

**THE ILLUSION OF SUPERIORITY: DECONSTRUCTING COLONIAL EDUCATION
AND CULTURAL ALIENATION IN MONGO BETI'S *MISSION TO KALA***

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Abstract

This study examines the representation of colonial education and cultural alienation in Mongo Beti's *Mission to Kala*. Colonial education functioned not merely as a means of formal instruction but also as an important instrument through which European cultural values and assumptions were transmitted to colonised African societies. In Beti's novel, Jean-Marie Medza, the protagonist, initially embodies the prestige associated with Western education. Although he has failed his school examination, the people of Kala regard him with extraordinary admiration because of his exposure to European schooling. His experiences in the village, however, gradually expose the limitations of his education and the cultural distance it has created between him and indigenous realities. Using a qualitative close-reading approach and drawing on Postcolonial Theory, particularly Frantz Fanon's concept of psychological alienation, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's notion of the "cultural bomb," and Homi K. Bhabha's concept of colonial mimicry, the study analyses Medza's cultural and psychological predicament. It argues that Beti employs satire, irony and Medza's journey to deconstruct the supposed superiority of colonial education. The study finds that the protagonist's schooling has equipped him with social prestige but has inadequately prepared him for meaningful engagement with the practical and cultural realities of his society. The novel consequently questions an educational system that alienates individuals from their cultural foundations and presents cultural self-knowledge as an important component of meaningful education and genuine emancipation.

Keywords: Mongo Beti, *Mission to Kala*, colonial education, cultural alienation, postcolonial criticism, cultural identity

1.0 Introduction

Formal education constituted an important part of the colonial encounter in Africa. Although European colonial authorities presented Western schooling as an instrument of civilisation and enlightenment, colonial education also transmitted assumptions about the superiority of European language, knowledge and cultural practices. The result was often a system in which indigenous knowledge was marginalised while European cultural standards acquired institutional prestige. Education could therefore become a means through which colonial subjects learned to evaluate themselves and their societies according to external cultural standards.

Mongo Beti's *Mission to Kala* offers a satirical exploration of this problem through the experiences of its protagonist, Jean-Marie Medza. Medza is a product of Western-style formal education who has failed his school examination but nevertheless possesses considerable social prestige because he has attended secondary school. His journey to Kala places him in a community where his school experience is regarded as evidence of exceptional wisdom. The irony, however, is that the supposedly educated young man gradually discovers the limitations of the knowledge on which his prestige rests.

Medza's experience foregrounds the tension between colonial schooling and indigenous cultural knowledge. His formal education has produced a sense of intellectual distinction, but it has not necessarily given him a corresponding understanding of the social, cultural and practical realities of the people among whom he finds himself. Consequently, his encounter with Kala unsettles his assumptions about education, superiority and civilisation. The journey becomes not simply geographical but psychological and cultural: Medza is compelled to reassess the value of the education through which he has been taught to view indigenous life.

Beti employs humour, irony, exaggeration and satirical reversal to expose the contradictions inherent in colonial education. The supposed bearer of superior knowledge is repeatedly confronted with situations in which his education proves inadequate. At the same time, the villagers' exaggerated admiration for him demonstrates the extent to which the colonial valuation of Western knowledge has entered indigenous consciousness. The novel therefore directs its criticism both at the colonial educational system and at the internalisation of its hierarchy of knowledge by colonised subjects.

Against this background, the present study examines the relationship between colonial education and cultural alienation in *Mission to Kala*. It focuses on the ways Medza's education distances him from indigenous knowledge, how the people of Kala participate in the elevation of Western schooling, and how Beti uses satire and irony to undermine assumptions about European intellectual and cultural superiority. The argument is that the novel does not simply condemn education; rather, it interrogates an alienating form of education that disconnects knowledge from the cultural and practical realities of the society in which the learner lives.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The major aim of this study is to examine colonial education and the ways it contributes to cultural alienation in Mongo Beti's *Mission to Kala*. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. identify the processes through which Medza is alienated from his indigenous cultural roots and communal values;
- ii. examine the representation of Western schooling as an instrument of psychological and intellectual domination in the novel;

- iii. assess how the people of Kala's admiration for Western education ironically exposes the limitations of its assumed superiority; and
- iv. analyse the psychological and cultural crisis experienced by the colonised individual caught between indigenous African traditions and Western education.

