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Psychopolitics, Cultural Syncretism and Untranslatability in Albert Memmi's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1974) and Paulo Freire's *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1970)

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Abstract

This article is concerned with analyzing Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) and Albert Memmi's *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1974), as postcolonial critical works that roam around the whirlpool of psychopolitics, cultural hegemony, and untranslatability. It phenomenologically looks at culture as a latent leavening agent wielded by the oppressor for the ongoing process of oppression in which the oppressed still bear their colonial pathologies and pathogens. The analysis uncovers how the colonial toxin has seeped in their cultural vessel and infected the black lymphocytes that are the main agents for the psychological, economic, political, and cultural immunization of the oppressed. These dangerous methods, labelled psychopolitics and cultural syncretism legitimately operating under the aegis of imperialism, deserve serious and meticulous reflection, for they embody the worst weapons of cultural invasion and ethnocide. Resting on the theories of psychopolitics and psychoanalysis, and untranslatability and syncretism as concepts, the paper brings to light the social inadequacy and alienating structure of cultural imperialism through the medium of the legislation of their intrinsic incivility.

Keywords: Culture, syncretism, psychology, psychopolitics, alienation, oppression, oppressed, politics.

Introduction

The politics of imperialism, the key motto inscribed in the seed of all instruments of domination as reflected in colonial domination, is still seeking to utterly accomplish its tasks and to materialize its malevolent intentions under newer other guises. Therefore, the

manifest objective of cultural imperialism is to fortify its bastion through its claims to globalize and syncretize what will later be known as global culture. In fact, syncretism is the blending of cultures and ideas from different places. The main objective is to

create a new culture by combining aspects of multiple cultures that have been adopted by a community. Cultural syncretism is a worldwide phenomenon, hence the relevance to look at the interaction between human psychology and politics known as psychopolitics and psychopolitical validity. The latter refers to the extent to which studies and interventions in the community integrate knowledge with respect to multidisciplinary and multilevel sources, experiences, and consequences of oppression, and effective strategies for promoting psychological and political liberation. It is in that framing that Paulo Freire and Albert Memmi have written, respectively, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) and *The colonizer and The colonized* (1974) to examine the psychological impacts of how politics and the political and cultural structure affect individuals under their cultural and identity governance. How has the colonizer resorted to psychological precepts and techniques to achieve the political goal of cultural and psychological domination of the colonized? That is such an impending danger that Paulo Freire and Albert Memmi have been concerned with insofar as for them, the oppressor's attempt to reconcile is but a pretext to crash the oppressed's 'minor' cultures and assert their superiority through the alleged hegemonic culture.

In fact, contemporary studies have provided evidence for the variegation of the thematology of cultural syncretism owing to the contiguous frictive topics it encompasses such as cultural alienation and cultural invasion which have gestated a shockwave of existential dilemma in which the lines of belongingness and being are blurred, and the condemned gate of Bhabha's "unhomeliness" opens (Bhabha, 1994). Cultural alienation covers recurrent antecedents like the problematics of identification with racial, ethnic, sexual minority, gender-based discrimination, disability, ageing, and chronic illness that are impending threats to sociocultural cohesion in the formerly colonized countries. It is in the same line of thought that, in "Cultural alienation: A concept analysis", Timothea Vo conceives cultural alienation as an oppressively exclusive space instilling "sociocultural deprivation", resistance, mistrust, distrust, and identity loss (Vo, 2020: 160). Yet, although Vo provided a laborious parsing of the concept itself, in factoring in Memmi's and Freire's theoretical frames of reference he has inadequately omitted the metaphysical and psychoanalytical epiphenomena that alienation includes in the psycho-existential and phenomenological remission of the culturally oppressed individual.

