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Post-colonial Study of Akachi Ezeigbo's Trafficked

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ABSTRACT

Post-colonial literature which has become a phenomenon for all nations examines, among others the anti-conquest narrative and the functional relations of social, cultural and political powers that sustained the tripartite governmental bodies of colonialism, post-colonialism and neo-colonialism. Since the colonialists viewed the masses as the 'Other' the well-being of the colonizers remained unchallenged as the nomenclature fluctuated from colonialists to post colonialists and to neo-colonialists. These named archetypal structures support all forms of corruption in which human trafficking and the inherent psychological trauma are apparently part. This paper examines post-colonialism in the Akachi Adimora Ezeigbo's Trafficked through the theoretical framework of post-colonialism.

The paper depicted the experience of the migrates in diasporas: ill-treatment of women: and also examined the ideology and practice of neocolonialism fixated on the ideology and practice of colonialism. The paper further portrayed the brazen corrupting influences of the post-colonialists and how they actively employed the 'Us-and Them' binary social relation to govern their community; which among others, are reflected on the realities of undue and illegal trafficking of young women prevalent in contemporary Nigerian society. The paper further observed that the post colonialists like their colonial masters and the neo-colonialists, use language as their most important vehicle to exercise powers through a mixture of coercion, persuasion, conflict and collaboration to imprison the colonized.

It is the view of this paper that any human-being has the potential for redemption however dark their situation, as exemplified in the lives of the Nneoma and Efe: some of the deported essentialists commercial sex workers who for instance, settled down to some craftsmanship and family lives, Nneoma further gained admission into the University to further her education. Also the teachers, who had not been paid in almost one year because of the strike action they embarked upon, engaged themselves in other lucrative businesses other than prostitution. The paper recommended that post colonialists should address the problems of unbridled corruption, mis-governance, fraud, exploitation, crimes, etc., by incorporating platforms of diversified economy for the gainful engagement of the teeming youth population; and establish maintenance schemes for the old especially the pensioners, in the likes of Ogukwe. It is the opinion of this paper that the government should be sensitive to the earnest demands of the subaltern majority, and the educational core curriculum should be technically based. And finally, many more NGOs should be founded and encouraged to offer skill acquisition to the youths.

Keywords:

Neo-colonialists, Subaltern majority, Diaspora, Strategic essentialist, Hybridity.

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Post-colonialism also denotes Mother Country's neocolonial control of the decolonized country, affected by the legalistic continuation of the economic, cultural and linguistic power relationships that controlled the colonial politics of knowledge (the generation, production, and distribution of knowledge) about the colonized peoples of the non-Western World.

Introduction:

A post-colonial study analyses, explains and responds to the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism as it affects the world at large, the nation and the individual. It speaks about the human consequences of external control and economic exploitation of native people and their lands; it also covers all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present. This is because there is a continuity of preoccupation throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression. (Ashcroft et al:2). Post colonialism questions and reinvents the manner in which a culture is being reviewed, thus challenging the narratives expounded during the colonial era as it effects the treatment of women, language, literature and humanity; it justifies the self-ascribed racial and cultural superiority of the Western world over the non-Western world. These self-ascribed 'civilizing mission,' proposes that some races and cultures have a higher purpose in life whereby the more powerful, more developed and more civilized races have the right to colonize other people, in the service to the noble idea of 'civilization' and its economic benefits, (<http://www.postcolonialweb.org/>). Authors in various literary genres represent this idea of 'civilization' to ascertain its economic benefits to the colonized since literature is conditioned by the socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural realities present in any given society. George Lukacs avers that: "literature and art should be a reflection of reality" ((Abrams :179), Nigeria is confronted by the ugly reality of modern day slavery: the trafficking of the

younger generation, especially the young women, an act which is predicated on the post-colonial civilization. Post-colonialism also denotes Mother Country's neocolonial control of the decolonized country, affected by the legalistic continuation of the economic, cultural and linguistic power relationships that controlled the colonial politics of knowledge (the generation, production, and distribution of knowledge) about the colonized peoples of the non-Western

World. (<http://www.postcolonialweb.org>). The above statement is germane to the interest of this paper, as it seeks to examine the effects of neocolonial control of the decolonized people of Nigerian as portrayed in Akachi Ezeigbo's *Trafficked*.

