How Did Europe Rule Africa? Dialectics of Colonialism and African Political Consciousness in the Matabeleland Region of Zimbabwe

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Abstract
The question of how Europe ruled Africa relates to the crucial issues of settler-native identity as constructions of colonialism as well as political consciousness formation and development among the colonized as well as the colonizers. Because colonialism operated ambiguously throughout its life to the extent of hiding its adverse contours of epistemological and mental invasion that have come to haunt during the post-colonial era, it deserve to be subjected to systematic theorization and historicization. This article deploys various conceptual tools culled from post-colonial theories to delve deeper into the dialectics and ontology of colonial governance in Zimbabwe and it simultaneously historicize the phenomenon of colonial governance on the basis of how white Rhodesians inscribed themselves in Matabeleland in the early twentieth century. It also systematically interrogates the development of Ndebele political consciousness under the alienating influences of settler colonialism up to the mid-twentieth century. The article contributes to the broader debates on colonial encounters and colonial governance that have left an indelible mark on ex-colonies across the world. Colonialism was not just a footnote in African history. It had long term pervasive impact of altering everyone and everything that it found in Africa.

Introduction
Walter Rodney in his seminal book *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* explained the dynamics how Europeans contributed to economic backwardness of Africa but as argued by Mahmood Mamdani, nobody has written about how Europe ruled Africa (Mamdani 651a). How Europe ruled Africa is simplistically termed colonialism as though Africans were just passive and weak people who fell victim to powerful forces of European imperialism. Ruling Africa by minority white invaders was not an easy task and it involved white minorities and Africans engaging in a contest for power that was never completely won by a single group. Therefore, any study of how Europe ruled Africa is of necessity a study of how white minority rule was inscribed on the African space, particularly an exploration of how Europeans as aliens indigenized themselves as well as how they struggled to broadcast their power over a people of a different race, different religion, different languages and different cultures. The way Africans responded to this invasion of their space, their cultures and being, was equally complex involving resistance, negotiation, impositions, hybridity, alienation, mimicry and complicity.

Colonialism was thus riddled through by ambiguities and contradictions as the white settlers experimented with different form of administering Africans

including assimilation, association, indirect rule, direct rule, apartheid, as well as company rule (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 173-191a). The colonial governance system became even more complicated because it had to deal not only with ethnic identities of Africans whole were now lumped together as natives but also with race as an organizing tool. Identity therefore became one major issue from start to finish revolving around what became known as the native question, which Mamdani rightly qualified as settler-native question because the settler was part of the governance matrix and equation. This is how Mamdani described the problem:

The settler-native question is a political question. It is also a historical question. Settlers and natives belong together. You cannot have one without the other, for it is the relationship between them that make one a settler and another a native. To do away with one, you have to do away with the other (Mamdani 63-73b).

This problem arose from the fact that settler colonial governance was a government born of conquest and it was inscribed on other people's space through the so-called 'right of conquest.' As a result of its birth within situations of conflict and violence, colonial governance was never stable and peaceful. It remained a government in construction and reconstruction through out its life in response to the initiatives and calculation of both the conquered people and the conquerors. But like all governments it had to try and legitimize itself and make itself more acceptable even to the conquered people. It had to inscribe itself into the spaces it had conquered in a less violent fashion.

At one level, settlers tried to justify their conquest as a civilizing mission. In line with this false thinking the triumphant settlers grouped themselves together not only as a superior race and a white ruling elite but also as citizens, appropriating for themselves all the positive aspects of liberal ideas of liberty, fraternity, equality as well as civil and political rights, as their preserve (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 53-83b). They brought to Africa in general and Matabeleland in particular what became known as the 'standard of civilization' as a means to separate themselves from natives (Crong 122). One of the leading imperialist agents in Southern Africa, Cecil John Rhodes elaborated on the meaning of 'the standard of civilization' within British colonies on 23 June 1817, addressing the Cape Parliament in this way:

I will lay down my own policy on this native question. Either you have to receive them on equal footing as citizens, or call them a subject race. Well, I have made up my mind that there must be pass laws and peace preservation acts and that we have got to treat natives where they are in a state of barbarism, in a different way to ourselves. We are to be Lords over them. These are my policies on native affairs…treat the native as a subject people as long as they continue in a state of barbarism and communal tenure, be Lords over them and let them be subject race and keep liquor from them (Quoted in Samkange 15).

