

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE AS A DISCOURSE OF DECOLONIALITY: AN EXAMINATION OF SIMON MWANSA KAPWEPWE'S POEMS IN "AFRIKA TWASEBANA"

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ABSTRACT

Poetry has always been a significant aspect of communication in African societies. It is used as a medium of instruction from generation to another. The British colonisation that lasted for more than seventy years in Zambia had far reaching consequences that affected the social, political, and economic aspects of the indigenous people. As a way of countering colonialism, Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe wrote poems in Bemba to educate the local people on the ills and the hypocrisy of colonialism that occurred in Africa in the 19th Century. This paper analyses five selected poems in Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe's "Afrika Twasebana" as a tool for decoloniality in post-colonial Zambia. Anchored on the decolonial perspective of Ngugi Wa Thiongo as a theoretical binocular to explain Kapwepwe's poetry as a form of decoloniality. The paper used a qualitative approach, document analysis and thematic analysis as its methodological orientation. This paper argues that Kapwepwe used indigenous language (Bemba) as a tool to fight against colonialism among the Bemba of Zambia.

Keywords: Kapwepwe. Poetry, knowledge. Resistance. Coloniality. Decoloniality

A LÍNGUA INDÍGENA COMO DISCURSO DE DECOLONIALIDADE: UM EXAME DOS POEMAS DE SIMON MWANSA KAPWEPWE EM "AFRIKA TWASEBANA"

RESUMO

A poesia sempre foi um aspecto significativo da comunicação nas sociedades africanas. É usado como meio de instrução de geração em geração. A colonização britânica que durou mais de setenta anos na Zâmbia teve consequências de longo alcance que afetaram os aspectos sociais, políticos e económicos dos povos indígenas. Como forma de combater o colonialismo, Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe escreveu poemas em Bemba para educar a população local sobre os males e a hipocrisia do colonialismo que ocorreu em África no século XIX. Este artigo analisa cinco poemas selecionados em "Afrika Twasebana" de Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe como uma ferramenta para a decolonialidade na Zâmbia pós-colonial. Ancorado na perspectiva decolonial de Ngugi Wa Thiongo como binóculo teórico para explicar a poesia de Kapwepwe como forma de decolonialidade. O artigo utilizou como orientação metodológica a abordagem qualitativa, análise documental e análise temática. Este artigo argumenta que Kapwepwe utilizou a língua indígena (Bemba) como ferramenta para lutar contra o colonialismo entre os Bemba da Zâmbia.

Palavras-chave: Kapwepwe. Poesia. Conhecimento. Resistência. Colonialidade. Descolonialidade

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1 INTRODUCTION

This article explores some of the poems that were written by Simon Kapwepwe's poems in *Afrika Twasebana* (Africa we are Embarrassed) in Bemba as a decolonial tool in the fight against colonialism in Africa. Although African literary and historical texts have existed alongside western knowledge, they remain marginalised in the main streams of knowledge production (Mkhize,2020). This is because knowledge is produced from the social, political, cultural, and material worlds the people inhabit (Rangan, 2022). Apart from being a form of art and aesthetic, poetry has always been used as a tool of resistance by the oppressed and the politically excluded in society from the time of the Greek classics up to now (GETZ, 2002; de Medeiros, 2018; Rice and Hamdy, 2016). It has been used to denounce social inequalities, injustices, and abuse of power in society (KHAN, FARAZ; AFRIN, 2021).

Poets of resistance wrote to the public to agitate for change against the ills that were happening in society at a particular period in history. The works of poetry provided insight into the social, political, and economic environment of society (Godsell,2019). Consequently, Paulo De Medeiros (2018, p. 83) has argued that "all poetry, all literature, is site and history specific". The poets spoke for the voiceless and vulnerable in society. Paulo De Medeiros (2018, p. 82) contends that "for it has always been one of the roles of literary representation and of the poetic voice to speak to power, that is, to denounce the abuses of power that constantly threaten to engulf human societies".

According to Daniel Olowookere (2013) poetry, unlike prose, it is considered Indigenous in Africa. Before the advent of writing, the bards/griots were the custodian of these texts in oral form termed oral poetry. Examples of poetry in Africa included ritual hunting, work songs, complex verbal/oral forms like incantatory poetry, chants and praises (OLOWOOKERE, 2013). Modern African poetry emerged in the 1950s in Africa and has evolved tremendously across generations (IRELE, 2020; OLAOLUWA, 2008; TUTUOLA, 2015; EMEZUE 2014).

Like in other African countries, a poetry of resistance existed as a discourse against colonialism Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) due to the harsh experiences of colonialism. The local people were unhappy because the British colonial government disrupted the local economy through the imposition of a cash economy and wage labour (SANTEBE, 2015; TEMBO, 2016). Thus, the local people were forced to work so that they could pay taxes and raise revenue for the colonial project (RÖNNBÄCK; BROBERG, 2022). Those who did not comply were punished heavily by whipping them severely in public and chaining them (ROTBURG, 1965). When tax was evaded and resisted, other techniques used included taking wives and holding them as prisoners until taxes were paid, "...and seizing a wide variety of assets in lieu of unpaid taxes" (FREDERIKSEN, 2010, p.122). The involvement of Britain in the First and Second World Wars increased the demands to pay tax by the people of Northern Rhodesia (TEMBO, 2016). This forced the Africans to travel great distances to the Copperbelt Province of Zambia, Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and South Africa to sell their labour to raise taxes, leaving villages depopulated of male labour, and working in mines was dangerous (GELFAND, 1961; VAN ONSELEN, 1976; FREDERIKSEN, 2010; DANDULE, 2012; TEMBO, 2015). Thus, poetry become handy as a means of communication in African communities at communal gatherings.