Post-colonial literature emerges when writers of colonized nations set out to produce their own body of literature that deal with the imperial front, the contact point between the colonizer and the colonized to portray a sense of loss or gain of national and cultural identity. Ashcroft et al believe that "... post-colonial writers were forced into the search for an alternative authenticity which seem to be escaping them, since the concept of authenticity itself was endorsed by a centre to which they did not belong and yet was continually contradicted by the everyday experience of marginality" (41). Such writers create conditions of imagined community on one hand, a unified homeland and a Diaspora on the other hand, to reflect their colonial history and experience in either the Administrative or Settler colonies. The cultural and religious assumptions of colonialist logic remain active practices in contemporary society and are the basis of the postcolonial therefore the neocolonial fixated attitude towards her former decolonized subjects.

Some critics have examined among other topics such as: 'Immigration', 'X-ray of the Contemporary society', 'Rhythm of violence' etc., in Akachi Ezeigbo's *Trafficked*, this paper finds the theory of post colonialism apt to present, explain and illustrate the ideology and

practice of post colonialists towards her former colonial subjects: an economical source of labour and raw materials. To this effect the paper depicts the experiences of the migrants in diasporas: ill-treatment of women: rape and abuse, women as merchandise, cultural colonization, prostitution as a preference, resistance, the deportees' homecoming. The paper also examines the ideology and practice of post-colonial ideology on: general unrest, corruption and poverty, gross negligence of the old and young, and effects on culture.

Synopsis of the novel *Trafficked*

Akachi Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* is the story of the illegal migration of young women from Lagos to London via Italy in search of jobs aided and abetted by the rich. The story is told in medias res and in the first-person point of view, with the use of flash-backs as a literary device to clearly link the past to the present and future. The story is set in various locations in Nigeria, Italy and London. Ezeigbo focuses on the social contexts in the migrants' country of origin which perhaps prompts the migrants' migration to include, corruption, poverty, lack of job opportunities for young graduates, incessant strike actions, violence, insecurity, and all other vices that make young women fall easy preys to the traffickers. The author also focuses on the experiences of migrants in the diasporas. Unfortunately, on arrival they realize that they were deceived but recruited mainly as commercial sex workers to slave for their masters. They also realize that they are shuffled as articles of trade being sold and bought by different masters and are moved like dice from one master to another and from an old location to a new. Ezeigbo furthermore centers on the experiences of the migrants and the mix reception they receive as deportees, and finally the deportees' self-definition or the lack of it.

Treatment of women: Rape and Abuse

The menace of trafficking is a global phenomenon which no country is exempt. In *Moring Yet On Creation Day*, Chinue Achebe

succinctly says: "writers who try to avoid the big social and political issues of contemporary society ... will end up being irrelevant" (78). In Ezeigbo's continued relevance, she portrays the callous maltreatment of women in the form of trafficking or illegal migration, where some young women for reasons of economic betterment, are taken from their geographical areas in Lagos for a prolonged stay or permanent settlement in Italy or London. "I went to Italy with a woman who promised to help me and some other girls to get jobs she said it was easy to get good jobs there and that we could migrate to Britain after a while if we wanted" (15), Nneoma, the protagonist laments. These migrants were also assured that they will have plenty of time to pay back their debts to the agency when they start earning money. At Murtala Mohammed International Airport, an unnamed woman travels out with them in place of Eddie and Maria, the local operators of the trafficking agency. Initially the traffickers at home Eddie and Maria try to establish the hegemony with the trafficked. The woman in question feels superior and benign to these subalterns but pretends to provide gratification to them. Eddie and Maria flatter the trafficked to acquire a false sense of self-worth – feeling important, superior, noble and high hope of some expected material benefits through their cooperation. Michel Foucault argues "that post-colonial discourses are where power and knowledge become intertwined. ... Pleasure and power do not cancel or turn back against each other; they seek out, overlap and reinforce one another" (89), the overlap of power and knowledge reinforce the innocence of the trafficked young women and the power of the traffickers in question.