In his article "Views on the Cultural Invasion" (2018), Yuanyuan Zhang has, for his part, by virtue of historicization of the term 'cultural invasion' also impregnated with socioeconomic and political traced some of the elements determining the fate of the culturally invaded victims. Zhang's paper appears to be much slanted in favor of cultural invasion's association with "the unequal global economic power structure and the hegemonic Western discourse of materialism, modern lifestyle and consumption" (Zhang, 2018: 162). This is to the point of ignoring the precarities and impediments it brings off in the survival and subsistence of the marginalized cultures which equally affects their cultural identity despite untranslatability during practical translating activities which are linguistic and cultural. However, the analytics of syncretism owes much to the laborious examination carried through by Vassilis Lambropoulos in dissecting the concept and elucidating the forms it implicates such as creolization, homogenization, hybridization, mongrelization, cross-cultural psychology, etc. Eventually, Lambropoulos

diagnoses syncretism as a hybrid space of "mixture rather than separation" (Lambropoulos, 2001: 221). Contrary to Memmi and Freire, despite the synthetic functions it claims, syncretism also establishes, under of the auspices of [cultural] imperialism and globalization, "cultural domination of one culture [super] imposing its way of life on another" (Zhang, 2018: 162). It is felicitous to overtone Memmi's and Freire's overemphasis on the phenomenologization of oppression in all its forms. In apposition with the issue at stake, phenomenology, in the perceptual method of Hegel or Husserl helps expose the problem as an object whose exteriority is correlated by inner causes. The colonized's cultural alienation, being more limpidly anatomized through this approach, in tandem with psychoanalysis, the purpose of the analysis goes beyond problematizing cultural oppression. It rather penetrates the consciousness of both the oppressor and the oppressed, as well as the latent mechanisms that govern the operationalization and instrumentalization of culture against a politically dominated, socially marginalized, historico-culturally *de-individuated* societies and their peoples.

I- Uncovering the Politics of Demonization and the Meta-Phenomenalization of Cultural Alienation

The cultural supplantation carried through the cultural invasion of the colonized is set a priori. It is the kingpin by which the subsequent cultural implementation of the colonizer is ensued. The colonial *master* has prophesied that for colonization to be complete, it must be processioned by psychological, cultural, economic, political, environmental, spatial, and colonial alienation. Respective to Freire's and Memmi's stances, this cultural supersession could not be possible without the colonizer's resort to the politics of demonization of the culture of the oppressed as unsophisticatedly 'backward':

Just as the colonized cannot escape the colonialist hoax, he could not avoid those situations which create real inadequacy. To a certain extent, the true portrait of the colonized is a function of this relationship. Reversing a previous formula, it can be stated that colonization creates the colonized just as we have seen that it creates the colonizer (Memmi, 1974: 135).

To take hold of the native's possessions without if and buts, the oppressor lays a hand on the cultural scaffoldings of the oppressed to take control of their minds. Therefore, Carter G. Woodson's a posteriori statement, "when you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions" (Woodson, 1933: 7), underlies Memmi's previous thesis. Michel Foucault's "power/knowledge relationship" (Foucault, 1972: 178) is recursive to this context. From his notion of "the unities of discourse" (Foucault, 1972: 21) and "the formation of concepts" (Foucault, 1972: 56), Freire and Memmi underscore how the colonizer has constructed an image of Africa (Achebe, 1988) and has made of it an object of study. Foucault allusively shows how Charles Spearman's "noegenesis" (Spearman, 1923: 141), the process of which the acquisition of new knowledge from observation and experience (Spearman, 1923: 347), is fetched from "inferring relationships between known things" (Spearman, 1923: 141).

Consequently, under Freire's and Memmi's observations, when the imperial womb delivers a bunch of Orientalists, Africanists, and

Egyptologists, power gushes forth from the false knowledge detained by Westerners who name the world according to their own limited perception of it while expecting vile ends. Therefore, Paulo Freire when speaking to the invaded illustrates such idea writing:

In cultural invasion (as in all the modalities of antidualogical action), the invaders are the authors of, and actors in, the process; those they invade are the objects. The invaders mold; those they invade are molded. The invaders choose; those they invade follow that choice—or are expected to follow it. The invaders act; those they invade have only the illusion of acting, through the action of the invaders (Freire, 1970: 152).

