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**In Search of a Hybrid World: Rethinking Eurocentric Conception of Primitivism: a
study of Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness***



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Abstract

This study is an attempt to deconstruct the Eurocentric conception of primitivism as it examines the inter human relationship between the whites and native South Africans. The paper reveals the stereotypical classification of the natives by the whites as wild and primitive as a result of their indigenous cultures, customs and traditional practices. The stereotypical consideration of the blacks was a strategy which aimed at subjugating the natives, thereby creating a fertile ground for domination. The study stems from the premise that the whites who considered the blacks as primitive, and thus, need to be redeemed from primitivism, are instead being suffocated from their sophisticated cultures due to the effects of modernisation and thus, are rather the ones in need of redemption through the elements of the indigenous culture which are still pure and have not been adulterated by socio-ideological and economic factors. The whites had assimilated the cultures of the

natives to primitivism and therefore seek to redeem this uncivilised set by teaching their cultures. This is because, from the colonialist standpoint, domesticating a group is enabling them to move from primitivism to civilisation, and the European civilising mission was to be achieved through Christianity and the teaching of English. However, time has proven the futility of the civilising mission as the whites are now returning to the remotest areas of the African continent which had once been considered as “the heart of darkness” to enjoy the peace that reigns, commune with pure nature and partake in the sacred rituals of the natives, as a means to redeem themselves from the excesses of globalisation. The Heart of Redness presents tensions and divisions in South Africa in the colonial era as a result of the racist discourses ascribed on to the natives which caused them to believe in their claimed primitive nature, and backward cultures, creating room for easy colonisation, and the hardship, torture and

torment which followed. However, we argue that the whites who considered the blacks as primitive due to their cultural practices, rights and rituals, are now turning to these same practices as a means of obtaining peace, comfort, and fulfillment in pure nature as an escape route from the devastating consequences of globalisation. This paper, thus, questions the Eurocentric idea of primitivism and redemption, as the westerners who considered the Africans as primitive rather find redemption here in Africa because Africans cultures are still pure. The analysis demonstrates that even though some blacks in contemporary South

Africa still consider aspects of their cultures as marks of shame and primitivism, Mda shifts into the past to copy those aspects of the indigenous cultures which are gradually being rejected by youths in the contemporary era as prerequisite for the forging of an ideal African identity which can redeem the world from its present predicaments.

Keywords

primitivism, racist/colonialist ideologies, redemption, resistance, hybridity

RESEARCH PAPER

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the stereotypical classification of the South African natives by the whites as primitive as a result of their culture, the role of resistance in deconstructing this Eurocentric conception of primitivism and the role of hybridity in fashioning a new post-apartheid South African society. From the very moment of contact till present, the whites have classified the native Africans as primitive due to their indigenous cultures which the whites describe as savage, and pagan. By so doing, the whites project their culture as civilise, good and ordered, with the mission of replacing the cultures of the natives with theirs. This stereotypical classification of native South Africans together with the civilising mission of the whites leads to an antagonistic relationship between the natives and the whites, as the former devised strategies to reverse the colonialist discourse of primitivism ascribed on to them by the latter through resistance. However, the realities in this contemporary era reveal the excruciating impact of globalisation, and the futility of the civilising mission as the whites are gradually being suffocated by their sophisticated cultures, and thus are now returning to the remotest areas of the African continent which had once been considered as “the heart of darkness” to enjoy the peace that reigns, as a means to redeem themselves from the excesses of globalisation. Based on this, postcolonial scholars seek measures to eliminate xenophobic behaviors. This paper therefore seeks to demonstrate how hybrid sites as well as the zeal of characters to tolerate and accept their precolonial Africanity can go a long way in the fashioning of an ideal post-apartheid South African society.

