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UFR Lettres et Sciences Humaines, Université Gaston Berger,

BP 234 Saint Louis, Sénégal

Tel +221 77 718 51 35 / +221 77 408 87 82

E-mail : babacar.dieng@ugb.edu.sn / khadidiatou.diallo@ugb.edu.sn

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School and Docilization of Colonized Bodies in George Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin* and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood*

Babacar DIENG

Professeur Titulaire, Département d'Anglais
Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis, Sénégal

Ameth DIALLO

Vacataire, Département d'Anglais
Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis, Sénégal

Abstract

This article discusses the role of school in the process of docilization of the colonized in Barbados and Kenya. While it brings together two different and yet converging perspectives from Africa and the Caribbeans, it explores two classical novels, *In the Castle of My Skin* and *Petals of Blood*, respectively by George Lamming and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. Building from the theories on power and domination as explained by Foucault, Althusser, Said and Fanon, it explains how the British metropolis has utilized education to subjugate the Barbadians and the Kenyans. It shows how students are made to appropriate the British cultural capital and accept the supremacy of the colonial power through school curricula in which the empire is maintained in a symbolic grandeur which the subjects had to worship and emulate.

Keywords: school, power, colonialism, Lamming, Ngugi

Résumé

Cet article traite du rôle de l'école dans le processus de docilisation des colonisés en Barbade et au Kenya. Réunissant deux perspectives différentes et pourtant convergentes de l'Afrique et des Caraïbes, il explore deux romans classiques, *In the Castle of My Skin* et *Petals of Blood*, respectivement écrits par George Lamming et Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. S'appuyant sur les théories sur le pouvoir et la domination de Foucault, Althusser, Said et Fanon, il explique comment la métropole britannique a exploité l'éducation pour subjuguer les Barbadiens et les Kenyans. Il montre comment les élèves sont amenés à s'approprier le capital culturel britannique et à

accepter la suprématie du pouvoir colonial par le biais de programmes scolaires dans lesquels l'empire est maintenu dans une grandeur symbolique que les sujets doivent vénérer et imiter.

Mots-clés: école, pouvoir colonial, Lamming, Ngugi

Introduction

In *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault posits a tight relationship between power and knowledge as he conjectures that the exercise of power is often buttressed by a system carefully organized to docilize the dominated people's bodies and make them obey authority. Indeed, Foucault lists school among the institutions that act as tools helping to subject the body, use it, and transform it so as to make it docile through enclosure in space, controlled activities, and discipline. Thus, like the Panopticon, school is a laboratory of power and a site of docilization and construction of normalized judgement. Docilization is based on disciplining which functions as a double system of gratification-punishment.

The colonial powers in general, more specifically the British, were aware of this subtle relationship between power and knowledge. They knew they needed to devise systems to make the colonized appropriate their cultural capital and accept their domination as a natural phenomenon. Indeed, colonialism was not simply appropriation of lands through violence; it was a vast system accompanied by an incredible production of knowledge and supported by a carefully devised ideological machine.

Postcolonial theorists such as Edward Said and Frantz Fanon have made visible this hidden face of colonialism. In *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Edward Said argues that colonialism was supported by considerable ideological productions that "include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination" (9). Frantz Fanon also argues the ideological power of language in *Black Skins, White Masks* (1952) and the colonizer's insidious formation of knowledge to maintain his domination over the colonized in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). In the latter, he explains that

the colonial enterprise rested, in a large extent on the colonizer's erasure and negation of the history, civilization, and culture of the dominated as a means of legitimating colonial hegemony as a benevolent mission. As a matter of fact, once he took over the natives' land, the colonizer also put in place a powerful ideological machine aiming at docilizing and subtly convincing them of their innate inferiority and in culture. He devalued everything that was local and praised the metropolis and western civilization. Although religion played an important role as well, colonial ideological discourses were mostly disseminated through schools, which ensures a vital function in the docilization of future adults; it was a site of mis-education. Postcolonial scholar Ngugi wa thiong'o reinforces Said's pertinent observation when he comments in *Homecoming* that the colonial system "produced the kind of education which nurtured subservience, self-hatred, and mutual suspicion [...]. Society was a racial pyramid: the European minority at the top, the Asian in the middle, and the African forming the base. The educational system reflected this inequality" (14).

