mental growth in the African ceased early that childhood was never left behind" (Gandhi, 1998, p. 32). The coloniser is considered as an educator who is bound to "cultivate, enlighten and ennoble the human race" (Gandhi, 1998, p. 33).

2.2 Binary Distinctions in The Poisonwood Bible

The Poisonwood Bible is about an American missionary family's experience in the Belgian Congo. Nathan is the father, a missionary baptist, who takes his wife, Orleanna, and four daughters, Leah, Rachel, Adah, Ruth May, to the Congo in 1959 to convert Africans. Rachel is the oldest, she is sixteen years old and she is the representative of America's material culture. Leah and Adah are twins, they are fourteen-year-olds. Leah is fearless and noble, Adah is scholarly and disabled, she walks with difficulty and cannot speak. Ruth May is the youngest. In the novel we see Nathan Price, an Evangelical Baptist minister, as an educator. He devotes his life to save the souls of the Africans. He announces that "my work is to bring salvation into the darkness."¹¹ He sees himself as a saviour. Nathan is bringing the Word of God to the land of darkness.

The Price women are subject to Nathan's authority. Nathan as a male is superior to his wife and his daughters. Nathan Price as the father, is also furnished with a central position as patriarch in his family. He has the authority, he makes the rules.

¹¹

Kingsolver, Barbara, (1998). *The Poisonwood Bible*. London: Faber and Faber, p. 137. subsequent references to this edition are parenthetically in the text.

He sets himself up as a godlike figure, “the captain of a sinking mess of female minds” (36), which he is trying to “drag toward enlightenment through the marrow of their own female bones” (88). Nathan is a domineering force and the Price women’s lives move around him. He is cruel, insensitive, arrogant, cold and obstinate. Nathan attempts to impose his own will on both the people of Kilanga and his family. He both tries to cultivate the Congo and his daughters. While imposing his own interests on his family he uses both force and consent. For instance, he wants his daughters to act according to his rules, and if they go against him, he punishes his daughters by making them copy verses from the Bible. Hence they all live in terror of the cursed Verse:

The dreaded Verse is our household punishment. Other lucky children might merely be trashed for their sins, but we Price girls are castigated with the Holy Bible. The Reverend will level his gaze and declare, ‘You have the Verse.’ Then slowly, as we squirm on his hook, he writes on a piece of paper, for example: Jeremiah 48:18. Then say ye good-bye to sunshine or the Hardy Boys for an afternoon, as you poor sinner, must labor with a pencil in your good left hand to copy out Jeremiah 48:18, ‘*Come down from your throne of glory and sit in mire, O daughter that dwells in Dibon,*’ and additionally, the ninety-nine verses that follow it. One hundred full verses exactly copied in longhand, because it is the final one that reveals your crime. In the case of Jeremiah 48:18, the end is Jeremiah 50:31, ‘*Lo! I am against you, O Insolence! saith the oracle of the Lord, the God of hosts; For your day has come, your time of reckoning.*’ Only upon reaching that one-hundredth verse do you finally understand you are being punished for the sin of insolence. Although you might have predicted it. (69)

Despite the girls who act according to their father will and afraid of their father, Orleanna sees herself as an “inferior force” (218). She thinks that God is on his side, “unto women God said: I will greatly multiply thy sorrow, and thy conception, in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband that he shall rule over thee” (218). Orleanna feels inferior since Nathan as the representative of the patriarchy, imposes this ideology on her and she internalises this ideology. Nathan achieves domination through consent, as Althusser explains by means of ‘Ideological State Apparatuses’. Since he is a minister he uses Bible as his ideology. Bible helps Nathan have domination over his family. Therefore family members accept the biblical values and biblical

values determine their lives. Orleanna internalises the Bible, she makes Nathan's ideas her own, she expresses biblical views. Nathan uses Bible as the ideological tool of patriarchy. Thus in his family Nathan achieves domination not only by force but also by consent.

In addition to that, at the beginning, the Price women under, the authority of Nathan, believe that they come to the Congo to bring the Word of God to the land of darkness. As Orleanna Price narrates "we stepped down there on a place we believed unformed, where only darkness moved on the face of the waters " (Kingsolver, 1998, p. 11) They think of Africa as a land unformed and they are going there for missionary service. The Price women buy Nathan's views not only about themselves but also about the Congo and the Congolese. Since the West defines its other by creating certain stereotypes, the women of the family think of the Congo as it is represented in European literary texts. As Said argues representation of the Orient as strange creates the dichotomy between Europe and its other. Hence Nathan as the representative of the West describes, "the Africans are living in darkness. Broken in body and soul" (61). Similar to Orleanna, Leah thinks that Africa is a land of darkness. On their way to the Congo she states that "I expected everything: jungle flowers, wild roaring beasts. God's Kingdom in its pure, enlightened glory" (20). As an American white missionary family they believe that they are carrying civilization, light to the darkness.

In fact, Africa is not an unformed land, the West describes it like that. The colonial discourse represents the Orient as primitive. Hence when the Price family go to the Congo they carry with them the white man's prejudices. However the Orient has its own values, social codes. For instance, when flesh-eating driver ants invade the village the Price women see this event in a wholly negative light, their neighbors in Kilanga are used to the biennial visit, and view it a positive light, as a form of cleansing. When the ants pass through the village they eat all plant and animal matter left in their wake which means that they clean the houses of crumbs, the bed of the bugs. It also means that any baby or pet that is left behind will be eaten alive, but the Congolese know this and act accordingly. By this event we

understand that, the Congolese are well adapted to their land, and that the civilization that grew up there was the correct civilization for that location. For so many centuries, Western civilization tries to impose its own culture to Africa which is wrong, because a culture that is right in some context can be ill suited to others.

However, when the Prices start to live in Congo they, infact only the Price women, realize that Africa is not an unformed land. Rachel expresses it very nice: “are we in for it now, was my thinking about the Congo from the instant we first set foot. We are supposed to be calling the shots here, but it doesn’t look to me we are in charge of a thing, not even our ownelves” (26). Although they see themselves as centers and Africans as margins they notice that for the Congolese they occupy the margin. As Leah writes:

After we first arrived, the children congregated outside our house each and every morning which confused us. We thought there must be something strange. . . . Then we realized the peculiar was us. They were attracted to our family for the same reason people will pull over to watch a house afire or a car wreck. We didn’t have to do a thing in the world fascinating but move around in our house, speak, wear pants, boil our water. (118)

Through these lines we understand that the world through the eyes of the other is different. Until this point we observe the East through the eyes of the West, but here we observe switch of the roles. Leah expresses the Easter gaze. The Congolese reverse the binary opposition here in the Congo they are normal and the Price family is abnormal. When the Price girls come out “the children would scream and bolt in terror,” as if they are “poisonous” (119). They watch them like zoo creatures or potential sources of looties (119). The Price family is “different” here, not the Congolese. Similarly, in the Congo Rachel is different not Adah because “here bodily damage is more or less considered to be a by-product of living, not a disgrace. In the way of the body and other people’s judgment I enjoy a bening approval in Kilanga that I have never, ever known in Bethlehem, Georgia” (84). As Orleanna describes, in the Congo the Congolese people “use

their bodies like we use *things* at home” (62). They use their bodies like clothes or garden tools hence, “their bodies just get worn out, about the same way as our worldly goods do” (62). Therefore nobody stares at Adah, they rather stare at Rachel because she has “sapphire-blue eyes, white eye lashes, and platinum blonde hair that falls to” her “waist” (55). As a result Adah finds acceptance in the Congolese culture and this acceptance contrasts with “the judgmental morality of American culture which expects perfections, and reviles the missed mark” (Koza, 2003, p. 286).

Even though the Price family goes to the Congo to educate, to civilize, and to cultivate, to enlighten the people there, Rachel, Leah, Adah and Orleanna realize that there exists a civilization which has its own social values. As a result they try to get into that society, be a part of it. As Leah suggests “ I wanted them to play with me. I suppose everyone in our family wanted the same, in one way or another. To play, to bargain reasonably, to offer the Word , to stretch a hand across the dead space that pillowed around us” (120).

However Nathan is blind to the surrounding realities of the Congolese culture and he refuses to learn anything about the culture around him. He does not want to enlarge and deepen his understanding of the world. He just wants to be followed, not to join the already existing system. The girls want to join the Congolese children and to play with them, but Nathan wants the Congolese to follow the words of God. He is trying to make everyone love Jesus “ but they don’t ” (180). He wants to baptize all the children in the river. In his sermons Reverend Price emphasizes baptism, “ but when he showered the idea of baptism on people there, it shrunk them away like water on a witch” (85) because they are afraid of crocodiles. As a result, the girls begin to play with the Congolese children whereas Nathan has trouble in communicating effectively with the villagers.

3. THE PATH TO RUIN

The Poisonwood Bible portrays Nathan's fanatical insensitivity to the Congolese and his lack of understanding the needs of the others which causes the alienation of his small congregation, the death of his youngest daughter Ruth May, the disintegration of the family, and his own madness. While the Prices disintegrate the new nation disintegrates as well; thus their fates are intermingled. Nathan is so obsessed with his mission that he is unable to see hardships his family goes through. While Nathan is trying to educate, enlighten the Congolese, his family tries to adapt themselves to their new surroundings, learn a new language, and culture, and still maintain the united front their father required. Thus Barbara Kingsolver draws parallelism between the national upheaval and the hardships that the Price women have in an isolated village in Kilanga. The clear intent of The Poisonwood Bible is to offer Nathan's patriarchal troublemaking as an example in miniature of historical white exploitation of black Africa.

3. 1 The Faith of the Price Family

In The Poisonwood Bible Kingsolver interweaves the story of the Price family, American Baptist missionaries who travel to the Belgian Congo on the eve of its independence, with the story of American involvement in the deposing and murder of Patrice Lumumba, the first Congolese prime minister. Hence Kingsolver investigates the complex interrelationship between the personal and the political. "The Price family is clearly an example of the personal because the family structure replicates the power structure of colonialism" (Koza, 2003, p 285).

To begin with, Nathan the patriarch sets himself up as a godlike figure, "the captain of a sinking mess of female minds" (111). Orleanna describes herself as Nathan's conquest, "I was only a captive witness. What's the conqueror's wife, if not a conquest herself? " (9). Orleanna, because of her husband's overpowering presence, is so minimized that her identity is melted into his. She and her

daughters are inevitably complicit in his colonizing mission. Orleanna realizes this when she sees herself through the eyes of the Congolese market women:

A foreign mother and child assuming themselves in charge, suddenly slapped down to nothing by what they all saw us to be. Until that moment I'd thought I could have it both ways: to be one of them, and also my husband's wife. What conceit! I was his instrument, his animal. Nothing more. (101)

Orleanna wants to be a part of Kilanga and be Nathan's wife, but she becomes aware of her true position:

And where was I, the girl or woman called Orleanna . . . Swallowed by Nathan's mission, body and soul. Occupied as if by a foreign power. I still appeared to be myself from the outside, just as he still looked like the same boy who had gone off to war. But now every cell of me was married to Nathan's plan. His magnificent will. This is how conquest occurs: one plan is always larger than the other.(226)

She emphasizes the parallel between herself and a colonized person and between Nathan and the colonizers. Since there is an analogy between the subordination of women and colonial subject. Women and non-Europeans, colonialist and patriarchal ideologies. The colonial subject is usually conceptualised as male and the female subject as white (Loomba, 1998, p. 163). She depicts herself as a country occupied by foreign power, just like Congo. Nathan is the archetypal colonizer who is "in full possession of the country once known as Orleanna Wharton" (228). Orleanna sees how her own "lot was cast with the Congo . . . barefoot bride of men who took her jewels and promise the Kingdom" (229).