For Freire, after having assimilated those databases from the “reproduction” (Spearman, 1904: 293) of an unevidenced and unverified knowledge, the colonizer has proceeded on the other phase: the use of concretized knowledge and its absolutization insofar as one controls only that which they have knowledge upon. Therefore, the Orient becomes easily the cog in the Western machine simply because Western signifiers signify it. Knowledge being power, signifying a cultural entity is possessing the fate of that signified entity (Thines, 1977). As observed by Memmi, the colonizers having on their thumbs the cultural material of the oppressed decide its validity and invalidity in the global culture. This work has been facilitated by anthropologists and ethnopsychologists who according to their partial and inaccurate cultural analyses, therefore etc, the outsider’s perspective, conclude that it is ‘backward’ and ‘obsolete,’ and need refining and polishing by Western civilization. Moreover, Memmi posits that “*the myth*” according to which the African or the colonized is ‘uncivilized,’ rudely ‘uncultured,’ ‘backward,’ etc., “*is furthermore supported by a very solid organization; a government and a judicial system fed and renewed by the colonizer’s historic, economic and cultural needs*” (Memmi, 1974: 135). Added to that is what “*the authority of academic institutions and governments*” can create:

[...] not only knowledge but the very reality they appear to describe. In time, such knowledge and reality produce a tradition, or what Michel Foucault calls a discourse, whose material presence or weight, not the originality of a given author, is really responsible for the texts produced out of it (Said, 1978: 94).

In other words, the globalization of reality, whose mainstream is to establish a cultural hegemony, dismisses the oppressed’s “*cosmic totality*” (Soyinka, 1976) in relation to the cosmological constant of the dominant’s culture just as it widens the gap of the world’s geopolitical divide. The gallows of cultural translation that degrades the culture on scrutiny substantiate the resuscitation of the West/East, Center/Periphery, Self/Other binary divides and Us/Them dichotomies. As Freire and Memmi have noticed it, if one examines this geometrical partition at close quarters, it psychologically topples down the colonized from global politics and from the ‘new world order’ scheme, which according to conspiracy theories, lies in misanthropic and postcolonial humanitarianism, whose primal aspiration is to defend the interest of the world’s elites.

That is why Memmi maintains that it is when the colonized peoples become finally defined in relation with their oppressors that their exclusion from world history takes root. It is also in that

situational context that the oppressors promulgate the false truth according to which ‘the colonized’s history began only after colonization.’ In concrete language, the statement will echo in the ear of the other the idea that Africa in particular or the colonized peoples in general have had no history prior to the arrival of the white colonialists. In the eyes of Memmi, this entails a falsification and a political sharp practice of manipulating history to suit the current agenda which renders the colonized not only an ahistorical being but also as a nonentitive creature whose existence hinges on a futureless and motionless present, thus inventing temporalities and senses of time and space for the colonized subject. In so doing then, they remove the colonized subject from history, deny them any historicity, memory, and memory space:

Since colonized society does not possess national structures and cannot conceive of a historical future for itself, it must be content with the passive sluggishness of its present. [...] The calcified colonized society is therefore the consequence of two processes having opposite symptoms: encystment originating internally and a corset imposed from outside. Both phenomena have one common factor, contact with colonization. They converge in the social and historical catalepsy of the colonized (Memmi, 1974: 145-146).

The colonized belonging to the countries of the East or the Rest of the world, means in a Eurocentric lens, these arrays of countries constitute “*an economic wastebasket, a cultural desert and a political swamp*” (Maraire, 1996: 63). The whole forms “*the only landmass largely populated by Blacks and the world’s most miserable excuse for a continent*” (Maraire, 1996: 63). Following Freire’s and Memmi’s analytical lines, as this nihilistic categorization is concretized, the culture of poverty, dependency, and squalor becomes the main hallmark of ‘the countries of the Global South.’ Remarkably, in reading *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) and *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1974), one can feel what Frantz Fanon’s undertone in his essay “*the Wretched of the Earth*” (Fanon, 1961). For them, there exists an antagonistic group, their nemesis, and ‘the blessed of the Earth.’ The incisive analysis of the different groups and forms of categorizations, and categories reveal the exclusivist and reductionist politics that are concealed in the loins of imperial globalization. Henceforth, both Freire and Memmi assume that these forms of cultural invasion are clad with the rags of cultural imperialism. The latter’s purposes “*serve the ends of conquest and the preservation of oppression [...]. It implies the ‘superiority’ of the invader and the ‘inferiority’ of those who are invaded, as well as the imposition of values by the former, who possess the latter and are afraid of losing them*” (Freire, 1970: 160).

