

LINGUISTIC COLONIALISM AND DE-COLONIALISATION:

The School System as a Tool of Oppression¹.

by

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Every colonized people, in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality, finds itself face to face with the language of the civilized nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country.

Frantz Fanon

Black Skin, White Masks

1. Introduction

The most devastating impact of colonialism registers in the minds and souls of men. The coloniser's soul is just as ravaged by his own inhumanity as the soul of the colonised. These notes will concern themselves mostly with the latter.

For this purpose, a colonial situation will be arbitrarily defined as a situation in which the economical, political, social and cultural life of a colonised population is controlled by the coloniser. It will be implied, however, that the deeper imprint of colonialism on the minds and souls of the colonised does not arise from the "objective" facts of economic exploitation and political control. More "humane" or "liberal" forms of colonialism, in fact, seem to have succeeded better in instilling in the colonised people's consciousness the self-destructive and debilitating attitudes of cultural and personal alienation which Fanon has so passionately decried. On this I would like to quote at length from Kunene:

There are two distinct symptoms commonly known as segregation and integration, about which much heated discussion has often taken place, on the basis of which governments either stand or fall, but each of which may be traced right back to the basic cause, viz. the rejection of the African qua African. (i) Those whom history labeled as segregationists have said: He is not one of us, he can never be, he is not our equal. Let him stay the way he is -- he is docile, he is happy, he is exploitable. We shall keep him socially separate from us, and physically, as far as possible, even though we shall eat

the food he has cooked, and shall not object to his women acting as mother-substitutes for our children...

(ii) He can be one of us, he can be our equal, says the other school. It is neither right nor fair, it is unchristian, to let him stay the way he is. We have to uplift him, we have to teach him to be like us, we have to teach him to be a human being. The closer he approximates to us, i.e. the more human he becomes, the readier we will be to associate with him socially -- we might even increase his wages. (1970: 12-13)

Our historians have either failed or refused to see that Cecil Rhodes' 'equality for all civilised men' and the 19th century South Africa Boer Republic's 'no equality in church or state' arose from the same underlying motivating factor. (1970: 14)

Linguistic colonialism is but one product of the coloniser's attitude toward the values and culture of the colonised. When you have succeeded in instilling in a person a deprecating attitude towards his own language, you have also succeeded in instilling in him a deprecating attitude toward himself. Nevertheless, we are dealing with a well-defined phenomenon which may be used to gauge the scope and severity of the colonial impact upon the colonised.

2. "Raw" and "Enlightened" Colonialism

The "segregationist" and "integrationist" attitudes described by Kunene (*ibid.*) correspond rather well to what I shall attempt to characterize as "raw (pre-urban)" and "enlightened (urban)" colonialism. The correspondence between the emotive labels "raw", "enlightened" and the "more objective" "pre-urban" and "urban", respectively, is strong, though by no means perfect. For the purpose of this discussion, "enlightened" or "urban" colonialism must meet the following conditions:

- (a) The colonised derive their livelihood by working at enterprises directly controlled by the colonisers;
- (b) The colonised are freely exposed to the material and cultural world of the coloniser, though at the same time they are removed from equitable participation in it;
- (c) The colonised are exposed to an educational system designed and controlled by the coloniser, again without equitable participation or benefits;

Classical studies of colonialism have dwelled mostly on factors falling under (a) above. Below I shall deal mostly with those falling under (b) and (c).

3. Two African Situations

In the space below, I will try to give substance to the concepts "raw" and "enlightened" colonialism by describing, rather informally, two situations in Africa.

South Africa. For the details of the situation described here I am much indebted to Dan Kunene (private communication). It involves both a raw and enlightened stage of colonialism, as well as an abortive attempt at imposing linguistic de-colonialization from above. The physical setting was a small town in the Transvaal.

The "Raw" Phase. This phase pertains to the generation of Kunene's parents, SeSuthu-speaking people with no formal education, who performed menial work at farms and shops owned by Afrikaans-speakers, the colonisers. They lived in segregated shanty-towns and most of them were bilingual and would switch freely from SeSuthu to Afrikaans even among themselves. However, they took pride in their Suthu heritage and language and did not consider them as social stigma.

