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Rethinking the Interface Between Tradition and Modernity in Post-apartheid South Africa through Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness*

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Abstract: The interface between African tradition and modernity is one of the concerns of spirited debates in the post-colonial period. Although most African writers deal with it, relatively few have attempted to depict how tradition and modernity may both benefit African societies. Modernity has reached Africa and, thus, the African tradition cannot remain intact. The utmost global portent that distresses human social life is the impact of modernity. Therefore, the paper's key objective is to delineate the degree of social impairment in the present-day Africa engendered by the interface between tradition and modernity. In Africa, modernity has not only influenced personal characteristics but also social, cultural, religious and the operation of establishments. Most believers of African tradition are very conventional, counterattacking the effects of modernity signalled by the colonial period, including the arrival of Christianity and Western teachings. This noted, the paper has utilised a qualitative research method and a textual analysis to critically scrutinise the impacts of the clash between tradition and modernity through the lens of the literary text, *Heart of Redness* (2000) by Zakes Mda. The findings from the study divulge the clash between African tradition and modernity has resulted in the erosion of many African traditional systems notwithstanding the dethronement of the colonial administration that empowered modernity at the expense of African traditional systems. The paper concludes that to re-essentialise African traditions, the remnants of colonialism should be successfully uprooted. This noted, this study will make a significant contribution to the rehabilitation of African traditions as it unravels the foundations and gatekeepers of modernity at the expense of African tradition.

Keywords: African tradition, Christianity, modernity, post-apartheid cultural progression

Introduction

The concept of hybridity is prevalent in post-colonial discourse. This is mostly due to the benefit of in-betweenness, the ability to straddle two cultures and so bridge the gap, which is valued and favoured as a type of superior cultural intellect. Hybridity, according to Birama (2005), is concerned with cultural exchange, transition and transformation all at the same time. Furthermore, post-colonial criticism influences the process of redefining post-colonial and minority institutions. The contrast between traditional African ideals and Western modernity is one of the key problems addressed by Zakes Mda in *Heart of Redness* (2000). These principles are sometimes perceived as diametrically opposite. Many African post-colonial authors, including Ngugi Wa Thiongo, have decried the loss of African traditions as well as the persistent influence of Western modernism in post-colonial Africa. This paper tries to present a critical review of cultural hybridity in post-colonial South Africa, utilising Mda's chosen novel *The Heart of Redness* (2000) as the main substantiation premise. Furthermore, the main issue, which is the marginalisation of the African tradition by the enduring legacies of colonialism such as the Western-orientated modernity in the post-colonial day will be crystallised through the aforementioned literary texts by Mda.

Methodology

The study aimed to critically analyse Zakes Mda's *Heart of Redness* (2000) to delineate the impacts of the interface between tradition and modernity in post-apartheid South Africa. The research used the qualitative research method. Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2006, 64) define qualitative research as:

A research study that is concerned with collecting and analysing information in many forms chiefly non-numeric, as possible. It tends to focus on exploring, in as much detail as possible, smaller numbers of instances or examples that are seen as being interesting or illuminating and aims to achieve "depth" rather than "breadth".

1. Research Design

Leedy and Ormrod (2014, 143) assert that "qualitative research has five main designs, namely case study, grounded theory, phenomenology, ethnography and textual analysis". Of these five, the study used a textual analysis design. This is because the study was purely text-based and looked at Mda's novel. Textual analysis refers to the detailed and systematic examination of a text to deduce themes and patterns.

2. Sampling

According to Bless et al. (2013), in most cases, researchers are unable to make direct observations of every person in the community they are investigating. As an alternative, researchers collect data from a group of individuals and samples. The observations are used to make conclusions about the entire population. Various sampling techniques are used in qualitative research. The study employed a purposive sampling technique, which "relies on the researcher's judgment when identifying and selecting the individuals, cases, or events that can provide the best information to achieve the study's objectives," (Nikolopoulou 2022, i) to select the *Heart of Redness* (2000) out of the novels that Zake Mda has penned by virtue of its delineation of the clash between tradition and modernity.

Mda's *Heart of Redness* depicts how Mda's imagination recreates the historical record by dramatising facts and occurrences. According to McLaren (2005), Mda is one of the key figures of post-apartheid writing. The novel *Heart of Redness*, in which redness indicates traditional South Africa, is a multigenerational saga. The novel recounts divisions among the Xhosa and unravels controversies with British colonisers around the 19th century. The clash between British colonisers and Xhosa people brings forward the contemporary times and the legacy of this clash breaks.

3. Data Analysis Technique

Zakes Mda's *Heart of Redness* is a primary source of data in the study. The thematic analysis technique is employed to examine data in both novels to fulfil the objectives raised by the study. Braun and Clarke (2012) define thematic analysis as a technique of recognising, classifying and providing understanding into designs of the meaning of themes across the dataset. It can be achieved by focusing on meaning across a dataset; therefore, the technique affords the researcher to make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences.