Similarly Orleanna tells us that her husband "simply can see no way to have a daughter but to own her like a plot of land" (217).

Other than Orleanna, Ruth May shows us the evil results of their father's behavior and the consequences of white supremacy. Ruth May's time in the novel is short, she arrives in the Congo at the age of five and dies from the bite of a green mamba snake when she is six. Her words are few, but her naive voice

reveals the prejudicial attitudes shaped by her father and a religious rhetoric of white superiority and biblical truth. Her statements about African people or blacks in general, her tales about parental conflict, and her political comments illustrate well the outcomes of discrimination.

Ruth May starts her narration by repeating the words of her father “God says The Africans are the Tribe of Ham. Ham was the worst one of Noah’s three boys. So Noah cursed all Ham’s children to be slaves for ever and ever. That’s how come them turn out dark” (23). Then she thinks about Georgia; in Georgia blacks have their own school. In addition to that she remembers the man in the church saying concerning the white African Americans, “they were different from us and needs ought to keep to their own” (23). In her young child’s imagination Jimmy Crow is the man who “makes the laws” (23); he excludes blacks from stores, restaurants, and the zoo. She also writes about a classmate in Sunday school teaching her to talk like a native “Ugga bugga bugga lugga” (24). These words of Ruth May are similar to those of Khrushchev in a newspaper cartoon that appears in an article on Soviet plans for the Congo. Holding hands and dancing with a skinny cannibal native with big lips and a bone in his hair. Khrushchev sings, “Bingo, Bango Bongo, I don’t want to leave the Congo” (185). Her words parallel against the breadth of white supremacist attitudes and the depth of Kingsolver’s anti-imperialist ideology that undergirds the narrative. “Her story about parental conflict adds to this understanding” (Ognibene, 2003, p. 30).

Ruth May hears her parents taking different positions on a range of issues related to the natives. For instance, she watches malnourished children with distended stomachs and comments, “ I reckon that’s what they get for being the Tribes of ham. Father says to forgive them for they know not what they do.” Mama says, “You can’t hardly even call it a sin when they need every little thing as bad as they do” (58-59). When Ruth May notices the lost legs, arms, eyes, and other physical disabilities of the natives, Father says, “They are living in darkness. Broken in body and soul, don’t even see how they could be healed.” Mama says, “Well maybe they take a different view of their bodies.” Ruth May observes that

“Mama has this certain voice sometimes.” and when Father states that “ the body is the temple,” Mama says, “ Well, here in Africa that temple has to do a hateful lot of work in a day.” Ruth May sees her father “ looking at Mama hard... with his eye turned mean,” for talking back to him (61-62). Even Ruth May recognizes the undertow of her parents’ relationship.

Kingsolver uses Ruth May’s voice for more. Ruth May’s story challenges Nathan’s and other exploiters’ sense of superiority, placing the people of Kilanga in the female members of his family always beneath his feet (Ognibene, 2003 p. 30). Nathan’s attitude toward his family mirrors both his and general Western attitude towards Africa. He is violent and tyrannical. He exploits his family and rules within an atmosphere of repression in which no one is permitted to speak their mind except for Nathan himself. Ruth May is aware that her father’s abuse of herself and her sisters. He assigns “The Verse,” he tries to teach everyone to love Jesus, but infact he spreads fear. Nathan governs his family just like the Belgians govern the Congo. Nathan feels superior over his family members.

Even Ruth May, the youngest Price woman understands the white man’s abuse of the Congolese. She observes the Belgian Army arrive, recognizes that the “ white one knows who is boss” and sees the shoeless “Jimmy Crow boys” who hide out and say “Patrice Lumumba!” (140-141) She listens to the doctor, who sets her arm argue, with her father about those “boys” and “missionary work” in the same debate. When the doctor says that missionary work “ is a great bargain for Belguim but . . . a hell of a way to deliver the social services,” listing the abuses of slavery, such as cutting of hands in the rubber plantations, father gets angry and shouts, “Belgian and American business brought civilization to the Congo!” (138). Like other colonizers, Nathan associates “civilization” with his God, his language, and his culture. These are the words Ruth May remembers, these are the words that make her “scared of Jesus.” (180) These are the words that tell her that her father isn’t listening to anyone but himself. These are the words that make her believe she is sick “because of doing bad things” (307) when she has malaria. These are the words that make Ruth May believe that “being dead is not worse

than being alive” but different from it because the “view is larger” (609). Moreover, she notices the parallels between behaviours of Nathan and national leaders. She describes Nathan’s similar need for control, as well as his desire for distance from the consequences of his acts.

As the women discover themselves they lose faith in Nathan. The Price women come to understand what Nathan cannot, and they start to tell their stories in sharply distinct voices (John Skow, 1998, p. 1). Ruth May’s death is the turning point in the novel. “Gone to a ruin so strange it must be called by an other name. Call it *muntu* : all that is here” (607). Until Ruth May’s death family members try to keep the family together. “We are all keeping our hopes for family relations, but our true family fell apart after Ruth May’s tragic death” (526). Ruth May’s death change everything in the Price family’s life. They become aware of their position and decide to take action. As Rachel writes “the whole world would change then, and nothing would be all right again. Not for our family. . . . for us it would never be normal again” (417).

It will never be the same for the Congolese as well because Ruth May and Patrice Lumumba die on the same day. Hence both the Price family’s and the Congolese’s life change. Rachel analyzes their position as “what happened to us in the Congo was simply the bad luck of two opposite worlds crashing into each other, causing tragedy” (526). With Ruth May’s death the Prices disintegrate as well as the newly established the independent Congo. At the very moment the Prices’ lives in Kilanga fall apart, the CIA arranges to murder Patrice Lumumba, Prime Minister of the newly independent Congo.

3.2 The Faith of the Independent Congo

Beginning in the late 1870s the Congo was colonized by Leopold II, king of the Belgians. Leopold believed that Belgium needed colonies to ensure its prosperity, and thinking that the Belgians would not support colonial risks, he privately started to establish a colonial empire. Between 1874-1877, Henry M.

Stanley made a journey across central Africa during which he found the course of the Congo River. Intrigued by Stanley's findings, Leopold engaged him in 1878 to establish the king's authority in the Congo basin. Between 1879-1884, Stanley founded a number of stations along the middle Congo river and signed treaties that gave the sovereignty to the king with several African rulers. At the Conference of Berlin (1884-1885) the European powers recognized Leopold's claim to the Congo basin, and in a ceremony in 1885 at Banana, the king announced the establishment of the Congo Free State, headed by himself. The announced boundaries were roughly the same as those of present-day Congo, but it was not until the mid 1890s that Leopold's control was established in most parts of the state.

In 1891-92, Katanga was conquered, and between 1892 and 1894, East Congo was obtained by using strength from the control of E African Arab and Swahili traders. Since Leopold did not have sufficient funds to develop the Congo, Leopold sought and received loans from the Belgian parliament in 1889 and 1895, and in return Belgium was given the right to take possession of the Congo in 1901. Meanwhile Leopold declared all unoccupied land to be owned by the state. Hence he would gain control of the very profitable trade in rubber and ivory. Much of the land was given to concessinarie companies, companies benefitting from a grant, which in return were to build railroads or to occupy a specified part of the country or merely to give the state a percentage of their profits. In addition, Leopold maintained a large estate in the region of Lake Leopold II.

Private companies were also established to exploit the mineral wealth of Katanga and Kasai; a notable example was Union Minière du Haut-Katanga, chartered in 1905. The Belgian parliament did not exercise its right to annex the Congo in 1901, but reports starting in 1904 about the brutal treatment of Africans there led to a popular campaign for Belgium to take over the state from Leopold. After exhaustive parliamentary debates, in 1908 Belgium annexed the Congo.

Under the Belgian rule the violent acts of the Free State were gradually diminished, but the Congo was still regarded as a field for European investment, and little was done to give Africans significant role in its government or economy. Economic development was furthered by the construction of the railroads and other transportation facilities. European concerns established more large plantations, and vast mining operations were set up. Africans formed the labor pool for these operations, and Europeans were the managers. By the end of the 1920s, mining became the principal support of the economy, and it outdistanced agriculture. Some of the mining companies built towns for their workers, and there was considerable movement of Africans from the country to urban areas, especially beginning in the 1930s.

The economic boom of the 1950s brought major social changes. During this period new social groups were created, these groups lead to intensified national agitation and ultimately independence. In the postwar period, the most important social change was rapid urbanization. "The capital city of Leopoldville grew from 47,000 in 1940 to 340,000 in 1955, and Stanleyville and Elisabethville registered substantial growth as well. For the Congo as a whole, the population was 22 percent urban by 1955" (Gibbs, 1991, p. 69-70). Urbanization enlarged politically important groups and it also helped to create another social group called *évolué*, that is an African who had changed, separated from traditional ways, and become westernized. It was the product of postwar economic boom. It produced large number of jobs for clerks, nurses, and skilled laborers. Africans filled these positions, and the *évolués* emerging from this group constituted an African elite.

However, the *évolués* could not achieve recognition in respectable society; thus they chose nationalism. They created a series of cultural and social groups termed as *évolué* clubs. Some of these groups moved into political actions. The most important of these was the organization of the Bakongo peoples, eventually known as the Alliance des Bakongos (ABAKO). The ABAKO's leader was Joseph Kasavubu.

The first public demand by African leaders for comprehensive program of political change was a manifesto published in June 1956 (Kaplan, 1979, p. 40). In 1955, when demands for independence were increasing throughout Africa, Antoine van Bilsen, a Belgian professor, published a 30-Year Plan. In this plan he proposed that the Congo will be independent within thirty years. Congolese nationalists supported him. In 1956 Conscience Africain¹² magazine published by a group of Ngala *évolués* in Leopoldville, wrote an editorial calling for an end to racial discrimination and for political freedom, meaning independence within thirty years. They were probably inspired by Bilsen, and this manifesto was the beginning of African political awareness in the Congo. It evoked controversy.

As the Republic of Congo struggles to maintain its freedom from the West, in The Poisonwood Bible Leah mirrors this struggle in her own relationship with her father. She insists to take part in the fire hunt by doing so she declares her right to be who she truly is, and not who her father dictates that she be. We see here the parallelism between womanhood and race. Leah's freedom is restricted because she is a woman in a culture which limits the life possibilities of the female. Similarly, the freedom of the Republic is endangered because of the racist belief that African culture is inferior, and African life not worth as much as Western life.

"The main reaction came from the ABAKO. An ABAKO counter-manifesto was published on August 23, 1956, supporting the Conscience Africain declaration but going further in demanding immediate independence" (Kaplan, 1979, p. 41). Between December 1957 and January 1959, it was a time of increasing unrest. Most *évolué* demands were rejected, and it was a time of economic withdrawal, and unemployment.

Belgians made the first moves towards political liberalization in 1957, the first municipal elections were made. The only political party that attempted to be broadly based and national in scope was the National Congolese Movement (MNC). It was established in October 1958 and Patrice Lumumba was the whom

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It is a magazine published by a group of Ngala *évolués* in Leopoldville.

president of this party. It began with a group of *évolués* in Leopoldville, several of had participated in the Conscience Africain manifesto. "This group aimed to form a party that had no ethnic orientation" (Kaplan, 1979, p. 41). Lumumba's MNC was the first truly national party, and it played an important role in the political process of achieving independence. Lumumba was a significant figure in the Congolese independence struggle and the birth of the democracy movement in the Congo.