Further, prior to independence, the local people were put into native reserves so that they could be pushed out of agricultural production in Northern Rhodesia (VICKERY, 1985). Due to overcrowding the soil became degraded and the yields for farming were poor. This forced Africans to seek for employment so that they could survive. The Africans were pushed out from the margins of land that was fertile to live in crowded reserves (CHIPUNGU,1992). The colonial government also curtailed those economic activities which discouraged Africans

from engaging in wage labour (FREDERIKSEN, 2010). It is these cruel experiences that made poets to talk about the evils of colonialism in Africa.

Apart from the cruel experiences of colonialism Walima Tuesday Kalusa (2022) argued that colonialism brought about cultural erosion in Northern Rhodesia. For example, Karen Tranberg Hansen (2023) noted that the Africans who went to work in the mines in mining towns in Rhodesia and South Africa admired Europeans clothes and other goods. The films that were played in cinemas and social events contributed to the demand of European goods by Africans (KALUSA, 2022; HANSEN, 2023). The huge demand for modern clothes enticed African girls in the Copperbelt into prostitution to earn money to buy and dress like Europeans and ignore their traditional values (KALUSA, 2022). Europeans sold clothes, accessories, bicycles, beds, radio sets and other goods on credit to the local people (KALUSA, 2022). Thus, it was such conditions that made African poets to author poems to caution the local people not to forget their traditional values.

Arising from the legacy of colonialism summarised above, poetry of the 1950s and 1970s in Africa and Asia focused on the anti-colonial struggle (OLAOLUWA 2008). The poets bemoaned the evils of colonisation such as loss of land and resources due to colonialism. They spoke against the policies and institutions of the colonial government in their colonies. Setu Chelliah (2017, p.251) noted that “resistance to oppressive regime was prompted by the perception of the writer as the sentinel of his times as well as his urge to communicate to his readers, how so ever few anywhere so ever scattered”. Among the Zambian writers who championed anti-colonial discourse in his literary works was Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe.

2 CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY TO SIMON MWANSA KAPWEPWE: LIFE HISTORY AND LITERARY WORKS

Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe (henceforth Kapwepwe) was born on 12th April 1922 in Chinsali District in Northern Province of Zambia, then Northern Rhodesia (CHINTONTOLO, 1991, MWANAKATWE, 1994, MUMBA, 2012, KANGWA, 2021). He was from the Bemba royal family and the youngest in the family of six. His father worked as a prison warden. Kapwepwe grew up during the time of the British colonial administration in Northern Rhodesia and had the first-hand experience of colonialism and socio-cultural practices of the Bemba people of Zambia (KAUNDA, 2016).

Kapwepwe started school at Ilondola Mission by Catholic missionaries and later went to Mwenzo Mission in Isoka District and Lubwa Mission by the United Free Church of Scotland (KANGWA, 2021). It was at Lubwa Mission where he met the would-be first Zambian president Kenneth David Kaunda who became a long-life friend, and other Zambian freedom fighters like John Malama Sokoni, Hyden Dingiswayo Banda, Lameck Goma, Kapasa Makasa and Wesley Nyirenda (IPENBURG, 1991; KANGWA, 2021). While at Lubwa, the mission school’s aim was to provide education, they ended up preparing some of the young African to be a freedom fighter (KANGWA, 2021). Some of missionaries and Kapwepwe were not happy with some European missionaries who accepted the colour bar and other oppressive colonial policies. Hence, they spoke against the oppressive colonial policies in Northern Rhodesia. The colour bar referred to the colonial policy that prevented Africans from mixing with white settlers (KANGWA, 2021).

In 1948, Kapwepwe began teaching at Wusakile in Kitwe in the Copperbelt Province. The province was a highly urbanised, industrialised and was known as an area where racism and discrimination against African people was prevalent (KANGWA, 2022). The racial prejudice led to the political conscientisation of Kapwepwe. While on the Copperbelt he began attending political meetings for Africans at the Welfare Societies where he eventually became a Welfare Assistant with Kitwe Municipal Council. Due to his contributions and commitment,

Kapwepwe was given a scholarship to go and study in India in 1951 with the backing of Godwin Akashambatwa Mbikusita Lewanika the then unionist and would-be future Litunga (King) of Barotseland. While Kapwepwe was in India, he studied leather technology, pottery, bookkeeping and journalism. Other notable Zambian freedom fighters that went with Kapwepwe to India were Wesley Nyirenda and Nalumino Mundia (MOONO, 2015). When he returned to Northern Rhodesia in 1955, he found the nationalist struggle was in full swing and he joined Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula and Kenneth Kaunda for the liberation cause against colonialism in Northern Rhodesia (LARMER, 2011). As opposed to Nkumbula, Kapwepwe and Kaunda pursued an aggressive nationalist policy for the independence of Northern Rhodesia, for the attainment of independence and this led to growing calls to oust Nkumbula as leader of the struggle (MOONO, 2015).