In fact, the structuralist judgement is recidivous and permeates the universalist benchmark of cultural acceptance. With respect to Freire’s and Memmi’s examinations, the level of signifiers levied in the culture of the other still betones the hegemonic layers which connive to bring into life the late colonial Manicheanism. Such archetypically (Jung, 1969) and stereotypically (Said, 1993) repeated cultural difference justifies the growing desire of the oppressors to be recognized culturally to the detriment of the others’ silence which sinks their cultural anchorages into desuetude while rejuvenating and overvaluing the former’s culture. As suggested by Memmi, cultural transfer is effected through the medium of “*chimney sweeping*” (Lacan, 1960: 3) whereby the cultural soot or nonsensical incongruities of the colonizer are

dumped to the oppressed's culture to soil it. In Freire's opinion, if according to structuralists, there is no difference without similarity, the colonial neurotic refusing any similarity and assimilation from the colonized will doubtlessly overstress the latter's evilness to invalidate their culture and implement theirs. To that idea, both Freire and Memmi sustain that:

That is why a simple biological or cultural difference, which is sometimes a real one, brings a whole crowd of meaning in its wake: the biology of the Jew becomes a repulsive biology, an unhealthful one. One step further, and it becomes heavy with a specific, harmful psychology, then with a metaphysical life of its own, etc.[...] We go from biology to ethics, from ethics to politics, from politics to metaphysics (Memmi, 1968: 214).

Both Freire and Memmi have shown that it is this colonial doubleness and difference implemented by colonialism through *"its paradoxical move to enforce sameness"* (Janmohamed, 1985:62) while at the same time engendering differentiations and discriminations which arranges the *"metaphor of Prospero and Caliban"* (Mannoni, 1964), the master-slave relationship and the ancillary forms of colonizer/colonized dualities. This polarity of the colonial culture imposed upon the colonized serves as *"model or antithesis"* (Memmi, 1974: 184) or as what Freire calls *"antithetical contradiction"* (Freire, 1970: 132) or *"polarizing binarisms"* (Freire, 1970: 18). For the same reason, Homi Bhabha argues:

The discriminatory effects of the discourse of cultural colonialism, for instance, do not simply or singly refer to a 'person', or to a dialectical power struggle between self and Other, or to a discrimination between mother culture and alien cultures. Produced through the strategy of disavowal, the *reference* of discrimination is always to a process of splitting as the condition of subjection: a discrimination between the mother culture and its bastards, the self and its doubles, where the trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated as something *different*—a mutation, a hybrid (Bhabha, 1994: 111).

What is problematic is, metaphorically, that in a salad bowl where there is no salad, the eaters who is made to believe that it is a bowl of salad tend to befool themselves in it. The corollary is that the globalization of the colonized's culture results in a systemic deterioration. Therefore, the cultural amnesia of the colonized is given shape by the estrangement of the oppressed from their culture and more causally by their permanent acculturation to the dominant's culture. As the oppressed symptomizes this cultural loss and their identity crisis, Memmi states, *"he continues to struggle against him. He was torn between what he was and what he wanted to be, and now he is torn between what he wanted to be and what he is making of himself. Nonetheless, the painful discord with himself continues"* (Memmi, 1974: 184).

Moreover, Fanon believes that *"the colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle"* (Fanon, 1967: 9), insofar as he also loses his self in becoming the Other. For the colonizer, the quasi-total destruction of the oppressed's culture which Freire in concomitance with Memmi defines as *"a superstructure which can maintain 'remnants' of the past"* (Freire, 1970: 159), amounts to

the psychological obliteration of the latter and their subjection to physical and spiritual subjugation. However, Memmi points out that this *"superstructure has real value as a refuge"* because it *"saves the colonized from the despair of total defeat"* (Memmi, 1974: 143). Furthermore, the latent imperialism, which transfigures itself under other forms of domination and parasitism, avers to be the insidious mimetic cultural bomb launched to the 'Rest of Us.' As portended by Memmi and Freire, it effectively produces a cataclysmic impact on the colonized as it spawns their avowed 'backwardness,' 'economic dependence' and 'political non-autonomy' and 'incapacity.' Nevertheless, what about those whose culture has been deserted and who, consequently, in their insubstantiality, are 'eternal pawns' in the political, economic, and cultural draughts board of their metropolises? How will they lead their people the way they will or will they adopt Western leadership as it is seen in some African states, whose leaders are often portrayed to look like 'puppet governments' puppeteered by 'Western puppet masters.' If African countries have not broken the yokes from Western cultures, they will never cease seeing the world in Western eyes. To support these argumentative precepts, Freire declares that for cultural imperialism to be effective *"it is essential that those who are invaded come to see their reality with the outlook of the invaders rather than their own; for the more they mimic the invaders, the more stable the position of the latter becomes"* (Freire, 1970: 153). Ngugi wa Thiong'o in *Devil on the Cross* (1980) gets in the heart of cultural imperialism which he critically analyzes through the character Gatuiria:

Cultural imperialism is mother to the slavery of the mind and the body. It is cultural imperialism that gives birth to the mental blindness and deafness that persuades people to allow foreigners to tell them what to do in their own country, to make foreigners the ears and mouths of their national affairs (Wa Thiong'o, 1980: 58).

With the decaying decoys of imperialism's new cultural hitmen, such as globalization, it is agreed that its maleficent enterprise engulfs the alleged subordinate cultures and transforms them into 'subcultures' or 'countercultures.' Afterwards, when unable to cope with the thorny fabrics of their neocolonial masks, they wind up getting out of their lairs and flare up the old colonial lucifers which ignite the age-old nihilist exclusivism and reductionist sectarianism schemes ever borne up by the colonized. Worse yet, both Albert Memmi and Paulo Freire contend that it impedes any *"change in the way the oppressed perceive the world of oppression"* (Freire, 1970: 54-55). It also ambushes the pariah in a chasm of quandary where the oppressed finds it difficult to move through *"the expulsion of the myths created and developed in the old order, which like specters haunt the new structure emerging from the revolutionary transformation"* (Freire, 1970: 55).

II- De-Thinking the Western Anti-Dialogical Enterprise and the Psychophysical Third-Space Theory

Regarding the cultural discrimination, which Freire in Memmi's sense calls *"antidialogism"* (Freire, 1970: 125), Catherine Lutz establishes a set of, premises that excavate the ethnotheories that govern Western cultures. The ethnotheories are the wherewithal that decide the acceptance of a culture or its rejection, the very nature of Western anti-dialogical enterprises. As Vinciane Despret assumes, the colonized subjects are also to blame *"if we cannot be*

accepted culturally” (Lutz, 2004: 25). She further adds that it is no longer university discourses which in themselves “can allow the inventory of ethnotheories of its culture; it’s all those people, like you and I, who are the depositaries and creators of this vast repertory of ethnotheories which shape up the ethnopsychology of a culture” (Translation Mine) (Lutz, 2004: 25). The cultural problem which touches on all the frailest domains of the colonized leads to what Freire conceives as the conditions wherein the oppressed is “constantly juggling the power asymmetry of the two worlds, two cultures, and two languages” (Freire, 1970: 11). The danger in cultural imperialism lies in the fact when it imposes its rotten culture, it does not leave the chance for the invaded to assert theirs or merge this newly brought culture with theirs; but rather deprives them of any opportunity to be in permanent touch with it after having neutralized it completely. Instead, with cultural imperialism, the colonized “is driven back by colonization and, to a certain extent, lives with that situation. Planning and building his future are forbidden. He must therefore limit himself to the present, and even that present is cut off and abstract” (Memmi, 1974: 146). In this respect, Freire’s and Memmi’s literary texts mirror the idea that the more the invaded gets in touch with the other’s culture on a regular basis, the more they relinquish their cultural identity and, as a result, the more they are alienated. This estrangement comes up with the colonized’s desire to become the colonizer. Freire continues, arguing that “the more invasion is accentuated and those invaded are alienated from the spirit of their own culture and from themselves, the more the latter want to be like the invaders: to walk like them, dress like them, talk like them” (Freire, 1970: 153). Erich Fromm, backing up Freire’s and Memmi’s considerations on this dehumanization process, elucidates this extension of cultural oppression which transubstantiates the psyche of the oppressed and ‘metamorphizes’ them into a being that is neither human nor inhuman, neither themselves nor the other:

By alienation is meant a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien. He has become, one might say, estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the center of his world, as the creator of his own acts—but his acts and their consequences have become his masters, whom he obeys, or whom he may even worship (Fromm, 1991: 117).