The migrants only discover that are trafficked when they arrive the Diasporas and that the affairs of their lives are manipulated by others. Nneoma grieves:

There's a woman call MADAM Dollar – nothing comes between her and money. She owns us and the man whom we learn to call Captain, is

her body-guard. She keeps us prisoners in her flat. Life is hell in Rome – we are always walking in the night selling sex to Italian men and foreigners (129).

These subalterns are completely devastated by the life they are forced to live, they hit the nice street waiting for customers in winter, spring, summer and autumn; then come back at dawn to eat and sleep and the circle continues day in day out. Through essentialism and 'othering' the trafficked lose their identity as they imbibe an ideology of prostitution imposed on them by their colonizers. They suffer all forms of abuses. Nneoma laments:

I am often assaulted by Captain because I'm stubborn and bring in the least amount of money home. I sometimes refuse to cooperate with the customers especially when they demand positions I find despicable or when they refuse to use condom or make one of the other nasty demands ... when I am difficult the men beat me and throw me out their cars or kick me out of wherever they have taken me - sometimes in a car-park or a field or public garden. When this happens, I go home with little or no money. Madam raves at me, and Captain beats me up, but he makes sure he does not disfigure me, for this will mean loss of revenue for Madam Dollar (129).

Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin, White Mask*, describes "the nature of post colonialism as essentially destructive. Its societal effects – the imposition of a subjugating colonial identity – are harmful to the mental health of the native peoples ... the ideological essence of colonialism is the systematic denial of 'all attributes of humanity' of the colonized people" (250). These traffickers with fake names Madam Dollar and Captain have no kindness or humanity for these economic tools.

Treatment of women: Women as Merchandise:

The colonialists' power to buy and sell women regularly as merchandise and the horror of women used as commodities are devastating.

Nneoma bewails: "... as soon as we arrive, she [Madam Dollar] sells my friend. I have not set eyes on her since" (129). Efe, also one of the trafficked confesses: "Madam Gold sold me to a pimp – a white man – after four years of slaving for her. I worked for my 'new owner' for two years before I escaped. (100). Baron another trafficker, whose father is English and his mother a Nigerian buys Nneoma and other two young girls off Madam Dollar and migrates with them to London via France. While he puts out the other girls into brothels he domiciles Nneoma in his flat and instead of planting her on the streets, he brings in men to her. He rapes, beats and assaults her if she resists customers who demand oral or anal sex and when she insists on their use of condoms. Whenever Baron asks Nneoma to plait his thick glossy hair, it is call for him to violently rape her (94). Baron is a sadist. He has Nneoma under lock and key at home even in the car when they go shopping (130). He subconsciously constructs Nneoma as his alter-ego and yet the 'other', who owns no material possession. Edward Said describes the "'us-and-them binary social relation' as social construct which are mutually constitutive and cannot exist independent of each other, because each exists on account of and for the other" (76). The ambivalence between Baron (the colonizer and Nneoma and the other trafficked, the colonized) is that the colonizer sees the colonized as inferior yet exotically other, while colonized see the colonizer as enviable yet corrupt (Said:76).

Baron purchases Nneoma and two other trafficked girls from Madam Dollar, "thus cancelling my debt" (132), Nneoma says. She recalls the time Baron left her in a brothel for a few days while he travels to Nigeria and returns with two women who later disappear from the flat the following day. She suspects that "Baron must have sold them to pimps" (135). The act of being bought and sold and moved from one owner to another is dehumanizing. Fanon argues that "... such dehumanization is

achieved with the physical and mental violence, by which the colonialists mean to inculcate a servile mentality upon the natives" (250), this also buttresses the justification of the self-ascribed racial and cultural superiority of the colonizer over the subaltern.

Madam Dollar, Madam Gold, Captain, Baron and other pimps generally exploit the trafficked, they deny them the money due them in the pretext that they should first of all pay up their debts – their transportation and purchase prices - therefore they strip the essentialists of all resources. Vladimir Lenin describes colonial imperialism as a degenerate form of capitalism, which requires greater degrees of human exploitation to ensure continually consistent profit for investment (34). The experience of hostility, racism and being used capital goods is devastating for these unfortunate migrants caught up in modern day slavery.