2.0 Review of Relevant Literature

Critical discussions of Mongo Beti and African literature generally have approached questions of colonialism, cultural identity, education, modernity and social transformation from different perspectives. Scholars such as Moore, Irele, Palmer, Bjornson, Balogun, Mickelson, Ihom, Arnold and more recent critics have contributed to the understanding of the ideological and aesthetic contexts within which Beti's fiction may be situated.

2.1 Tradition, Modernity and Cultural Identity

An important strand of African literary criticism concerns the relationship between inherited African cultural traditions and forms of modernity introduced or intensified through colonialism. Moore's study of African writers emphasises the relationship between literary creativity and the social and cultural experiences from which African literature emerged. African writers, from this perspective, do not merely imitate inherited European literary conventions; they transform the available literary forms in response to indigenous historical and cultural realities.

Irele similarly situates modern African literature within the complex encounter between African cultural experience and European literary languages. His idea of an African imagination draws attention to the capacity of African writers to employ European languages while articulating experiences, values and historical realities rooted in African societies. This perspective is relevant to Beti, whose fiction uses the language and form associated with European literary culture to question the ideological assumptions of European colonialism.

Palmer's criticism of the African novel further highlights the close connection between artistic form and social experience. African novelists frequently place questions of social responsibility, cultural transformation and moral conflict at the centre of their narratives. Such concerns are especially evident in texts dealing with colonialism and its consequences for individuals caught between different systems of value.

Bjornson's extensive work on Cameroonian writing also foregrounds the search for freedom and identity in literary responses to colonial and postcolonial experience. The tension between inherited cultural traditions and the institutions introduced under European rule is particularly important in understanding the predicament of characters such as Medza. His education promises social advancement but simultaneously positions him at some distance from the indigenous world whose values his journey to Kala forces him to reconsider.

Balogun's treatment of tradition and modernity in African narrative also provides a useful context for understanding this conflict. African literary texts frequently resist any simplistic division in

which tradition is entirely virtuous and modernity completely destructive. Rather, they dramatise the difficult negotiations through which individuals attempt to live within changing cultural circumstances.

These perspectives help illuminate *Mission to Kala* as a narrative of cultural encounter. Medza's problem does not arise merely because he has attended school, but because the educational system has encouraged a hierarchy in which Western knowledge acquires disproportionate prestige while indigenous knowledge is treated as inferior.

2.2 Colonial Education and Cultural Alienation

A second body of scholarship concentrates more directly on colonialism, education and the psychological consequences of cultural displacement. Within this tradition, Western schooling is frequently examined as one of the institutions through which colonial values were reproduced.

Fanon's analysis of the psychology of colonialism remains fundamental to this discussion. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, he examines the psychological consequences of a colonial hierarchy that encourages the colonised subject to identify cultural worth with the values and language of the coloniser. Colonial domination thus operates not only through political structures but also through the internalisation of ideas about racial and cultural superiority.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o develops a related argument in *Decolonising the Mind*. His concept of the "cultural bomb" describes the process through which colonial domination weakens a people's confidence in their languages, histories, environments and cultural traditions. Education and language become particularly important because they shape how individuals understand themselves and interpret their societies.

Within criticism of Beti, Mickelson's discussion of *Mission terminée* as a Bildungsroman provides another important perspective. Medza's journey can be understood as a process of maturation in which initial assumptions are tested against experience. The conventional coming-of-age journey is given an ironic dimension because the protagonist's formal schooling does not automatically correspond to wisdom. His growth depends partly on recognising the inadequacy of his earlier assumptions.

Kuvulya's more recent examination of Western and African educational systems in *Mission to Kala* similarly demonstrates the continuing relevance of education to critical interpretations of the novel. Such studies suggest that Beti's representation of schooling cannot be separated from broader issues of colonial power, cultural identity and indigenous knowledge.

2.3 Satire, Irony and the Critique of Colonial Superiority

A further critical perspective concerns Beti's use of humour, satire and irony. Rather than present colonial domination entirely through solemn denunciation, Beti often exposes its contradictions through comic reversals and exaggerated situations. This strategy is particularly effective in

Mission to Kala, where an unsuccessful student is treated as an intellectual authority largely because he has acquired Western education.