In the mid-century, many creative writers from the African diaspora, including George Lamming from Barbados, Merle Hodge from Trinidad, Mongo Beti from Cameroon, Ngugi Wa Thiongo from Kenya, and Toni Morrison from America, have depicted in their "liberational or awakening narratives" the subtle ways in which the colonizer or oppressor docilized the bodies of the colonized in such sites as schools and churches. These creative writers aimed mainly at changing the marginalized people's mindsets in their process of analyzing the past.

It is not a coincidence that all these "liberational" narratives depict school as an important Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) in the colonial or dominating machine. School is represented as a major site of circulation of colonial ideology in Merle Hodge's *Crick Crack Monkey*, George Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin*, Ngugi Wa Thiongo's *Petals of Blood*, Michelle Cliff's *Abeng*, and Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*. In Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, the author shows that it helps disseminate the Eurocentric ideology of the dominant culture.

In an article entitled “Colonial(ist) Education in Two Caribbean Bildungsromane: School as a Site of Miseducation in George Lamming’s *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953) and Merle Hodge’s *Crick Crack, Monkey* (1970)”, published by Alizes in 2013, the utilization of education for the normalization of colonial power has already been discussed by Dieng. However, stronger invariants can be noted between Lamming’s 1953 novel and its filial novel *Petals of Blood* (1964). Ngugi wa Thiongo had read the Barbadian novelist’s powerful hypotext and was certainly influenced by it. In his first essay, *Homecoming*, Ngugi explains his interest in Caribbean Literature on which he wrote his dissertation at Leeds, and particularly on George Lamming. According to Ngugi, Africa and the Caribbeans share a common experience rooted in slavery, colonialism, and the longing for freedom. He even states in *Moving the Center* that “...George Lamming had more to offer and I wanted to do more work on him and on Caribbean literature as a whole” (6). Lamming’s influence on Ngugi clearly appears in *Petals of Blood*, which in many ways echoes the themes earlier addressed by the Barbadian writers. *Petals of Blood* indeed carries a close intertextuality with Lamming’s novel when it comes to the cohabitation of the colonizer’s luxury and orderliness with the colonized’s destitution, the hopelessness in the life of the villagers both in Creighton (*In the Castle*) and Illmorog (*Petals*) who meet at public places to discuss their sorrow and the grandeur in the representation of the mother country through institutionalized education at school.

This article scrutinizes how Lamming and Ngugi paint school as a site of propagation of colonial ideology in *In the Castle of My Skin* and *Petals of Blood*, respectively. It illustrates how the British metropolis encoded itself on the colonized bodies through subtle practices disseminated in colonial schools so as to reinforce its power and make it accepted as natural by the colonial subjects. In a first stage, some theories illustrating the ideological function of school in general will be presented. Then, narrative evidence will be used to show how the British colonizer used school in Barbados and in Kenya to brainwash children and perpetuate its domination over the West Indian and African colonies, and how the effects of colonial education continued to operate on the colonized subjects even when colonies became autonomous.

I. Theorizing the function of school: Bourdieu and Althusser

It is important to lay our theoretical perspective first to show the depth of the representation of school in *In the Castle of My Skin* and *Petals of Blood*. Our perspective borrows Bourdieu and Althusser's lenses.

It is generally accepted that the primary role of school is to educate and maximize citizens' potential to evolve in society, even though its objectives may vary depending on the types of society. Education is considered not only as a liberator of minds, but also a tool for social mobility in societies, especially industrial ones. Even though they have different definitions and views on schooling, educational scientists generally agree that it is a "social and cultural enterprise in which different communities and institutional groups instantiate the themes, perspectives, concepts, and routines that organize and give meaning to their lives" (Bourdieu 197).

However, scholars have also demonstrated that beyond its noble and innocent social and cultural objectives, school has also been instrumentalized as a site of ideological dissemination by forms of powers. Pierre Bourdieu discusses the ideological role of school in *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, more specifically in the second part of his work entitled "Structure and the Habitus." In this part, Bourdieu describes school as a potential tool for the dominant group to strengthen its power over non-dominant ones. He posits that the dominant group has exclusive and total control over the discourses circulating in school. As a matter of fact, in his view, the culture of the dominant group controls the economic, social, and political resources that are embodied in schools; thus, schools take the cultural capital of the dominant groups as the natural and only proper sorts of capital.