The colonial conception of the 'standard of civilization' was clearly that of discrimination. The claim was that the settler was ruling over the native because

the native was uncivilized. Defined this way, the 'standard of civilization' was a lever of legitimation of colonial conquest and colonial governance. It was also a justification of separation of black and white people. This was put forward openly by the Rhodesian Prime Minister Godfrey Huggins:

The Europeans in this country can be likened to an island of white in a sea of black, with the artisan and tradesman forming the shores and the professional classes the highlands in the centre. Is the native to be allowed to erode the shores and gradually attack the highlands? To permit this would mean that the leaven of civilization would be removed from the country, and the Blackman would inevitably revert to a barbarism worse than anything before (The Herald, 31 March 1938).

This colonial philosophy of governance which is clearly described by Mamdani in terms of the bifurcation of the colonial state into 'citizen' and 'subject' created the binaries of 'settlers' as citizens and 'natives' as subjects (Mamdani 15-25c).
Such scholars as Albert Memmi, Octave Mannoni, Frantz Fanon, Kuan-Hsing have contributed extensively towards an understanding of colonial governance and the philosophy underpinning the ethos of colonialism, including the psychological and political responses it stimulated on the colonized subject (Memi 23-26; Mannoni 10-15; Fanon 58-66; Chen 5-15). To Fanon, the colonial subject was always 'over determined from without' and 'what is often called the black soul is a white man's artifact' (Fanon 16).

Deploying the concept of ambiguities of dependence, Shula Marks argued that colonial governance was characterized by both continuities and disjunctures, giving birth to the development of contradictory and ambiguous political consciousness among the colonized; reflective of the colonial social order that was itself contradictory and ambiguous in outlook (Marks 5-20). Marks emphasized that the inner workings of the colonial governance necessitated that the words and actions of individuals were both deliberately and accidentally ambiguous, as the colonizer donned the mask of deference before the colonized. At the psychological level, colonial domination was both experienced as ambiguous and in turn elicited ambiguous behaviour (Marks 9-11). However, the ambiguity of behaviour of individuals arose not simply out of personal psychology, but also from their structurally dependent position within the colonial political economy and the colonial state, and the contradictory nature of the colonial social order itself (Marks 1-10).

Marks's concept of ambiguity is crucial to any understanding of domination, because even while demanding obedience, and provoking resistance, colonial domination, like all other hegemonic projects, did not simply operate through coercion, but also through concessions that were shaped by the nature of resistance. These in turn became the basis of consent as well as of further struggle by the dominated. This framework is very useful in understanding and teasing out logical conclusions from the ambiguities and contradictions of colonial governance that goes far beyond the common and unsophisticated previous studies that

reduced the comprehension of the colonial encounter to a simple paradigm of domination and resistance (Ranger 45-60).

The debate is joined by Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff who defined the space of colonial governance as 'historical anthropology of cultural confrontation-of domination and reaction, struggle and innovation,' and its impact as altering 'everyone and everything involved'(Comaroff & Comaroff 5). The Comaroffs noted that subordinate populations with communal identities like the Ndebele in this case had resilient ideologies. As such, these subordinate groups continually tried to assert themselves against the dominant colonial order and reversing existing relations of inequality, by calling actively upon those ideologies of the past as well as the present. The struggles of the dominated were purely ideological for they necessarily involved an effort to control the cultural terms in which the world was ordered and power legitimized (Comaroff & Comaroff 5-15).

If this argument is extended to and cast on our case study of the Ndebele, it means that the Ndebele were thus drawn unwittingly into the dominion of settler colonialism, and they continuously contested its presence and the explicit context of its worldview (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 173-192a). Their responses consisted of a complex admixture of tacit (even uncomprehending) accommodation to the hegemonic colonial order at one level, and diverse expressions of symbolic and practical resistance at another. The latter reaction had the crucial role of reinforcing the former, by displacing attention away from, and by actively reproducing, the hidden signs and structures of domination. All the Ndebele responses to colonial domination were underpinned by skepticism about its operations and the continuous process of reading their own significance into the colonial encounter, seeking to siphon off evident powers in it while at the same time rejecting its invasive discipline (Comaroff & Comaroff 5-20).

While the Ndebele tried to resist the colonial enterprise in favour of their own worldviews and conventions, they were inevitably and subtly transformed by their engagement with colonial discourse. They found themselves having to speak and articulate a new political discourse, including liberal ideas, trade unionism, and independent churches in their confrontation with the Rhodesian colonial state.