As evidenced, when the oppressed is denied subjectivity, they are prone to feel ostracized, abandoned and dejected from the center of truth and reality. Furthermore, if they do not undertake cultural actions for putting a curb to this ongoing fiasco, they become estranged, alienated, cut from themselves and from reality. The existential torment that they experience must be prompted by the oppressor’s sectarianism. For Freire, this deindividuating sectarianism “is mythicizing”, alienating “and irrational, turns reality into a false (and therefore unchangeable) ‘reality’” (Freire, 1970: 37).

In fact, the oppressed, in spite of their ostracism, are hammered by the idea that they cannot be a ‘civilized nation’ without the oppressor. As the latter is conscious that this exclusion of the oppressed is illusory, they reinforce it more aggressively. This urges Frantz Fanon to write that “the effect consciously sought by colonialism was to drive into the natives’ heads the idea that if the settlers were to leave, they would at once fall back into barbarism, degradation, and bestiality” (Fanon, 1963: 125). From Freire’s considerations, all the oppressed masses who are deprived of their cultures are living in imagined communities, for they no longer

belong to themselves and to their space and time. Indeed, the factuality of their hallucinated community rests on their lost cultural moorings, marked by its being a nation without a national culture proper that is a rudderless nation. It is not a genuine nation but one that is constructed through “certain discursive and literary strategies” (Bhabha, 1990: 8). It is then a travesty of national states, whose destinies are threatened by the gallows of the dominant cultural leather, which is internalized. Albert Memmi illustrates this illusion the oppressed have in acting through the action of the invaders, which Freire has also highlighted by instantiating the case of the Jewish peoples who strive to escape their existential colonial condition through impersonating the colonizer or rather through emulating them rigorously. As someone who belongs to the Jewish nations, Memmi has experienced the same anguish as his fellows have. He believes that for the Jew, as long as they cultivate moral and behavioral characteristics that would make them look like their antagonists, they will be able to reduce the physical and emotional oppressions they cope with in their daily existence. This is, then, for Memmi what accounts for “their efforts to forget the past, to change collective habits, and their enthusiastic adoption of Western language, culture and customs” (Memmi, 1974: 60).

However, as the colonizer repress their attempts to the assimilation process, Memmi follows up, arguing that

But if the colonizer does not always openly discourage these candidates to develop that resemblance, he never permits them to attain it either. Thus, they live in painful arid constant ambiguity. Rejected by the colonizer, they share in part the physical conditions of the colonized and have a communion of interests with him; on the other hand, they reject the values of the colonized as belonging to a decayed world from which they eventually hope to escape (Memmi, 1974: 60).

For Freire, indeed, the social inadequacy and alienating structure of culture that Memmi has also laid bare in almost all his works, to which the colonized is quite indifferent, are spawned by their submersion in the reality of oppression, in a situation that makes such critical awareness and response seem practically impossible. There exists a previous phase which involves the destruction of the native’s culture through the medium of the legislation of their intrinsic incivility. This dangerous method of cultural syncretism legitimately operates under the aegis of imperialism and embodies the worst weapons of ‘cultural invasion and extinction.’

III- Cultural Untranslatability and the Existential Dilemmas of the Postcolonial Subject

Cultural untranslatability refers to the translation difficulties that originate from the gap between the source language culture and the target language culture. This occurs specially in rendering cultural aspects of a language such as names of people, clothes, foods, and abstract cultural concepts, rites, rituals and terms. Thus, cultural syncretism in a meta-colonized society is crucially characterized by its infiltration in the world of meaning through what Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) calls “cultural invasion” (Freire, 1970: 95); it is carried out by its “imposition on others in such a way that they cannot think about it or question it” (Warren, 1992: 6). What does the colonized mean other than the ‘worthless,’ the ‘dullard,’ the ‘lobotomized monkey,’ the ‘uncivilized other,’

the 'impotent' and 'incompetent' all living in heaps of dung, etc.? That is why Freire and Memmi insist much on "*reading the world and the word*" (Freire & Macedo, 1987: 3). Cultural syncretism, as an ideological conquest that invades the targeted culture by imposing their distorted views in their world of meaning, also rests on the world of meaning. As such, the capacity to define and give meaning, which the colonizer possesses and uses unlawfully, becomes an object of power and of power coercion which serves to give essence to the invaded and to attribute them an identity and a persona which even predate the existence of the attributed. As Memmi avows, "*the most serious blow suffered by the colonized is being removed from history and from the community. Colonization usurps any free role in either war or peace, every decision contributing to his destiny and that of the world, and all cultural and social responsibility*" (Memmi, 1974: 135).