Lumumba was born in the village of Ona Lua, in the Sankuru District of Kasai. He got a primary education in that village. He rebelled against the paternalism and authoritarianism of both Catholic and Protestant missionaries in Sankuru. For a short period of time he lived in Kinar-Port Empain, and he took part in local *évolué* groups. Then he attended school in Leopoldville for a while, and he worked in Stanleyville as a postal employee. He spent much of his adult life as a postal clerk in Kisangani. There he was also active in several civic associations. It was through the activities of these associations that he learned much about the world, together with the art of organizing. He also acquired in the process a strong commitment to the political emancipation and economic development of the Congo as a multiethnic state (Ntalaja, 2002, p. 83).

In 1956 Lumumba was invited to Brussels to a conference in order to arrange the uniform code to regulate government employment. When he came back to the Congo he was arrested and convicted of theft from the post office. He emerged from prison in 1957, and then his popularity greatly increased. He resumed his activities as an influential leader of the independence movement.

Certain influences outside the Congo did much to encourage the growth of political interest among the African elite. General Charles de Gaulle's Brazzaville speech on August 24, 1958, offering independence to the French Congo either within or without the French community, dramatized the contrast in the pace of political development between the Belgian Congo and other African colonies (Kaplan, 1979, p. 42). In 1958 many Africans came in contact with the outside

world for the first time through the Congo exhibitions at the Brussels Worlds Fair. In addition to that in 1958 the first pan-African conference was held in Accra and Lumumba, Diomi, and Ngalula attended this conference.

In Accra, Lumumba met Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of independent Ghana, and other African nationalist leaders, and he was impressed by African solidarity. When he returned to Leopoldville he brought “new political perspectives, a mature nationalism and a strong commitment to the African national project. The major components of this project are national unity, economic independence and pan-African solidarity” (Ntalaja, 2002, p. 84). He made a speech about independence to a mass audience, it was the first of this type of speech delivered in the Congo. The political agitation that begun by Kasavubu in 1956 reached its climax in 1958 with Lumumba’s speech and immediate independence became a national goal.

After the 1958 elections the government started decolonization policy in Belgium. A study group was appointed to go to the Congo in order to consult with prominent Africans and Europeans as a prelude to proposals for a new colonial policy. In 1959 a few days after the Leopoldville riots, the government announced a new program for accelerated political change based on the recommendations of the study group (Kaplan, 1979, p. 43). However, Belgians thought that the declaration was too radical. After this announcement the mistrust between Belgians and Africans increased an atmosphere of tension, indecision, and a breakdown of public order dominated the country.

Meanwhile Congolese political parties continued to be formed. Lumumba, Kasavubu, and Tshombe were the dominant personalities. The December 1959 elections were held as planned, but they could not be concluded. The MNC and ABAKO boycotted them despite a new policy statement by the Belgian government on October 16 that outlined a definite schedule for Congolese self-government within four years (Kaplan, 1979, p. 44).

After a meeting of the MNC congress, riots broke out in Stanleyville, and Lumumba was put into jail. So during the elections he was in jail, but when the Roundtable Conference of Belgian and Congolese leaders opened on January 1960 in Brussels, the Congolese formed a common front and insisted on Lumumba's release from jail as a condition for pursuing the talks. In this Roundtable Conference, Belgian government decided that the Congo would obtain a total and unconditional independence on 30 June 1960. A major reason for the Belgian to grant independence in 1960 was the fact that several areas of the country had become totally ungovernable. African population refused to pay taxes and respect administrative regulations. Some even refused to have any contact with the social services provided by the colonial state (Ntalaja, 2002, p. 87).

In May 1960, elections were held for the parliament and the provincial assemblies. Lumumba's personal charisma, powers of speech, and ideological sophistication contributed to the party's success. As the doctor said in The Poisonwood Bible "Lumumba has such a way of moving a crowd he does not seem to need shoes. Last week he spoke for an hour on the nonviolent road to independence. The crowd loved it so much they rioted and killed twelve people" (139). MNC-Lumumba ended up with the largest contingent in the Chamber of Deputies, but no party had a clear majority. After unsuccessful attempts to form a government, Lumumba worked out a coalition that succeeded on his second attempt. Lumumba became the first prime minister, and Kasavubu was elected as the first president. The Congo's first government was formed. Initially the Belgians agreed in the prospect of an MNC government. They thought that Kasavubu would set limits to Lumumba; however, in the Independence Day ceremonies on June 30, 1960 with Lumumba's speech they realized that Lumumba would admit no limit to his strong nationalist commitment:

Our lot was eighty years of colonial rule...We have known tiring labor exacted in exchange for salary which did not allow us to satisfy our hunger. . . We have known ironies, insults, blows which we had to endure morning, noon, and night because we were "Negroes" . . . We have known that our lands were despoiled . . . We have known that the law was never the same depending on whether it concerned a white or a Negro . . . We have known

the atrocious sufferings of those banished for political opinions or religious beliefs. . . We have known that there were magnificent houses for the whites in the cities and tumble-down straw huts for the Negroes. (qtd. in *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention* Gibbs, (1991), p. 81)

While Lumumba was uttering his speech Leah was there, that day she went to Leopoldville with her father and she listened Lumumba's speech and she thought that he was right "I'd seen it myself when we went to the Underdowns. Leopoldville is a nice little town of dandy houses with porches and flowery yards on nice paved streets for the whites, and surrounding it nothing but dusty rundown shacks for the Congolese. They make their home out of sticks or tin or anything in the world they can find" (208) .Thus even Leah, as a young girl, can understand the unequal treatment towards the Congolese.

After the Congo achieves independence, after the family loses the money paid to the clergyman for service and all contacts with the larger world, after Orleanna and Ruth May fall "sick nigh on to death," the girls endure Nathan's increasing anger and physical abuse. Adah remembers the bruises and connects her father's abusive behavior with the secrets she learns about Ike and the planned assassination of Lumumba (246). Thus domination of their father, and greed in the Congo demonstrate similarities.

The Lumumba government lasted two months. The major difficulty began with the upheaval of the Force Publique on July 5, 1960. After independence soldiers expected immediate Africanization. They had been demanding Africanization since 1959, but senior Belgian military officers were opposing the progress of Africans, as a result there were no Africans in positions of command. Hence soldiers were not satisfied and they rebelled against their Belgian officers. There occurred acts of violence and humiliation of Europeans. As the mutiny began to spread all over the country, President Kasavubu and Prime Minister Lumumba made several trips into interior with the hope of restoring law and order.

They also considered several options with regard to foreign military assistance in order to achieve this goal. Europeans were abandoned from most

areas. On July 10 Belgian paratroopers landed at Luluabourg and Elisabethville to reestablish order. Prime Minister Lumumba had great trouble with these uprisings and he decided to replace the Belgian commander with an African. Lumumba chose his uncle, Victor Lundula, commander in chief and Joseph Désiré Mobutu as chief of staff. The name of the army was turned into Armée Nationale Congolaise (ANC), and Africanization was started.

Meanwhile two issues shattered the diplomatic relations between the Congo and Belgium. These were the declaration of Katangan independence on July 11 by Tshombe and the landing of Belgian troops at Matadi, Elisabethville, and Luluabourg. The troop landings were a breaking of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed by the two countries the day before the independence. They convinced the Congolese authorities that Belgium was attempting to reoccupy the country.

On July 12 Kasavubu and Lumumba asked military help from the United Nations (UN) to protect the Congo from foreign aggression. On July 14, 1960 UN Security Council responded to the Congo government's request for aid. UN requested the withdrawal of Belgian troops and gave right to Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld to take the necessary steps by seeking advice from the Congo government to provide military and technical assistance for the Congolese security forces.

However Lumumba and Kasavubu were not satisfied by UN actions and they said that they would ask for Soviet's help if Belgian troops were not removed in two days. On July 20, UN sent thousand of troops, and Belgium agreed to remove its troops from Leopoldville, hence Lumumba gave up the threat. These incidents made the situation worse, mistrust, suspicion, and bitterness increased between the Congolese and the Belgians. The new government was unable to organize its administration, lots of Belgian civil servants and technicians left the job so there was administrative problems. On the other hand, the Katanga secessionist regime was strengthening its position. UN was told not to interfere in the Congo's internal

conflicts, so it was clear that the Katanga secession was about to become an other problem for the Lumumba government (Kaplan, 1979, p. 47).

Having failed to bring Lumumba down through the mutiny, his internal and external enemies used the secessions of Katanga and South Kasai as obstacle courses through which he could be entrapped. He was charged with the sin of communism in the first instance, and accused of crime of genocide in the second. Lumumba could not get Western support for the Katanga secession and UN was unwilling to use force to end it, hence Lumumba accepted Soviet's military aid to attack the secessionist areas in August 1960. This was the incident that provided his enemies in Washington and Brussels with an easy justification for removing from power and eventually assassinating a nationalist and revolutionary leader who threatened their neocolonial interests in Central Africa.

In the novel Orleanna mentions to an article, related to Lumumba's assassination, that is written in the American news magazine. " President Eisenhower spoke of having everything under control; the Kennedy boy said Uncle Ike was all washed up and we need look no farther than the Congo- Congo!- for evidence of poor U.S. leadership, the missile gap, and proof of the Communist threat" (109).

By 1 September, ANC troops had invaded south Kasai and were advancing towards Katanga. The secessionist leaders Tshombe and Kalonjisaw the boldness of these troops, and appealed to Kasavubu to stop Lumumba's anti-secessionist drive. Two issues made Kasavubu take action against Lumumba. The first one was the military action of ANC in South Kasai which resulted in massacres of innocent civilians in several locations. The second factor was the presence Andrew Cordier in Kinshasa.

According to Thomas Kanza, who was the first representative of Congo at the United Nations, Cordier arranged things in favor of Kasavubu and the interests of the West. Consequently on September 5 President Kasavubu announced the

dismissal of Lumumba from the government. He also appointed Mobutu to replace Undula as head of the ANC. Ileo was chosen as the new Prime minister and started to form a new government. This was a civilian coup and it was illegal. Parliament rejected Kasavubu's decision. Lumumba reacted by dismissing Kasavubu, however, parliament refused to remove Kasavubu from office as well. Parliament tried to reconcile Lumumba and Kasavubu.

On 14 September 1960, Mobutu pulled off his military coup with the help of the CIA and of General Kettani. Mobutu declared his intention as that of temporarily neutralizing both Lumumba and Kasavubu politically. Until the situation improves or returns to normal he promised the country was to be run by a college of commissioners made up of university graduates and students under the presidency of Justin Bomboko, foreign minister in Lumumba's cabinet (Ntalaja, 2002, p.109). In fact this was a coup against Lumumba.

The anti-Lumumba alliance of UN officials, Belgian authorities, US diplomats and Congolese moderates became successful in removing Lumumba from office. In order to prevent Lumumba from regaining state power the US ambassador, Timberlake sought UN approval for Lumumba's arrest. On October 10 Lumumba was placed under house arrest. Following the credentials vote in the UN General Assembly on 24 November, Lumumba realized that the only way to regain power was through popular support and armed struggle led by the legitimist forces then gathering in Kisangani under the leadership of Antoine Gizenga, the deputy prime minister. He had to break out of his isolation as a prisoner in his own residence. On 27 November 1960, Lumumba fled Kinshasa in an attempt to reach his stronghold of Kisangani. US and Belgian intelligence services, security police chief Victor Nendaka assisted Mobutu in following Lumumba's movements.