Theoretical insights from Homi K. Bhahba are very useful here, particularly his concepts of mimicry and hybridity (Bhabha 42-55). Arguing on the same lines with Gayatri Spivak (66-111), Bhabha noted that colonial discourse of governance was not 'over determined' by the colonizer alone, as the colonizer and the colonized constructed each other within the confines of a pervasive hegemonic discourse (Bhabha 84-95). What is even more relevant is the conceptual and theoretical value of Bhabha concepts of negotiation, mimicry, and hybridity in revealing the ontology of colonial governance. Bhabha used the concept of negotiation to understand the structure of *iteration* which informs native political movements like nationalist parties that attempted to articulate antagonistic and oppositional elements to colonialism while at the same time failing to transcend the epistemological terrain set by colonialism (Bhabha 26).

The concept of negotiation helps to comprehend the 'in-between reality' within the hegemonic colonial governance where the colonizer and the colonized interchange inputs intuitively. On-going negotiation within the edifice of colonial governance opened up fissures and spaces of contestation between the colonizer and the colonized. As an example the Ndebele effectively negotiated themselves into the colonial Christian ethos and appropriated its human rights theories to challenge colonial rule. On the side of the colonizers, the pre-colonial power structures were appropriated and used to perpetuate colonialism. Ndebele concept of chieftainship was reconstructed as part of local colonial governance (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 173-192a).

The concept of mimicry is useful in understanding how the colonized were able to undermine colonial hegemony while remaining dominated. Mimicry emerged as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge, and it represent an ironic compromise (Bhabha 99-112). It rotated and operated around ambivalence producing slippages, excesses and its differences. At the end of the day, it took the form of a double ideological articulation, a complex strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline, which appropriates the 'Other' as it visualized power (Bhabha 112). It was at once resemblance and a menace. Hence Bhabha wrote:

What I have called mimicry is not the familiar exercise of *dependent* relations through narcissistic identification so that, as Fanon has observed, the black man stops being an actional person for only the white man can represent his esteem. Mimicry conceals no presence or identity behind its mask: it is not what Cesaire describes as 'colonization-thingification' behind which there stands the essence of *presence Africaine*. The *menace* of mimicry is its *double* vision, which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority (Bhabha 112).

Colonialism created a lot of mimic persons in its attempt to reproduce itself. Mimicry emerged within instabilities colonial domination and shifting identities it created. The colonial school was a major centre of mimicry than education, with natives directly miming white culture and language as a form of education. At the end of the day mimic persons ended up being fluent in colonial languages like English, Portuguese, Spanish, French and Dutch, putting on European clothes. Later they challenged colonial rule using claims of liberal democracy and Christian ethos they have learnt at school. Mimicry opened the way for hybridity which Bhabha defines as:

Hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority). Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination

and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power. For colonial hybrid is the articulation of the ambivalent space where the rite of power is enacted on the site of desire, making its objects at once disciplinary and disseminatory-or, in my mixed metaphor, a negative transparency (Bhabha 112-114).

Colonial governance was very porous creating hybridization rather than 'the noisy command of colonialist authority or the silent repression of native traditions' (Bhabha 112). Hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other 'denied' knowledge enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority as well as its rules of recognition.

Terence Ranger and Eric Hosbawn's theory of invention of tradition raises another key aspect of colonial governance. Instead of the colonial government expending its effort trying to completely wipe off native institutions and creating new ones, it found it less expensive to just re-invent these institutions making them more amenable to colonial demands and needs. This explains why colonialism left behind two ambiguous legacies of invented traditions in Africa. The first was the body of *invented traditions* imported from Europe that continued to influence the ruling class culture in Africa. The second legacy was that of *traditional* African culture re-invented during colonialism. Ranger went on to warn that those who blindly seek a return to original African culture were instead faced with the ironic risk of embracing a set of colonial inventions (Hasbawn & Ranger 1-14). Spivak makes a similar point when she strongly opposes the nativist position which assumes that pre-colonial realities and ways of life can easily be recovered. Spivak does not believe that the African sovereignty of the lost 'Self' of the could be restored. Spivak states that it is impossible for the colonized to return to a pure set of origins. To her the long-term historical and cultural effects of colonialism are irreversible. The colonized therefore only remain with painful nostalgia for lost origins (Spivak 66-111).

Colonial Governance Discourse

The Rhodesian colonial state ideology emphasized that the Ndebele state they destroyed was profoundly undemocratic and human rights unconscious. They claimed that colonialism brought enlightened system of governance to a barbaric people who lived a very miserable and violent life. Mamdani noted that colonial officials used the rhetoric of human rights in its relations with its African subjects and the practice of democracy was restricted to the white colonial citizens (Mamdani 20c).