Bourdieu also argues that to succeed, an individual of a non-dominant background has to move from the bottom cycle to the top by appropriating and acquiring the right cultural capital. School is thus a site of appropriation of cultural capital which can take the form of habituses, "habituses" being the ways cultures are embodied in the individuals. Consequently, school facilitates the process of "embourgeoisement" in social terms or assimilation when referring to cultural or ethnic groups. It makes the member of the non-

dominant group acquire, through habituses, new cultural capital to the detriment of his own.

Neo-Marxist scholar Louis Althusser also presents school as an instrument of propagation and dissemination of ideological discourses and reinforcement of power. He posits that power is not always transparent in its exercise because it operates in open and disguised ways. For him, power is a force which functions in manners that are subtle, disguised, and accepted as ordinary, everyday practice. Althusser distinguished two main structures of power that operate simultaneously and complementarily in modern societies: (Repressive) State Apparatus (SA) and Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). The Repressive State Apparatus is the state power exercised through its potential capability to cause harm or pain instrumentalizing repressive administrative and political bodies such as the law and the police. The second structure of power or ISA—the one we are interested in—operates through ideology, and it can include school systems, films and news media. The stated objectives and accepted roles of ISAs are to educate, entertain and inform, but they can help indoctrinate people into seeing the world in a certain way and/or accepting certain identities as their own within that world.

In Althusser's view, the ISA which is a site where the state's ideology is disseminated in hidden ways, is the most influential of the two power structures. For him, the ideological power conveyed through ISAs is far more extensive and potent than the coercive one of the SA. It is concealed in the textbooks we read, the films we watch, and the music we hear. It makes us accept a particular world. Ideology thus becomes a machine by which we structure ourselves and define who we are (Althusser 143-47). Thus, from Althusser's perspective there is a clear and tight link between state-formation and individual socialization. Besides, school constitutes one of the most important tools to shape the individual in a certain way and make him accept and appropriate as his own an identity.

Scholar Anne Allison, in her article entitled "The Lunch-Box as Ideological State Apparatus," reinforces the position of Althusser when she argues that the universe that we live in is symbolically constructed and the constructions of our cultural symbols are endowed with or have the potential for power

because culture is not necessarily innocent and power not necessarily transparent. She also conjectures that the way we see reality depends, to a large extent, on how we live the latter because “the conventions by which we recognize our universe are also those by which each of us assumes his or her place and behavior within that universe” (195). For her, ideology makes us accept the way the world is and naturalizes our environments by making the daily routines of our life “familiar, desirable, and simply our own.” Allison elaborates that culture is thus doubly constructive: it constructs people and specific worlds. Building on this theoretical approach, she shows how school is instrumentalized in Japan to shape children.

In the same vein as Anne Allison, this article intends to demonstrate how school has been used in colonial societies to disseminate knowledge aiming at docilizing the colonized and making him accept domination as a natural phenomenon or centuries. It will first analyze significant and relevant parts of George Lamming’s *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953) before discussing Ngugi Wa Thiongo’s *Petals of Blood* (1964).

II. The docilization of Barbadian bodies in Lamming’s *In the Castle of My Skin*

Lamming exploits the novel of development or Bildungsroman, a genre privileged by liberational novels aiming at unmasking the impacts of “colonial” or hegemonic legacies in the African diaspora because it allows the authors to cover longer story times. Indeed, the Bildungsroman allows the depiction of a child’s development from younger age to adulthood, thus allowing the reader to see how the past shapes the future. In addition, the story is recounted by an autodiegetic narrator looking back at his past. Subsequently we have a juxtaposition of voices: although the story is told from the child’s perspective, we also notice the intrusion of the critical and mature voice of the adult narrator reflecting on events and sometimes guiding the readers’ attention towards specific slices of his life. In Lamming’s *In the Castle of My Skin*, the story is told from the perspective of G, a Barbadian child growing up in colonial times.