When Northern Rhodesia gained independent in 1964, Kapwepwe was appointed Minister of Home Affairs (MOONO, 2015). In 1966, he became Vice-president of Zambia (LARMER, 2011). However, there was intense competition on who should lead the nationalist party after independence. Moono (2015) notes that Kapwepwe always had interest in ascending to power. However, in August 1969, Kapwepwe quit as the Vice-president after threats of a vote of no-confidence led by leaders from Eastern Province of Zambia. Mile Larmar (2011) noted that formed his own political party called United Progressive Party, abbreviated as UPP. The members of the UPP were later arrested and detained on suspicion of receiving support from Rhodesia, South Africa and Portuguese-controlled Mozambique and Angola (LARMER, 2011). He was arrested in August 1971 and stayed in prison without trial until 31st December 1972. The coming of UPP on the political scene threatened to sweep UNIP's support from the Bemba dominated Luapula, Northern, and Copperbelt Provinces (MOONO, 2015). Kapwepwe claimed that Bembas were being victimised (CHALWE, 1991). He re-joined the United National Independence Party (UNIP) in 1977. He died on 26th January 1980 in Chibuluma Mine Hospital in Zambia (DAILY MAIL, 2022).

Apart from his political contribution during the nationalist struggle and after independence, Kapwepwe was one of the prolific writers in Bemba language (CHINTONTOLO, 1991). The other Bemba writers include Stephen Mpashi, B. S. C. Nkunika, E. Kasonde, P. M. B. Mushindo, A.R Chibamba, W. B. Chilanga, I. N. Chipingu and F. Tanguy (CHINTONTOLO, 1991). Kapwepwe's works were also used by the Ministry of Education (Zambia) for the language curriculum for the Bemba Literature Syllabus for secondary schools in Zambia. Some of his renowned works include: *Utunyonga Ndimi* (Tongue Twisters), *Shalapo Canicandala* (Goodbye Colonialism), *Ubutungwa mu Jambo Jambo* (Freedom in Jambo Jambo) *Afrika Kuti Twabelela Uluse lelo Tekuti Tulabe* (Africa we can forgive you, but we can never forget) (CHINTONTOLO, 1991). Kapwepwe's writing prowess and influence on readers was so immense that in 1959, he was arrested by the colonial government for writing against the colonial government and for being involved in political activities (DAILY MAIL, 2022). Thus, it can be argued, that Kapwepwe's work was a form of resistance against colonialism in Africa.

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section discusses the concept of knowledge in relation to power, resistance and indigenous language as projected by different scholars and studies.

2.2 KNOWLEDGE AS POWER

Michel Foucault (2007) opines that power is intertwined with forms of knowledge, language, and representation. Thus, for several decades, debates on the politics of knowledge

have centred on knowledge as power (CORTES-RAMIREZ, 2014; AZAMFIREI, 2016; FOUCAULT, 1970). Further, Leonard Azamfirei (2016) argues that Francis Bacon's famous expression that "knowledge is power" meant that having knowledge was the same as having influence in society. Similarly, for Foucault (1970), those who control knowledge also have power. For example, Foucault (1977, p. 27) contends that "power and knowledge directly imply one another; there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations". Thus, the one who holds the channels of discourse or language, also hold the power (AGBEDO, KRISAGBEDO, EZE, 2012). The implication is that knowledge legitimates power and, conversely, as Hans Weiler (2011) theorises, knowledge is legitimated by power. As PoReSo (The Research Group Power, Resistance and Social Change) (2020) equally contends, producing knowledge is a way of exercising power (PoReSo, 2020). Arising from the theoretical perspectives on the relationship between knowledge and power, this paper sought to find out how Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe's poetry was a form of knowledge that could counter colonialism in Northern Rhodesia.

2.3 KNOWLEDGE AS RESISTANCE

Besides the concept of knowledge and power, the current enquiry further explored Kapwepwe's poems from the vantage of knowledge as resistance. According to Daniel Innerarity (2012) and PoReSo (2020), knowledge as resistance is dependent on power. Emphasizing on the role of power, PoReSo (2020, p.172) notes that knowledge as resistance "can also nourish as well as undermine it". In the same vein, Daniel Innerarity (2012) observes that if knowledge strengthened power, it also weakened power, creating a paradox of the nature of the relationship between knowledge and power. When another knowledge form that was not based on authoritative knowledge is produced power shifted to the people without it (Hira,2020). Hence, there has been a growing pluralisation, diffusion and (de)monopolising of knowledge such that several ways of knowing had appeared and able to confront colonial government projects (Innerarity, 2012). Drawing from an array of existing literatures on language and power as inspiration, this article investigated if Kapwepwe's poetry provided agency to speak against colonialism.