From now on, it is not evident to "*read the world*" (Freire & Macedo, 1987) without reading the word through what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak calls "*the worlding of the Third World*" (Spivak, 1990: 1) through the word, but Western epistemic violence or more clearly "*the violence of language*" (Žižek, 2008: 58). Conceptualized by Slavoj Žižek, this has subverted this notion and knowledge itself becomes westernized. To know the *Negroes*, the researcher needs to learn the books written on them by Western [armchair] scholars. How should the White know the Negro better than the White know the Negroes themselves? Is it not crude writing the history of people whose past they have not had the slightest inkling? Is that a falsification of history or a politics whereby history is imposed to a nation to attribute a meaning to its people? Owing to this institutionalized systemic racism which is concentric to culture, Memmi analyzing Freire's vista deduces that "*racism in other words as a pseudoconceptual construction, may have its source in heterophobia, but it owes much to its social and cultural milieu*" (Memmi, 2000: 44). The danger with this racialized information units or data, Freire assumes, is that it blinds "*men who are bound to nature and to the oppressor*" from discerning "*themselves as persons prevented from being*" (Freire, 1970: 174). These constitute some of the factors that have pushed Frantz Fanon to write that cultural oppression is another form of racism that imposes an identity to the oppressed. For him, "*this racism that aspires to be rational, individual, genotypically and phenotypically determined, becomes transformed into cultural racism. The object of racism is no longer the individual man but a certain form of existing*" (Fanon, 1967: 33). Adjacent to that idea of racism, Fanon depicts the oppressor's transformation of the "*corporeal schema*" to a "*racial epidermal schema*" (Chew & Richards, 2010: 10) to forge racial attributes to both the colonizer and the colonized (Macey, 2001). What is contradictory above all is that Western scholars had agreed that Africa had no history. So, why then do they seek to come up with another shaggy-dog-story ready-made for Africa? Or do they want to thwart Hegel, their paragon of racialized history, whose biased and heterophobic statement has it that:

Africa proper, as far as History goes back, has remained — for all purposes of connection with the rest of the World — shut up; it is the Gold-land compressed within itself — the land of childhood, which lying beyond the day of self-conscious history, is enveloped in the dark mantle of Night (Hegel, 1956: 91).

From then on, one can now sense the imperial contradiction that its nonsensical and oppressive colonial politics reveal. Consistent with

Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970) and *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1974), as the prime function of culture is to give meaning and identity to an individual and to a community, cultural oppression seeks to regulate values and interpretations, and universalize them. Freire and Memmi have theoretically sketched the ideological premises that cultural imperialism and syncretism aim at disseminating in the cultural world of the oppressed. Practically, to translate these precepts evoked into daily experiences, an example from Nozipo Maraire's novel *Zenzele: A Letter for My Daughter* (1996) in which the protagonist Zenzele, who is very enthralled by Western culture and her openness to it has tempted her to renounce and put into question her own cultural values and rites is illustrative of the idea. The daughter Zenzele, who engages in a utopian curiosity with her mother Amai Zenzele, asks her why are women men's properties, referring to the *lobola* or dowry; why they change their family names once they married; why is marriage patrilocal and not matrilineal? The daughter's perception of the *lobola*, culturally translated into English as '*bride price*', has always been for some Western people a means to turn women into properties as people who are like goods to be transferred from father to husband. All the questions the daughter has raised are situational pretext for Zimbabwean writer Maraire to draw the attention of the daughter in particular and the reader in general to cultural 'untranslatability' (Aboulela, 1999). According to her, "*there are terms and customs that cannot be translated adequately into their language and so become distorted*" (Maraire, 1996: 32). She goes on showing the incongruity of cultural translation based on essentialism, stereotypes, and stereotyping: "*lobola is called 'bride price', kings are 'chiefs', our medicine is called 'witchcraft' and African religion is labelled 'animist'*" (Maraire, 1996: 32).