Following the child's development in the Barbadian society, the critical and ideologically aware adult narrator, most probably Lamming himself looking back at his past, depicts school as an ISA used to buttress the colonial enterprise through docilization of the colonial subjects. Indeed, Lamming's narrative exposes the colonizer's exclusive and total control over the discourses circulating in Barbadian schools. The curriculum is shaped in such a way as to only embody British culture: in G's school, children sing "God save the King;" they learn about British history and they are taught about the Battle of Hastings. However, they have no knowledge about their own culture. For example, G wonders if slavery ever existed. Thus, like in most post-colonial Caribbean works, the narrative draws attention to the inappropriateness of the syllabus, a syllabus tailored by the colonizer in such a way as to brainwash and alienate the Barbadian children, as well as make them adopt the cultural capital of the metropolis. The acceptance of the British conventions made the Barbadian children experience colonialism as a natural phenomenon.

The narrator draws attention to the operation of discourses in Barbadian schools—discourses aiming at making children perceive colonialism as a benevolent and beneficent mission for the colonies. To focalize this constructive aspect of school, which has lasting effects on the Barbadians, Lamming presents how the older people and the child perceive their tie to England:

Good old England and Little England. They had never parted company since they met way back in the reign of James or was it Charles? [...] Three hundred years, more than the memory could hold, Big England had and held Little England and Little England like a sensible child accepted. Three hundred years, and never in all time did any nation dare interfere with these two. Barbados or little England was the oldest and purest of England's children, and may it always be so. The other islands had changed hands. Now they were French, now they were Spanish. But Little England remained steadfast and constant to Big England (29).

The illustration of this false relationship between metropolis and colony illustrates to what extent it serves as an ISA buttressing the colonial; school is painted as a site of construction and production of British colonial power

in Barbados. It naturalizes colonialism as a motherly and protective relationship devoid of violence, expropriation and exploitation. We share Sandra Paquet Pouchet's analysis, in *The Novels of George Lamming* (1982), when she notes that the inspector's speech builds fantasy and myth about Britain and the British Empire. The children develop a sense of belonging to the Empire as they feel they have a special connection with the Mother Country.

This naturalization of colonialism and development of the children's sense of belonging to the Empire are achieved not only through the teachings in school, but also through the construction of a fictive reality during the celebration of significant events such as the Queen's birthday. As a matter of fact, each year, on the twenty fourth of May, the traditional Queen's birthday or Empire Day was celebrated at school. On Empire Day, the students lined up like soldiers, the yard was crowded with relatives and other children, and the whole school was decorated with British flags. In his speech, the British inspector presented colonization as a God-blessed mission to maintain peace in the world. He insisted that the "British Empire [...] has always worked for the peace of the world. This was the job assigned by God" (*ITCOM* 30). In his speech, the inspector did not fail to make allusions to the second war between Ethiopia and Italy, which was trying to reconquer for the second time Ethiopia after a first defeat at Adoua. This reference constitutes an attempt to cut short all vague desires of independence inspired by the image of the King of Ethiopia in newspapers or news of the war in Abyssinia. He reassured the older students who might have read about the event that God blessed Barbados and England with a peaceful and strong tie. Using flattery, the inspector further asserted that Barbados is "the pride and treasure of the Empire." It is thus clear that the inspector instrumentalizes Empire Day to docilize the bodies of the Barbadian students, as Michel Foucault would say, and make them obedient to the Empire.

The use of school as ISA is further instantiated in the narrative's depiction of the end of the Empire Day commemoration. After the military rituals of saluting the flag and marching under the orders of the teachers, the celebration ended with the distribution of pennies, supposedly gifts of the Queen. The military ritual that characterizes the whole commemoration of the event and

the final scene in which the student is punished are reminiscent of Foucault's Panopticon in *Discipline and Punish*. The students are influenced, controlled, and disciplined through a double-system of reward-punishments so as to turn them into bodies docile to colonization. It is also important to note the symbolic value of the penny: between 1971 and 1984, period which coincides with the historical setting of Lamming's text, the penny was stamped with the head of Queen Elizabeth II wearing the Girls of Great Britain and Ireland, Tiara. The distribution of these coins with the stamp of the Queen reinforced the tie between the colonized and the Empire in several ways: it reinforced the inspector's message and made the children accept the Queen as a generous surrogate mother.