Lumumba was captured on 1 December on the left bank of the Sankuru River, and "denied UN protection by the Ghanaian contingent at Mweka the next morning. He was handed over to Pongo at Ilebo, and flown with the latter to Kinshasa on an Air Congo DC-3 airliner" (Ntalaja, 2002, p. 110). Lumumba was

exposed to humiliation and violence at the Binza parachutist camp and then he was transferred to the élite armoured brigade camp at Mbanza-Ngungu, in the lower Congo. Even though he was in jail he did not give up his struggle. As he wrote to his wife:

No brutality, no agony, no torture has ever driven me to beg for mercy, for I would rather die with my head high, my faith unshaken, and a profound trust in the destiny of my country, than live in subjection seeing principles that are sacred to me laughed to scorn. History will have its say one day- not the history they teach in Brussels, Paris, Washington or the United Nations, but the history taught in the countries set free from colonialism and its puppet rulers. Africa will write her own history, and both north and south of the Sahara it will be a history of glory and dignity. (Lumumba-Kasongo, 1999, p. 220)

By January 1961, the Lumumbist government in Kisangani began expanding its control and authority in the eastern part of the republic, and thus encouraged Lumumba's followers all over the country to continue the struggle for genuine independence, national unity and territorial integrity. US and Belgian officials were alarmed by these developments. They were also afraid that the soldiers guarding Lumumba at Mbanza-Ngungu might free him. Finally, on January 17, 1961, Lumumba and his two companions, Youth and Sports Minister Maurice Mpolo and Senate Vice-President Joseph Okito, were severely beaten on the plane ride to Katanga, in the presence of two Luba-Kasai members of the college commissioners. They were tortured at the Brouwez villa, assaulted by Katanga leaders and Belgian officers, and shot by an execution team under command of Captain Gat. Police Commissioner Soete and his brother removed the bodies from the burial site the next day and dissolved them in acid.

Orleana paralyzes her ruin with death of Lumumba she writes "What ever your burdens, to hold yourself apart from the lot of more powerful men is an illusion. On that awful day in January 1961, Lumumba paid with a life and so did I. On the wings of an owl the fallen Congo came to haunt even our little family, we messengers of goodwill adrift on a sea of mistaken intentions." (368)

On February 10, the Katanga government announced that Lumumba and his aides escaped from jail. After this announcement there spread rumours that the three had already been killed. Therefore on the 13th of February the Katanga Minister of the Interior, Mr. Munongo announced:

Yesterday evening a katangan from the Lkolezi region . . . came to my private residence to inform me that Lumumba, Okito, and Mpolo had been massacred yesterday morning by the inhabitants of a small village situated quite a distance from the place where the vehicle had been discovered, so that we are still wondering how the three fugitives could have got there . . . they were identified beyond any possibility of doubt and their death was certified. The bodies were immediately buried in a place which we shall not reveal, if only to prevent any pilgrimages being made to it. . . I should be lying if I said that Lumumba's death grieves me. You know how I feel about him . . . We cannot honestly blame these people who killed Lumumba because they have rid the Congo and the world of a problem . . . which menaced the existence of humanity. This village will be given the 400,00 francs promised by the Katanga Government for the capture of the three men . . . If people accuse us of killing Lumumba, I reply: 'Prove it' (Ekpebu, 1998, p. 62).

Consequently Lumumba was assassinated. "Author Bill Berkeley approves that, the Congo was left in the hands of tyrants, white and black who, throughout Mobutu's thirty-four years of brutality unmatched in the colonial era and after, took the jewels and killed the people (Ognibene, 2003, p. 23).

His fall and assassination were the result of a vast conspiracy involving US, Belgian and UN officials on the one hand, and his political enemies, including Kasavubu, Mobutu and Tshombe, on the other. On August 18 1960, US President Eisenhower met with his National Security Council and when he learned the situation in Congo he asked them whether "we can't get rid of this guy" (Ntalaja, 2002, p. 107). This was a presidential directive to assassinate Lumumba. As Adah hears two men talking to each other "the President: Eisenhower, We Like Ike. The King of America wants a tall, thin man in the Congo to be dead." This is a shock to her "How is it different," she thought, "from Grandfather God sending the African children to hell for being born too far from a Baptist Church?" (338)

Since Eisenhower wanted to get rid of Lumumba Allen Dulles, the CIA boss, gave instructions to Sidney Gottlieb, the CIA's top scientist. Gottlieb would later land in Kinshasa with a deadly substance made of cobra venom, to be applied to Lumumba's food or toothpaste. Similar to this poison that would kill or disfigure Patrice Lumumba Orleanna was trying to protect her children and escape the dreadful poison raining down upon her from her husband's obsessive behaviors. However the CIA station thought that this was a ridiculous plan. He suggested that the best course of action was to work with Lumumba's Congolese rivals to eliminate him politically and physically. This is the plan of action that was finally put in motion, in collaboration with Belgium.

The US involved in the Congo Crisis as the leader of the Western Camp. "In the context of the Cold War, this involvement was part of a tradition established in the Middle East and Southeast Asia after the Second World War, by which Uncle Sam would intervene in a strategically important country where former colonial power was unable to retain control over a turbulent situation" (Ntalaja, 2002, p. 116). In the Congo, the United States replaced the former colonial power. However Belgium along with France remained Washington's major partner. The US followed a strategy of multilateral imperialism. Other western powers, regional powers or clients, and multilateral lending and economic management agencies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the Paris Club were all involved in this strategy. Hence in the first Congo crisis was a actor in the multilateral strategy of imperialism led by the United States. Neither Hammarkjöld nor the US government had any intention of collaborating with the legally and democratically constituted Lumumba government to resolve the crisis. US diplomats and intelligence officers were trying to undermine and subvert this government. Lumumba was aware of the policy that the West follows in Congo, in his letter to his wife he wrote:

But what we have wanted for our country, the right to honorable life, to untarnished dignity, to unrestricted freedom- these things have never been desired on our behalf by those important officials in the UN in whom we put our trust, and upon whom we called for help, because whether they knew it

or not, they were directly or indirectly supporting the colonialism of Belgium and her friends in the West. (Lumumba-Kasongo, 1999, p. 220)

Lumumba died since he attempted to keep the constitutional order, national unity and territorial integrity. "The Congo was left in the hands of soulless, empty men" (368). When he came to power Lumumba aimed to demolish the colonial rule because Congo had been under colonial rule for eighty years, and as he stated in his speech "we have suffered the the colonial oppression in body and heart, all that is finished. Together we are going to make a place for justice and peace, prosperity and grandeur. We are going to show the world what the homme noir can do when he works for freedom. We are going to make the Congo, for all of Africa, the heart of light" (210). However Lumumba could not fulfill his dream because the United States plan was larger than his.

With the removal of Lumumba, the Eisenhower administration accomplished its principal objective in the Congo. "Congo is too rich in resources to be left to the Congolese" (Ognibene, 2003, p. 20). And in their memoirs, Eisenhower-era officers justify the policies in anticommunist terms. They argued that the Soviet Union was intending to take over Congo and its valuable mineral resources. The United States removed Lumumba from power because he was serving Soviet interests.

In The Poisonwood Bible one day the Underdowns, Belgian nationals who run the finances for several missionary organizations, visit the Price family and they bring a newspaper and talk about the newspaper article. The newspaper is from New York. "It was written in red-blooded English. Soviet Plan Moves Forward in Congo. It said Khrushchev wanted to take over the Belgian Congo and deprive the innocent savages of becoming a free society, as part of his plan for world domination" (184). The United States was trying to prevent Soviet expansionism and to protect Western security. As Orleanna says "Independence is a complex word in a foreign tongue. To resist occupation, whether you are a nation or merely a woman, you must understand the language of your enemy.

Conquest and liberation and democracy and divorce are words that mean squat” (435-36).

Nation is gendered. National fantasies whether they are colonial, anti-colonial or post-colonial play upon and with the connections between women, land or nations. Across the colonial spectrum, the nation-state is imagined as a woman. Resistance itself is feminised. Sometimes the dilemma of an entire culture is expressed by means of a female figure.

Thus Orleanna, as a baptist missionary’s wife, is portrayed just like Congo who is under the power of white supremacy. “A wife is earth itself, changing hands, bearing scars” (101). Orleanna is aware of her position. She is the inferior force same as Congo and she claims that “Africa and I kept company for a while, and then parted ways, as if we were both party to relations with a failed outcome. Or say I was afflicted with Africa like a bout of a rare disease, from which I have not managed a full recovery” (9).

To sum up in The Poisonwood Bible Kingsolver tangles the troubles Congo and the Price women had. The narrators connect consequences with actions in the Price family and the broader world as well. Orleanna says “If I hadn’t let Nathan take us to Kilanga. If the Baptist hadn’t taken upon themselves the religious conversion of the Congolese. What if the Americans, and the Belgians before them, hadn’t tasted blood and money in Africa? If the world of white men had never touched the Congo at all?” (369)

4. ACHIEVEMENTS AND FAILURES

Although colonialism engendered ideologies of difference, in practice it also brought different peoples in intimate contact with one another. As Megan Vaughan writes, African historians, long before colonial discourse theorist, were discussing the ways in which custom and tradition are established and invented by both colonialists and their opponents. They were discussing that the colonisers and the colonised cannot represent neat binaries because they are active in constructing each other. In The Poisonwood Bible Price family is in the Congo as a representative of American colonizers, they are sent there to form a white dominated society. While establishing a new community colonisers form an interaction with the colonised. Leah, Adah and Orleanna are transformed through their experiences in the Congo. Leah who at first admires and believes in her father begins to rebel. Adah who chooses not to speak in the Congo starts to talk after she leaves the Congo. Orleanna who accepted what Nathan told her as the truth at the beginning of the novels, turns into a devoted mother and gains her own voice. Mary Louise Pratt calls this “the contact zone where disparate cultures meet, clash, grapple with each other often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination” (Loomba, 1998, p. 68). By renaming the arena of colonial conflict as the contact zone Pratt underlines the interaction, the borrowings, and lendings, the appropriations in both directions. Thus in The Poisonwood Bible we experience the borrowings and lendings of both the Price family and the Congolese people. There is a transformation, a change of values occurred. As Rachel says, at the end of the novel, “You can’t just sashay into the jungle aiming to change it all over to the Christian style, without expecting the jungle change you right back” (584).

4.1 Liberty

To begin with we see Leah as the admirer of her father. Leah believes very much in her father’s mission to bring enlightenment to the unenlightened. She even compares her father to Jesus saying that like the savior he has been “singled

out for a life of trial” (Revelation: Leah) At the beginning of the novel she idealizes her father and depicts him as a hero: “My father believes in enlightenment. As a boy he taught himself to read parts of the Bible in Hebrew, and before we came to Africa he made us all sit down and study French. A wounded hero in the Second World War. So he has seen about everything” (49). She has strong belief in her father; She is her father’s daughter, hence she is always with her father. While her sisters stay indoors and help their mothers, Leah helps her father in the garden. As she narrates she likes spending time with her father more than she likes doing anything else (42). Leah takes her father as a model, she wants to “be a missionary or a teacher, a farmer, telling others how the Lord helps those that help themselves ” (170). Leah watches her father cultivating the soil. Although the result of Nathan’s agricultural experience in Kilanga is a total failure, for Leah this does not diminish her adoration of her father:

No matter how bad things might get, he will find the grace to compose himself. Some people will find him overly stern and frightening, but that is only because he was gifted with such keen judgement and purity of heart. He has been singled out for a life of trial, as Jesus was. Being always the first to spot flaws and transgressions, it falls upon father to deliver penance. Yet he is always ready to acknowledge the potential salvation that resides in a sinner’s heart. I know that someday, when I’ve grown large enough in the Holy Spirit, I will have his wholehearted approval. (48)

Throughout the days she spends in the Congo Leah, “our father’s star pupil” (64), begins to realize his father’s arrogance and abuse. Her garden story comes a parable of the minister’s inability to harvest either seeds or souls. Nathan plans his garden of Eden to be his first African miracle and instructs his daughters while they work with a paradigm about the balance of “ God’s world of works and rewards. ” He states, “ Great sacrifice, great rewards” (44). However when Mama Tataba, the family’s African maid, warns Nathan about both his method and the poisonwood plant, he cites scripture and ignores her words. Next morning with “a horrible rash” and swollen eye caused by the red dust from the tree, Nathan, one of “God’s own,” feels unjustly cursed. Denying responsibility for his own foolish

acts, he screams out his anger to his family. While Nathan heals, Mama Tataba reconstructs the garden shifting the design from the flat to hills and valleys so that the seeds will grow, and later Leah watches as angry Nathan levels it again. When Nathan does follow Mama Tataba's design, plants to grow but bear no fruit, because, they lack pollinators.