2.4 INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AS RESISTANCE

From the second half of the twentieth century, Hans Weiler (2011) argues that the concept of knowledge has undergone a lot of changes and become a centre of critique. Hans Weiler (2011) contends that the results of the controversy have opened the space for recognition of knowledge that is non-western and literary analysis of social reality. The propositions by Weiler (2011) are similar to what Michel Foucault speaks of as "the rehabilitation of 'subjugated knowledges ... a whole set of knowledges that once were disqualified as inadequate to their task' and that have now acquired new validity as 'people's knowledge'" (Foucault, 1980, p. 82 in Weiler, 2011). Further, PoReSo (2020, p.172) notes that 'indigenous knowledge' is used to both resist and legitimise state power. For example, Ngugi wa Thiong'o is one of the literary scholars that uses indigenous language to write about the ills of colonialism in Africa. He was later arrested and branded by the government as being tribal and anti-national (MLAMA, 1990). For Ngugi, European languages were seen as threats that Africans needed to guard against to prevent the erosion of African languages (ARAB, 2019). Using his nonfictional and fictional works, Ngugi wa Thiong'o is considered Kenya's spokesperson for the mass commoners who spoke against colonialism (ARAB, 2019). Arising from the reviewed literature on Indigenous

languages as a form of resistance, it can be noted that Indigenous knowledge plays a key role in resisting colonialism in African societies.

3 THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL LOCALE

This article finds expression and agency in the theoretical perspective of decoloniality by Ngugi Wa Thiongo (1986) who posits that the use of Indigenous language offers a decolonial possibility in Africa. This is because, Ngugi (1986) notes that colonialism took control of the mind of the colonised. The domination of a people's language by the languages of the colonial masters was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonized in Africa (NGUGI, 1986).

To Ngugi (1986), colonialism's most critical area of domination was the mental universe of the colonised, the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world. Ngugi (1986 :160) argues that colonialism's dominance involved two aspects of the same process: "the destruction or the deliberate undervaluing of a people's culture, their art, dances, religions, history, geography, education, orature and literature, and the conscious elevation of the language of the colonizer".

Riding on Ngugi (1986), other theorists argue that decolonial perspectives seek to undo the ills of Western epistemology or Universalism (MINGOLO, 2011; NDLOVU-GATSHENI, 2012). Thus, it is particularly important to place intervention strategies aimed at revalorizing indigenous languages in Africa as an agency of decolonisation (AGBEDO, KRISAGBEDO, EZE, 2012, p.173). Colonialism undermined indigenous knowledges or knowledges that were produced outside the West. Moyo and Dube (2022, p. 5) argue that "Western knowledge has continued to perpetuate "epistemicides, linguicides and historicides" on the African continent that has led to marginalisation of knowledges, erasure and distortion of the histories". Consequently, this influenced knowledge production and dissemination in former colonies and created unequal power relations and hierarchies (SHIVA; MANYIKA, 2018) by denying the epistemological value of indigenous knowledge systems (MOYO; GONYE, 2021). Ngugi (1981, p.13) notes that "there is a dual nature of language: for communication and as a carrier of culture." Thus, indigenous languages are key in resisting colonialism. Mental liberation in Africa has often been seen in terms of a deterministic relationship between language, culture and cognition (MAZRUI, 1993). By including indigenous languages and knowledges, they provide for subjugated knowledges in Africa.

To address the question of poetry as a conduit of decoloniality in post-colonial Zambia, this paper was framed within the methodological locale of the qualitative approach as confined by the epistemological and ontological dimensions of the constructivist paradigm (CRESWELL, 2008; KUMAR, 2011). A document study was used specifically in which a sample size of five (05) poems by Kapwepwe were selected and analysed to find out the kind of knowledge he was producing. Sarah Godsell (2019) notes that apart from being a tool that can be used to decolonise knowledge in society, poetry is an alternative way of investigating the truth evidence, narrative, and perspective in society. Poetic discourse provides history and a space for marginalised voices on sensitive topics in society (GODSELL, 2019).

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The poems in "Afrika Twasebana" are written in Bemba, a Bantu language coded 'M42' by Malcom Guthrie (1948) and classified by Joseph Greenberg (1965) as a language found in the Bantoid sub-group of the Benue-Congo Group of the Niger-Congo Branch of the Niger-Kordofanian family of African languages. Across the poems, the thematic content spans from how foreign intrusion came to Africa through exploration by European explorers in South

Africa and expanded in the interior of Africa. Kapwepwe's "Afrika Twasebana" caricatures a South Africa from the time of Van Riebeeck's, British occupation of South Africa and Africa in general; activities of the Dutch, the relationship between Africans, the Dutch and the British, the Anglo-Boer wars; and the institutionalisation of apartheid in South Africa. In the poems, Kapwepwe reveals the plight of Africans who were dispossessed of land, natural resources, maltreated and dehumanized because of colonisation in South Africa and Northern Rhodesia.

The subsequent section of the findings presents and discusses findings on selected poems from Kapwepwe's "Afrika Twasebana" as perceived through the theoretical lens of Ngugi's (1986) theory of decoloniality.