III. Ngugi's caricature of the ISA of school in *Petals of Blood*

Petals of Blood conveys a similar representation of school as an instrument designed by the British to docilize the minds of the Kenyan children. Colonialism invested in education, because as a system, its champions knew that, in order to sustain it, they needed to anchor it on a sound educational design that would instill into the future African elite the sense of obedience and duty. Ngugi was so conscious of the pernicious effect of colonialism in transforming the mindsets of the subdued people that he asserted in *Moving the Center*:

Children are the future of any society. If you want to know the future of a society look at the eyes of the children. If you want to maim the future of any society, you simply maim the children. Thus, the struggle for the survival of our children is the struggle for the survival of our future. The quantity and quality of that survival is the measurement of the development of our society. Enslave the children and you enslave parents. Enslave the parents and you enslave children. Thus, if you enslave children, you are enslaving the survival and development of the entire society - its present and its future. Survival and development are an integrated whole (94).

The British colonial education was later devised to ensure an enslaved mentality that would help further the exploitation of the conquered people, especially the children. Although it remains true that violence through the

lethal weapons carried by the colonizers is what brought African people to their knees in their long confrontation with European powers, the role of sustaining their domination was upheld by the education given to the natives at school. Ngugi refers to the Holy trinity (The Sword, the Coin and the Bible) to explain the subtle mechanisms of colonialism. Among the three, it is unanimously considered that the Bible (education) has the most damaging effects on Africans.

The British educational system was almost the same in all colonies. Its aim was aptly summarized by the famous British colonist Thomas Babington Macaulay in his famous “Minutes on Indian Education” when he evokes the need “to train a class of persons, Indians in blood and color, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect” (Bill Ashcroft & al, *The Postcolonial Studies Reader* 430). The Africans trained in colonial schools were also expected to behave and act according to what Macaulay and his British peers intended on Indians.

To embark on such an educational enterprise required to send devoted agents at the service of the colonial empire. Ngugi’s fiction is replete with educational missionaries (Livingstone in *The River Between* and *A Grain of Wheat*, Fraudsham in *Petals of Blood*) working to docilize the minds of school goers. The Kenyan author has been meticulous in capturing and representing the life and the reality around these characters because he is himself a product of such an educational system as he recounts in many of his memoirs, especially in *In the House of the Interpreters* which informs on his passage at Alliance School under the stewardship of his legendary principal, Edward Carey Francis. This school is the prototype of the college in Africa (Achimota in Ghana, for instance) which trained the African elite that had to support the colonial system. Colonial education in these institutions was centered on the grandeur of the Empire which was represented in such a way that ensured loyalty, obedience and reverence from the colonial subjects. As Ngugi sums it, “the yardstick is England. Everything that affects the tender minds of children is geared towards veneration of England and the British throne” (*Homecoming* 115).

In Petals of Blood, Ngugi attempts to represent his experience as a colonial subject going to a school designed literally to brainwash the minds of school children. This experience is revealed through the representation of Siriana, the high school attended by Munira, Chui, Karega and Joseph. In many ways, in this novel, Siriana stands for Alliance School and its headmaster Cambridge Fraudsham for Carey Francis (Ngugi's former headmaster). Siriana offers an education which aims at offering an exclusive image of the Empire. Both in its organizational architecture and in its curricula, the school contributes into the molding of minds ready to serve the Empire to which they will owe obedience, loyalty and admiration. One of the most striking features of Siriana is its high sense of organization and discipline which it links to the life of the British Empire and its people. The school itself is a fortress, kept away from the lot of the life of the ordinary colonial subjects. Its beauty, calmness, organization and even architecture reminds of the sense of the orderliness of the British people. The education is based on a high sense of discipline and self-organization with a rigorous timetable.

When Munira recounts his passage at Siriana he highlights the rigor the school maintained in the following words: "The strength to serve: sports, cross-country races, cold showers at five in the morning became compulsory. We saluted the British flag every morning and every evening to the martial sounds from the bugles and drums of our school band" (*Petals*, 35). Life at Siriana, as Ngugi narrates about Alliance, resembles army life: the morning shower, the parade with rising the British flag and the praising hymn to the Queen ("God save our gracious Queen") and the morning prayers at the chapel (*In the House*, 17). The feeling which invades the school children on these solemn moments reminds of the reverence which the boys have to observe when it comes to using the pennies at Queen Victoria's effigy the children in *In the Castle of My Skin* are offered.