To Leah, Nathan's failed efforts contradict his theory of balance and rewards, and his words about cause signify nothing: the Bible convention in Atlanta Nathan tells Leah "debated about the size of heaven . . ." and "there's enough room for everybody," especially the "righteous" (90). Leah understands that empty words, like empty vines, bear no fruit.

At fifteen, Leah learns more about the ways of Kilanga, and her life becomes more complicated. She begins to realize the attractions of Africa. Leah hears Eben Axelroot, the bush pilot who brings supplies to them, talking about the CIA, guns, tools, army clothes, although these words sound strange to her right now they will gain meaning later. She will learn that Axelroot is also an CIA operative who is working to weaken the new democratically elected government of Patrice Lumumba. Leah also learns the language of Kikango ¹³ and begins to recognize the wide gap between cultures. "It struck me what a wide world of difference there was between our sort of games- -'Mother May I?,' 'Hide and Seek' -- and his[Pascal's, Pascal is a Congolese boy and the first real friend of Leah in the Congo]'Recognize Poisonwood,' 'Build a House' " (130). There is a big difference between American games and the Congolese children's game. Therefore, Leah feels embarrassed by her father's ignorant and arrogant behaviour and changes her ground from her father towards the Congolese people. Before Leah is on her father's side, but later on she starts to stand on the Congolese people side.

The three episodes below makes Leah's attitude clear about her father. With the election held by the villagers in Nathan's church, Ruth May's death and

¹³

Kikango has its own linguistic personality. Most words in the language have widely divergent meanings, and the intended meaning must be indicated by subtle differences in intonation.

through the influence of her friend Anatole, a young pro-independence Congolese schoolteacher, Leah loses her faith in her father. During Sunday service, in the midst of Nathan's sermon about false idols from the "Apocrypha," the congregation is inattentive. Finally Tata Ndu, the tribal chief, stands and cuts Nathan off to hold "an election on whether or not to accept Jesus Christ as the personal Saviour of Kilanga" (373). "Nathan shrieks that his behaviour is "blasphemy," but Ndu hoists Nathan upon his own white imperialist petard" (Ognibene, 2003, p. 25). Ndu states that "white men have brought us many programs to improve our thinking. The program of Jesus and the program of elections. You say these things are good you cannot say now they are not good" (378). Leah feels a chill as her father begins speaking "slowly, as if to a half-wit" and then blows up, insulting the whole congregation. To Leah, Ndu "states truth" about Nathan's and other white men's ignorance: "You believe we are *mwana*, your children, who knew nothing until you came here" (379). Explaining the foolishness of such thought,

Ndu clarifies the history of his learning handed down across generations, the philosophy of cultural sharing, the politics of a tribal government that teaches the need to listen to each man's voice before making a choice and then to select only if the entire community agrees, and the dangers of a majority vote capable of excluding up to forty-nine percent of the people. (Ognibene, 2003,p. 27)

American ideas of religion, politics, agriculture, and economics, viewed by Nathan and other whites as superior, are illogical or unworkable in the daily life of the Congolese. For example, the Western idea of a democratic election, while seemingly fair, only brings turmoil to a village where, traditionally, issues were discussed at length until everyone agreed. Now, those holding a minority viewpoint have resentment that brings discord to the harmony of the village. As a result of the majority votes Jesus loses, eleven to forty-six (380). Leah sees that how Nathan has no sense at all of the culture he wants to civilize; his message is as irrelevant as his Kentucky seeds to the Congo environmen.

Moreover Leah loses the faith that she has left in both her father and his God when Ruth May dies from a poisonous snake bite. Nathan cannot explain his

daughter's death; he only says she is not baptized. Seeing an ugly man instead of her father, who desires the personal glory of baptizing his child with all of Kilanga's children, Leah, who has idolized her father, now cannot stand to look at him. Amidst torrential rains, Nathan appears like Lear, a mad father abandoned by his daughters, wandering in the wilderness and speaking in words that few can understand. Leah notes the bizarre and almost humorous irony, when Bwanga, one of Ruth May's friends, asks, "Mah-dah-mey- I?": while the children chant to "Mother" seeking wisdom and permission, Father, Leah observes, continues his biblical oration without any clear idea of what is going on (426). Nathan is deaf to the language and nuances of the Congolese culture.

In addition to Ruth May's death, Leah's relationship with Anatole, an African teacher and a co-worker, is another factor that drags her away from her father. As a result of her friendship with Anatole, Leah gets to know more about war and politics, especially about Lumumba's revolutionary struggle. Anatole familiarizes her with a Congo which she has never suspected existing, one that is seen through the eyes of the colonizers, but through those of its native population: "Congo. Not minerals and glittering rocks with no hearts, these things that are traded behind our backs. Congo is us" (261). As a result she simply transfers her devotion from one man to another. Her values change, she loses her faith in her father and devotes herself to her husband and to the struggle for a real African independence. She says "It's still frightening when things you love appear suddenly changed from what you have always known" (266). "If his decision to keep us here wasn't right, then what else might he be wrong about? It has opened up in my heart a sickening world of doubts and possibilities, where before I had only faith in my father and love for the Lord. Without that rock of certainty underfoot, the Congo is a fearsome place to have to sink or swim"(260) He replaces her old faith with a new one while she is walking with Anatole across the river she utters "I felt the breath of God grow cold on my skin" (354). She murmurs Anatole's name over and over feeling that, "it took the place of prayer" (355). Her love for Anatole becomes her new anchoring force, taking the place of her father and his worldview.

In The Poisonwood Bible Leah through marriage is transcultured. Leah joins with the inhabitants of the land that she is coming to love. She loves Anatole, married and stayed with Anatole in Africa. When she is informed about the political issues she realizes that the country she knows as home where she knows the rules no longer exists. “Where is the easy land of ice-cream cones and new Keds sneakers and We like Ike, the country I thought I knew the rules. Where is the place I can go home to?” (353) So as Leah becomes aware of the fact that the home she remembers when she is a child, is not that much innocent she chooses to live in Africa with her Congolese husband:

I rock back and forth on my chair like a baby, craving so many impossible things: justice, forgiveness, redemption. I crave to stop all the wounds of this place on my own narrow body. But I also want to be a person who stays, who goes on feeling anguish where anguish is due. I want to belong to somewhere, damn it. To scrub the hundred years' war off this white skin till there is nothing left and I can walk out among my neighbours wearing raw sinew and bone, like they do. (537)

Leah stays in the Congo with her husband, Anatole, and devotes her life to her husband and her sons and she struggles for an independent Africa. She seeks social justice for the Africans. Although she has some difficulties as a white woman in Africa Leah considers Africa as a land of her own and at the end of the novel she says “I understand that time erases whiteness altogether” (595).

Leah exemplifies what Homi K. Bhabba calls hybridity throughout the novel “It refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. As used in horticulture, the term refers to the cross-breeding of two species by grafting or cross-pollination to form a third, ‘hybrid’ species” (Ashcroft et al., 2000, p. 118). Around this concept Homi K. Bhabba analyzes the relation of colonizer/colonized through emphasizing their interdependence and mutual construction.

Another character that changes is Adah, Leah's twin sister who is handicapped. Unlike Leah's transformation Adah's transformation is not about her

feelings concerning her father. Rather, her case is a process of physical recovery. Adah has hemiplegia, one side of her brain is defective, so she speaks little and thinks in palindromes, for instance she says “my own name, as I am accustomed to think of it, is Ecirp Nelle Hada. I am a perfect palindrome” (67). Similar to this when she finishes reading a book from front to back, she reads it back to front. She thinks that it is a different book, back to front, and one can learn new things from it. *“Ti morfsgniht wen nrael nac uoy dna tnorf ot kcab koob tnereffid a si ti”* (67).

She describes herself as “ the monster, Quasimodo, dragging her right side behind her left ” (72) who is definitely not her father’s favorite. She associates herself with both “Jekyll and Hyde” because of her dark desires and crooked body (64). Adah is the one who does not speak, she chooses silence recognizing its advantages in certain circumstances. “Silence has many advantages. When you don’t speak , other people presume you to be deaf or feeble-minded and make a show of their own limitaions. It’s true I don’t speak as well as I can think. But that’s true of most people” (40). She identifies herself most often with Emily Dickinson, using her as a kind of personal philosophy that guides her narrative: both like to dwell in the darkness, and both tell all the truth but tell it slant.

Even though Adah does not speak she notices everything; the words she uses for her father are brilliant and caustic. From the start Adah is critical about her father. “Our father speaks for all of us, as far as I can see” (37). Adah tells the truths about her father in her own poetic way. While making suggestions on her father’s attitude about her own condition she is very sarcastic: “Our father probably interpreted Broca’s aphasia as God’s Christmas bonus to one of his worthier employees” (40). She also comments about her father’s garden fiasco, his distance from and lack of concern about family members, his passion for the Apocrypha. Adah states “The dreaded Verse is our household punishment. We Price girls castigated with Holy Bible ” (68). From “Genesis” through “The Judges” Adah describes her father’s ignorant errors as he attempts to convert the villagres to his point of view. Her palindrome for Nathan’s semonizing , his “high-horse show force” is the “Amena enema” (80). As the Reverend towers over the

altar, Adah watches the congregation stiffen, and recalls the dead fish on the riverbank, one of her father's conversion mistakes. "Living in the Congo shakes open the prison house of my disposition and lets all the wicked hoodoo Adah run forth" (64).

Thus to Adah, Nathan is incapable of understanding why, just as he cannot not understand how saying "wrong words" leads only outcasts to his flock. According to Adah Nathan's method is his meaning and that is his mistake. Adah said "I can't resist these precious Gospels. They lead me to wonder what Bible my father wrote in Africa. We came in stamped with such errors we can never know which ones made a lasting impression. I wonder if they still think of him standing tall before his congregation shouting, '*Tata Jesus is bangala!*'" ¹⁴ (603)

Adah comprehends, more than anyone in the Price family, how unable Nathan is to understand the Congolese culture. She questions his religious tenets; Adah despises all that her father represents. She wants to stand up and ask her father "Might those pagan babies send to hell for living too far from Jungle?" (195). When in Africa she never voices her rebellion against. She never asks her father those questions she has in mind, Adah separates herself from the world by convincing herself that she does not care about it, dargging herself "imperiously through a world that owed [her] unpayable debts" (464). She takes a wry and cynical stance toward her own life, and toward everything else she observes. While she is running away from the driver ants she realizes that her attitude is a pose, and that she values her own life. From there she begins to enter into life as a participant fighting her way into college and then medical school. She also takes the responsibility of caring of her mother. However she is not completely happy with redemption since she realizes the pleasant advantages of the sin that she has left behind. For the first time, she explains, she feels afraid, because she has begun to "love the world a little and may lose it" (501). Voice comes to her only after she leaves the Congo now that she has a story to tell. Adah returns to America, with

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here Nathan means to declare that Jesus is dearly beloved, but because of wrong intonation he infact says Jesus is a fatal Poisonwood tree.

the help of her neurologist friend she overcomes her handicap. She becomes a researcher and studies the life of viruses. Adah finds her voice in a language of self-definition and science at Emory University, where she finds a future as a neonatal physician and researcher on AIDS and Ebola. "Profaning her father's religious obsession, she states, 'I recite the Periodic Table of Elements like a prayer; I take my examinations as Holy Communion; and the pass of the first semester was a sacrament'" (Ognibene, 2003, p.29).