POEM 1: Twaingililwa (*We have been ambushed*)

AFRIKA – abaana bandi aba Hottentots naba Saan (Bushmen)
mumyaka amakumi-yatatu Bapoka CAPE – capwa nokupwa.
Amabunu yayambako yalafuntuka ukulola kuntanishi kukupoka naimbi
impanga.
Batemwa basamwa pantu uko batulile nikubusha kabili
ubwansholololo.

Translation:

AFRICA – my children the Hottentots and the Saan (Bushmen) in a
period of thirty years the CAPE was taken and that was it.
The Dutch have started expanding into the interior to snatch more land.
They are happy and rejoicing because where they came from is total
slavery.

The poem "Twaingililwa" (We have been ambushed) above uses the narrative voice of Africa as the personified continent granted human attributes of a mother who has children namely the Hottentots (Khoikhoi) and Bushmen. The author (Kapwepwe) distances himself from the narratorial voice and focalisation in the poem and grants persona qualities to the African continent. By backgrounding his authorial voice and foregrounding the African continent, Kapwepwe's "Twaingililwa" (We have been ambushed) provides a tone and atmosphere of sorrow combined with bitterness that the continent laments that it was taken from the Hottentots and Bushmen by an outsider Jan Van Riebeeck. The tone and atmosphere of the poem presents anger and regret that looks upon at Africans as being too welcoming. By denying himself a direct authorial voice in "Twaingililwa" (We have been ambushed), Kapwepwe uses the poem as a discursive instrument of resistance and rebellion in which he presents the experiences of black people prior and at the onset of colonialism. This finding is in tandem with Oluwapelumi (2021, p.194), on the focus of poets of resistance who noted that "the poet presents the experiences of the black people, especially those of African ancestry in the globe, fared during the periods of slavery; slave trade denunciation and the eventually, during the period of European conquest of African colonies".

Furthermore, the absence of regular poetic form, rhythm and rhyme in "Twaingililwa" (We have been ambushed) add to the suspense and unpreparedness with which Van Riebeeck found the African man. Through the irregular rhythm and a diction that avoids words of force or resistance at the initial contact of Riebeeck and the Africans at the Cape of Good Hope, the poet uses the persona of Mother Africa to lament the docility of the African as a contributing factor to an easy colonisation of Africa. Africans are presented as naïve and very welcoming people who, for example, welcomed Vasco Da Gama in 1497 and later Van Riebeeck, with the latter being welcomed by the African king by the name of King Gogosa. Upon his welcome, Riebeeck started a war with the locals, and it marked the beginning of colonialism.

Instead of using the English language, the persona in “*Twaingililwa*” (We have been ambushed) uses Bemba. The linguistic choice and repurposing of one of the languages of the oppressed transforms Bemba from being the objectified and peripherised language to being the language of agency and transformative decolonial thought. This tallies with Foucault (2007) who argues that there exists a symbiotic relationship between language and power. The choice of Bemba also displaces English’s monopoly over knowledge while successfully pluralising and decentralising knowledge and making it not only fragile but also debatable to the target audiences. By using Bemba, the poet uses the persona in the poem to de-escalate the domination of the oppressed people’s language by the language of the coloniser and effectively undo the ills of Western epistemology and/or universalism (cf. Ngugi, 1986). Kapwepwe uses the knowledge of one’s language in “*Twaingililwa*” (We have been ambushed) to resurrect the silenced knowledge about how Africa was first colonised at the Cape by Van Riebeeck.

POEM 2: Palupili (*On top of the mountain*)

Afrika – bushe walishiba ifyaba mumpanga yobe
 nokucila muno SOUTH AFRICA?
Wila ipusha imbwa ngeifwele!
 Nalishiba kabili ecileta nabasula banobe.
 Akubula fyuma fyandi ngatabaisako
 Ico balefwaya mulopa wandi necuma candi
 Isa kuno umone - twanina pa *Table Mountain*

Translation:

Africa – do you know what is in your land
 More than what is just in SOUTH AFRICA?
 Don’t ask a dog whether it’s dressed up!
 I know because that’s what brings your fellow assholes.
 If it were not for my treasures they would not have come.
 What they want is my blood and my treasure.
 Come and see – we climb up the Table Mountain.

Unlike the first poem “*Twaingililwa*” (We have been ambushed) which uses a single persona, “*Palupili*” (On top of the mountain) uses three persona engaged in dialogic discourse within the poem. The first persona is the unnamed entity whose focalisation provides him or her with a first person unlimited omniscient vantage point of both Africa (the second persona) and the coloniser (third persona). The first persona is the African who is enlightened and knows the wealth that Africa has. He, therefore, calls the third persona (the coloniser) an asshole for the latter is only after the wealth that the former is blessed through the African continent (second persona).

The poem also utilises Table Mountain – a well-known geographical feature of Cape Town – as a poetic synecdoche that also takes some metonymic properties by representing an enlightened view of Africa. In this case, a geographical feature is blended with language and theme to sharpen the poet’s discourse of resistance and enlightenment of the author about the real motives of colonialism.

Figure 1: The Table Mountain, Cape Town, South Africa

Source: Britannica, 2017.