Treatment of women: Cultural colonization:

When people migrate from one nation or from one culture to another, they carry their knowledge of culture and identity with them. "... On settling down in the new culture their cultural identity is likely to change and that encourages a degree of 'belonging' to the new culture" (Barzilai:44). Nneoma, Efe and the other trafficked young women are taken into diaspora where their identities are greatly altered in terms of language and culture. They are stowed away at the back of the plane during the journey and they are the last to disembark, without passports, without any identification (2-3), they have become faceless and nameless, complete loss of identity. Sometimes, while standing in the right area where other prostitutes line up, youths come shouting 'Putu! Putu!' At such moments, Nneoma cries: "I am completely overwhelmed by shame ... I am completely devastated by the kind of life I was forced to live; hit the street at night, waiting for customers (129-130). The colonizers experience cultural mingling and begin to adopt themselves to the necessities

and the opportunities of oppressive cultural impositions of alien cultural patterns.

The alien cultural patterns - colonialist ideology or discourse - play out strongly in language use. Since Language is determined by a complex weave of social conditions and experiences, it becomes a material practice the trafficked cannot resist. In diaspora their indigenous languages are suppressed therefore they appropriate the Italian language in particular, thus they mimic the culture {language, clothing etc.}, of the colonizers in order to fit into the alien society, while their culture becomes the 'other.' As the trafficked interact and mix with each other in that contentious environment in Italy and London they become hybrids as they acquire new forms of identities and experiences. They are easily known as 'Putu', 'ashawo' or prostitutes. In a word exchange between two deportees one shouts at the other: "Prostitute! I'm glad I was trafficked as a domestic servant and not a sex slave like you" (34). "Prostitute," a taboo name in Nigerian culture is publicly uttered unashamed. Ngugi wa Thiong'o adjudges that: "Communication creates culture; culture is a means of communication. Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world" (Ngugi:15-16). Since language is communication and is culture therefore, they are products of each other, these names become the identity of the migrants. English language as a language and as a cultural institution is inseparable.

When the migrants are eventually apprehended, questioned and deported, they are traumatized; Nneoma's mind is pledged by the horrors in Rome, the humiliation of arrest and detention. "When and how did you enter Britain?" She was asked. "I came to this country from Italy." "From Italy, what part of Italy. ... Rome" (14-15). Nneoma is sure her response had been garbled by fear and panic at her illegal status and despairs at her identity

crisis. Post colonialism denotes aspects of the subject matter, which indicates that “the decolonized world is an intellectual space of contradictions, of half-finished processes, of confusions, of hybridity, and of liminalities” (Fanon:561), this cross fertilization of cultures, the ‘contradictions,’ ‘hybridity’ and ‘liminalities’ also reflect in the allegiance oath-taking. The colonizers recognize the African traditional gods to be very potent therefore administers the oath of allegiance to Nneoma and other trafficked “In a shrine?” (128); in the case of Efe they administer a combination oath using the “Bible and an image of *arusi*” (128), this process of exoticism - the use of items of oath-taking from both the Christian and traditional religions - the oath is administered in a shrine.

Treatment of women: Psychological Inheritance; Prostitution as a Preference:

Prostitution, one of the world’s oldest professions as survival strategy is a choice. It comes as a result of economic desperation experienced by various women and limited to options available to them. At Heathrow Airport in London, the pilot compels the immigration officers to take away two commercial sex workers who were wailing against their return to Nigeria. One of them bellowed “I’d rather die than return to that country.” (3), these are psychically conditioned for life or death: the English system will devise other means of getting rid of them either through torture and murder to de-populate their nations of prostitutes. Illegal aliens are like disposables; they are subjected to all forms of non-human treatments. Nneoma recollects being caught and dismissed for picking up some apples from the pantry in her place of work in London, because as a subaltern she is given scanty and routine food while the colonizers eat whatever they like and trash the leftovers thus humiliating her into stealing or eating from the garbage.