The "Enlightened" Phase. This phase pertains to Kunene's own generation, the ones who went to Suthu primary schools and then, at least the brighter members, to English-medium schools away from home. In these children colonial attitudes toward the Suthu culture and language rapidly developed and were actively encouraged by the schools. Thus, Dan Kunene writes:

By the time the children passed out of school... they had already been told, in elementary school and beyond, things such as the following: '...In the olden days there was no peace among the black people. There were many wars. People attacked one another without provocation, they killed one another and captured each other's cattle... Such freedom from fear and want as we enjoy today did not exist; instead, fighting was a daily occurrence'. (1970: 4)

The missionaries were not alone in modifying the thought patterns of the African. They were only one section of a host of white comers who, by design or by accident, combined forces to remake the African in some image, usually their own. (ibid.: 8)

Given the great incentive and material benefits accruing to the African young from the acquisition of the "right" kind of education, their complete alienation from their own culture and the development of acute colonised attitudes towards themselves inevitably followed.

"Decolonialisation" From Above. It is an open question

whether cultural, linguistic, and psychological decolonialisation can proceed in a vacuum, apart from decolonialisation at other, "more basic" levels. A straight-forward Marxist analysis would probably deny this possibility, though the recent experience of black people in the United States may perhaps suggest that a change beginning from the "top" should not be ruled out. Since, as I will argue repeatedly, the mere "objective" facts of economic exploitation and political control by a coloniser need not automatically result in cultural and linguistic colonialism, there is no reason to assume *a priori* that cultural and psychological decolonialisation may not proceed in the absence of full political and economic liberation.

The Bantu Education Act of 1954 (henceforth BEA) is a curious postscript to the South African situation described above. By fiat and over strenuous objections from the African population, the Nationalist government tried to introduce what appeared to be, on the surface, the re-Africanisation of the culture and education of the various Bantu peoples. The act provided for the gradual shifting of the medium of instruction, at all levels, from the colonial language (in most cases English) to the tribal language.

The BEA can never be judged apart from its political context -- the policy of Apartheid. The African population and especially the African intellectuals have correctly judged it as an attempt to achieve the following:

- (1) Downgrade the level of African education;
- (2) Divide educated Africans along tribal lines;
- (3) Restrict scientific and scholarly (as well as any other kind of) communication between Africans, European South Africans, and the rest of the world;
- (4) Reinforce the Bantu Reservations System and thus serve as a tool for instituting Apartheid.

Presumably, while the physical implementation of the BEA proceeds, its impact on decolonialising the attitudes of the Africans toward their culture and toward themselves will likely be nil. In our terms, the BEA is an attempt to move back from the "urban" to the "pre-urban" phase of colonialism. While economic and political facts may perhaps be reversed, attitudes and psychological makeup, so it seems, cannot, especially when the reversal is dictated from above rather than generated from within.

Zambia. An independent republic since 1964, Zambia had had a long tenure as a British colony. In the context of the discussion here, it will serve as an example of how cultural and linguistic colonialism may easily survive the physical departure of the coloniser.

The "Raw" Phase: The rural population of Zambia, which comprised during the colonial era (as it still does today) the bulk of the country's population, had remained, due to its isolation and lack of contact with the cultural and educational institutions of the coloniser, largely free of the debilitating impact of cultural and linguistic colonialism. The most common exception to this were the mission-educated Africans, and, indeed, any African who managed to attach himself, in one manner or another, to the European educational machine. The copper mines constituted another major avenue through which cultural colonialism spread. Although the African miners received little or no formal instruction, their mere presence on the Copper Belt, in close contact with the white economy and material culture -- coupled with their explicitly inferior position there -- never failed to produce the expected psychological reaction of self-abnegation.