In fact, the loss of the cultural self, as illustrated by both Freire and Memmi, gives way to the colonized's indomitable lust for being in dilemmas, problems that often revolve around questions of meaning, purpose, identity, mortality, and the nature of reality. This forces them to embark on a quest for identity and selfhood. Unfortunately, this adventure is impeded by the multiculturalist hobbles that submerge Africa and its counterparts into the imperially conditioned culture of silence (Macaulay, 1835). This different attempt at syncretizing or 'imperializing' cultures through cultural translation, transposes the translated culture's total subjectivity into an objective intersubjectivity in which the invaded fails to transcend a "*culturally schizophrenic colonial existence*" (Freire, 1970: 11) which makes them be "*present and yet not visible*", be "*visible and yet not present*" (Freire, 1970: 11). Within this proviso, multicultural translation, "*baffles the communicable verities of culture and refuse their*" 'authentic' "*translation*" (Bhabha, 1994: 124). Through both *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) and *The Colonizer, and The Colonized* (1974), this cultural translation can be better apprehended in making a digression to cultural transference or translatability. This transference is brought about by the overemphasis of a cultural difference that lands off in a minefield of "*colonial nonsense*" (Bhabha, 1994: 132).

Therefore, along with Freire and Memmi, this ratifies the truth that "*each language has its genius and its manners of speaking that are not transposable into another*" (Translation mine) (Diagne, 2014: 39). Similarly, Wole Soyinka has devoted a book to this character who builds up a contestation of African realities and stipulates that the main problem of African cultures is that of hermeneutics (Ani, 1994; Asante, 1999; Baldwin, 1985; Karenga, 2002). Therefore, in Freire's analysis, cultural invasion which is a latent form of

cultural imperialism and syncretism, because the notion of hegemony is never left apart, reveals itself when the “invaders penetrate the cultural context of another group, in disrespect of the latter’s potentialities; they impose their own view of the world upon those they invade and inhibit the creativity of the invaded by curbing their expression” (Freire, 1970: 152). Worldviews are divergent depending on cultures and which part of the world you are or hail from, but what is that structuralist tendency to signify a culture that is not your own? Worldviews are imposed on the colonized world through worlding as if they forcibly reflect their own realities. In fact, these invasive meanings “pertain to a theoretical world divorced from reality” (Memmi, 1974: 149). Consequently, the syncretized cultures are besieged and hemmed in the mires of universalization and its pernicious mediators, multiculturalism and globalism brought up by cultural imperialism and its consorts, which abiding by structuralist rules, preconize that “every identity originates in some sort of a pre-given essence” (Buden & Nowotny, 2009: 198).

Conclusion

The article has highlighted the prevailing states of minds between the oppressor and the oppressed through psychopolitics, cultural syncretism, and cultural untranslatability. The relationship and interactions between the two subjects have framed up a world of dualities, contradictions, dilemmas, and negations that needs transcending. They have also created a world wherein the presentification of the individual is shelled by scutes of nihilistic fatalism; a world where the weak dwells in “being present and yet not visible, being visible and yet not present” (Freire, 1970: 11). When will the apparition of the “superman” (Nietzsche, 1999) which Nietzsche prophesies be witnessed? Therefore, when will Fukuyama’s “last man” (Fukuyama, 1992: 285) come and be one that will prevent himself and the world from “plunging back into the chaos and bloodshed of history” (Fukuyama, 1992: 3)? Alternatively, will this world, which is tumbling down because of the burdensome schizophrenic western culture, be saved by “cultural hybridity” (Bhabha, 1994: 206) Senghor’s pluriversalism or by “the third space as a solution to cultural difference” (Bhabha, 1994: 38) as Bhabha has suggested. The argument behind that is that the polarizing binarisms under which the fuzzy logic of the world is sustained will no longer continue to tear [us] apart from reality. However, hybridity alone cannot save people and the world from decay, for multicultural views govern people’s ‘weltanschauung’ and thus draw the economic and political fate of the oppressor and the foredoomed oppressed. Therefore, only a cultural revolution can save them from the ideological fires of the oppressor.

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