Such a way of life centered on the powers of the Queen and the solemnity of religion is meant to delineate African children from their natural reality and to subdue their minds to the British way of life symbolized by the Queen and her religion. In the colonial school, religion played a crucial role as it strived to legitimize the colonial enterprise. Colonialism required to "civilize" the African subject. To attain a good level of civility implied not only to be well-

organized but also to be “clean”. As Ngugi asserts: Cleanliness is second to godliness” (*In the House*, 14). The children are made to believe that a generous Queen from the other side of the sea has saved their life as Munira asserts: “At the same time, we had to grow strong in God and the Empire. It was the two that had rid the world of the menace of Hitler” (*Petals*, 35). Painted in a mythical fashion, with the image of a deity, the Queen simply stands for God in the minds of the children. In praising her every morning through a ritual of chants and hymns, the children progressively nurture a sense of belonging and proximity to that mythic creature. Such a feeling can be sensed in the following passage where Munira asserts:

Then we would march in orderly military lines to the chapel to raise choral voices to the Maker: Wash me, Redeemer, and I shall be whiter than snow. We would then pray for the continuation of an Empire that had defeated the satanic evil which had erupted in Europe to try the children of God (*Petals* 35).

The strong religious zeal expressed above shows also the moral link which exists between the colonial subject and God and the British crown. Interestingly, such a link is seized in *ITCOMS* when the inspector observes:

My dear boys and teachers, we are met once again to pay our respects to the memory of a great Queen. She was your Queen and my Queen and yours no less than mine. We're all subjects and partakers in the great design, the British Empire, and your loyalty to the Empire can be seen in the splendid performance which your school decorations and the discipline of these squads represent....The British Empire, you must remember, has always worked for the peace of the world. This was a job assigned to it by God, and if the Empire at any time has failed to bring about that peace it was due to events and causes beyond its control (*ITCOMS* 30- 31).

This passage highlights the power assigned to the Queen, the ruler of the British Empire. These rituals of loyalty always opened with a parade leading to the rising of the flag. The image of the Union Jack fluttering in the air (Ngugi, *Petals of Blood* 35), early in the morning, leaves an ineradicable imprint on the minds of the students who ultimately develop a sense of respect and duty towards the Empire. The parade served to instill a sense of discipline into the children. It reminded the children that order and hierarchy are solid

requirements on which every society has to be grounded. This message is perceptible in the words of Fraudsham to his students when he explains:

In any civilized society there were those who were to formulate orders and others to obey: there had to be leaders and the led: if you refused to obey, to be led, then how could you hope to lead and demand obedience? Look at heaven: there was God on a throne and the angels in their varying subordinate roles. Yet all was harmony (Ngugi, *Petals of Blood* 203).

The docilization of the children is not limited to these aspects of discipline, religion and reverence to the British crown, it is mostly sustained through the curricula at the school.

The Empire was the center of the school everyday life. At school, as Munira attempts to explain when he recounts the first strike at the school, the centrality of the British experience was not to be challenged. Just like in the school Lamming describes in *In the Castle of My Skin*, the curricula in the school depicted in *Petals of Blood* is built around the life of the Empire, its people, its way of life, its geography, etc.... African life, culture and history have no room in such a curriculum. Or where it was taught, it was just to highlight the wide gap that existed between the colony and the metropolis. The students at Siriana, as it was typical to most African schools in its time, were introduced to Britain, its geography, its people and its history. Ngugi, in his memoir, *In the House*, Ngugi explains, how Mr. Oades the English teacher asks the students to follow him, during his first class, to his house so that they discover the typical house of an Englishman, his living room, parlor, kitchen and even bedroom (*In the House*, 19-20-21). This situation is related in *Petals*, when the students ask “why should ourselves be reflected in white snows, spring flowers fluttering by on icy lakes (Ngugi, *Petals of Blood* 204).

There is no domain where this practice was sharper than in the realm of literature. Culture can vastly be disseminated through the arts, and literature is one of most efficient tools to ensure such a dissemination. The courses of literature at Siriana based on British authors, especially representative ones such as Shakespeare, were a privileged means to make the Kenyan pupils adopt the British cultural capital. Ngugi’s observation that “English texts were the norm, and Europe the cultural reference” (Ngugi, *In the House of*

the Interpreters 64) can be easily verified at Siriana. The extensive reference to Shakespeare, the English author who brought its literature to its helm is eloquently sufficient to sustain the observation. Besides, Chui, one of the most gifted students at Siriana, is nicknamed Shakespeare by Fraudsham. The presence of Shakespeare reminds of the reality which Ngugi paints in *In the House of the Interpreters*, especially about the author being an annual fixture in the 1950s at the Alliance dramatic society (50).