Statement of the Problem

The problem underlying this study is the fact that the whites considered the indigenous South Africans to be primitive as a result of their culture, customs, and traditions and seek to redeem these natives by abolishing the cultures of the former and replacing them with Eurocentric cultures which the latter considered to be civilised as seen in ZakesMda's *The Heart of Redness*. The consideration of these natives as primitive, played significantly on the psyche of these natives, so much so that some believed in this "primitive" status and started mimicking the European ways of life so as to be perceived as civilised.

Objectives of the Research

This study seeks to deconstruct the Eurocentric conception of primitivism as it examines the inter human relationship between the whites and the native South Africans by reversing the colonialist discourses of primitivism ascribed on to the Africans. Beside interrogating the stereotypical classification of the native South Africans by the whites as wild and primitive, it also proposes measures through which these authors obliterate these binaries by promoting tolerance, and hybrid sites in society whereby, xenophobic feelings have incited conflict.

Research Questions

How did the classifications of the native South Africans as primitive, spark up conflict as presented in the novel under study?

What are the various strategies employed by Mda to erase and reverse the Eurocentric idea of primitivism and reconstruct an ideal identity for the South Africans as presented in the novel?

Research Hypotheses

The study stems from the premise that the whites who considered the blacks as primitive, and thus, need to be redeemed from primitivism, are instead being suffocated from their sophisticated cultures due to the effects of modernisation and thus, are rather the ones in need of redemption through the elements of the indigenous culture which are still pure and have not been adulterated by socio-ideological and economic factors. The whites had assimilated the cultures of the natives to primitivism and therefore seek to redeem this "uncivilised" set by teaching their cultures.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework chosen for the study is the postcolonial theory. This theory is applied in the analysis to deconstruct and interrogate colonial codes and ideologies, with the aim of redefining the concept of primitivism.

Postcolonial theory refers to a set of critical perspectives in literature that grapple with the legacy of colonial rule. As a literary theory or critical approach, it deals with literature produced in countries that were once, or are now colonies of other countries. It can still be better described in the words of Elleke Boehmer as a literary analytic approach on literature about the “conditions in which colonized peoples seek to take their place forcibly or otherwise as historical subjects” (*Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* 3). Postcolonial theory further involves analysis of the dilemmas of developing a national identity in the wake of colonial rule, the ways in which writers from colonized countries attempt to articulate and even celebrate their cultural identities and reclaim them from the colonizers. It also considers the way the knowledge of colonized peoples has served the interest of the colonizers and how this knowledge is produced and used and the ways in which the discourse of the colonial powers is used to justify colonialism through the perpetuation of images of the colonized as inferior. Postcolonial theory is a cultural toolbox and Edward Said’s book *Orientalism* is considered to be the theory’s founding work. Other advocates of this theory include Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Chinua Achebe, Ngugi waThiong’o and Frantz Fanon.

The postcolonial critic John Lye (1998) in an online article entitled “Some Issues in Postcolonial Theory” writes that:

Postcolonial theory deals with reading and writing of literature written in previously or currently colonized countries, or literature written in colonizing countries which deals with colonization or colonized peoples. It focuses particularly on the way in which literature by the colonizing culture distorts the experience and realities, and inscribes the inferiority of the colonized people, and also how this literature attempts to articulate their identity and reclaim their past in the face of the past’s inevitable otherness. It can also deal with the way literature in colonizing countries appropriates the language, images, scenes, traditions and so forth of colonized countries.

This quotation highlights the fact that postcolonial theory deals with literature from previously or currently colonized countries or literature which deals with colonization, and the manner in which this literature attempts to articulate the identity of the colonized. Lye’s viewpoint about postcolonial theory is also supported by Bill Ashcroft et al, (1995) when they purport that:

Postcolonial theory involves discussion about experience of various kinds: immigration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place and responses to the influential master discourses of imperial Europe such as history, philosophy and linguistics and the fundamental

experiences of speaking and writing by which all of these come into being. Postcolonial theory reflects the egregious classification of 'first' and 'third' world and contests the lingering fallacy that the postcolonial is somehow synonymous with the economically underdeveloped. (2-3)

From the claims of these various critics, postcolonial theory basically 'de-centers' assumptions of superiority in any human society. There are several concepts underlying postcolonial theory and for the sake of this study we shall highlight hybridity and its significance to this paper. This is the conceptual space, which the postcolonial theoretician Homi Bhabha refers to as the "third space".