As can be seen from Figure 1, the Table Mountain is an elevated point in Cape Town (a South African city initially called the Cape of Good Hope by the explorers and colonisers). In Kapwepwe’s “Palupili”, the Table Mountain takes the symbolic form of enlightened view because as one climbs on it, one looks at the fish, vegetation and other natural endowments that Africa has. This is complemented by a rhyme scheme consisting of front and back short vowels within the five-vowel system of the Bemba language, with a single alveolar nasal /n/ as the only consonant of the polysyllabic word ‘mountain’ whose post-penultimate syllabic coda ends in a consonant. Such a minimal use of the English language in “Palupili” (On the mountain) castrates the intellectual and academic prowess of the English language while empowering and decentralising knowledge through Indigenous languages (SEE NGUGI, 1986; INNERARITY, 2012; PORESO, 2020).

The findings further established that the theme of the historicity of colonialism and its evils is presented not only in Poem 1 “Twaingililwa” (We have been ambushed) and Poem 2 “Palupili” (On the mountain) but also in a few other poems not selected for analysis herein. These include the poem “Abangeleshi na Mabunu” (The English and the Dutch) where Christianity, and the arrival of English people at the Cape with their new rules against the Dutch which made the latter to migrate are talked about; and “Ukupoola” (an informal way of saying moving) which provides details about the trekkers and the heroic actions of Chaka the Zulu king. In all the poems, Kapwepwe adopts a narratorial disposition that seeks to negate the epistemicides, linguicides and historicides of Africa. The findings agree with Ngugi (1986) and Dube and Moyo (2022) who argue that the preservation of African identity resides in ensuring that Africa’s history, knowledge reservoir and languages must be preserved primarily through linguistic choices.

POEM 7: We muntunse wee! (*Oh what a man!*)

Mweba British cinshi mwishile mulefwaya? Nimondo.
Mweba German cinshi mulefwaya, nimondo!

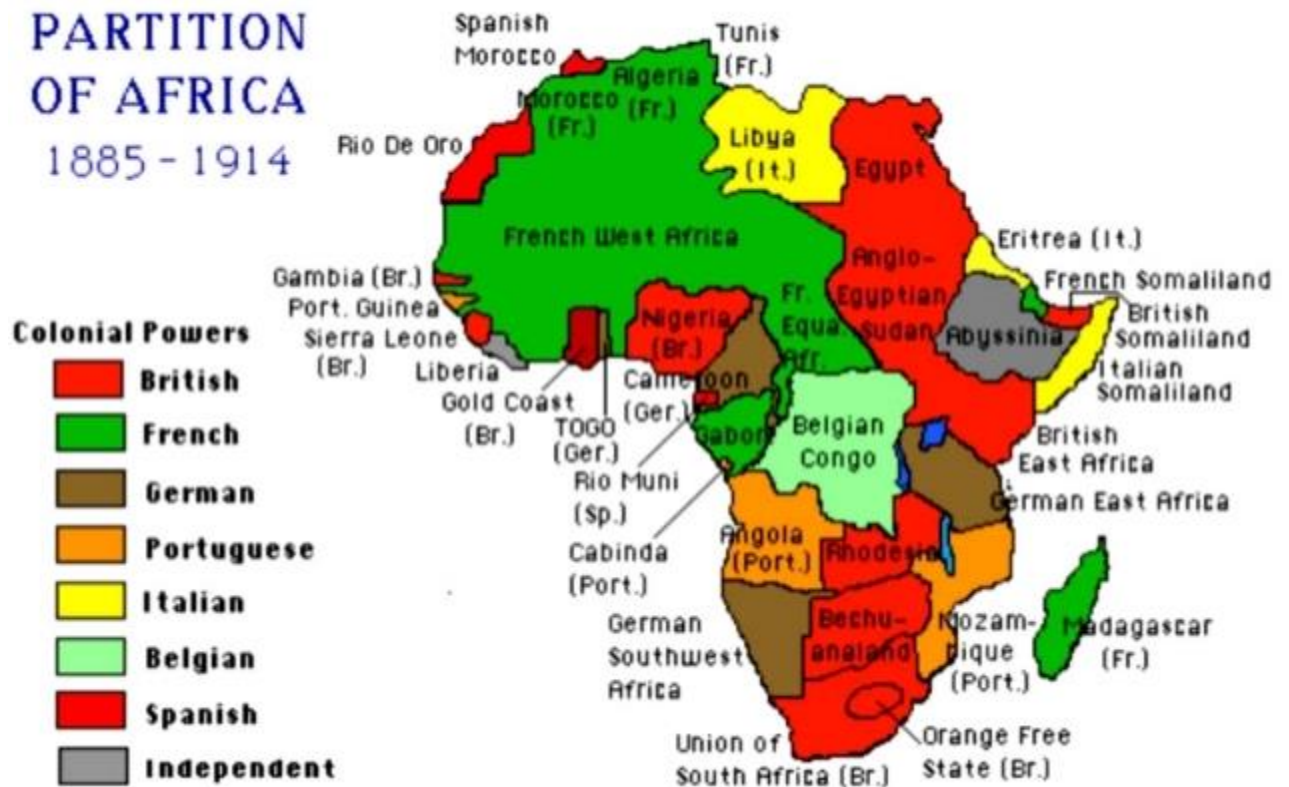
Mweba Italian cinshi mulefwaya, nimondo!
 Mweba Spanish cinshi mulefwaya, nimondo!
 Mweba Yudah naimwe bene nimondo!
 Nga imwe mweba Dutch, nimpanga nemondo!
 We mondo waleta ulwisula-mushi!