The "Enlightened" Phase: The colonial administration of Northern Rhodesia did little to educate the African beyond a certain point. Before independence, only one secondary school in the colony (Munali, near Lusaka) accepted Africans (this is aside from the mission supported schools). The mission schools, government primary schools, lowly clerical jobs in the city, and the copper mines have, nevertheless, combined to expose a large segment of the African population to the devastation of cultural colonialism. Intimate contact with the colonisers through jobs, schools, or the media of communication was the daily lot of the urban African. As usual, this contact was coupled with the expressly inferior status of the African *vis-a-vis* the European. Present day attitudes of the urban Zambian toward his language, culture and heritage, described below, bear the marks of this prolonged exposure.

The Woes of Cultural De-colonisation: For whatever reasons (I will later attempt to speculate on this), cultural, linguistic, and psychological colonial attitudes have remained substantially intact -- the lot of the urban African in Zambia. In fact, with the expansion of communication networks into the outlying provinces and the growing administrative and educational presence of the central government in the district towns and even in the villages, cultural colonialism in Zambia has been on the increase since independence. Although I have had the chance to observe this situation from close quarters, I will defer in this matter to an African friend, and quote at length from a paper by Mubanga E. Kashoki (1969), at the time of the paper, Chief Literacy Officer in the Ministry of Community Development, Government of Zambia.

Mr. Kashoki's paper sums up the agony of colonial attitudes still rampant among the Africans in Zambia. On the

status of African "vernacular" languages in the Zambian school system, he writes:

Upon entering the school, the Zambian child discovers to his dismay that his school does not have a single competent teacher who can teach him properly the essential facts about his own language. The teacher he is given, although himself a native speaker, knows little or nothing about his own language and he teaches it without a love or relish for it and probably only accepted to teach it at the insistence of the head-teacher. (ibid.: 18)

In the typical Zambian classroom, the Zambian has only a brief acquaintance, if any, with his mother tongue, but on the other hand he has invariably cultivated a more intimate and much longer-lasting familiarity with the English language. It is therefore not surprising that his closer personal identification with English, as far as reading and writing are concerned, leads to greater literacy competence and facility in it than in his own mother tongue. It is not necessary to carry out detailed research to find out that the majority of educated Zambians -- except of course for those who cannot read English -- find it generally easier to read English than their own language. (ibid.: 20)

On the prevailing attitudes toward African languages in Zambia, Mr. Kashoki writes:

Typically, the Zambian vernacular writer grows up, goes to school and secures a job in a society which does not glorify his own language. In the school and in the community at large, all sorts of eulogies and superlatives are conferred on the English language, and through his life the Zambian has heard endless incantations, which paint English in glowing colours, drummed in his ears. The litany goes as follows: English is an international language; it is the only language which is suitable for the administration of a modern state; it is the only language capable of expressing scientific, mathematical and philosophical concepts; it is the only language capable of bringing about national unity; etc., etc. ad infinitum.

On the other hand, nothing but insult and contempt is heaped on the Zambian local languages. In the other ear of the Zambian, the following points are forcefully driven home: Your language is primitive and limited in the range of concepts it can express; for one thing, it is not an international language; it is a tribal language -- a mere vernacular; for another, it is incapable of accommodating modern technology; nor is it sufficiently developed to express scientific concepts; it is

altogether unsuitable for administering a modern state; and how do you think you can express mathematical concepts? (ibid.: 19)

Turning to the problems facing Zambian authors writing in their own native tongues, Mr. Kashoki says:

Generally speaking, the aspiring Zambian writer finds that the audience for whom he wishes to write has been, to use a coinage currently in vogue, 'brainwashed', if not alienated -- in the sense that the things native to the Zambian and for which he should therefore have natural attraction, generally leave him cold...The primary and fundamental problem confronting the African aspiring to become a writer, as far as language is concerned, is that he has for an audience a community of people who have undergone a protracted and far-reaching process of de-culturation -- or de-Africanisation. (ibid.: 15)