Christian missionary evangelical rhetoric of having saved the Ndebele from paganism resonated with secular colonial governance discourses particularly that of the Rhodesian Native Department which took upon itself marshaled a crusade of bringing to an end witch-hunting, child pledging, and ritual murders. They claimed be engaged in democratization through abolition of hitherto oppressive pre-

colonial customs and institutions which had denied human rights in traditional Ndebele society (Ranger 31-53b). The Native Department officials also claimed to have freed young Ndebele women from child or compulsory marriages and the subject communities from slavery. Young Ndebele men were said to have been freed from compulsory military service, giving them the flexible option of working in the mines, farms, and towns. Above all, the colonial propagandists said that they abolished the traditional Ndebele system of justice, which they dismissed as an oppressive, informal, and bizarre mixture of compensation and arbitrary violence. To then Ndebele system of justice was replaced with a formalized, civilized and equitable western system of justice predicated on Roman and Dutch law (Summers 15-30).

The process of articulation of colonial governance went in tandem with the hegemonic process of nation-building involving broadcasting of colonial power and construction of a colonial worldview. Colonial governance debates revolved around issues of segregation versus integration, land partition versus protection, and trusteeship. Theirs was consistent search for a better way of administering the Ndebele after defeating them, rather than a genuine search for a framework of democracy and human rights which they claimed to stand for (Summers 10-15).

The hypocrisy attendant to colonial claims offering human freedoms to the natives became clear when 'freed' the Ndebele women from oppressive customs and institutions were not allowed to enter urban centres and when they were forced to live under decentralized despotism of rural chiefs (Schmidt 16-30). To enforce colonial patriarchal control, the colonial state entered into an 'unholy alliance' and connivance with pre-colonial African patriarchy, involving accused African women who entered the cities as being dangerously assertive (Schmidt 12-23). The urban centres were designated by the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 as a domain of white citizens only who needed peace, order and seclusion from the irresponsible madding crowd of natives. For purposes of enforcing patriarchy the Native Department worked closely with African chiefs to control female mobility. The colonially codified customary law declared women to be perpetual minors. It was this situation that led Elizabeth Schmidt to argue that African women came to suffer from the double yoke of oppression in the form of African traditional patriarchy and colonialism capitalist patriarchy (Schmidt 16-30) .

Hypocrisy in the Rhodesian colonial claims to civilization and respect for people's rights revealed itself clearly when it came to the property rights of Africans especially pertaining to land and cattle of the Ndebele. The colonial state showed no respect for Ndebele property rights. Ndebele cattle were looted in broad day light in proper violent primitive accumulation style. On the land issue, even before the Reserves Commission of 1915 and the Land Apportionment Act of 1930, the Native Commissioners had already moved hundreds of thousands of Ndebele families from good land so that white farmers could occupy it. The Gwai and Shangani Reserves were established in 1894 (Alexander et al 30-40).

Matabeleland was turned into a grand political laboratory where the Rhodesians tried various ways of ruling and administering the Ndebele. Ndebele traditional institutions were rehabilitated for indirect rule purposes. The earlier colonial beliefs and propaganda that emphasized that Ndebele traditional institutions were profoundly undemocratic and authoritarian quickly disappeared and some positive evaluations Ndebele traditional institutions began to emerge that were underpinned by instrumentalist thought. Now these institutions were to be re-invented for colonial purposes (National Archives of Zimbabwe Historical Manuscript NB6.5/2/2). The Native Commissioner for Bubi and later Sebungwe, Val Gielgud in his assessment of Ndebele, Tonga, and Shona political authority, stated that the Ndebele society was characterized by secession and disorder rather than despotic or authoritarian control. He added that the Ndebele men and women were prone to rebellion against authority either black or white. On the nature of pre-colonial governance, Gielgud asserted that for the Ndebele:

Authority was divided among hundreds of headmen. The religious rites were similarly plural, their kraals being full of altars of different kinds for sacrificing to the river, their amadhlozi, the hippo, or any other beast, stone or tree (National Archives of Zimbabwe Historical Manuscript NB6.5/2/2).

This was indeed a ridiculous statement from a member of a colonial society that destroyed the Ndebele state between 1893 and 1896 on the grounds that it was profoundly despotic. The fact that some colonial officials were regretting the consequences of direct rule, the erosion of Ndebele chiefly authority, as well as the general collapse of traditional societies was indeed a glaring example of ambiguities that beset the colonial society in its search for cheaper and stable governance system.