A culturally displaced Alice a deportee, in her rage says: “who wants to stay in this stinking place anyway? It has nothing for me. I’m a graduate with a good degree. If I had had a job

I wouldn’t have been trafficked, I wouldn’t have ended up in this horrible place, I wouldn’t have been deported. I’ll look for a job or go back to Italy” (163). The colonized at a point go through what Frantz Fanon calls “mental pathology” or “reactionary psychoses” (251), some harmful nervous stimuli which lead to depression and mental disorder. Alice desires to return as a commercial sex worker to Italy; after years of being used and battered the body and soul become accustomed to what Fanon describes as “destructive violence” a situation where the body readjusts for more violence because of some mental displacement. Alice and her likes have lost their social systems of value due to the transnational dimension of cultural transformation as an illegal migrant. In Fanon’s *Towards African Revolution*, he succinctly says: “having judged, condemned, abandoned his cultural forms, his land, his food habits, his sexual behavior, his way of sitting down of resting, of laughing, of enjoying himself, the oppressed flings himself upon the imposed culture with the desperation of a drawing man” (Fanon. Toward. Wikipedia <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>), having abandoned all their cultural forms Alice and the likes of her, become slaves to sex abuse. They have become so oppressed that they have such low self-esteem that believe the worst about themselves.

Treatment of women: Resistance:

Post-colonial theory is also built around the concept of resistance; some of the trafficked violently oppose colonial subjugation and debasement as they physically resist their colonizers: “Once, while he’s beating me, I grab Captain’s penis and pulled hard; he howls, letting go of me immediately. From that day, he becomes wary when he approaches me” (130), Nneoma equips. Though an essentialist, Nneoma also resists some positions and postures customers want her to take for their selfish satisfaction, she likewise insists on the use of condoms and defies the men who try to force her into unprotected sex, Her

confrontation occasionally earns her severe beatings, under-payment and at times being thrown off moving cars and other forms of humiliation, but she stands her grounds, though there were a few occasions when she is over-powered. Nneoma comes by some money as she picks up and hides Baron's fallen wallet and with the money she plans and executes her escape. Efe also strategizes and escapes "... to Verona and teamed up with a prostitute ... and worked independently for about another year because I wanted to save some money to return home. ... Then the police arrested me, and I was deported (100). Fanon describes violent resistance to colonialism as a mentally cathartic practice, which purges colonial servility from the native's psyche, and restores self-respect to the subjugated (250). Nneoma and Efe are fulfilled to some extent and become bonded in ethnicity as they share their common experiences in diaspora.

Treatment of women: The Deportees and Homecoming:

A mixed reception awaits Nneoma and the other humiliated deportees on their arrival. As they shuffle and file out of the aircraft like a colony of lepers or slaves disembarking from a slave ship, they are disparaged and looked on disdainfully. "Shame on you," one of the officers taunted. "Go and join the rest of the scum who flew in from Rome, a few minutes before you." "Look at them," ... "What a disgrace to the country!" (17), in shame the deportees cover their faces as pressmen angle for photographs and interviews. But they are more humanly received at the Oasis Youth Centre for Skills Development and Rehabilitation, a non-governmental organization (NGO). Here they are tested for HIV and their lives are restructured: their battered moral, cultural values and identity lost to them during the period of illegal migration are revamped. As part of their rehabilitation they are exposed to skill acquisition thus learning various trades like tailoring, hair dressing, catering and pottery, for proper re-orientation, mind development and

self-sustaining re-integration into society. They also have opportunities to aspire for higher education.

Invariably, the deportees are threatened by the economic downturn in the country, rejection, insecurity and porous immigration borders, where, Baron and his likes freely recruit more illegal immigrants and search out those who escaped. Baron's voice re-echoes:

"Whatever gave you the idea that you could successfully escape from me"? Nneoma heard a familiar voice snap behind her. She wheeled round and saw Baron grinning in that cruel manner that always preceded a beating and a rape. She froze and stared at him. As he took a step towards her, she flinched, shielding her face (53).