The inappropriate character of the curricula will be even challenged by Karega and his fellow students at Siriana. They denounced its outward bend on European and Western roots and its silence on Africa. They called for an African centered syllabus as their voices resonate: “We wanted to be taught African literature” (Ngugi, *Petals of Blood* 204). Ultimately, they win the battle against the fierce Fraudsham. Even if the arrival of new a principal, an African, a former student of Siriana, Chui, does not lead to a significant progress, the students’ strike informs on the harmful impact of the curricula and the need to reform the educational system as a whole.

History was also part of the issue which spurred the confrontation between students and the school and its administration. The voices of the students did not limit themselves to demanding the teaching of African literature. They also included history (Ngugi, *Petals of Blood* 35). The history they are taught is a praise song of the deeds of the British Empire and its feats. It does not grant to African history the slightest importance. It starts with the conquest of Africa with the intrusion of the British who supposedly came to rescue Africans from damnation. African history prior to the arrival of the conquerors is obscured if it is not erased. It was distanced from the school children. According to Munira, all the schooling never mentioned some key event of the history of the Kenyans as he relates:

[It went] ...against a background of tremendous changes and troubles, as can be seen in the names given to the age-sets between the Nyanbani and the Hitira: Mwomko.....Karanji, Boti, Ngunga, Muthuu, Ng’aragu Ya Mianga, Bamiti, Gicina, Bangi, Cugini-Mburaki. But you understand we were protected from all that at Siriana (Ngugi, *Petals of Blood* 34).

The curricula therefore rendered Africans ignorant about their real history. And this went on even after independence. It is clearly shown in the argument which pits Karega against Munira when the latter accuses him of teaching propaganda to the students. Karega's point is that he is not teaching anything invented, but just facts about the history of black people which has never been included in the curricula (Ngugi, *Petals of Blood* 292, 293, 294). This echoes the complaint made in *In the Castle of My Skin* where the absence of the history of slavery is lamented or where it is made as a distant past which does not involve the current life of the boys at school.

The educational system was also built on a paternalistic relationship between the teacher and the pupils. Such a relationship highlights the rights the Empire has on its subjects with regard to the way of life it wants them to adhere to. The teachers are there to lecture on the niceties and refinements of the Europeans compared to Africans. They are given the right to lecture Africans on how to entertain a sense of good manners in their life. This is so well conveyed by Fraudsham when he lectures the children on ethics and the necessity to have feelings on two occasions: when Peter Pooles was sued for shooting an African who had thrown a stone at his dogs (Ngugi, *Petals of Blood* 197); and when his own dog Lizzie died where he stated, in front of the school children mockery that "African had no feeling" because of their lack of love to pets (Ngugi, *Petals of Blood* 203). In both cases, Fraudsham's speech is a rejoinder to the words of the inspector in *In the Castle of My Skin* when he requires the children to nurture a sense of duty, loyalty, and reverence to the British Queen.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the use of school as an instrument devised by colonial powers or agents to rule and consolidate power in the subdued territories of Africa and the Caribbeans. It has demonstrated, as Said has argued, that colonialism is merely appropriation of lands; under its different forms, it has always been supported by an impressive ideological machine deployed through school and religion. Using theories developed on power

enhancement from Foucault, social apparatuses from Althusser and “empire building” from Edward Said, the paper has underscored how school serves in both Lamming’s *In the Castle of My Skin* and Ngugi’s *Petals of Blood* to build lasting effects on the consciousness of colonial or neocolonial subjects to ensure a kind of mental enslavement and to maintain the supremacy of the dominant forces. More precisely, it has evidenced how colonial agents such as the British inspector in *ITCOM* and Cambridge Fraudsham in *Petals of Blood* draw from the school curricula and the learning orientations. They depict how it influences school goers in order to pledge allegiance to the British Empire (or the Queen) and to serve into a working machine which only profit the interests of the rulers and hold the ruled into a dehumanizing status which they ultimately challenge as we see with the caricature of the ISAs in Ngugi’s novel.

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