On the side of the Ndebele, land issue and the question of restoration of the Ndebele monarchy became central in Ndebele protest movements of the early twentieth century even though colonial rule was affected all aspects of Ndebele life. As the colonial state sought to redefine the Ndebele as colonial subjects with very limited rights, the Ndebele were busy trying to pick up bits and pieces of their remaining sources of identity like land and the idea of the restoration of the monarchy. Urbanization and the spread of Christianity was quickly transforming the previous Ndebele worldview. Christianity was spreading faster due to its missionary oriented discourse of rights and notions of equality of every human being before God. Such evangelism was bound to be attractive to the oppressed people and right-less colonial subjects. Some Ndebele seized Christian ideologies as a tool to challenge some aspects of settler colonialism. Urbanization attracted some young Ndebele people and exposed them to modern forms of political organization to challenge colonial deprivation and oppression (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 173-192a).

Taken together, these rapid changes generated discontent and produced various but related responses of despondency, agitation, compliance, migration, and protest that lumped together Ndebele Christians, urban elite and traditional leaders into an

ambiguous response to settler colonialism. Ndebele chiefs and members of the Ndebele royal family were the first group of people to react by forming associations to agitate for a Ndebele homeland, return of Ndebele cattle, and restoration of the Ndebele monarch. Their response drew inspiration from Ndebele pre-colonial culture as well as from traditional Ndebele religion with its doctrines of political legitimacy, entitlement to land and relationship to environment (Ranger 8-23c).

Even though Ndebele chiefs had become salaried colonial civil servants they still wanted to represent their people and their people still wanted them to represent them. Yes, some supported colonial government, particularly those who received cattle due to their 'loyalty' to colonialists when others rose in rebellion in 1896. What angered many chiefs were the evictions from the land around Bulawayo, including those who initially supported colonial government. Thus the responses of the Ndebele traditional leaders represented by the chiefs and the royal family had its own interesting internal contradictions and dynamics. Scarcity of land was first felt by the chiefs and the royal family as the owners of large herds of cattle that needed large grazing lands. Hence they were among the first people to move to the reserves. For instance, between 1898 and 1920 a number of aristocratic Ndebele chiefs as well as sons of Lobhengula moved with their cattle to the reserves. Lobhengula's son Tshakalisa was the first royal Ndebele to make his home in the Shangani Reserve, and he was followed by Madliwa in 1900, Sivalo in 1906, Sikhobokhobo in 1910, Tshugulu in 1912, Dakamela in 1913 and Nkalakatha in 1920 (Alexander at al 55-60).

Nyamanda the eldest son of Lobhengula who remained in Matabeleland while other sons were being taken by Cecil John Rhodes to South Africa, refused to move to the reserves, especially to Gwai and Shangani Reserves, arguing that the areas were wild forests, disease-ridden, and too far from Bulawayo and the mainstream of the Ndebele society (National Archives of Zimbabwe Historical Manuscript A3/18/1). Nyamanda, despite being a salaried chief in the Native Department, personally experienced eviction from white farms with his large herd of cattle.

The National Home Movement led by Nyamanda was a land concerned organization. It brought together into coalition, the radical Ndebele chiefs, the urban Ndebele 'progressives' as well as Ndebele Christians in a struggle for Ndebele land, which was being monopolized by the white settlers at the expense of the Ndebele. Nyamanda became a leading intellectual entrepreneur together with some Ndebele chiefs and Ndebele Christians in the creation of Ndebele protest in the aftermath of the Ndebele state. Ndebele protest emerged mainly as a response to eviction and the rural as well as urban people were active in its formulation to the extent that it becomes incorrect to argue that both 'ethnicity and nationalism in Matabeleland had more to do with peasants and workers than with chiefs and warriors' (Ranger 1-10d). Nyamanda was part of what one can call the 'warriors' because of the active part he played in the rising of 1896.