Nneoma escapes to safety without any assistance from the law enforcement agencies who may jeopardize her security. In Efe's own interest she flees Lagos to Benin when she reveals Baron's true identity as a trafficker. Zenner Wright states "to assimilate or integrate into the society of migration or one's own society when repatriated would be difficult therefore the sense of deculturation or alienation emerges for the girls which further add to the sense of failure, loss, and/or poor self-esteem which is generally from loss of inherent personal identity" (56), the deportees are alienated both in diaspora and at home.

Furthermore, the stigmatization of the deportees trails them almost everywhere in spite of their earnest struggle to resettle honourably within their community: "... Why didn't you tell me you were a deported prostitute when I interviewed you for this job?" (272), Chief Amadi the employer spits out at Nneoma, who jerked reflexively, speechless. Though a good worker and a talented fashion designer, Chief Amadi lays her off, based on the reporter's information. Zenner Wright is of the view that "when political and economic reasons lead to mass migration, this may produce a sense of hopelessness in the individual leading to a depressive effect (6),

social assimilation becomes problematic. Society may be prejudiced against the likes of them, all the same Nneoma finds joy and gratitude doing something less demeaning and humiliating like walking the streets as a whore or locked up in a furnished flat as a sex object for every male or being abused beaten and raped or being put up on sales.

With grim determination, Nneoma tries to reintegrate: she reclines to her cultural mythic belief: "If you don't want me I don't care," she whispers defiantly to *arusi Oroua*, the Irite-Agu god of sleep (73), she likewise reunites with her family members. She seeks and gains admission into the University of Lagos to acquire higher education and there finds Ofomata her betrothed still willing and ready to take her hands in marriage. Efe trains and works as a hair- stylist, marries and settles down to family life.

The ideology and practice of neocolonialism: General Unrest:

The social contexts in the migrant's country of origin which prompted them to leave are predicated on the post colonialists lip-service and lies to her citizens and in reaction "Everyone is up in arms - soldiers, teachers, railway dock workers - but the government didn't listen to anyone" (87), religious riots in the North (102). The ideology and practice of falsehood of the neocolonialists, like their colonial masters, are exemplified in the following lines:

We are addressing the social and cultural issues that forced our girls to consider prostitution as a means of livelihood, it is commendable that bills have been passed against the trafficking of children and women, as well as female genital mutilation. We have increased our efforts to ensure women have equal rights with men in the field of education (55).

Spivak in reiterating Foucault's term calls the government's address "epistemic violence" which specifically relates to the women,

whereby the subaltern [woman] must always be caught in translation, never [describe the destruction allowed to be] truly expressing herself because of the colonial power's destruction of her culture ..." (67). As strategic essentialists - the women and children - the government ignores the diversity of identities - cultural and ethnic - in a social group therefore minimizing inter-group diversity.

Continuing their fabrications, the post colonialists flatter the citizens:

The condition of the Nigerian women and children has worsened, especially in the past two decades, as a result of military rule. Violence, brutality and all forms of abuse have multiplied. But the present government is fighting these evils - this is what democracy is all about: safeguarding the rights of our people. We have declared war against slavery, child abuse, the international sex trade and HIV/AIDS. We have to stamp out prostitution from our society. We want international prostitution to stop. The trafficking of our girls is despicable and this evil trade must be eliminated (55).

This is just a classy statement for the oppressed who have limited access to cultural imperialism, what Gayatri Spivak calls "strategic essentialism - a fixed and established subaltern identity." (68) The neo-colonialists use language and their education which are formal colonial relics to Africans; and have become the definitions of colonialism which encompass the post-colonial period, an endearing relationship of domination and mood of dispossession between the subaltern majority and minority colonizers who are convinced of their superiority.