Ihom's discussion of technique in Beti's fiction is useful in understanding how formal strategies contribute to ideological criticism. The comic structure of *Mission to Kala* repeatedly creates a gap between appearance and reality. Medza appears to the villagers as a bearer of sophisticated knowledge, yet his own experiences continually expose the inadequacy of that reputation.

The irony also extends beyond Medza himself. The people of Kala have internalised a hierarchy that encourages them to associate schooling with almost unlimited intellectual authority. Their response to Medza consequently becomes part of Beti's critique of colonial ideology. The effectiveness of colonial cultural domination is demonstrated by the fact that the colonised may reproduce its assumptions even without the direct physical presence of the coloniser.

Beti's satire therefore performs an important decolonising function. By making the hierarchy of colonial knowledge appear ridiculous, the novel invites readers to question the values on which that hierarchy depends.

2.4 Research Gap

Existing scholarship has provided valuable discussions of Beti's representation of colonialism, identity, cultural conflict, satire, education and the Bildungsroman structure of *Mission to Kala*. However, the relationship between colonial education and Medza's cultural alienation can be examined more directly through an integrated postcolonial framework.

The present study therefore brings together Fanon's psychological alienation, Ngũgĩ's "cultural bomb" and Bhabha's colonial mimicry to examine how education shapes Medza's perception of himself and his community. It further considers how Beti uses the exaggerated prestige accorded to Medza to expose both the cultural authority of colonial education and its practical limitations.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored in Postcolonial Theory, with particular attention to Frantz Fanon's concept of psychological alienation, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's notion of the "cultural bomb," and Homi K. Bhabha's concept of colonial mimicry. The three concepts are treated as complementary analytical tools rather than as separate theoretical systems.

2.5.1 Fanon's Psychological Alienation

Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* examines the psychological consequences of colonial domination. An important aspect of this condition is the tendency of colonised individuals to internalise the cultural values and assumptions of colonial authority. The colonised subject may consequently experience alienation from indigenous identity while aspiring to cultural standards associated with the coloniser.

This concept provides a useful means of examining Medza. His exposure to Western education gives him a particular conception of intellectual authority and social status. Although he has failed his examination, he still carries the symbolic prestige of the colonial school. His encounters in Kala gradually expose the distance between this prestige and his practical capacity.

Medza's alienation is therefore not simply physical separation from home. It is a psychological condition in which the categories through which he assesses knowledge and cultural worth have been significantly shaped by colonial education. His journey challenges these assumptions and compels him to confront the limitations of the identity that schooling has produced.

2.5.2 Ngũgĩ's Concept of the Cultural Bomb

Ngũgĩ's concept of the "cultural bomb" describes a colonial process through which people are encouraged to lose confidence in their language, history, environment, heritage and indigenous systems of knowledge. The domination of the mind becomes particularly effective when the colonised begin to regard their own cultural world as deficient and the coloniser's world as naturally superior.

In *Mission to Kala*, Western schooling functions in a comparable manner. It produces knowledge that carries enormous symbolic prestige but remains insufficiently connected to some of the practical and cultural realities encountered by Medza in Kala. His education has exposed him to a system of knowledge whose authority the villagers themselves have partly internalised.

The people's admiration for Medza therefore demonstrates that the effects of colonial education extend beyond the school. Its hierarchy of knowledge enters social consciousness. A Western-educated person may be treated as naturally wiser than those whose knowledge is rooted in lived experience, community memory and indigenous cultural practices.

2.5.3 Bhabha's Colonial Mimicry

Bhabha's concept of colonial mimicry further clarifies the ambiguous identity created by colonial education. Mimicry refers to the colonial production of subjects encouraged to resemble the coloniser while never becoming completely identical with him. The colonial subject becomes, in Bhabha's well-known formulation, "almost the same, but not quite."

Medza can be read within this contradictory condition. His education has given him access to Western forms of knowledge and social prestige, but it has not transformed him into a European. At the same time, his initial attitudes reveal a measure of distance from the cultural world of the villagers. His predicament therefore illustrates the instability of colonial mimicry: the education that promises advancement also creates uncertainty about identity and belonging.

Beti intensifies this contradiction through satire. Medza's Western educational identity becomes impressive precisely where its practical limitations become most visible. The supposedly superior colonial subject finds himself learning from the community he initially regards from a position of assumed intellectual advantage.