...The prospective Zambian vernacular writer sooner or later comes to grips with the fact that strong forces within his own society deny him full expression of his creative ability. Sooner or later he must come to appreciate that the constant relegation of his mother tongue to inferior position, both at school and in the society at large, is a major contributory factor to the subsequent rejection by society of the fruits of his creativity. Similarly, he is not slow to notice that the favourable emphasis which society has placed on English has had the inevitable consequence of cultivating in the educated Zambian generations a corresponding attachment to English, but a profound disdain for the local languages. And the Zambian vernacular writer (who in any case must depend for his livelihood on the proceeds from his writing), quite understandably becomes less inclined to write in the mother tongue. Nor does he regret taking this step. After all, even an illiterate woman in the remotest of Zambia's villages is today demanding to be taught the basic skills of reading and writing in English, arguing that literacy in the vernacular does not pay. English, I am afraid, has come to signify for many in this country -- including the prospective Zambian vernacular writer -- both the key to a lucrative occupation and the passport to considerable social prestige. (ibid.: 20)

Finally:

Zambian vernacular newspapers can only circulate in the rural areas where the level of education is generally rather low. The local language, it would seem, is only worthy of the attention of the semi-literate. (Even in

the simple matter of reading and writing Zambia must have social classes!) To write for only this section of the community, economically the least capable of providing a writer with livelihood, would be the highest degree of economical madness, and only a writer who is willing to dig his economic grave would contemplate such a step. (ibid.: 21)

4. Why the Mother Tongue?

The language of culturally deprived children...is not merely an underdeveloped version of standard English, but is a basically non-logical mode of expressive behavior. (C. Bereiter et al, 1966: 113)

Before we impose middle class verbal style upon children from other cultural groups, we should find out how much of this is useful for the main work of analysing and generalising, and how much is merely stylistic -- or even disfunctional...Our work in the speech community makes it painfully obvious that in many ways working-class speakers are more effective narrators, reasoners and debaters than many middle-class speakers who temporize, qualify, and lose their argument in a mass of irrelevant detail. (W. Labov 1969: 19-20)

With virtually no exception, post-colonial African countries are rampant with cultural and linguistic colonialism. Whether spoken in French or English, whether by "expert" expatriates or African government officials, the same arguments are advanced for downgrading the local vernaculars and retaining the former colonial tongue as the national medium. The literature on this subject is voluminous and it is not my intention to review it here. The major arguments one usually hears are:

(a) *The National Integration Argument:* In the absence of any clear majority language, and given the tribal dichotomies and ancient rivalries, the only possible medium to unify the country is the already established colonial language.

(b) *The Unsuitability Argument:* The local "tribal" vernaculars are unsuited for dealing with the modern educational, scientific and administrative functions of a forward-looking state. In particular, their lexicon cannot accommodate all the special vocabulary needed for all these functions.

(c) *The Communication Argument:* The continuing use of local vernaculars will help perpetrate colonial-initiated divisions within Africa, as well as further isolate Africa from communicating with the rest of the world.

I have presented these arguments on purpose in the most

favorable light, though more absurd and more obviously fallacious versions are much more commonly heard. Not accidentally, I think, the popular and "expert" views of the African vernacular as cited by Kashoki (1969; see quotations above) are virtually identical to the prevailing "expert" and popular attitudes toward Black English in this country, as cited by Labov (1969). The two situations share the very essence of the cultural and linguistic colonial situation -- *the refusal of a dominant culture to recognize a different, colonised culture as legitimate, deserving and worthwhile -- and the subsequent instillation, within the hearts and minds of the colonised population, of an attitude of self-rejection, self-abnegation and self-hatred.*

Arguments (a) through (c) above are, nevertheless, serious and deserve an answer, in particular the national unity issue within the African context. Further below I may attempt to briefly sketch some of the possible answers. It is more important, however, to pose here the question that is usually left out of the discussion altogether -- at what price national integration? At what price suitable language medium? At what price easy communication with the outside world? The pricetag attached to the retention of the colonial culture, language and values in post-colonial Africa is, paradoxically, both staggering and inconspicuous. It may be viewed in two different contexts:

(1) *At the personal level:* Here full analogy may be drawn between the urban Black experience in this country and the experience of the *educated* African. The systematic bombardment of the psyche from birth by the subverting message: "You are no good; your color is no good; your culture is no good; your language (and thus *thought pattern*) is no good; your Gods are false; your music primitive; your dance barbaric; your customs outrageous" -- has inevitably produced in the white-educated African a pattern of *de-cultured, insecure, frustrated, and alienated* personality. The damage to his self-respect, self-confidence, sense of belonging, and sense of worth and manhood is staggering. The fact that these phenomena are *less tangible*, if anything, increases the devastation of the *internalized* colonial experience. Before, the oppressor was visible; one could fight it and chase it out. The enemy without has since physically departed. Its oppressive presence, the constant putdown of one's soul, has remained within, stifling, frustrating, defeating -- and invisible.

(2) *At the national level:* Here a tacit assumption has been perpetrated by a curious alliance of former colonials, well-meaning white "experts" and the white-educated African elite: *the only way to national integration, economic development, education, and progress is the indiscriminant and whole-*

sale adoption of the European political, cultural, educational, and linguistic model. The fact that no one has ever attempted to prove this assumption in any conclusive or systematic way coincides well with the fact that few in Africa and elsewhere have ever seriously challenged it. The few available counter examples -- China, North Korea, North Vietnam and perhaps also Tanzania -- may well illustrate the fallacy of this assumption.

The price Africa is asked to pay for "progress" is the broken hearts and twisted souls of its children. This involves the tacit acceptance of a seeming fact that *alienated, frustrated and powerless citizenry, a citizenry devoid of any sense of participation and real community, must inevitably characterize the modern nation state.* The European example makes this seem inevitable -- one must lose in *internal* values of community, belonging, sense of control, sense of meaningful participation, and freedom of choice -- in order to gain in *national* values such as progress, development, formal education, higher gross national product, national integration, national purpose, and national goals. The frightening import of this seeming equation is this: *national/external* values are visible, easily defined, and easily extolled. In a society which has allowed its citizens to lose their internal values, national values ring hollow and oppressive to the individual; they cannot sustain him; they have become dysfunctional. The demoralized and powerless citizenry, so characteristic of most African states, is a sad testimony to this unfair exchange.

Why then the mother tongue? Both externally and internally, language serves as *the most obvious signal for the identity of a distinct community of values.* This pertains to the national, regional, town, neighborhood, household, and individual levels. To the individual, it signals his own group identity. It signals the very same thing to members and non-members of his community. Further, it is the medium through which all personal and social contact is transacted. It is perhaps no accident that the linkage: *language -- cultural values -- self,* is so easily established in the individual. The affirmation of the first will re-affirm the two others. Rejection of the first affects the other two.

5. The School System as a Colonial Tool

An' when they be sayin' if you good, you goin' t'heaven, tha's bullshit, 'cause you ain't goin' to no heaven, 'cause it ain't no heaven for you to go to. (Larry H., as cited by Labov 1969: 21).

I have attempted above to show why language occupies such a pivotal spot in the colonial equation. One of the places

where language attitudes are consciously, purposefully fashioned is in the school. From the two African situations cited above, the crucial role the colonial school system plays in the instigation and perpetration of the self-hatred and self-abnegation so characteristic of the colonised's attitude towards his culture and language, is abundantly clear. The free exposure to the coloniser's cultural trappings, rather than the mere facts of political and economic oppression, seem to be at the root of cultural colonialism. The school system, as the prime active agent of the coloniser's culture *vis-a-vis* the growing young of the colonised, seems to serve as the most efficient tool in the complete negation of the colonised -- his values, history, culture, and language.

Within the school system, further, the language-medium of instruction, innocuous, seemingly neutral, and largely taken for granted, turns out to be the focal point in the colossal putdown of the colonised people. It is probably the most effective agent in the de-culturation of a colonised population. The economic advantages of the white-designed education may be real enough, as far as they go. The psychological damage of undergoing one's education under a colonial system -- manifest or disguised -- is probably immeasurable. The most devastating effect of colonialism then, i.e. its presumptuous and arrogant tampering with the consciousness of the colonised, must be to a large measure, traced to the seeming Pavlovian effectiveness of the colonial school system and its ability to inculcate self-devaluation and to destroy the self-respect of the colonised.

