

**Infiltration of Whiteman Ego in The Cultural Ethos of The African People: A****Textual Analysis of Dele Charley's Drama***The Blood of A Stranger***Adewumi, Samuel Idowu****Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo****Department Of Languages,****P.M.B 1019,****Owo, Ondo State, Nigeria.****Abstract**

Africans, before the era of colonialism had been living a well structured pattern of life which guided their daily existence. The partitioning of Africa at the Berlin conference of 1884/85 upturned the traditional patterned life system of the Africans thus, giving way to the dictates of the white masters who then hold the aces. This paper, therefore, takes a foray into the exploitative antics of the white lords at changing directly or indirectly the socio-cultural ethos of the Africans, as vividly portrayed in the text. Things were no longer the same for the Africans with the takeover of government from the Africans by the minority whites.

**Keywords:** Colonialism, Partitioning, Ethos, Exploitation, Antics.

**Introduction**

In the late 1870's, the continent of Africa became totally vulnerable to the imperial aspirations of European countries. The passing conference of 1884/5 was a

meeting between European nations to create rules on how to peacefully divide Africa among them for colonization. The conference was convened by Portugal but led by Otto Von Bismack, the Chancellor of newly united Germany.

Before the conference, European diplomacy treated African indigenous people in the same manner as the New world natives, forming trading relatives with tribal chiefs. But by the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, European countries then considered Africa to be ripe for occupation because of Africa's abundance of valuable resources in gold, timber, land, markets and labour power. Hence, European interest in the continent increased dramatically. The Berlin Act was an important change in international affairs creating the rules for effective occupation "of conquered lands, ensuring that the division of Africa would take place without war among the European powers and without even considering the desires of the indigenous African people. The arbitrary boundaries the Europeans imposed often divided an ethnic group and also brought enemies under the same government causing strife that still exists today.

### **Culture and Society**

The concept of culture according to Otite et al, (1985) is used in various ways with different meanings. These usages are either colloquial or scientific. In colloquial terms, culture or 'cultured' is used to state that someone has or does not have good manners of behaviours while scientifically used it is defined in blanket terms as the total way of life of a people. It is the complex whole of man's acquisitions of knowledge, moral belief, art, custom, technology etc, which are shared and transmitted from generations to generations.

Ogbeidi (2002) in his article titled “Educational Dimensions in Nigeria- US cultural relations: (A Background Analysis) published in African Spirit and Black Nationalism sees culture as “the totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempt to meet the challenge of living in their environment. He affirms that the major characteristics of culture is its ability to uphold two opposite concepts, i.e uniformly and diversity things making it possible for a culture to be inherited related to other cultures either cooperative or antagonistic terms).

Obafemi (2008) sees culture as the fundamental of human existence and the human civilization, embodying in its dynamism, the totality of a people’s response to the challenges of life and in a given environment. He affirms that culture offers meaning, purpose and value to the socio-economic, political and aesthetics ethos of society. Culture does not die according to Otite et al, with the death of an individual or a group of individuals. The culture of a people may vanish only when such people vanish under such mishaps as earthquakes. Even, there is the possibility that the materials and the technology of such a people may be dug up at some future date by archaeologists and the buried culture of the society reconstructed.

Unlike culture, society defined in various forms by different scholars and people. Otite et al, (1985) see society as a unit consisting of institutions and culture which are exclusive to a group of people. Also, it is defined as a network of relationships. The latter definition takes into account the fundamental point in sociological studies, that the relationships in a given society are within a cultural context. It should be noted that all societies have their political boundaries which often coincide with the societal boundaries.

J.H. Abrahams as quoted in *Sociological and Philosophical Foundations of Education* (1981) sees society as “an organised group of people with solidarity ties, through whose interaction systems of life and institutions are established to allow for the probability of future, defence and survival”. For people to live and interact freely in society there should be certain conditions that regulate their behaviour towards one another. Such conditions include participation and interaction, cohesion, conformity, cooperation among others.

Since human societies and cultures are not the same thing, they are inextricably connected because culture is created and transmitted to others in a society. Cultures are not the product of lone individuals, they are the continuous evolving product of people interaction with each other.

### **Slavery and Slave Trade: A Brief History**

Until the 15thc, Africa, South of the Sahara, had remained unknown to Europe according to Michael Crowder (1980:48) in *The Story of Nigeria*. During the period starting about 1600 to the 19thc, a great change came in the articles of trade. The trade in human traffic replaced the formally existing trades, which are, for example, the trade in gold. The era mentioned above was that of the slave trade to American colonies, a trade in which all the European nations sought fame, wealth and power. The British, the French, the Portuguese and the Dutch all came out in full force to compete for the trade.