2.5.4 Application of the Framework

Taken together, Fanon, Ngũgĩ and Bhabha provide a useful framework for examining different dimensions of Medza's predicament. Fanon helps explain the psychological consequences of internalised colonial hierarchy; Ngũgĩ illuminates the devaluation of indigenous cultural knowledge; and Bhabha explains the unstable identity of the colonially educated subject.

These concepts enable the study to interpret Medza's experience not simply as an individual failure but as a literary representation of a wider problem associated with colonial education. Beti's satire exposes an educational structure that confers prestige while creating cultural distance, and the protagonist's journey gradually destabilises the assumptions produced by that structure.

3.0 Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative literary research design based on close textual analysis. Mongo Beti's *Mission to Kala* constitutes the primary text, while books, journal articles and other relevant critical studies provide secondary materials.

The novel is purposively selected because of its sustained engagement with Western education, indigenous knowledge, cultural conflict and the psychological experience of the colonially educated African. The analysis focuses principally on Jean-Marie Medza's experiences in Kala, his interaction with the villagers, the prestige attached to his formal education and his gradual recognition of the limitations of his schooling.

Relevant passages dealing with education, cultural identity, indigenous knowledge, psychological alienation, social prestige, mimicry, satire and irony are selected and interpreted in relation to the objectives of the study. The analysis is guided by Postcolonial Theory, particularly Fanon's psychological alienation, Ngũgĩ's "cultural bomb" and Bhabha's colonial mimicry. The study does not seek statistical generalisation; rather, it examines how specific textual features contribute to Beti's critique of colonial education and cultural alienation.

4.0 Analysis of Colonial Education and Cultural Alienation in *Mission to Kala*

4.1 The Myth of Western Intellectual Superiority

One of the most striking ironies in *Mission to Kala* is the extraordinary prestige accorded to Medza despite his academic failure. His secondary-school education is treated by the villagers as evidence of unusual intelligence and almost unlimited intellectual capacity. This exaggeration enables Beti to question the colonial hierarchy through which formal Western education is equated with superior wisdom.

Medza himself recognises the excessive reverence associated with schooling when he observes that his people "make a tremendous fuss over anyone who's been to secondary school" and regard such a person almost as if he were "a god" who has descended to solve their problems (Beti 37). The comparison with divinity intensifies the satire. Beti presents a failed student as the object of

exaggerated admiration in order to expose the irrational cultural authority that colonial education has acquired.

This admiration illustrates one of the deeper consequences of colonial educational ideology. Its success is not measured merely by the number of people who attend school but by the extent to which the surrounding society accepts the school's hierarchy of knowledge. The villagers' response to Medza shows that Western educational credentials have become symbols of intellectual distinction independent of actual competence.

The situation becomes more ironic when Medza is expected to function as an authority on matters beyond his ability. He recalls:

"The village laid siege to me socially from the early morning onwards. First of all there were the young boys. They invaded my uncle's house loaded with books and slates ... They begged me to teach them to read, write, do sums.... Then came the grown men, who all wanted me to write letters for them.... I became their public scribe, scribbling away from morning to night..." (Beti 75–76).

The passage demonstrates the social power attached to literacy and formal education. Medza becomes teacher, letter writer and public intellectual because his schooling gives him access to skills that are socially scarce. Yet the language of "siege" and "invaded" suggests that the prestige is also burdensome. The role imposed upon him does not necessarily correspond with his actual intellectual maturity.

The irony therefore works in two directions. Beti acknowledges that literacy has practical usefulness, as demonstrated by the villagers' need for letters and instruction, but he simultaneously ridicules the assumption that literacy automatically confers wisdom. Medza's prestige rests on a colonial educational hierarchy that mistakes institutional exposure for complete knowledge.

4.2 Colonial Education and the Devaluation of Indigenous Knowledge

The conflict between Western schooling and indigenous knowledge becomes particularly visible when Medza is required to explain the abstract knowledge acquired at school. His difficulty demonstrates that the problem is not knowledge itself but an educational system insufficiently connected to the cultural environment of the learner.

The tension is captured in the contrast between school subjects and the forms of knowledge valued by the community. The question "Who in Kala cares about geography?" draws attention to the distance between institutional knowledge and immediate social usefulness. The novel does not necessarily suggest that geography is intrinsically worthless. Rather, the episode satirises a system in which school knowledge is taught and valued without sufficient relation to the lived realities of the people.