Moreover when she moves back to her mother's house searching for Nathan's military discharge to provide her tuition benefits, she discovers that his medal was not for "heroic service" but for "having survived. " Though "the conditions of his discharge were technically honorable, but unofficially they were: Cowardice, Guilt, and Disgrace" (468). Adah finally understands why the Reverend cannot flee the same jungle twice.

As a result for Adah "the Congo is a long path that takes you from one hidden place to another. Palm trees stand alongside of it looking down at you in shock, like too-tall, frightened women with upright hair. Nevertheless, I am determined I will walk that path, even though I don't walk fast or well" (39). The two of them walk together in that long path for a while. "Walk to learn. I and the path. Long one is Congo. Congo is one long path and I learn to walk . That's the name of my story, forward and backward" (154). Adah walks the long path that is called Congo and at the end of her journey she discovers that "we constructed our life around a misunderstanding. Illusions mistaken for truth are the pavement under our feet. They are what we call civilization" (602).

Lastly in the novel we observe the transformation of Orleanna Price, the wife of Nathan Price, who has devoted herself to her family. At first Orleanna was an obedient wife who does not question bringing salvation to the heathens.

Similar to Leah she is under the influence of her husband, but through her experiences in the Congo devoted wife turns into devoted mother. Orleanna does

her best to mother her daughters, but she does not have the strength to counteract the negative influence of Nathan. As an individual within her family, she is weak, merely going along with whatever Nathan expects and trying to maintain a normal if not always happy home. She accepts what Nathan's tells her as truth. She makes no major decisions until the moment Ruth May, her youngest daughter, die, she then decides to leave the Congo and when she turns back America she recovers her own self.

While they are getting ready for their journey to the Congo she takes all the necessary things that she thinks her family will need. However, when they arrive at Congo she realizes that they "brought all the wrong things" (75). Since she does not know anything about the Congo and what is awaiting them there. As Orleanna announces her husband's ambition about bringing salvation to the people of Kilanga, "we aimed for no more than to have dominion over every creature that moved upon the earth. And so it came to pass that we stepped down there on a place we believed unformed, where only darkness moved on the face of waters" (11).

Moreover the Prices arrive in Africa believing that God is on their side. According to Nathan, they have the Lord's protection, but with the hardship they have Orleanna begins to lose initial faith in her husband's sincerity "I could never work out whether we were to view religion as a life insurance policy or a life sentence" (109). While Nathan tries to baptize the unwilling villagers, Orleanna tries to keep her family alive since disease, starvation, the foment of revolution, and even her husband's physical presence threaten their very existence.

What effects Orleanna's transformation is her clear grasp of her past, especially one in which Nathan turns into a cruel tyrant. Unlike Nathan she wants to be a part of Kilanga and at the same time be Nathan's wife, but she sees herself as a "captive witness" to the events that occurs during the years she spends in Congo (9). Orleanna feels herself guilty for her complicity in the death of her youngest daughter, and she also suffers from the crimes the United States performs

against the natives in the Congo. She feels the burden of these guilts. By calling herself the “conqueror’s wife,” Orleanna places herself in a particular position with respect to the guilt she is feeling (9). Although she does not commit the act she is closely connected to that perpetrator, her husband. Nathan’s devotion to his mission places the entire family in mortal danger. Moreover the performer of the second crime is the United States, and here the relationship of wife is metaphorical. Orleanna acts just like a citizen who is loyal to his or her nation. She bears the guilt and responsibility for the crimes of her nation and her husband commit in the Congo.

The longer she lives in Kilanga, the clearer Orleanna’s vision becomes. She remembers a man who seduced her with promises of “green pastures”; instead, she now sees a “righteous” and unbending judge, an abusive husband and father (221). After Nathan and Orleanna get married Nathan is sent to the Philippine shore, on their second night Nathan is struck in the with a shell fragment and spent the night in a bamboo shed, luckily next day he is picked up by a PT boat, but when he learns what happens he turns into a different person. “Nathan was changed, disclosed to me and the world. That was the last I would ever hear from the man I had married ” (Kingsolver, 1998, p. 223). As a result Nathan becomes more devout. When he comes home “his first words to me were to speak of how fiercely he felt the eye of God upon him” (Kingsolver, 1998, p. 224). He aims to save more souls than has perished on the road from Bataan. That’s why he is trying to drag the Congolese toward enlightenment. “Up, get ye out from this place of darkness! Arise and come forward into a brighter land!” (Kingsolver, 1998, p. 32).

As Orleanna observes World War II and Nathan’s escape from the Death March from Bataan that killed the rest of his company was the reason of Nathan’s transformation to a tyrant. When he returned home he was a man who blamed others for his own sense of sin. He turned out to be a different man who refuses her touch, who hits her when she jokes, who blames her for her “wantonness” when they have sex, who condemns her “idleness” when she stands still.

Additionally, when Orleanna or one of the girls suffer he accuses them of a “failure of virtue.”

As a result Orleanna ends up having no life of her own in her marriage. She is occupied by “Nathan’s mission” (226). She sees herself as a captive. Once she had wings, but in her words, she lost her wings when she did not fight against Nathan.

When she finally finds the courage to go against Nathan, she blames herself for failing to protect her children from Africa and their father “I couldn’t step in front of my husband to shelter them from his scorching light. They were expected to look straight at him and go blind” (109). She regrets the things she cannot do. She understands that things can be different if she has set her own authority. “If only I had not let the children out of my sight that morning. If I hadn’t let Nathan take us to Kilanga in the first place” (369). She also blames herself for Ruth May’s death. Orleanna says “to live is to be marked. To live is to change to acquire the words of a story and that is the only celebration we mortals know. In perfect stillness, frankly, I’ve only found sorrow” (438).

After Ruth May’s death, Orleanna regains full control of her own and her daughter’s fates. She decides to leave Nathan and go back to the United States. Price women come to a self realization. They become aware of their needs and set themselves new lives in accordance with their needs. Orleanna takes her own steps in the world, she tries to change things rather than standing passively by. She returns to her earlier self who is not yet cowed and brutalized by Nathan. Years later, when free of Nathan’s control, Orleanna chooses to speak and said “I walked across Africa with my wrists unshackled, and now I am one more soul walking free in a white skin” (9). Like Leah and Adah, Orleanna stands still and silent in her husband’s rule for much of her time in Congo.

In The Poisonwood Bible we experience the change of Adah, Leah and Orleanna. Each of them narrates the stories of change as well as discovery. “They

reveal specifics about intellectual and spiritual awakenings; the loss of one kind of belief and the birth of another” (Ognibene, 2003, p. 21) By the end of the novel, like their mother Adah and Leah come to see that “the Emperor in this case our father is not wearing any clothes” (460). Thus they lose their faith in Nathan:

We are the balance of our damage and our transgressions. He was my father. I own half his genes, and all of his history. Believe this: the mistakes are part of the story. I am born of a man who believed he could tell nothing the truth, while he set down for all the the Poisonwood Bible (603).

Like their mother they also believe that they are responsible in some way for the horrors that happen in Africa, as Adah utters “we his daughters and wife are not innocent either. The players in his theater. We Prices are thought to be peculiarly well intentioned, and inane. I know this” (243). The Price women share the collective cultural guilt that all Westerners must share for the crimes performed against the people of Africa. It presents the question: What did our nation do in Africa and how should we live with the burden of guilt? Leah announces, “we have all ended up giving up body and soul to Africa, one way or another. Each of us got our heart buried in six feet of Africa dirt, we are all co-conspirators here” (589). Leah suffers under the burden of white guilt, she calls herself the “unmissionary beginning each day on my knees, asking to be converted. Forgive me, Africa, according to the multitudes of thy mercies” (594). She claims that she has found the “simple relief of knowing you’ve done wrong, and living through it” (594). All Price women find their own way to deal with this burden. They learn to live with this guilt. Orleanna and the twins experience a redemptive sense of worth. Each in her own way learns how to hold secure one’s own moral and spiritual self amidst the crushing institutional forces of the state . . . the marketplace, and . . . the church . . . Each is driven by particular interests and passions. All three women advocates for justice, civil rights, medical research on AIDS and revolutionary educational practices for the poor people in the Congo (Ognibene, 2003, p. 33). Leah ends up spending her life working, with her husband Anatole, to improve the life of the Congolese, Adah devotes her life to science, she becomes a celebrated epidemiologist. Orleanna works for justice,

marshes for civil rights, collects money to help Leah's efforts. They all seek forgiveness.

4. 2 Blindness

Meanwhile throughout the novel Rachel and Nathan remain the same they do not go through a change. Rachel represents America's material culture. For her fashion is more important than culture, politics or moral issues. At the opening of the novel, she is sixteen years old, a teen queen who yearns for pop music and beauty aids. Leah is describing Rachel as follows, "Rachel is worldly and tiresome in my opinion" (18). She is egoistic. When they get off the airplane and Congolese people surround them her first words are "we got fumigated with the odor of perspiring bodies. What I should have stuffed in my purse was those 5- day deodorant pads" (26). She is a girl who is only eager to "have a sweet-sixteen party and a pink mohair twin set" (33). Thus when she first steps into the Congo she understands that it is not a place for her. Soon after their arrival in Kilanga, she states, "already I was heavy-hearted in my soul for the flush commodes and machine-washed clothes and other simple things in life I have took for granite" (27). Even though Rachel talks about her own gains and losses from the moment they arrive in Kilanga she she sees the truth about Nathan's position, as well as, her family's place in Congo. She writes, " we are supposed to be calling the shots here but it doesn't look to me like we are in charge of a thing, not even our own selves" (26). She realizes that the life that is waiting them is not an easy one. "From the very first moment I set foot in the Congo, I could see we were not in charge. We got swept up with those people that took us to the church for all their half-naked dancing and goat meat with the hair still on, and I said to myself: this little trip is going to be the ruin of the Price family as we know it." (584) She narrates well the poison her father uses to destroy the people's spirit. Although she congratulates herself for not being like her father, for sounding unChristian. Rachel ironically misses the point that she is in a way most like him in her singlemindedness.