The first European country to export slaves from African was Portugal. Christopher Columbus discovery of the West Indies and America made trading in slavery the most profitable venture. The discovery of America therefore was responsible for the

greatest increase in slave trade that the world had known according to Afolalu R.O is his book titled A Textbook History of West Africa (1971:67)

In the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup>C, the English plantation colonies developed. Virginia was founded in 1607, North Carolina and South Carolina in 1663 and Georgia in 1732. These settler colonies were discovered to be most suitable for sugar and tobacco which were important cash crops. As these colonies developed into plantations, so the slave trade developed for slave labour was required to developed colonies plantation agriculture which brought tremendous profits.

Apart from sugar, slaves were required in the tobacco and cotton plantation in the American colonies. By 1760, half of Virginia population of 400,000 were slaves. By 1800, there were about 77,600 African slaves in Spanish America. In the last half of the 18<sup>th</sup> C, 642,000 slaves were shipped to Brazil. In 1775, slaves in French West Indies were over 500,000. The rough total of slaves carried from the shores of Africa across the Atlantic from the beginning to the end of slave trade could not be less than 15,000,000. This figure is exemplified by Basil Davidson's is Black mother thus;

*First of all, what were the round numbers involved in this forced emigration to which the Africa – European trade gave rise, beginning in the 15<sup>th</sup> C and ending in the 19<sup>th</sup> C? The short answer is that nobody knows or ever will know either the necessary records are missing or they were never made. The best one can do is to construct an estimate from confused and incomplete data.*

### **Textual Analysis**

From the preface on the drama text, the dramatist criticises the exploitation of Africans who find themselves wide European power. These are people who have never received or accepted visitors before because visitors to them mean sickness, disease and fighting. The people of Manbo were deceived by both Maligu- the chief adviser and Soko-the chief priest that a letter was receive revealing the arrival of a stranger in their village and that they should prepare to welcome him.

The people believed that the chief priest had been sent with the vision from their forefathers but Kindo, the son of the king and the chief worries of the town smell a rat because to knew that both Maligu and Soko were corrupt and from the claims of Soko to have had visions permitting the stranger entry. The Whiteman, white head, soon reveals to Maligu that his true mission is diamonds. He has lied to the king, giving the impression that he would plant tobacco, build a school, and help the village. His real intension is to have the farmers unknowingly harvest the diamonds for him. Maligu, the chief adviser.

The king Santiqi his son Kindo were engaged in serious discussions about the strangers being expected.

**Kindo:** My lord, we must not receive the strangers. We have not receive strangers since the wars.

They bring bad luck and sickness

**Maligu:** The priest said.....(38)

**Kindo:** I know the priest said we must receive the strangers but is it wise to do so?. (38)

**Santigi:** Kindo, do you doubt the wisdom of the spirits? (38)

**Kindo:** I do not, my lord (39)

**Maligu:** The priest voice in the voice of the spirit, do you perhaps doubt the spirits?

**Kindo:** The spirit have also warned us through the mouth of the priest that we must not allow strangers on the land. (39)

**Maligu:** (Growing impatient) The spirit now warn us that more blood will flow if we do not welcome the stranger. (39)

**Kindo:** My lord, I wish also for peace and happiness in the land, strangers have always brought us ill luck. (39)

The king finally gave order for receiving the strangers thus:

**Santigi:** Kindo, you will make the necessary preparation to receive (Raising his hand) the strangers. Maligu, you will tell Soko to offer a sacrifice of appeasement to the spirits, on behalf of my impetuous son. Kindo, you will send out some of your men to go and find out what this strangers look like. They should return here before he arrives here (40)

Maligu, the chief adviser deceived the king into believing into believing what the whiteman had not provided them in the town.

**Maligu:** My lord, the whiteman has plans that will make the tribe rich. We must not ..... (58)

**Kindo:** You are always talking about poverty and making the tribe rich; we're are not poor. We are not starving, our forefather tried to make the tribe rich by making the war on weaker tribes and they succeed? The weaker tribe united and defeated them..... I want the best things for our people, but there is a price of peace.....(59)

Kindo, son of the king and chief warrior of the town forces Whitehead, the whiteman to kiss the ground in fact of him by paying obeisance. This, Whitehead, did in order not to be whipped by Kindo.