According to Bhabha, the third space is the arena that constitutes the struggle of the dominant groups undertaking to define the identity of the other within a unitary framework, in contexts where cultural and linguistic practices, as well as histories and epistemologies clash. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha writes:

The concept of the third space is submitted as useful for analysing the enunciation, transgression and subversion of dualistic categories going beyond the realm of colonial binary thinking and oppositional positioning. Despite the exposure of the third space to contradictions and ambiguities, it provides a spatial politics of inclusion rather than exclusion that "initiates new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation." (1)

For Bhabha, hybridity is about the fact that when a new situation, a new alliance formulates itself, it may demand that you should translate your principles, rethink them and extend them. In addition, hybridity provides for a third space of resistance, negotiation, and articulation of new meanings in the face of ambivalences, normalization, and hegemony. Bhabha has conceived the third space as a liminal, in-between space where the established hegemonic and normalizing practices are challenged, re-articulated, and negotiated. This space signifies a resistance to polarization, binaries, labels, and unitary identities. It is a space that is fluid, shifting, and political. In Bhabha's cultural studies, the "third space" has been understood to indicate the place where life in all its ambiguities is exposed, the ambiguities negotiated, and where identity is constructed and re-constructed, resulting in new identities and possibilities.

Bhabha observes that:

The importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather, hybridity...is the "third space", which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority. (Identity, Community, Culture, Difference 211)

In order to erase differences and enable the emergence of new cultural and identity definitions, there is need to resist the established and rigid norms that provide limiting views of the other. The 'third space' allows for the interruption and interrogation of restrictive forms

of cultural meaning, resulting in the enunciation of new forms of meanings and production. The 'third space' therefore "serves as a corrective to regulative, hegemonic views, and suggests that identity and culture are complex, ambivalent, and negotiable entities, which reject fixity and polarization" (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* 1). Bhabha points out that although the third space is one of contradictions, ambiguities, and ambivalences, it enables negotiation of inclusion rather than exclusion and becomes a site for innovation, collaboration, and contestation of dominant colonial discourses. This paper will probe into the examination of characters who reconcile the polarities established by hegemonic matrices and how this trend constructs an affable space for characters.

Colonialist Ideologies and the Subjugation of the Native South Africans

According to James Kavanagh in his article entitled "Ideology", ideology is:

Ideology designates a rich system of representation, worked up in specific material practices, which helps formed individuals in to social subjects who freely internalize an appropriate picture of their social world and their place in it. Ideology is a system of representation, perceptions and images that precisely encourages men and women to see their specific place in a historically peculiar social formation as inevitable, natural, a necessary function of the real itself. (Critical terms for literary studies, 310)

In any social context, therefore, subjects to a dominant ideology are expected to appropriate and internalise the ideas of a dominant group and start acting accordingly. In the apartheid context, there were also ideologies which were translated in to discourses aimed at regulating the obnoxious relationships between the whites and the Africans. For instance, in the colonial setting, there is the ideology of the superiority of the coloniser and the inferiority of the colonised. The coloniser perceives the colonised as primitive, and thus claims to redeem the colonised by imposing their Eurocentric cultures on them. In the colonial setting, therefore, some whites acted as the embodiment of the British, spreading the ideas of their superiority. In *The Heart of Redness*, the governor of the Cape colony, MrGeorge Grey, was the apostle in charge of spreading the British ideology of saving the world, which they considered to be in dying need of help. Mda asserts that he was sent by the empire and:

...had arrived with great enthusiasm with a mission to civilise the natives. He had been a governor in Australia and New Zealand, they said, where his civilizing mission did many wonderful things for the natives of those countries. Of course he had to take their land in return for civilisation. Civilisation is not cheap. He had written extensively on the native people of those countries and about their plants. He

had even given names to ten of their rivers, and to the mountain ranges. It did not matter that the forebears of those natives had named those rivers and mountains from time immemorial. (Mda, 2000, p. 8)

According to the west, the indigenes had no culture nor religion. Defined as being backward, uncivilised and as pagans, they were therefore in need of the white's civilisation justifying the idea of the civilising mission as they claimed. Governor George Grey who is a symbol of western imperialism, holds in high esteem the notion that the natives have no culture and civilisation. Thus, he has upon him, the duty to bring civilisation to the natives and by so doing, he appropriates their land, thereby justifying the enterprise of colonisation, which is economic exploitation. Sir George Grey dictates everything to the natives because he believes these people lived in darkness before the coming of the British. He even goes further in naming some of the rivers and mountains although they already had names.

Since George Grey considers the indigenes as a degenerate population, whenever he is talking about the natives to other whites, the governor emphasises their backwardness and stresses on the reason why the natives must be civilised. The governor explains:

You know in Australia and New Zealand I did the same thing. I built an important collection of the languages, customs and religion of the natives. It is important to record these because they are destined to disappear along with the savages who hold them. The advance of Christian civilisation will sweep away ancient races. Ancient laws and customs will molder into oblivion. The strongholds of murder and superstition shall be cleansed, as the gospel is preached among ignorant and savage men. The ruder languages shall disappear, and the tongue of England alone shall be heard all around. (Mda, 2000, p. 206)

Perceiving and portraying the natives as uncivilised, backward and uncultured as mentioned above, Mr George Grey reveals the white's civilising mission. In other words, by referring to them as savages, he is indirectly telling his friends that the Africans are in need of civilisation. This claim will justify any plan he will design for the cultural enlightenment of the natives. According to him, their deplorable situation is a consequence of their cruel and superstitious customs. Everything about the natives' customs, including their languages, must be erased and replaced by English customs. This then justifies why the governor goes to the extent of renaming places and rivers that already have names. Chimamanda Ngozi in *Half of a Yellow Sun* interrogates such attitudes of the British claimed superiority over the blacks in general and particularly over the Nigerians, as the British officials perceived the Nigerians as

backward, uncultured and savages. Based on such considerations that everything about the Nigeria indigenes was uncivilised and had to be replaced, they started naming and renaming places and rivers. She asserts that "... they will teach you that a white man called Mungo Park discovered River Niger." (7) To her this is stupid because her people fished in the Niger River long before the grandfather of Mungo Park was born. It is because the British project themselves to be superior to the natives that everything concerning the natives has to be redefined, since their culture according to the whites does not permit them to have discovered anything even though they live in the mists of these things.

Furthermore, the Africans had their system of government which was headed by the chiefs who were regarded as divine authorities, since the ancestors inspired their leadership. As supreme in their position and in their authority, they were therefore perceived as models of their communities. With the coming of the whites, everything fell apart as even the authority of the native authorities will be jeopardised by the whites' claimed superiority over their rule, customs beliefs and practices as they considered these African values as primitive. In *The Heart of Redness*, we realise that George Grey has a mission; he tells John Dalton the interpreter that the Empire

...wanted only to bring civilisation and progress to the amaXhosa people. The British government was coming with a new administrative system devised by the governor himself. He made it clear that the people had no choice but to accept it. (Mda, 2000, p. 133)

In effect, sir George Grey wants "to break the power of the chiefs" (Mda, 2000, p. 134). He does not only see the Africans as uncivilised but as children who cannot do anything on their own. To accomplish his mission, he assigns a subordinate role to the chiefs in the administrative realm.