The ideology and practice of neocolonialism: Corruption breeds Poverty:

The neocolonialists are essentially fraudulent and the citizens live in penury. In a dialogue between Ofomata, Nneoma's betrothed and the University gate-keeper, over two hundred casualties in Ejigbo oil pipelines fire, the

discussants agree the incident is premised by dearth caused by the fraudulent government. “... Yes it is a result of the poverty of the masses and the corruption of our leaders. What do you expect the poor to do? Accept staying hungry in a land with plenty of money? But the money is in very few hands. You will see the explosion will never end as long as there is mass poverty...” (101). This dangerous incident whereby citizens siphon fuel direct from the oil pipelines is a recurrent activity. According to Fanon ‘the oppressed will always believe the worst about themselves’ (Wikipedia BSWM). The poverty-stricken and desperate Nigerian victims, like some of the deportees, prefer death to life in trying to fend for themselves and their families. Politicians aid and abet armed robbery attacks, they patronize head-hunters who deal in human spare-parts, they are blamed for the increase in murder, they are patrons of trafficking in hard drugs and humans, they are the originators of new and strange crimes (111), hundreds of souls die through plane crashes because aircrafts are not maintained (102). Even the porter collects money from students and turns blind eyes and deaf ears to their excesses, Lecturers and people in Administration milk the students dry, University Dons are not left off the hook of this wide spread corrupting influences. They extort money from, and make high demands on the poor struggling students to favour them with undeserved scores; Prof. Komolafe for instance, demands monetary and material gifts from Ofomata (103), in spite of the student’s lean financial condition.

The ideology and practice of neocolonialism: Gross negligence of the Old and the Young

The poor and illiterate are willing tools in the hands of the power-hungry fanatics. The survival of the men, women and children as victims or home born slaves in their country is suicidal. The government neglects the old and the young; the depressed pensioners are not paid their gratuity in years. In Enugu, Ogukwe Eke, Nneoma’s father watches as two retirees

like him collapsed in the queue and died. “He had joined other pensioners to demonstrate in the streets to protest the government’s neglect of retired workers but the police had used tear gas on them” (87). Fanon contends “that the rationality of human action is to be sought in the nation and goals of collective human life. ... Collective human life must be viewed however, as primarily an attempt at regulating the interaction of individual in groups” (Jinadu:127). Ogukwe as a member of the group of the unpaid retirees joins the demonstration to reinforce his identity in the face of scarcity and to deal with scarcity problem along with others but they are tear-gassed by government officials. The masses exist in hopeless squalor; Ogukwe’s family live in a porous hut where pythons move leisurely in and out in search of rats and other rodents (86). Post-colonial theory underscores the need to shift from the preoccupation with colonial realities. Corruption, misrule, dictatorship abuse of power, violation of human rights, concomitant degradation of the human persons has become fashionably entrenched in the laws of the post colonialists as endearing legacies of the colonialists. The situation where a ‘democratic government’ callously and ignobly sends the police to disperse the pensioners with tear-gas leaves much to be desired. Incidentally, for a whole year the young ones have missed out on a school year since the teachers strike and the government is yet to address the issues that started it. Out of necessity, most teachers have become emergency farmers, traders and artisans in order to generate some income. How could a government be so insensitive to the needs of the people it ruled? Fanon believes that “Social institutions and structures must be adjudged in terms of their impact on the individual” (Jinadu:129). The government sees this race of people as the ‘other’ and therefore expandable. The government rationalizes ignores lives in denial of anything that does not fit their core belief, what Fanon

calls 'cognitive dissonance' (Fanon. BSWM. Wikipediahttps://en.m.wikipedia.org).

The subaltern is cowed to silence and remains apathetic to the selfishness and irresponsibility of those who rule them. The citizens' indifference only gives "wings to the evil rulers to fly high and spread their droppings on everything below" (152). Some subalterns, like this 'been-to' simply complains and flies back to Europe where things work:

... I'm tired of this country where nothing works: nothing works – constant power cuts; infernal heat, robbery and violence; bribery and corruption; strikes, students unrest, religious riots ...it is terrible ...No, I can't stay any longer ... it's enough. ... one month in this hell is already too long. It will be a long time before I come back here again ... get me at Gatwick Airport (197).

The country is really a 'hell' of a place where corruption, manipulation of policy decisions by social institutions and their structures remain unchallenged. This is what Spivak still describes as "essentialism and strategic essentialism which is a social function of post colonialism. The government creates a stereotype presentation of the different identities of the people of a given social group" (67), the neo-colonialists have the power of such cultural knowledge that allows them to re-name, re-define and thereby control the masses, places and things within the imperial colonies.