Born as a result of colonial deprivations and contradictory operations, early Ndebele protest movements had no clear cut ideological underpinnings and remained largely ambiguous and contradictory too as the Ndebele grappled with the various interventions of the colonial state at various levels (Ranger 8-15a). Pre-colonial doctrines of political legitimacy, entitlement and inheritance derived from receding traditional Ndebele religion were used by the members of the royal family to agitate for lost royal privileges and rights even at the expense of other Ndebele people. Nyamanda attempted to inherit Lozikheyi (senior wife of Lobhengula)'s cattle after her death at the expense of Sidambe, a daughter of Lozikheyi (National Archives of Zimbabwe A3/18/18/1). Nyamanda also claimed all the cattle that were distributed to the Ndebele chiefs, especially to the former collaborators like Gampu Sithole, Faku Ndiweni, and others as his father's cattle. In a meeting with the colonial Administrator in 1915, Nyamanda demanded the return of his father's cattle held by Ndebele chiefs. He stated that:

I wish to complain of poverty and hunger. I am the son of the late king Lobhengula whose indunas I see are living in affluence while I am poor and hungry. I see my father's dogs in enjoyment of his herds of cattle while I have nothing. I want my father's indunas to be told to give me my cattle; among other indunas I have Gambo in my mind, who possess large herds of my father's cattle (National Archives of Zimbabwe Historical Manuscript N3/16/19).

Thus pre-colonial Ndebele culture's doctrines of legitimacy and entitlement were now appropriated and used by Nyamanda to claim property even from his own fellow Ndebele who were also experiencing varieties of deprivations under colonial rule.

Nyamanda and his brothers tried at one level to pressure the settler government to grant them land as personal property. At one time the government's refusal to concede to the royal family's demands forced Nyamanda's young brother, Nguboyenja to ask the Chief Native Commissioner whether he did not enjoy 'any difference in standing between myself and other people' (National Archives of Zimbabwe Historical Manuscript A3/18/6). The sons of Lobhengula still manifested royal arrogance and superiority above the ordinary Ndebele people to the extent that Nyamanda could describe other Ndebele chiefs as 'my father's dogs' leading the sons of Lobhengula to at times champion personal and family grievances within the wider Ndebele protest project against early colonial rule (Roberts 4-38).

However, in spite of the fact that the sons of Lobhengula at times protested on strictly personal than representative capacity, they remained a natural focus of Ndebele aspirations for a restoration of the monarchy. Nyamanda was intimately involved in the common Ndebele struggle for an Ndebele homeland. Nyamanda was a versatile political figure who ably appropriated diverse sources such as traditional Ndebele religion, Christianity, South African influences as well as modern organized urban protest, and grievances of the royal family into a single common Ndebele struggle for land and restoration of the Ndebele monarchy (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 173-192a).

Nyamanda was also able to use various means of pressure ranging from deputation, letters, petitions, and meetings not only on the Rhodesian settler government but also on Britain as a colonial power in pursuit of Ndebele struggle for humane treatment, social justice, personal betterment, and dignity in a colonial environment (Ranger 80a). When the colonial government offered him a big area in the reserves to meet his personal needs warning him not to further agitate for the Ndebele homeland, Nyamanda did not give up his ideal of securing a big Ndebele homeland where every Ndebele had adequate land to live on (Ranger 80-89a).

Ray S. Roberts wrote that the other sons of Lobhengula unlike Nyamanda were never given any chance to play a role in their people's struggle to survive, to adapt, and assert their rights. Instead theirs was not even a part of the 'African Voice' but rather they remained prisoners of a private limbo designed by Cecil John Rhodes (Roberts 20-30b). Cecil John Rhodes had taken all the young sons of Lobhengula away from main stream Ndebele society to South Africa where they were forced to imbibe and mime western culture through western education. Roberts concluded that the story of the other sons of Lobhengula, especially Nguboyenja was not of great importance politically but was rather a personal tragedy that highlighted the ways in which the process of conquest and modernization of one society by another can affect an individual.

But after the death of Nyamanda, the Ndebele society looked to other sons of Lobhengula for leadership as they formed the Matebele Home Society as a successor to Nyamanda's National Home Movement in 1929. One only needs to link this with Ranger's argument that Ndebele ethnic identity symbolized by the formation of Home Society was not necessarily 'irrelevant' to the problems facing the Ndebele society and could be easily connected modern Zimbabwean nationalism. Indeed some of the most articulate and imaginative creators of Ndebele identity became articulate creators of nationalism at the same time (Ranger 1-5d).

Carol Summers noted that government officials, missionaries, educated Africans as well as ordinary Africans faced a crisis of adaptation to the rapid changes within colonies in the early twentieth century. He put like this:

Individualism threatened communal identities. Customs and values were mutating under economic, social, and political pressure from an increasingly segregationist settler-dominated state (Summers 279b).

Within the period of flux, the colonized Ndebele seized even Christian ideologies as they searched for a new identity with the colonial environment. Christian enterprise created a new basis for challenge and resistance. Where the colonial state coercion stifled manifest political expression, the polysemic metaphors of the Old and New Testaments offered a haven for the critical imagination (Comaroff & Comaroff 14-24).