A similar problem appears when Medza attempts a textbook definition of blood: "Blood is a red liquid circulating through our veins and—" (Beti 87). His scientific explanation is formally defensible, but the encounter reveals that words and concepts may possess meanings extending

beyond classroom definitions. Within a communal setting, blood may also invoke ancestry, kinship and social belonging. The episode therefore dramatizes a conflict between abstract institutional knowledge and culturally embedded understanding.

Medza's difficulty is particularly significant because he has internalised the prestige of school learning. His educational experience initially gives him little reason to question the hierarchy in which European institutional knowledge occupies the superior position. Kala, however, confronts him with a world in which practical wisdom, communal experience and cultural memory cannot simply be dismissed as ignorance.

Ngũgĩ's concept of the cultural bomb is useful here. Colonial education becomes culturally destructive when it teaches the learner not merely new knowledge but contempt for existing knowledge. Beti's criticism is therefore directed at the hierarchical relationship created between different systems of knowing. An education that expands knowledge while respecting cultural experience would not necessarily produce alienation; one that requires the learner to view indigenous life as intellectually deficient is more problematic.

The novel consequently exposes the inadequacy of treating Western schooling as the sole measure of intelligence. Medza's encounters reveal that formal education can produce literacy and status while leaving significant gaps in cultural and practical understanding.

4.3 Medza as a Product of Colonial Mimicry

At the beginning of his journey, Medza frequently views the rural community through assumptions associated with colonial discourse. His language reveals a degree of distance from the people to whom he is culturally connected. Reflecting on adventure among supposedly "simple" people, he remarks:

"An easy adventure ... among comparatively simple people, is the wish and aim of every adventurer. When you come to think of it, the very existence of adventurers is only made possible by the survival of primitive, simple-minded tribes" (Beti 3).

The vocabulary of "primitive" and "simple-minded tribes" reproduces the language through which colonial discourse represented African societies. Medza has therefore learned more than school subjects: he has partially absorbed a perspective from which rural African life can be evaluated as backward.

This is where Bhabha's concept of mimicry becomes particularly relevant. Medza reproduces categories associated with colonial authority, but his performance of superiority remains unstable. He is not an actual colonial master surveying foreign subjects; he is an African youth evaluating another African community through an imported hierarchy.

Beti's satire exposes the absurdity of this position. Medza's assumptions are increasingly undermined by his encounters in Kala. The people he initially regards as simple are capable of

challenging the usefulness of his education, while the knowledge he regards as sophisticated frequently proves inadequate in the circumstances in which he is called upon to use it.

Medza therefore embodies the contradiction of colonial mimicry. He has acquired aspects of the coloniser's intellectual outlook without acquiring the authority or security that supposedly accompanies it. His identity is suspended between the prestige of Western schooling and a cultural world from which that schooling has partly distanced him.

The journey to Kala gradually destabilises this borrowed gaze. The more deeply Medza participates in village life, the more difficult it becomes for him to sustain the assumption that Western schooling automatically places him above the people around him.

4.4 Cultural Alienation and the Crisis of Identity

Medza's predicament ultimately develops into a broader crisis of belonging. His schooling has given him an identity that commands admiration, but the same education has also contributed to his sense of cultural displacement. He gradually recognises that the world he has been trained to value does not fully equip him to understand the world from which he comes.

The reflective character of the narrative is significant in this regard. Looking back on his youthful experience, Medza states:

"All my other memories, exposed to the scorching light of maturity, break up, melt, and blur into nothing, like a block of ice left out in the sun. But this adolescent adventure refuses to vanish. With lonely and heroic obstinacy it sticks in my mind, filling the gaps left by my lost youth" (Beti 3).

Kala becomes memorable because it marks an important stage in Medza's developing self-awareness. The journey unsettles the confidence associated with his earlier educational identity and forces him to confront the limitations of his assumptions.

His condition is more explicitly expressed in the image of "a man left to his own devices in a world which does not belong to him, which he has not made and does not understand" (Beti 181). This statement captures the psychological dimension of cultural alienation. The individual possesses neither complete confidence in indigenous cultural belonging nor genuine membership of the European world whose values colonial education has privileged.