The ideology and practice of neocolonialism: Effects on the Culture:

The effects of the ideology of neocolonialism on the essence of the people are diverse and varied. Abrams and Harpham see "post-colonial scholarship as studies of forms of imperialism other than European, including the domination of one southern-hemisphere groups or nation by other southern-hemisphere groups or nations" (278). In *Trafficked* Prophet Elias constitutes himself as an imperialist; he dominates his people through the Christian

religion, which is generally accepted as one of the positive colonial legacies to Africa. He annexes Hannah, Nneoma's elder sister, as one of his wives/concubines without paying the required traditional bride price in the guise that the custom was pagan and not Biblical (257), yet the Holy Bible says: If a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall surely pay her 'bride-price' for her to be his wife (Exodus 22:16). He uses her like a prostitute and batters her almost to her death point before she escapes back to her parents. Hannah's condition becomes almost similar to Nneoma's as a commercial sex worker in diaspora, though Hannah is not used as a commodity or stock for trade but Nneoma's 'owners' were careful not to leave scars on her in order not to diminish her value. Both sisters suffer from what Gloria Anzaldua calls 'cultural tyranny' – "the culture expects women to show greater acceptance of, and commitment to the value system than men," (Rivkin&Julia:888), and the value system here is women's ability to accept whatever venom the men pour on them.

Again, Prophet Elias uses religion as a tool for exercising political and psychological powers over others, especially the women, the poor and the weak. He likewise harnesses religion as a tool for vengeance against his perceived enemies and other religious bodies to anger the people. Therefore, sporadic warfare becomes commonplace between the Amaala people (the traditionalists) and the Irite-Agi Evangelical Mission headed by him. Prophet Elias plunders and steals off images of the two *arusi* (ancient gods) from the shrine of the Amaala worshippers of *arusi Udo* (64), with a view to selling same to white anthropologists having sold the first set. In preface to *Decolonizing the Mind*, Ngugi laments the neo-colonial situation which "Europe stole our art treasures from Africa to decorate their houses and museums" (xii), in this instance Prophet Elias trades and enriches himself through disposing these artifacts to the white anthropologists. The Holy Bible calls the likes of Prophet Elias: "False

prophets, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. 11:13), eventually, the youth lynch him and the structure of his exploitation is razed down by fire.

Conclusion

In conclusion since one of the major premises of post colonialism is to expand the literary canon to include colonial, postcolonial and neo-colonial writers, this paper examined post colonialism in Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* and observes that the author exposes the pervading evil of postcolonial social-economic, social-political and socio-cultural phenomena confronting the contemporary world in general and as they affect Nigerian citizens in particular. The paper believes that the rape of humanity - widespread and unabated trafficking on young women - as fore-grounded in the paper -is predicated on the unparallel corruption, gross unemployment, negligence, scarcity, hunger, porous immigration borders, are premised on complete disinterestedness of the post colonialists which is a backdrop of the colonialists who stratified and assigned varying degrees of social powers to the citizenry.

It is the position of this paper that should the post colonialists government emphasize technical training and skill acquisition programs in the educational curriculum, the teaming population of graduates unemployment will be curbed, and in addition, more NGOs be establish to create awareness, train and (re)settle the lost but found youth in other crafts.

The paper concludes in the words of Franz Fanon that "Each generation must out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it in relative opacity" (The Wretched:112), whereas the old and young may be victims and therefore, 'betray its mission' because they are handicap to circumvent the post-colonial austere positions on them but the able-bodied and educated ones should 'discover and fulfill its mission' by effectively challenging the excesses of the post

colonialists and not fly away to countries developed by others. The paper also believes that prostitution is a conscious choice for survival. It is observed that Nneoma and Efe for instance, settle down to some craftsmanship and family lives; Nneoma also gains admission into the University to further her studies. In addition, the unpaid teachers engage themselves in other lucrative businesses other than prostitution; whereas, Alice and some other young women prefer sexual servitude and bondage in the diasporas.

The paper recommends that scholars should investigate the psychological impact on the trafficked victims.

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