Christian missionary enterprise tried to project itself as a critique to some of the blatant iniquities of the colonial settler state in the wake of the fall of the Ndebele state and as such it attracted many Ndebele converts, though it had its own inherent contradictions. At one level, it failed dismally to mitigate the strains of the colonial predicament and to account for the manifest inequalities that dominated the colonial social order. Thus, although the church continued to serve as an accessible source of signs and organizational forms, these became elements of a syncretistic bricolage, deployed to carry a message of protest and resistance, and to address the exigencies of a runaway world. This resistance and its expression were embodied in the rise of independent African denominations. Their ideological articulation was more directly aimed at the culture and institutions of white dominated churches, but their subtle metaphors bespoke a rejection of domination in all its aspects. In reality Christianity was merely the edge of the colonial wedge (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 173-192a).

Christian missionaries deplored some of the brutal methods of the settler state on the Ndebele, especially the evictions of the Ndebele to the remote Gwai and Shangani Reserves. On top of this, the Christian missionaries, in general preached an attractive doctrine of equality of all human beings before God to the colonized Ndebele who were desperately in need of an emancipatory ideology. Worse still, the failure of the Ndebele rising of 1896 made some Ndebele people to lose confidence in pre-colonial religious institutions as a source of salvation in the face of colonialism. They became forward looking to Christianity as a new way of achieving human rights and democracy (Ranger 54-60e; Ranger 16-20f; Banana 10-15).

As more and more Ndebeles were becoming attracted to the promises of 'Christian' civilization, they realized that Europeans and Africans were not always considered equal before the Christian God. White Christian missionaries were culturally arrogant and deliberately blind to the positive dimensions of Ndebele culture as they exercised an almost medieval ecclesiastical discipline over their African converts. Added to this, African clergy and teachers were subordinated to young and arrogant white missionaries (Ranger 112-134g; National Archives of Zimbabwe Historical Manuscript A3/18/18/6).

The arrogance of white Christian practitioners led some Ndebele who had imbibed and mimed Christian doctrines of spiritual emancipation to appropriate these doctrines to challenge both the 'white church' and the colonial settler state. In other words, the establishment of Christianity in Matabeleland during the aftermath of the Ndebele state produced Ndebele Christianity comprising of men and women who were able to use the 'Christian solution' to condemn the Rhodesian colonial regime in terms of its own professed ideologies. The emergent Ndebele Christians repudiated the orthodoxy white church together with the whole ethos colonial capitalism. This evangelical onslaught gave rise to many and varied Zionist sects that pervaded the theological landscape in Matabeleland. It introduced a mode of practice that interacted with indigenous cultural forms to yield a Christianity that stood in vivid contrast to colonial orthodoxy (Daneel

7680). The emergent religious spectrum with its internal cleavages between mission, independent, and sectarian churches marked out in an elaborate order of signs and oppositions-came no merely to objectify the stark lines of differentiation within the modern context. It also opened up a general discourse about estrangement and reclamation, and domination and resistance. The Ndebele made serious efforts to incorporate the mission on indigenous terms, seeking to appropriate its resources to their own interests and to minimize its challenge to internal authority (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 186a).

Academic debates have raged on whether African independent churches should be seen as forms of political expression or mere religious manifestations. M.L. Daneel interpreted them as part of an inherent need on the part of the African activating a positive effort to interpret Christianity according to African insights (Daneel 4-8). The reality is that it was the inadequacies of the 'Christian elite solution' under white tutelage and patronage that explains the existence of African independent churches in Matabeleland as part of the Ndebele quest for freedom in the colonialist Christian dispensation of the post-rising period. Ali A. Mazrui saw independent churches as a distinct phase of African nationalism in search of a 'political kingdom' rather than a heavenly one (Mazrui 117-119).

The Rhodesian settler regime did not doubt the political message from the independent African churches. For instance, Makgatho's Church was castigated as 'confusing political propaganda with religious teaching.' Nyamanda became a close friend of Makgatho and he sent one of his sons to be educated in the African Methodist Episcopal Church School in South Africa (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 180-192a) Independent Ndebele speaking Zionist prophets like P.S. Ngwenya and others emphasized Holy Spirit possession, healing and prophecy, aspects which were considered politically dangerous by the settler state as it was possible that under the cloak of possession Zionist men and women could spread propaganda (National Archives Historical Manuscript N3/5/8). Independent African Churches even appropriated older Ndebele cultural and religious traditions in their evangelism and they become a form of hybrid phenomenon standing in between the fading Ndebele worldview and the emerging colonial-Christian worldview. Therefore, Ndebele Christianity must be properly described as dissenting Christianity that offered a return to lost values and a meaning to the alienated. It offered a middle ground between a displaced traditional Ndebele order and a new world whose vitality was both elusive and estranging (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 186-192).