Rachel's values are totally different from Leah, Adah and Orleanna. She focuses on pragmatic issues and her tone concerning the Congo and the Congolese as she sees herself above them is one of contempt. "We were different, not just because we were white and had our vaccinations, but because we were simply a much, much luckier kind of person" (418). She depicts herself just like a goddess. While she describes the Congolese people's reaction to her, she writes "of course, everyone kept staring at me. I am the most extreme blonde imaginable. I have sapphire-blue eyes, white lashes, and platinum blonde hair that falls to my waist. It is so fine I have to use Breck Special Formulated . . ." (55) this is a commonly shared view of Rachel in her family. Only Adah pokes fun at her overly arrogant ways; she says Rachel is our family's "own Queen of Sheba, blinking her white eyelashes, flicking her long whitish hair as if she were the palomino horse she once craved to own" (72). Rachel is a typical American who represents the consumer culture. She thinks that it is unjust to be kept away from carefree American teenage life. She keeps away from the black-skinned human beings that inhabit her new world and she sees herself as superior. On the Easter day Nathan arranges a picnic for the Congolese people in Congo and in that picnic Rachel makes a comparison between the picnics she used to make in America and the one they are making in Congo. She says "I closed my eyes and dreamed of real soda pop in convenient throwaway cans" (56). Moreover one day Congolese people and also the Price family cannot find any food and Tata Ndu, the chief of the village, decides that the whole village has to go on a big hunt and after the hunt they slaughter and eat the animals. Rachel describes that scene in terror:

It was the most despicable day of my life. I stood on that burnt-up field with the taste of ashes in my mouth, ashes in my eyes, on my hair and my dress, all stained and tarnished. I stood and prayed to the Lord Jesus if he was listening to take me home to Georgia, where I could sit down in a white castle and order a hamburger without having to see its eyes roll back in its head and the blood come spurting out of its corpse. (398)

She is terrified by the scene because not only the villagers but also her own sisters skin and eat the hunted animals, she says that she wants Eisenhower for a father instead of her own parents. She wants to live under the safe protection of

somebody who wear decent clothes, buy meat from the grocery store (399). Rachel thinks that these people are not different from animals. She does not try to understand coloniser's view, she sees them as barbaric, savage. In the binary opposition she places herself in the center. She wants to go back and live in America in a "decent" way. Rachel misses the life she used to have in the United States. She misses American way of life, being a part of something you can really believe in. "The parties, the cars, the music- the whole carefree American way of life" (580). However, she never leaves the continent which she so much wants to escape. Rachel, who is eager to go back to America from the beginning, stays in the Congo, but she does not change, she is always self-involved and wholly inward looking. When Ruth May dies Rachel writes:

Until that moment I'd always believed I could still go home and pretend the Congo never happened. The misery, the hunt, the ants, the embarrassments of all we saw and endured- those were just stories I would tell someday with a laugh and a toss of my hair, when Africa was faraway and make-believe like the people in history books. I would get back home to Bethlehem, Georgia, and be exactly the same Rachel as before. I'd grow up to be a carefree American wife, with nice things and a sensible way of life and three grown sisters to share my ideals and talk to on the phone from time to time. This is what I believed. I'd never planned on being someone different. Never imagined I would be a girl they'd duck their eyes from and whisper about as tragic, for having suffered such a loss. (418)

She finds herself a place among the exploiters. Under the pretense of engagement to Axelroot the Afrikaner bush pilot, diamond smuggler, and CIA mercenary, Rachel learns about his espionage activities and eventually escapes with him to Johannesburg, South Africa, the beginning her exodus experience. After three relationships, two marriages, one divorce and one death, she inherits her husband's Remy Fairly's Equatorial Hotel for businessmen in Brassaville and creates her own domain (579). Even though in her own malapropism "it's a woman's provocative to change her mind," Rachel never does, her final words shows us it very clearly:

You have your way of thinking and it has its. You just don't let it influence your mind. You focus on getting your own one little place set up perfect, as

I've done, and you will see. Other people's worries don't necessarily have to drag you down... So that's my advice. Let others do the pushing and shoving, and you ride along. In the end, the neck you save will be your own. (585)

Just like Rachel, another character who does not go through a change is Nathan. Nathan Price is a fierce, evangelical baptist that drags his wife and four daughters to the Belgian Congo to fulfill his dream of missionary service. His only aim is to save the souls of the Congolese people. He sees himself as a saviour. He says "my work is to bring salvation into darkness" (137). The Prices arrive in Africa believing God is on their side, but that changes quickly. "I always believed any sin was easily rectified if only you let Jesus into your heart," says Leah, "but here it gets complicated" (93). When the doctor tells Nathan "I don't think the people are looking for your kind of salvation" (138). He does not take the man's words into consideration. In his eagerness to save everyone's soul, Nathan is deaf to the truth.

Likewise Nathan is deaf to the nuances of the Congolese culture. For instance, Nathan insists on baptizing the villagers in the river, he cannot see that the villagers are not willing to baptize their children because a few months before the Price's arrival a crocodile ate a young girl thus, they don't want their children to be eaten by the crocodiles. He refuses to understand how his obsession with river baptism affronts the traditions of the villagers of Kilanga. Nathan tries to impose Christian values since he believes that they are the best, but he forgets that the Congolese have their own gods. Anatole tells Reverend that Tata Ndu, chief of the village, is worrying about people's going to church. Tata Ndu thinks that "people who go to church are neglecting their duties" to their important gods and ancestors of the village (145). Even though Nathan does not understand, the Congolese have their own values, traditions, religion thus, his attempt to convert them into christianity is not approved by the chief of the village. Tata Ndu thinks that "bringing the Christian word to these people is leading them to corrupt ways" (147). He worries that Nathan is "trying to lure too many of the others into following corrupt ways. He fears a disaster will come if" they "anger gods" (146-147).

Moreover, throughout the novel Nathan uses the scripture as a weapon of attack. He rails against nakedness and multiple wives to the tribesmen and as Nathan preaches about nakedness and the sinners of Sodom the natives expressions fall from joy to confusion to dismay (33). Unlike those of the Congolese, Nathan's words are not of welcome but of damnation. In the honour of the Price family's arrival the Congolese give a feast and they ask the Reverend to offer with them a word of thanks for this feast slowly Nathan "raised one arm above his head like one of those gods they had in Roman times, fixing to send down the thunderbolts and the lighting" (31).

Similar to this every Sunday Nathan gathers the congregation and gives them a sermon, but although there is a translator that translate his words he just cannot wait for his translator and takes Lingala language on himself and cries out, "Tata Jesus is bangala!" (312) Here he wants to say that Jesus is glorious, but he makes a mistake in pronunciation thus he says Jesus is Poisonwood tree. He ends every sermon by these words while people sit scratching themselves in wonder. The irony seems clear to all but Nathan. He fails to see how the language of the region, rich in tonal ambiguities, describes far better than his English the complex antithesis that face people in his congregation. He expects only that they, like his family will do as he teaches.

In the novel Nathan is depicted as a self-righteous, determined person whose only goal is to save the souls of the others, he is so much fixed in that issue that he cannot notice other people's needs. For instance, while he is planting his demonstration garden Mama Tataba, live-in helper of the Price family, warns him not to touch the dangerous plant, Poisonwood tree, but he ignores her and as a result his arms and hands are all torn. When Mama Tataba warns Nathan about his method and the poisonwood plant, he cites scripture and ignores her words. Next morning, with "horrible rash" and swollen eye caused by the red dust from the tree, Nathan, one of god's own, falls unjustly cursed. Denying responsibility for his own foolish acts, he screams out his rage at his family. His daughter, Leah

depicts Nathan's lack of understanding she says, "watching my father I've seen how you can't learn anything when you are trying to look like the smartest person in the room" (75). He is so obsessed with the Words of the God that he cannot realize that the Congolese people are not interested in the Words he wants to impose, because they have their own values, the Congolese culture. In clan system in colonial and modern Africa the group greatly outweighs the individual. Its members are taught to experience themselves as parts of a larger social organism. They differ from individualized members of modern Western society (Friedman, 1991, p. 7). Ruth May's words reinforce this "Father is trying to teach everyone to love Jesus, but they don't. Some of them are scared of Jesus and some aren't, but I don't think they love Him. Even the ones that go to the church, they still worship the false-eye dolls and get married to each other time and again" (180).

In a situation crying for flexibility and patience, Nathan Price slathers a shallow theological system over every situation and angrily imposes his will without listening. That's why his wife and daughters have learned not to question. What good would it do? They will only be punished with the Verse- one hundred verses to copy laboriously out of the Bible, the passage always ending with a verse that sums up the sin even worse, Nathan hits. Just like his family he expects the Congolese act as he teaches. However the Congolese do not obey him. During one of the Sunday services, while Nathan is uttering his sermon about false idols from the "Apocrypha," (374) noticing that the congregation is not paying attention Tata Ndu, the tribel chief, stands up and cuts Nathan off to hold "an election on whether or not to accept Jesus Christ as the personal Savior of Kilanga"(373). Nathan shrieks that his behavior is blasphemy, but Tata Ndu states that "white men have brought us many programs to improve thinking.... Jesus and elections" are two. "You say these things are good. You cannot say now they are not good." West emphasizes the superiority of elections and the rule of majority, but then tries to impose a way of life in Africa that the majority is despised. It is not the majority rule that the West really wants to instill, but minority rule with the semblance of democracy. Nathan blows up and insult the whole congregation. Tata Ndu continues as follows "you believe we are mwana, your children, who knew

nothing, until you came here" (379, 380). Ndu explains the foolishness of such thought and clarifies the history of his learning handed down across generations, the philosophy of cultural sharing, the politics of a tribal government that teaches the need to listen to each man's voice before making a choice and then to select only if the entire community agrees, and the dangers of a majority vote capable of excluding up to forty-nine percent of the people. The congregation votes and Jesus loses, eleven to fifty-six (380). As a result we understand that Nathan has no sense at all of the culture he wants to civilize. He is blind to anyone and anything outside of himself and the conception of his divine mission. His message is irrelevant to the Congo environment.

Nathan's behaviour is parallel to imperialist actions in the Congo. Nathan represents the patronizing attitude of white colonialists toward Africa. Similar to Nathan who is unable to view the women in his life as full human beings with their own concerns and desires, needs, and opinions the ruling Western powers are incapable of doing the same in the case of Africans. He is determined to save the souls of the villagers of Kilanga. He thinks the Belgian Congo is a place he can save needy souls. He sees the Congolese as savages. Nathan thinks that "they are living in darkness. Broken in body and soul, and don't even see how they could be healed" (61). When the Underdowns bring the news about a Soviet plan for moving forward in the Congo, depriving innocent savages of becoming a free society, and the election in May for independence of the Congo Rachel sees that for her father this news was a fairy tale and she states his response "An election . . . why . . . these people can't even read a simple slogan . . . Two hundred different languages. . . this is not a nation, it is the Tower of Babel and it cannot hold an election. . . . They don't have the . . . intellect for such things" (191, 192). These words of Nathan is similar to the articles about savages. As Lumumba states Africans are considered to be savages:

I ask my friends, all of you who have fought unceasingly at our side, to make this thirtieth of June 1960, an illustrious date that will be indelibly engraved upon your hearts, a date that will be indelibly engraved upon your hearts, a date whose meaning you will teach your children with pride so that they in turn will tell their children's children the glorious story of our struggle for

freedom... We are proud of this struggle amid tears, fire, and blood, down to our very heart of hearts, for it was a noble and just struggle, an indispensable struggle if we were to put an end to the humiliating slavery that had been forced upon us. We have been the victim of ironic taunts, of insults, of blows that we were forced to endure morning, noon, and night because we were blacks. Who will forget that a black was addressed in familiar form, not because he was a friend, certainly, but because the polite form of address was to be used only for whites. We cannot forget the burst of rifle fire in which so many of our brothers perished, the cells into which the authorities threw those who no longer willing to submit to a rule where justice meant oppression and exploitation. (Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo, 86-87)

Nathan is the symbol of the West, imperial culture who defines himself by degrading its opposite. He takes the West as norm and defines the rest as inferior. "Not a soul among these people has even gone to College or travelled abroad to study government. And now you are saying they'll be left overnight to run every single school, every service, every government office? And the army?" (191)

Moreover Nathan not only tries to cultivate the souls, but also the ground. The garden itself is representative of the attitudes and beliefs that the Prices carry with them into Africa. Like those attitudes, the plants are inappropriate in this environment. He plants the seeds he brings from America to their garden, and he plans to his garden of Eden to be his "first African miracle." However the storm ruins the seeds. This incident shows us Nathan's blind arrogance. Nathan believes that the Congolese are so backward that they have no idea how to grow their own food. Nathan cannot see that, if the climate permitted this sort of garden, Africans would have planted it themselves long ago. It does not occur to him to consider whether there is some reason, other than their utter stupidity and backwardness, which might account for the fact that there is little agriculture in Kilanga.