Consequently, chiefs lose their supremacy as custodians of the law:

The chiefs would henceforth receive a monthly salary in colonial money. They were no longer allowed to impose fines to those who were found guilty at the chiefs' courts and the work of the chiefs was now made lighter because they would no longer be allowed to judge legal cases on their own. This was because the governor valued the chiefs so much that he did not want them to be burdened with so much mundane matters.(Mda, 2000, p. 134)

The whites, thus, imposed their cultures on the Africans through the use of master colonialist discourses and ideologies which only helped to create an inferiority complex in the minds of the Africans as they saw themselves as being inferior to the whites they have been forced to consider as superior. The colonialist ideologies imposed on the indigenes also aimed at

suppressing the cultures and authority of the colonised in order to control the latter. We can also deduce from the above extract that the European claim of a civilising mission was aimed at controlling the cultural environment of the colonised. The fact that Sir George Grey decides to break the powers of the Africans and render them powerless is ironically justified when he says, “This was because the governor valued the chiefs so much that he did not want them to be burdened with so much mundane matters” (*Ibid*) By introducing a new religion, language and other forms of expression, the colonialists intended to transform the native so that the latter could consider the Europeans as superior while the former exploits their resources.

Also, the whites in *The Heart of Redness* expresses otherness towards the Africans through the ecclesiastical realm. There is total rejection of African traditional religion by the English, for they consider it contrary to their own idea of salvation. In *The Heart of Redness*, Wilhelm Goliath and some white missionaries fervently preach Christianity as the only way to salvation. The narrator purports that:

Sometimes he would break into a fit of preaching. “I urge you (to) change from your evil ways for they are the ways of the devil. Do away with your heathen practices, your superstitions and become civilised ones, those who have converted to the path that was laid for us by Christ.” (Mda, 2000, p. 49)

Wilhelm Goliath in this novel is an advocate of Christianity and believes that the religions of the amaXhosas are devilish. In his preaching, he urges the natives to convert to Christianity, which he claims is the only way toward salvation. This character refers to the African traditional religions as heathen, and presents Christianity as the only religion which can save the amaXhosas. The irony in this situation is that he does not consider the manner in which the amaXhosas also perceive Christianity. John Dalton expounds on the civilising mission and the need for Western guidance by telling Chief Nxito’s councillors that all Sir George Grey wanted was to spread British civilisation. His magnanimous wish is to divert the amaXhosa from their barbarous ways. “It was for their own good that they should discard their customs and follow the ways of the English. There was no saving grace in the culture and religion of the natives” (Mda, 2000, p. 123).

Education was also a fervent weapon of European cultural imperialism. This is also reflected in *The Heart of Redness*. The introduction of education would eventually expand European values, especially when the indigenous noble class imbibes this culture. Using education as one of the strategies on his agenda, the governor of the Cape, Sir George Grey, tells the native chiefs that:

We must get rid of all these superstitions. That is what civilisation will do for you. You see, I plan to open a school in Cape Town for the sons of chiefs, where they will grow up in the bosom of British civilisation. They will learn to appreciate the might of the British Empire and will acquire new modes of behaviour. They will give up their barbaric culture and heathen habits, and when they takeover in their chiefdoms, they will be good chiefs. I want all the chiefs to undertake to send their sons to the school. (Mda, 2000, p. 127)

Governor George Grey refers to the culture of the amaXhosas as barbaric and heathen. He notes that the amaXhosa chiefdoms can attain good governance if the chiefs send their sons to the white man's school, where they will learn "new modes of behaviour". In this school, the sons of these chiefs will not only learn British manners, but they will also learn to appreciate the might of the British Empire. This is a scheme to subjugate the amaXhosas through their chiefs, as the latter will recognise the British as superior to them. As seen in the various quotations, the theories of supremacy were materialised with the use of colonialist discourse. This refers to a collection of symbolic practices including textual codes, conventions and implied meanings which Europe employed in the process of colonial expansion (Boehmer, 50). The colonised were designated as an embodiment of backwardness and therefore needed western guidance.