Translation:

You the British what have you come searching for? It's minerals.
 You the Germans what do you want, it's minerals!
 You the Italians what do you want, it's minerals!
 You the Spanish what do you want, it's minerals!
 You the Jews what do you want, it's minerals!
 And you the Dutch, it is land and minerals!
 Oh, minerals you have become the talk of the village!

The poem “We muntunse wee!” (Oh, what a man!) above chronicles the ills of colonialism attained through conquests and interests triggering such conquests of different parts of Africa just to get the mineral resources in Africa. Europe conquered Australia, America, and Africa, and took our treasure for their own benefit. In the poem, the speaker cites minerals as the root cause for conquests conducted in Africa. As Figure 2 shows below, Africa was partitioned into different colonies by different European exploitative countries because of its minerals. Among those named in the poem are the German, the Italian, the Jews, and the Dutch.

Figure 2: Partition of Africa 1885 – 1914



Source: Britannica, 2017.

Noticeable in Figure 2 is how the entire continent was partitioned for minerals by the British, the French, the German, the Italian and the Spanish, among others. Each of the

colonised part of Africa is rich in particular minerals. For example, Union of South Africa (now called South Africa was colonised by the Dutch and British) is rich in diamonds and gold; Angola (colonised by the Portuguese) is rich in oil, diamonds, copper, manganese and cobalt; Northern Rhodesia (now called Zambia was colonised by the British and is Africa's biggest producer of copper; French West Africa (now consisting of independent African states like Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal, Central Africa Republic, among others) was colonised by the French and the region is rich in oil, uranium, gold, among others; and Belgium Congo (now Democratic Republic of Congo) was occupied by Belgium and is said to be the richest country on earth by mineral endowment. Therefore, through a tone of grievance and repetitive rhyme containing the word "nimondo" (it is minerals) as epistrophe and alliteration marked by the word "Mweba..." (You the...) as anaphora, the persona in the poem exposes not only the target of colonialism but also the perpetrators of the vice. By using a Bantu language in the poem, the poem assumes the role of poetry of rebellion and emancipation from the linguicides and historicides of true African history.

The reason the British and other colonisers colonised us is further reiterated in Poem 11 of Kapwepwe's "Afrika Twasebana":

POEM 11: Africa Twatukwa ii (*Africa we have been insulted – part 2*)

Tabatupata pantu twalifiita iyoo.
 Nimpanga yesu batemwako fwebene twanunka.
 Tabatupata pantu tatwaishiba Lesa wabo iyoo!
 Nimpanga batemwako nokupata fwebene.
 Tabatupata pantu tatwasambilila, iyoo.
 Nimpanga balefwaya pantu nasho nimbutuma
 Nangu batwita amashina ayabi: Native, Bantu, non-white
 Iyo nimpanga eyalenga twinikwe amashina ayakushita.

Translation:

They don't hate us because we are black.
 It is our land they like we the owner's stink.
 They don't hate us because we don't know their God.
 It's our land they like hating us the owners.
 They don't hate us because we are unschooled.
 It is land they want because they are also illiterate.
 Even though they call us ugly names: Native, Bantu, non-white.
 It is land that has caused us to be called bought names.

Like in Poem 7 "We muntunse wee!" (*Oh, what a man!*) discussed above, "Africa Twatukwa ii" (*Africa we have been insulted – part 2*), the poet asserts that the Dutch and other colonisers are thieves who stole land from Africans. The author further highlights the evils of colonialism perpetuated by orchestrators of apartheid. These evils included, among others, the land alienation agenda (e.g. the Native Land Act, 1913, Native Affairs Act, 1920 and Native Urban Areas Act, 1923 and Native Trust, 1924 in South Africa and Northern Rhodesia (Chipungu, 1992).

POEM 10: Africa Twatukwa (*Africa we have been insulted – part 1*)

In poem 10 (which constitutes Chapter 10 of Kapwepwe's "Afrika Twasebana"), the poet longs for a great African leader such as Shaka (written as Chaka in this book) or Dingani, to come and save Africans from the oppressors. The poem flows as follows:

Mwe Mabunu mwe baba nolukoba-nkombo.
 Ngomwina Afrika kuti abashani umwana wakwa Ham?
 Bushe Ham mupashi wesu?
 Bushe Ham cikolwe cesu?
 Bushe Ham wamwani?
 Bushe lubalinshi muno Afrika Ham afyalilwe?

Translation:

You the Dutch with cup holders.
 How can an African be a son of Ham?
 Is Ham our spirit?
 Is Ham our ancestor?
 Whose household is Ham?
 From which African side was Ham born?