Fanon's theory helps explain this condition as more than an individual personality problem. Colonial alienation arises when social institutions encourage subjects to measure themselves against cultural standards that simultaneously distance them from their own communities. The resulting identity is unstable because the individual is encouraged to escape one cultural position without ever acquiring complete acceptance within the other.

The tragedy is therefore not that Medza has learned Western knowledge. Rather, it lies in an educational arrangement that produces separation between institutional knowledge and cultural

self-understanding. His maturation involves recognising this separation and beginning to question the assumptions on which it rests.

4.5 Satire and Irony in the Deconstruction of Colonial Education

Beti's critique gains much of its force from satire and irony. Rather than merely announce that colonial education is inadequate, the novel constructs situations in which its supposed superiority is contradicted by experience.

The central irony is Medza himself. He fails within the institutional structure that supposedly measures educational achievement, yet outside the school he is treated as an intellectual prodigy simply because he has participated in that structure. The contrast exposes the arbitrariness of the prestige associated with colonial education.

A second irony lies in Medza's inability to fulfil all the expectations created by his educational status. The villagers assume that schooling has provided him with comprehensive knowledge. His difficulties with seemingly simple questions reveal the difference between possessing formal information and possessing wisdom applicable to particular cultural circumstances.

Beti also directs satire at Medza's initial Eurocentric attitude. His description of rural people in terms suggestive of primitiveness imitates colonial discourse, but the narrative subsequently reverses the hierarchy. The supposedly primitive environment becomes the space in which the educated protagonist acquires greater self-understanding.

The journey thus functions as a process of ideological reversal. Kala is initially imagined as the culturally inferior margin, while Western schooling represents the prestigious centre. By the end of Medza's experience, however, this hierarchy has become difficult to sustain. The village provides forms of experience and cultural knowledge absent from his formal schooling.

This does not mean that Beti simply substitutes one absolute hierarchy for another. The novel does not need to establish that indigenous knowledge is sufficient for every purpose or that Western knowledge has no value. Its more important achievement is to dismantle the colonial assumption that one system possesses inherent and universal superiority over the other.

Satire is therefore central to the novel's decolonising argument. By transforming the supposed products and assumptions of colonial education into objects of laughter, Beti reduces their ideological authority. The reader is encouraged to recognise the contradictions of a system in which a failed student can be elevated almost to the status of an oracle while the cultural knowledge of an entire community is treated as evidence of backwardness.

5.0 Conclusion

This study has examined colonial education and cultural alienation in Mongo Beti's *Mission to Kala*. Through Jean-Marie Medza's experiences, the novel interrogates the assumption that exposure to Western formal education automatically produces intellectual or cultural superiority.

Medza enters the world of Kala carrying the symbolic prestige associated with colonial schooling. Despite his academic failure, the villagers treat him as an exceptional intellectual because he possesses educational experience unavailable to many members of the community. Beti uses this exaggerated admiration ironically, exposing the extent to which colonial ideas about knowledge and superiority have been internalised by the colonised themselves.

The analysis also demonstrates that Medza's schooling has created significant distance between formal knowledge and his indigenous cultural environment. His difficulty in responding meaningfully to some aspects of village life reveals the limitations of an educational system that privileges abstract and imported knowledge while marginalising indigenous experience.

Fanon's concept of psychological alienation illuminates Medza's unstable cultural position; Ngũgĩ's "cultural bomb" explains the devaluation of indigenous knowledge produced by colonial educational structures; and Bhabha's concept of mimicry helps clarify the contradiction of a colonised subject encouraged to reproduce the cultural assumptions of colonial authority without ever becoming fully part of the colonial world.

Beti nevertheless avoids presenting Medza merely as a passive victim. His journey creates the possibility of self-recognition. Through his experiences in Kala, the assumptions underlying his educational identity are progressively unsettled. The village becomes a site where the supposed superiority of colonial knowledge is tested against lived experience.

Mission to Kala therefore constitutes a significant critique of colonial education when such education becomes detached from the cultural realities of the learner. The novel suggests that meaningful education should expand rather than erase cultural self-knowledge. Genuine emancipation consequently requires more than the acquisition of formal credentials; it also requires the recovery of cultural confidence, critical self-awareness and the capacity to value indigenous knowledge without rejecting useful knowledge from elsewhere.

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