As seen above, the contact between the whites and the native South Africans entailed two hegemonic forces in contention. Basically, in such situations, the tendency is for one group to seek to dominate the other and this incites conflict. The conflict comes as a result of the resistance mounted by the natives in their zeal of rejecting the subaltern identity ascribed on to them. Due to the fact that the colonisers considered the blacks and their culture as primitive, backward and evil, most of the natives mounted resistance as a means to protect their cultural heritage in the early days of contact. Therefore, we shall use the postcolonial concepts of resistance to demonstrate how the classification of the native South Africans as primitive, and the implementation of the civilising mission, which adversely affected some characters in the colonial and post-colonial epochs are being resisted.

As victims of the cruel and dehumanising treatments experienced in the hands of the whites, the natives in *The Heart of Redness* seeks to resist domination by sending away the whites as a means of preserving their dignity, identity, and heritage. When the British decide to capture and destroy the prophet Mlanjeni, the natives respond violently to oppose this radical decision, Mda asserts:

Twin-Twin suppressed bitterness in his heart and went with Twin, his father and a group of mounted men to see the Whiteman who called himself the Great White Chief of the Xhosas, Sir Harry Smith. He

watched in humiliation as The Great White Chief commanded the elders and even the chiefs to kiss his staff and his boots. The Great White Chief was running wild all over the lands of the amaXhosas, doing whatever he liked in the name of Queen Victoria of England. He even deposed Sandile, the king of the amaXhosa. This called the chiefs even those who were Sandile's rivals to rally around the deposed king. The people had had enough of The Great White Chief. Mounted men led by Xikixa went to the Keiskama River to consult with the prophet. Mlanjeni doctored the military men for war so that the guns of the British would shoot hot water instead of bullets. The great war of Mlanjeni had begun. (Mda, 2000, pp. 18-19)

The relationship between the native South Africans and the British from the very first moment of contact was very catastrophic. Since the latter considered the former as primitive, the British inflicted pain on the natives by torturing and brutalising the natives mercilessly. The inhuman and dehumanising treatments enacted on the natives was the immediate cause of the "the great war of Mlanjeni". The massive participation of the natives in this war against the British, reveals their resistance. Again, this resistance was a reaction against the British project of the destruction of the indigenous values embedded in their culture and traditions, which had been considered as primitive and evil by the British. By resisting, these natives demonstrate their commitment to the preservation of their culture and heritage.

The Creation of Hybrid models as an Ideal mode of Redemption in Contemporary South Africa

The pre-colonial South African society was made up of several communities that respected, venerated and held their cultural heritage in high esteem. Unfortunately, the contact between the whites and the blacks planted a seed of division among them, as Chinua Achebe better puts it through the character Obierika in *Things Fall Apart*, "the white man has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart" (176). The native South Africans were perceived by the whites as primitive, pagan and chaotic, and as such, their culture derided. They were also ascribed rules which limited them to positions of servitude. The aim of such classification was to incite economic exploitation and domination. As seen above, such classification met a lot of resistance from the natives, who interrogated the subaltern status quo ascribed unto them by the whites. This accounts for the untold conflict that characterised the colonial era.

However, Mda highlights the potency of hybridity in the deconstruction of the oppositional forces created by colonialism. The creation of hybrid models is based on the interaction of different cultures, customs and traditions, which will go a long way to reconcile these binary forces. It is for this reason that Robert Young in *Postcolonialism* notes that "the