In the American context, members of the more understanding liberal establishment have tended in the past to dismiss the growing attacks in Black and Chicano communities upon the schools as a childish (thus forgivable; the condescension is, of course, obvious) manifestation of pent-up frustration and anger, at best a symbolic expression of rebellion against other, more real sources of oppression. The same liberal establishment is also responsible for dismissing the Black dialect of American English as *incoherent*, *illogical* or *aberrant*, and of instituting various "remedial" linguistic programs -- all well-financed with federal poverty grants -- in which the aberration is to be drummed out of the Black and Chicano child. As shown by Kunene (1970), the basic premises of the *integrationist* and the *segregationist* in American and African education are identical: *that the colonised is no good as is*. Raw colonialism rejects outright, in the open. Enlightened colonialism tries to "improve".

When black or brown children chant "...burn, haby, burn...", however, it is worthwhile to consider an alternative interpre-

tation, namely that they mean it quite literally and not just symbolically, that school burning has become a *concrete* act of liberation -- hitting at the most effective and insidious instrument of colonial oppression, the one most responsible for robbing the child of his dignity, self-confidence, and his very soul. In Africa, it seems, as long as the colonial consciousness goes on being perpetrated and reinforced by essentially colonial schools, media and curricula, the mere fact of political, and perhaps also, economic liberation will fail to produce a parallel cultural and psychological de-colonialisation. The same may well be true in the American context.

6. The Child as a Nigger (2)

*Poor mamma's stuck with sagging dreams,
She'll sell a son or two into some
Slavery that's lucrative and fine,
Just teach them not to criticise,
To yes the boss, impress the clients.
O teachers of the world,
Teach them to fake it well (Buffy St. Marie, "Suffer
little children", from her album, *Illuminations*)*

I have earlier defined the colonial situation as one in which the economical, political, social and cultural life of a colonised population is controlled by the coloniser. In the space above, I have largely confined the discussion to colonialism as practiced on blacks by whites. This confinement is of course arbitrary. There exists one large body of population, dispersed over the globe, yet easily identifiable, which answers to the label -- children. Dan Kunene has written of Africa:

The tragedy of Africa, the basic problem that confronts us, is that of the contemptuous rejection of the African by the European...Europe came to Africa and to various degrees Europeanised Africa, but totally refused to be Africanized by Africa. (1970: 12)

As far as the white man is concerned, it is absolutely important that the black man should be seen to aspire to be white, for this proves his (the white man's) alleged superiority and correspondingly, the alleged inferiority of the black man, and thus justifies the parent-child protector-protege relationship. (1970: 15; emphasis is mine).

It is hardly an accident that the coloniser-colonised relationship has most often been viewed through the example of the paternal-filial paradigm. The assumptions which underlie

the educational system of any society with an inherent colonial mentality, a system through which that society attempts to acculturate and indoctrinate its young, bear striking similarity to the colonial pattern. Basically it goes like this: "I know it all; you know nothing; I am big and strong; you are small and weak; I control the economy; you are my dependent; my cultural values are proven supreme; yours do not even exist; you have to acquire them first -- from me; I know what is good for you; you don't; you cannot regulate yourself; I'll do it for you; for I am the father and you are my son...and you are nothing until I have made you in my own image".

If it sounds like a sad caricature, look again. Tools of coercion may vary. The withdrawal of approval may substitute for brute force. Moral pressure -- that nefarious and harmful device so effectively wielded by parents and societies alike -- may replace corporal punishment. Grading, public humiliation, and social rejection are just as Pavlovianly-effective as the cane. "Progressive" benevolence is just as repressive, in its underlying premise, as stern "traditionalism". Robert Hutchins and Max Rafferty are but twin sides of the same coin -- as long as the basic rejection of the values of the child *qua* child persists. In fact, just as in Africa, the "enlightened" colonial phase is much more burdensome to the oppressed: coercion is disguised, the enemy is invisible; soon the oppressive attitudes are internalised -- there's nobody and nothing tangible to resist; yet, the oppressive presence inside mounts; one has become one's own jailer.