Using anaphora through the word “Bushe...”, the above poem manages to probe the question of African ancestry. The poet uses the speaker of the person to enlighten Africans that they are not descendants of the cursed Ham of the Bible. The poem seeks to negate the Biblical interpretation by the colonisers that the white man is blessed while an African is cursed. The poet chooses to use a local language to (un-, re) educate, decolonise, and ultimately liberate the African mind from mental slavery. By targeting the mind, the poet wittingly uses the same strategy proposed by Bob Marley in the song “Redemption song” where he identifies mental slavery and argues that none but the people themselves can emancipate ourselves from mental slavery. The poem decentralises knowledge while challenging mainstream knowledge by providing and encouraging an African voice through indigenous languages.

From the poems considered for this study, the findings of this study revealed that Kapwepwe’s “Afrika Twasebana” is a constellation of poems that are a form of resistance. They talk about the process of colonisation in Africa and makes people aware of the activities of the colonial regime. The poems warn people not to be naive but demonstrate bravery by speaking against the ills of colonialism in Africa. The poet demonstrates bravery through a discourse of colonialism and how it percolated the interior of Africa at the Cape in South Africa. Kapwepwe’s work can be categorised as the work of second-generation poets in Africa. The second generation of poets centred their work on the ills of colonialism in the African societies. The poetry during this period was a reaction against colonialism. It was the harsh impact of colonialism that moved poets to write about the unfair treatment that Africans were subjected to during the colonial period (Olaoluwa, 2008). Some poets focused on affirming the African personality in their reaction to colonial views, while at the same time pointing out ways to cultural reclamation (Galafa,2018). For example, Okot p’Bitek’s “Song of Lawino” and “Song of Ocol”, Senghor’s negritude poetry, Neto’s poetry, among others, are works of this generation projected in this direction (Olaoluwa, 2008).

From the theoretical perspective of the use of indigenous language as a decolonial tool by Ngũgĩ (1986). By using his own language, Kapwepwe manages to promote and preserve knowledge of the local people which is key to the decolonisation process. Shiva and Manyika (2018) argue, one of key areas of decoloniality emphasises on the geopolitics of language and knowledge hegemony. This is because colonialism undermined indigenous knowledges or knowledges that were produced outside the West. In addition, the discussed poems above show that Kapwepwe’s poems are a production of silenced knowledges. Kapwepwe’s “Afrika Twasebana” provides a counter hegemonic discourse. The poet spoke against colonial rule in Africa. Thus, by producing poems that carried themes of anti-colonial government, the poet

promoted the subjugated knowledges then and now. In this regard, de Andrade Fortuna and de Souza Guedes (2020, p.36) have equally argued that “knowledge arises from the real world”.

The findings in this paper further concur with Martin Hewett (2004) who contends that knowledge and power is always accompanied by resistance; and Hanan Muneer Al Sheikh (2021) who opines that power is entrenched within different types of knowledge including religious, state and occupation power, with the determination to constrict tribal and paternal power of the social structure. However, when local people take agency to produce knowledge they can resist the authoritative forms of knowledge. Further, the findings of this study indicate that hegemony works by controlling knowledge and the production of knowledge (cf. Schroering, 2019). It is therefore logical to conclude that the poems analysed prove that decolonization of knowledge starts from the understanding that at one point in the past, “languages and subjectivities were denied the possibility of participating in the production, distribution, and organization of knowledge” (Mingolo, 2007, p. 492) and that the indigenous people can take agency to produce knowledge in their societies. Therefore, the findings of his study are consistent with Ngugi’s lens of decoloniality that indigenous languages play an important role in the process of resisting coloniality in Africa.

5 CONCLUSION

In summation, it can be argued that Kapwepwe’s “Afrika Twasebana” contributes to the knowledge on colonialism and its impact in Africa using indigenous language in Zambia. Though Kapwepwe’s work is based on South Africa, his work reveals the impact of colonialism in Africa as a whole. Using an indigenous language, Kapwepwe’s “Afrika Twasebana” used Bemba language as a way of alerting and warning the local people of ills of colonialism. His work promotes the use of indigenous languages as a way of upholding the African culture and resisting colonialism. Thus, Kapwepwe should be seen as a decolonial thinker, like Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiongo on the African continent. Kapwepwe’s poems were used as a tool of knowledge to subvert the institution of colonialism in Africa using Indigenous language (Ichibemba). The poet produced knowledge that is counter hegemonic discourse that was used in school curricula for Bemba in Zambia. Since schools play a significant role in facilitating the acquiring of knowledge values through the curriculum. However, the challenge is that most teachers and learners are not interested to teach and learn in Indigenous languages in Zambia (BANDA et al, 2022). Although Zambia has made strides on promoting and incorporating indigenous languages in the school curriculum by formulating policies such as the 1966 Act and 2013 Language Policy there is need to strengthen these policies and come up with effective strategies so that learners can benefit learning from indigenous language (BANDA, et al 2012; Mkandawire, 2017). Thus, curriculum designers and reform in Zambia should pay attention to ways the Indigenous languages can be promoted in schools and communities while grappling with the effects of globalisation which militating against erasure of indigenous languages in Africa.

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