postcolonial world is a place of mixture” (129). This is because it entails the copying of the positive aspects from different cultures. Mda in *The Heart of Redness*, makes use of hybrid attitudes in characters as a potent strategy of reconciling binaries in the society. Due to the division which characterises the post-apartheid South Africa, hybridity turns to become inevitable for the reconciliation of characters. Therefore, hybridity is a strength in the post-colonial era, as it can be used to alter the spirit of division within a community like South Africa. In *The Heart of Redness*, Mda presents characters who portray these hybrid attitudes. John Dalton and Camagu are replicas of the ideal characters who mediate and represent symbols of peace in a community that is in constant conflict as a result of the division which exists in their community, Qolorha-by-sea. Dalton, who is a white, does not manifest instincts of the white superiority in the community he lives in. Dalton takes Qolorha as his place and considered the blacks in this area as his brothers. When some of his friends are travelling out of the country due to the fact that they cannot withstand black majority rule, he informs them that: “this is my land. I belong here. It is the land of my forefathers” (Mda, 2000, p. 139). The fact that Dalton identifies with the people of Qolorha makes us to see him as a hybrid character who is able to mix aspects of his white ancestry and the aspects of the culture of the people of Qolorha. Dalton’s sincere collaboration with the natives as being one of them, infuses trust in the hearts of the natives, causing characters like Vathiswa to affirm: “Dalton is only white outside. Inside he is a raw umXhosa who still lives in darkness” (Mda, 2000, p. 67). This is because Dalton respects the culture of the natives and respects their practices. He holds in high esteem the tradition of the natives and also respects their prophets as well as their ancestors. This is seen when Dalton regularly throws coins at pool of Nongqawuse and even encourages tourists to do so (Mda, 2000, p. 96). John Dalton has also gone through the initiation school and circumcised according to the customs of the land. “In his youth...he went to the initiation school and was circumcised according to the customs of the amaXhosa people. He therefore knows the secrets of the mountain. He is a man” (Mda, 2000, p. 8). Characters like Dalton are thus models in the community whom other characters must strive to resemble so as to reconcile their differences and live with one another as brothers. Dalton’s ability to reconcile the values of both cultures is something which should be emulated by all South Africans for the realisation of nationhood in the new South Africa.

Camagu is another hybrid character who combines the Western knowledge he acquired from America and the African values. Despite the fact that he has acquired western education, he is so humble to return and put the knowledge he has acquired to the

development of his country. Just like Dalton, he acknowledges and respects the prophets and the tradition of his native land. An instance to justify this is when he discovers the Majola snake in his hotel room. Mda asserts:

Camagu is beside himself with excitement. He has never been visited by Majola, the brown mole snake that is the totem of his clan. He had heard of stories how the snake visits every newborn child, how it sometimes pays a visit to chosen members of the clan to give them good fortune. He is the chosen one today. (Mda, 2000, p. 98)

From this citation, it is shown that the Majola totem plays a very significant role in the culture of the amXhosa. Camagu's treatment of the snake shows that eventhough he has spent the most part of his life out of his community, he still acknowledges the relevance of the Majola totem. Camagu's recognition of his culture makes him to be the opposite of XoliswaXimiya who spent a relatively shorter time abroad but refuses to practice her culture and even perceives it as being useless. Therefore, development can only become possible in post-apartheid South Africa if the South Africans are able to recognise, accept and expose their cultural heritage for it is the first step toward the assertion of their identity.

Bhonco, who is the leader of the Unbeliever's cult has been brainwashed by her daughter XoliswaXimiya about civilisation and now see everything regarding the culture of his people as backward. Mda asserts:

The Unbelievers stand for progress," asserts Bhonco... we want to get rid of this bush which is a sign of our uncivilized state. We want developers to come and build our gambling city that will bring money to this community. That will bring modernity to our lives, and will rid us from our redness.