At another level, Independent Churches provided that apolitical environment for the safe expression of resistance. Ndebele Christianity, particularly its coded forms did not manifest a mere apolitical escapism but an attempt, under pitifully restrained circumstances, to address and redress experiential conflict. It served as a 'cradle' of social links and moral dissent and was far from being a liminal figure. It drew upon a common stock of symbols, commenting upon relations of inequality both local and more global, and communicating its message of defiance beyond its own limited confines.

In their endeavour to adapt but at the same time resisting the openly humiliating aspects of colonialism, the Ndebele even bought themselves into the colonial liberal ideas of equality, rights and democracy and claimed a share. Enterprising and modernizing politicians like Martha Ngano and Abraham Thwala began to form modern political organizations to fight for African rights. They drew inspiration from South Africa where at the Cape liberal politics were already playing themselves among elite Africans (Jabavu 12-14).

The formation of the Rhodesia Bantu Voters Association was a brainchild of modernizing African political like Thwala. It drew from a bizarre mixture of political traditions such as those of the Fingo politics, Bulawayo township tradition, Matebele Home Movement as well as the traditions of Ethiopianism and it was also the first organization that took the issue of gender seriously into its programme of action (national Archives of Zimbabwe S84/A/26). Special interests of African women were to be undertaken by a Native Women's League whose terms of reference were the uplifting of African women socially, morally, educationally and 'advise on all matters affecting the sex' (National Archives of Zimbabwe Historical Manuscript ZHA1/1/2). The association was even later led by a woman, Martha Ngano who proved to be a determined politician and representative of her people during the early colonial period, taking the organization to open branches in Plumtree, Mzingwane, Mguza, Nyamandlovu and other places in Matabeleland.

Martha Ngano was a determined fighter for African rights, who blended rural grievances with urban ones. She was able to talk forcibly about evictions, dipping fees, education, as well as wages in the urban areas, and this broad outlook of the Rhodesia Bantu Voters' Association under Ngano forced the colonial government to observe that it was seeking to become a mass nationalist party, 'to break down tribal barriers and thus to create a common sense of nationality among all Bantu people' (National Archives of Zimbabwe Historical Manuscript ZHA1/1/2). Read closely, this organization was taking the Ndebele people and other Africans into the modern politics of voting rights and civil rights in as early as the late 1920s. Another modern organization that was formed in the late 1920s was Rhodesia Industrial Commercial Workers Union (RICU) which took its inspiration from Clements Kadilie's Industrial Commercial Workers' Union of South Africa (National Archives of Zimbabwe Historical Manuscript S84/A/300). Like other associations that emerged in the 1920s, the RICU called for unity and expressed disillusionment with the failure of the colonial state and white missionaries to live up to their professed ideology of 'Christian Civilization' and demanded higher wages (Raftopoulos & Phimister 1-15). The dawn of modern African nationalism had arrived though it took time to grow from the Rhodesian Bantu Voters' Association to the first nationalist party the African National Congress formed first in 1934 and reconstituted into a radical African political movement in 1957.

Conclusion

Colonial governance was never stable and confident. Instability and ambiguity permeated it through and through. This was so because African opposition to

remained an incipient counter-hegemonic force that could eventually over throw colonialism.

But colonialism had inscribed itself in Africa in such a way that it lingered in symbols and minds of the colonized making it impossible for these people to revert back to pre-colonial times. The colonial political and social engineering process included re-invention of African tradition, throwing the African into serious identity crisis. Thus, even though Africans were able to rise up from a defeated people into very active political agents, seizing even liberal and Christian colonial symbols to pothole and question colonial authority and integrity, they failed to break from colonial discourse mentally.

African nationalism became just the other side of colonialism propagated by Africans who had imbibed and mimed white values to the core colonially instituted schools and universities. Thus the study of colonial governance and African responses to it becomes a study of historical anthropology of cultural confrontation, punctuated and mediated by domination and reaction, struggle and innovation, complicity and negotiation as well as mimicry and hybridity. Everyone and everything involved was deconstructed and reconstructed through the cultural encounters and resistance.

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