Just like the inhabitants of Kilanga the land resists to be cultivated. Whereas Nathan does not give up, for instance, one day while walking home from church Mama Tataba declares to the girls, "Reverend Price he better be give that up," she refers to his fixation on baptism. At that night Reverend tells a story about a Mercedes truck that drove all way from Leopoldville to Kilanga using little boys fanning elephant grass in place of a fan belt. By telling this story he aims to give a

message that anything is possible, so long as, you are willing to adapt properly. Similarly, when the rain ruins his garden he declares that "he would make them grow, in the name of God, he would plant again if only the sun would ever come out and dry up this accursed mire"(73). Nathan is influenced by Africa. His devotion to the progress of the garden is similar to his devotion to the church. As Leah writes "I knew my father could taste those Kentucky Wonder beans as surely as any pure soul can taste heaven" (74-75).

Throughout the novel he shows no change he is depicted as a colonizer who considers himself an educator whose aim is to bring the colonized to maturity, to cultivate, enlighten and ennoble the people who are in the darkness. When the Underdowns give them the news about the uprising and tell them that they should leave the country Nathan responds "I've worked some miracles here . . . I can't risk losing precious ground by running away like a coward before we made a proper transition!" (192, 193) Consequently Nathan, as the representative of the West, tries to define and establish its own superiority as a civilized culture against the darkness of a primitive Africa, but he cannot be successful in his attempts.

Consequently in the novel each character comes over to Africa confident that they are bringing with them a superior way of life. They believe that Africa is an unformed land, it does not have a culture. Infact Africa has its own culture, values and rules, it is not a land of darkness as the West suggests. Hence when the Westerners go to the Congo in order to civilize that nation they indeed destroy it. For instance, we think that it is unjust that in Africa young babies die of malnutrition and disease. We try to correct this injustice , we send over doctors to feed and inoculate them. However, Adah points out that the result of this good deed is simply death of a different sort. Over population leads to food shortage, deforestation, and further disease. We cannot change the balance of the world, eliminating all that we consider sad and wrong. The world maintains its own balance:

The little boys, the visitors, the village women all move their heads to the tightly strung voices of three different singers, popular from America whose

wrecked ancestors captive and weeping, were clamped in iron bracelets in the hold of a ship at a seaport very close by. Their music has made a remarkable , circular trip. That fact is lost on everyone present. This ruin must be called by another name. (610)

As Adah says “history holds all things in the balance, including large hopes and short lives”(469). This is Adah’s notion of justice, she thinks that absolute justice westerners believe in is impossible.

To sum up, in the novel Leah, Adah and Orleanna through their experiences in the Congo come to a realization that the Congo has its own culture, its own balance, and if one tries to change these he is neglected just like Nathan and goes to a ruin. Faith can provide beginning ties that cut across economic, political, and cultural barriers. “These ties can open the path into appreciating the way that culture understands our faith, and ultimately into appreciating that culture as a whole” (Blair, 2002, 247). Thus the Price women’s faith make them brothers and sisters with the Congolese. Seeing their faith tradition through other eyes deepen their understanding of the world. However Rachel and Nathan cannot deepen their faith, because they experience the Congolese culture at a distance, they never have a deep seeing or hearing of this culture.

CONCLUSION

Ideology plays a significant role in forming our world view. We receive the world through ideology. As Marx and Engels emphasize our ideas come from the world around us, they spring from the world in which we live. We conceive ourselves through the world we live. We are born into a world which has its own ideologies, hence we accept them as our own.

However, ideologies reflect the interests of the dominant social classes. This gives rise to a series of illusions. We do not perceive reality infact, we perceive what is represented to us which are false appearances. Thus in The Poisonwood Bible the characters born into white American society perceive the world in terms of white imperialist ideology. The Price family, as a representative of the missionaries, believe that the Africans are primitive, and they see themselves superior. Additionally, as a missionary family, they go to the Congo in order to civilize the people of the Congo. Each character comes over to Africa confident that they are bringing with them a superior way of life. That is why they carry with them everything they believe they will need in the Congo.

Betty Crocker cake mixes, a dozen cans of Underwood deviled ham, Rachel's ivory plastic hand mirror with powdered-wig ladies on the back; a stainless-steel thimble; a good pair of scissors; a dozen number-2 pencils; a world of Band-Aids, Anacin, Absorbine Jr.; a fever thermometer; a cast iron frying pan, ten packets of baker's yeast, pinking shears, the head of a hatchet, a fol-up army latrine spade, and all told a good deal more. (15-16)

All these are the representatives of the civilisation they carry with them. Despite these things they also carry with them their own prejudices about the Congo. They all figure out the Congo as a land of darkness and Africans as the savages.

To begin with Nathan as a missionary baptist suggests that "they [the Africans] are living in dakness. Body and soul" (61). Similarly Orleanna writes "we stepped down there on a place we believed unformed where only darkness

moved on the face of waters” (11). Orleanna who devotes her life to her husband share the same missionary view. The girls who are born into a family in which Biblical views are accepted thus, believe that the Congo is an unformed land. For instance, Leah expects to see “jungle flowers, wild roaring beasts. God’s own Kingdom in its pure, unenlightened glory” (20). Likewise Ruth May describes the Africans by citing the Verse from the Bible. “ God says the Africans are the Tribes of Ham. Ham was the worst one of Noah’s three boys. He was bad. So Noah cursed all Ham’s children to be slaves for ever and ever” (23). These words of Ruth May, her telling the story of Ham and why God turns the Africans into black, show us the perception of the white missionaries. She thinks that Africans are bad since it is represented like that in the Bible. Lastly, Rachel’s first impressions about the Congolese present the judgmental view of the Americans. She says “we stepped off the airplane and staggered out into the field with our bags, the Congolese people surrounded us- Lordy!- in a chanting broil. Charmed, I’m sure. We got fumigated with the odor of perspiring bodies” (26). Rachel is horrified by the stench of body odor as the Kilanga villagers surround them in a warm welcome, and miserable as they rush the prices toward “a dirt-floor patio with a roof over it which turns out to be the church” (27).

By contrast, Adah never views the Congolese as inferior to the Westerners because she has an agile vision. She is able to see the words backwards and forward equally well, she rings double meaning from any phrase.

Consequently, except Adah all the family members carry with them their one-sided American view of the Congo. However, soon after they arrive in the Congo they realize that the things they carry are inappropriate in this environment just like their attitudes. They begin to understand that they bring the wrong things with them.

For instance, Orleanna brings Betty Crocker cake mixes as she aims to make these cakes on her daughters birthday. However things do not progress as she imagines because in the Congo their stove does not have a proper oven; other than

the stove, in the powerful humidity the powdered mix get transfigured. Thus Orleanna realizes that they “brought all the wrong things”(75). Similar to Orleanna's Betty Crocker cake mixes the seeds Nathan brings from America are inappropriate in the Congo. When he plants these seeds they become unrecognizable, almost grotesque in their hugeness. More significantly they do not give any fruit. The North American plants cannot vegetate under the conditions in Africa. Hence we see that the Price family fail to consider that the Congo is another land which has a different climate.

As a result throughout their experiences they realize that the Congo is a different land which has its own climate. Similarly their view of the Congo changes as they start to live in the Congo. As their view of the Congo changes so does their own values, their view of themselves.

Leah, Adah and Orleanna experience a change of values. Their lives in the Congo lead them to self-realization. As they realize Nathan's idleness they lose their faith in Nathan and discover themselves. They get rid of their prejudices and declare the change with their distinct voices. To begin with Leah who adores her father changes as she sees his silly acts in the Congo. Other than her father's silly acts, Leah comes to a realization as she gets to know the white man's exploiting the Africans through Anatole. she discovers evil side of the American imperialism and transforms her devotion from her father to Anatole, her husband.

Next, Adah experience a change but, it is a physical change. Adah is born with a condition called “hemiplegia,” which prevents her from using the left side of her body. She places herself in a voluntary exile from the world. She keeps silent, stays as an observer rather than an active participant. She is too changed by the Congo. She is pulled into life and forced to admit that she cares enough to participate. She devotes her life to science, becomes an epidemiologist.

Other than Leah and Adah, Orleanna goes through a change by her experiences in the Congo. At first she depicts herself as an inferior force subject to

Nathan's authority. She acts according to Nathan's will. She does not have a life of her own. Moreover, she is presented to us just like a nation which is under the rule of colonial power. Infact Kingsolver builds an analogy between Orleanna and the Congo, like the Congo, Orleanna is conquered and oppressed by a dominating force, Nathan. Hence in the novel Nathan's patriarchal troublemaking identifies with the whites exploitation of Black Africa. However the troubles she has in the Congo lead Orleanna to a recognition. Especially, her youngest daughter, Ruth May's death change everything in her life. Up to Ruth May's death she devotes herself to her husband, she does not have a life of her own but, after Ruth May's death she starts to live for herself and her children. She begins to take action in her life, she returns to America and gains control of her life.

However, unlike Leah, Adah and Orleanna Nathan and Rachel do not change in the Congo because they do not try to understand the Congo. Infact they put a distance between themselves and the Congo. They cannot deepen their view of the Congo and this leads them to blindness.

To begin with Nathan's act of planting the seeds that he brings from America reveals his blind arrogance. Nathan believes that Congolese are so backward that they even do not know how to grow their own food. Thus in order to show the Congolese that one can cultivate the soil and get food from it by planting seeds Nathan plants the garden . Since he sees the Congolese as primitive, childlike, need to be taught he aims to demonstrate that one can grow his or her own food. Unfortunately he cannot understand that if the climate has permitted this sort of garden Africans will have plant it themselves long before Nathan. Nathan believes that there is little agriculture in Kilanga because the people of the Congo do not know how to develop it. He cannot consider that there might be some other reason other than their stupidity and backwardness. Therefore the garden adventure is a wonderful symbol of Nathan's sightlessness.

Nathan is ignorant not only about the climate of the Congo but also the language of the region. The Congo has its own regional language, Lingala and it

has its own linguistic personality. In this language words have different meanings and the meaning changes according to the intonation. Nathan never understands this, hence every week he preaches to his congregation that Jesus is a fatal Poisonwood tree infact, he means to declare that Jesus is dearly beloved. In short, Nathan is beyond redemption. His blindness is so complete that he is incapable of seeing his mistakes.

Just like Nathan, Rachel is blind to her surrounding. Nathan is blinded by his mission however, Rachel is blinded by herself, by her own needs and desires. When the novel starts she is a materialist girl of fifteen who does not her about other people's needs. She only cares herself, as a teenager she yearns for "sweet-seiteen party and a pink mohair twin set"(33). As we watch her age go to fifty little changes in her personality. Her apperance remains her chief concern and her well being the only force that can motivate her. With her good looks, she catches a string of wealthy husbands, one of whom leaves her a luxury hotel deep in the heart of the French Congo. Thus even she matures she continues to be a mortal infant, betraying friends, and using men to her advantage.

To sum up, this study concentrates on the transformation of values when the West meets its other the East by analyzing the characters in Barbara Kingsolver's novel The Poisonwood Bible. We journey step by step with the Price girls and their mother, as they painfully discover the beauty and ugliness of being white Americans in the Congo.

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