XoliswaXimiya is proud of her father's position. If only he had asked NoPetticoat to press his suit. But even a wrinkled suit is better than no suit at all. Far better than beats or traditional isiXhosa costume, even though a rock-rabbit-skin bag hangs on the elder's off-white shirt and twisted tie. (Mda, 2000, p. 92)

Bhonco's vision of development and civilisation is that of the destruction of the cultural heritage of the people in favour of the exotic and sophisticated lifestyle of the Westerners. However, what is interesting in this quotation is the dressing code of Bhonco. Eventhough he is totally against every aspect of the people's custom which portrays the beauty of the culture like beats, the red ochre, and the isiXhosa costume, he dresses in a suit but carries a rock-rabbit-skin bag. This unconscious act is deliberately fashioned by Mda to suggest that no South African can escape their culture, so they better make it a lifestyle they appreciate rather than accept it by compulsion. The excerpt further shows Bhonco's vision towards development, which entails eradicating the forest, which to him, is a sign of backwardness.

Mda through Zim debunks Bhonco's perception towards development. Zim interrogates the perception of Bhonco when he says: "This son of Ximiya talks of progress. Yet, he wants to destroy the bush that has been here since the day of our forefathers. What kind of progress is that?" (Mda, 2000, p. 92). According to Zim therefore, progress does not entail the destruction of the cultural heritage of the people. The perception of Zim is supported by John Dalton who reminds Bhonco and his followers who advocate for the destruction of the forest when he says: "Perhaps you need to learn more about your forefathers, says Dalton. King Sarhili himself was a strong conservative. He created Manyube, a conservation area where people were not allowed to hunt or chop trees. He wanted to preserve these things for future generation" (Mda, 2000, p. 165). Following the perception of Zim and Dalton regarding the conservation of the forest, Camagu proposes an ideal way that development can be attained without any destruction. To him:

The villagers must come together, and using the natural material that found in the village, the very material that they use to build and thatch houses, they must build a backpacker's hostel in Qorloha. There are many tourists who like to visit unspoiled places for the sole purpose of admiring the beauty of nature and watching birds without killing them. Such tourist would enjoy the hospitality of the amaGcaleka clan in self-catering rondavels or in the hostel with a kitchen and a dining room. Authentic food of the amaXhosa such as umngqusho, the maize samp that is cooked with beans, would be prepared for the amangquba, and imbhatyisa, which are plentiful in the rough sea. Many people will come for the sea food... Come to think of it, we can even create our own electricity! From the sun! there is plenty of sunshine here! We can harness the sun to light our hostel and our houses! We can even cook and warm our water with the sun. (Mda, 2000, p. 239)

Camagu's stands on progress is that which will rather lead to the endorsement of the customs and tradition of the people rather than destroying it. From his smart and interesting ideas and projects concerning the development of the local community, he proves to be a blessing to the people of this community.

Conclusion

This study is an attempt to deconstruct the Eurocentric conception of primitivism as it examines the inter human relationship between the whites and native South Africans. The first part of the paper examines the colonialist ideologies which weretranslated in to discourses aimed at regulating the obnoxious relationships between the whites and the native South Africans, leading to conflict as the natives strived to resist the primitive status ascribed on to them. The second section examines the construction of hybrid models in deconstructing the Eurocentric conception of primitivism, as well as reconciling the oppositional binaries

fragmenting this society. From the analysis, we realise that the native South Africans were perceived by the whites as primitive, pagan and chaotic, with the intention of redeeming the blacks by introducing and imposing the white cultures on the natives which they considered as civilised. The analysis therefore demonstrates that even though some natives in contemporary South Africa have been forced to, and they still consider aspects of their culture as marks of shame and primitivism, Mda shifts to the past and copies those aspects of the indigenous culture which are prerequisite for the forging of an ideal African identity which can redeem the world from its present predicaments. By so doing, Mda blends the positive aspects of the indigenous cultures of the natives and those of the western cultures, as a way of healing the society from the effects of globalisation. In other words, the stereotypical classification of the natives as primitive, due to their culture, customs, and religions is reversed as white characters like John Dalton can only obtain ideal peace and essence of living by communing with the natives in their most sacred rituals. The paper also calls upon the Africans to accept their precolonial Africanity which is a symbol of their identity and dignity.

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