And the ultimate weapons are just around the corner, else one has forgotten: "Bring the cops on campus and bash the impudent loafer's head!" Oppression seldom pauses in front of the oppressor's door. In a society where property rights take precedence over human rights, where man is a means of production rather than an end in himself, where raw power, coercion and the deprivation of freedom are the most legitimate tools in the transaction of human affairs, the depth and breadth of alienation of the young -- once they've got the real message -- is far from surprising. The young are at the very bottom of the social pecking order. They are rejected *qua* young, much as Blacks are rejected *qua* black. They are legitimized only after relinquishing their soul. And since the school systems are the tools through which a society coerces its young, the current universal uprising against them is not just a symptom -- it is the very crux of the matter.

7. Colonial Womanhood

The young are by no means the only members of the colo-

nialist's own household to be systematically denegated by the colonial system. The feminine half of the colonial population is just as much a victim of oppression, under one guise or another. As in the case of Blacks and the young, the ambiguities and surface tokenism so characteristic of the liberal democracy, have served, so it seems, only to deepen the frustration of women in their quest for full personhood. The underlying colonial message has changed only very little: "I control the economy; you are my dependent; I am big and strong; you are small and frail; you are not worth much on your own -- until you get married and become someone else's appendage; then you bathe in *his* glory, adopt his values, carry his name, bear his children, play his games, cater to his needs, anticipate his moods, support his ego, and submit to his desires".

The school, the family and (more recently) the ubiquitous media, have joined hands in subverting women's self-confidence, independence and sense of worth. The instruments of coercion are more subtle here (after all, this is the frail, fair sex), the message may be less explicit or garbled at times, but it seldom fails to sink home. And else you forget, turn on the tube and watch the sanctimonious footage of the candidate for political office, accompanied by his smiling, straining, tired woman, the proverbial self-denying mother and wife, a means but never an end in herself, an instrument in games of power or pleasure, but never a true partner in exhilaration.

8. Postscript on Africa

Cultural and linguistic colonialism is a phenomenon of the mind and soul. A nation is as secure and healthy as are the minds and souls of its people. The fact that consciousness is not a tangible commodity should not obscure this truth. Trading the consciousness of the people for more tangible gains, be those illusory or real, is in the final reckoning a horribly unfair exchange. The arguments against deserting the colonial language in Africa *can* be answered. The answer depends in part on change of consciousness. To a great extent, it depends on money. The unsuitability argument is either fallacious or easily remedied -- every African language possesses the derivational mechanisms through which an infinitely large lexicon, technical, educational, conceptual, and administrative, may be produced. The deep logical structure of every known African language is just like that of English. The linguist has known this for a while now; let the people know. The problem of bringing a vernacular up to date is mostly of money and engineering. This has been shown in Israel, with Hebrew, and in Tanzania with Swahili.

The issue of national unity is very significant in the

African context. It is vexing -- but is it really helped by the systematic alienation and de-culturation of the entire population? In the long run, I doubt that very much. And as I have said above, the price paid for the benefits, even if real, may outweigh them. A possible first step in a country with no clear majority language, could be a viable dual educational system, through which the colonial language is gradually shifted from first national medium to a mere required second language. In countries such as Rwanda, Burundi, Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland, Somalia, Ethiopia, and maybe others, all of which are closer to a monolingual situation, there is absolutely no excuse for paying the high penalties associated with linguistic colonialism. I doubt very much that the same will not eventually prove true for the rest of Africa.

Footnotes

1. I am indebted to John Davis and Dan Kunene for hours of stimulating discussion and to Dan Kunene and Mubanga Kashoki for permission to quote at length from their papers.
2. For the title of this section I am indebted to Jerry Farber (1969). In a way, what I say here is an extension of what he said earlier.

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