Kindo: Here, it's different. You kiss the ground in fact of my feet. You said what they did to Parker. I will not tell you to kiss the ground again. Guard: whip him!.....(66)

**Maligu:** O, spirits of our forefathers, spirit of our forefathers! Have mercy on us (67)

**Kindo:** Do not pray for us Maligu. Pray for yourself pray for greed and ambition not to destroy you. Whitehead, the king will come here again tomorrow morning. You will come and present yourself or you will go back where you came from .....(67)

**Maligu:** Mister Whitehead, please, do not be angry with us: I do not know what has come over Kindo. He is stubborn but he is not always like this. (67)

White head: You promised to take care of him

**Maligu:** I am trying, mister Whitehead. I am trying.

**Whitehead:** you had better try harder. I will not be insulted like this again.....(67)

**Maligu:** Be patient, mister Whitehead, we shall succeed. Soko agreed. (67)

**Whitehead:** I do not trust that funny witchdoctor. Are you sure I can depend on him?

The coming of the Whiteman, Mr Whitehead totally change the life pattern of the people it Mando. The villagers are always drunk because of the imported drinks given, them by the Whiteman including smoking of tobacco and hard drugs. The people are making a fool of themselves with the women giving in to the men in every corner of the village. Their cultural values, ethos and beliefs are thrown into the wind.

At the king's palace, the Whiteman tried to convince the king to use goat for the false sacrifice the priest said they will do for peace in their village. The king talk about



Whitehead promises for the village, which Whitehead confirmed and told the king to ask his people to work hard and the promises will be realised

As the king discusses with his people Whitehead told Maligu about the diamond business plan, that tobacco farm is what he made them to believe. He also told Maligu about his plan on how to get rid of Kindo. The king was giving tobacco while the people are drunk and high on hard drugs and tobacco .....(96).

**Santigi:** Soko, you perform the sacrifice thought have you got the girl? .....(87)

**Soko:** yes, my lord we have prepared her. Everything is ready.

**Santigi:** I hope you slept well, Whitehead?

**Whitehead:** The spirits would not mind if you offered on animal instead

**Santigi:** Whitehead, you are a stranger. You do not understand our custom. We have been at war with other tribes for many years-----we must shed the blood of a stranger – just onne life, not the blood of a goat .....(87)

**Santigi:** The spirits demand the blood of a virgin. Whitehead do not question our customs if you want to live with us ....(88)

**Whitehead:** I am sorry, my Lord. It's just that where we come from, we do not perform virgin sacrifices. .... (88)

**Santigi:** When do you want to start to plant, Whitehead? ..... (88)

**Whitehead:** Tomorrow, my Lord.

**Santigi:** And the people will be able to look after their own farms? We cannot eat tobacco, you know.

**Whitehead:** I just want your people to understand what I am going to do for them so that they work very hard, my Lord. No tobacco, no money. No money, no school.

Mister Whitehead in his bid to two the exclaim the people treacherously hatched a plan with Maligu to see that Parker, his right hand man kill Soko, the chief priest white Kindo, the chief worries will in turn kill Parker which will they make the king to banish him from the land thus paving way for him and Maligu to feed fat on the hapless populace. Kindo forewarned his father, the king but he did not listen to his son. He thought of his hard behaviour and temperament to issues. He saw danger looming on the land but could not coerce his father to submission.

Parker succeeded in killing Soko, the chief priest while Kindo too killed Parker in return and placed him of the sacrifice store. The king was enraged and decide the banish Kindo out of the village but Kindo has this to say.

**Kindo:** My Lord, there is evil in this place. These two man have as evil pan. You must listen to me.

**Santigi:** You killed a man

**Kindo:** Then you must banish me before you leave the truth?

**Santigi:** It is the custom

**Kindo:** Its not strange that the greatest protector of the custom should now be published by the by the custom? Parish me my Lord, but first listen to what I have to say.

Mando land is in danger. .... (99)

**Santigi:** I shall not listen to you. You have shamed me. You broke the law..... (100)

**Kindo:** I speak to the people. You are old. You will die soon. You will not live to eat of Maligu fruits of evil. My people, I have always fought for you.... The spirits say that Whitehead is a big stranger. It was a plan between Soko and Maligu with the hard of Whitehead directing it. .... (101)

**Kindo:** (Maligu backs against the stone Whitehead runs towards the exit. The king stand up. The two men are stopped by Kindo's men) I will not kill you, Maligu. You will confess your plot to the king and live the rest of your days in disgrace.....  
(102)

Kindo succeeded in killing Whitehead and left the town with his warriors/guards saying that he will never let White live to further plant more evil among the people.

### **Conclusion**

The drama piece has vividly revealed how the whites forcefully milked the hapless and defenceless Africans of their God-given economic resources and changed their socio-cultural ethos. The Whiteman in the drama piece symbolises Britain raping the national resources of the Sierra-Leonean people with few characters there in joining forces with the whites to dupe their fellow countrymen. It should be noted that before the coming of the whitemen to Africa, the lives of the Africans were structured towards African customs, values and beliefs which were strangely changed due to colonialism.

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