Theoretical Framework

According to Littlejohn (2002), theories are the academic underpinnings of all fields. Every academic study should be founded on a theoretical framework that exposes some of the most recent findings in the field of study. The study is underpinned by post-colonial theory. Post-Colonial Theory focuses on the colonial legacies that still exist in countries that have been colonised previously. This theory seeks to explain the challenges that developed when colonialism ended. According to Bhabba (1994, 7), Post-colonial Theory is a literary theory or critical approach that deals with literature produced in countries that were previously colonies of other countries. The philosophy revolves around the theme of otherness and resistance. The post-colonial theory was developed to dispel imperialist prejudices and myths about colonised people.

According to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989), Post-colonial Theory evolved from the inadequacy of European ideas to confront the complexities and mixed cultural sources of post-colonial writing. The theory originated as a result of western ideologies failing to comprehend the ways of life and cultures of colonised

peoples. Following colonialism, the African collective way of doing things was disregarded. According to Mogoboya (2011), the theory embraces all civilisations influenced by imperialism from colonial times to the present. Colonialism tainted many Africans' customs, morals, beliefs and attitudes. The adoption of a western way of life or modernism instilled greed in Africans. As a result, the post-colonial system is a framework or strategy used by post-colonial theorists to refute and deconstruct myths and preconceptions about other continents held by the center (Europe) (Africa in this case).

Post-colonial criticism constructs influence the process of redefining post-colonial and minority identities. According to Bhabha (1994, 64), cultural variants are predicated on hybridity. People cannot be criticised because they were born during historical transition periods, when ethnic groupings were separated into groups based on organic pre-existing features. Bhabha adds that for people to understand these gaps, they must transcend beyond. This is the point at which time passes and new identifiers arise. He demonstrates that people's characteristics are not fixed by their ethnic background but can change and alter as a result of their experiences.

The concept of hybridity is prevalent in post-colonial discourse. According to Hoogvelt (1997, 158), "It should be celebrated and privileged as a kind of superior cultural wisdom due to the benefit of in-betweenness, the straddling of two cultures and the resulting ability to overcome the gap." Bhabha invented the term "hybridity of cultures," referring to the "mixedness" or "impurity" of civilisations in order to argue that no culture is entirely pure. Bhabha (1994) states that every community is an original "mixedness" within every sort of identity. He believes that cultures are not different occurrences, but rather that there is a mix of cultures since we are continuously in contact with one another.

According to Bhabha (1994), stereotyped knowledge is considered a form of practical control and is kept separate from the colonial mission's philosophical "civilising" foundations. According to Bhabha, a stereotype has the problem of pigeonholing individuals or groups, rejecting their own sense of identity and pretending to comprehend them based on prior knowledge, which is often incorrect at best. According to Bhabha, all forms of colonial identification must be viewed as modes of differentiation, displayed as varied, cross-cutting determinations, polymorphous and perverse and always demanding assessments of their effect.

Findings and Discussion

1. Summary of Zakes Mda's *Heart of Redness*

The fictional novel *The Heart of Redness* by Zakes Mda was published in 2000. Mda's novel spans hundred and fifty years, depicting a South African community through history, myth and realist fantasy. In 1856, Nongqawuse, a 15-year-old kwaXhosa child, told her uncle, Mhlakaza, that she had met the spirits of two of her ancestors. The spirits promised the young girl that if the amaXhosa slaughtered all their animals, burned their crops and abandoned witchcraft, the dead would be reborn, and the white invaders would be washed away in the sea. The British exploited the famine induced by cattle slaughter and agricultural devastation, which killed approximately Eighty thousand people.

According to Malan and Mashigoane (2004), Zakes Mda's book, *The Heart of Redness*, has reinforced his standing as the foremost black author of the post-apartheid era. The title refers to Joseph Conrad's iconic short novel *Heart of Darkness*, which has spurred debate about how Africans are portrayed in Western literature for nearly a century. Mda's themes continue this 'conversation' about historical and fictional portrayals of Africans in the West.

2. Analysis of The Main Characters

Twin and Twin-Twin are two brothers on opposing sides of the cattle-killing prophecies. Although Twin believes in the prophecies and takes part in the devastation, his brother Twin-Twin opposes Nongqawuse and is ultimately forced to join the British government to defend his homestead, relatives and cattle from his brother and the other "Believers."

The progeny of both Twin and Twin-Twin are profoundly affected by their ancestors' behaviour. The feud has continued into the twenty-first century and South Africa's post-apartheid period. Twin's immediate descendant, Bhonco, has inherited Twin's scars from being accused of being a witch. He has

revived the Unbelievers' cult and continues to feud with Twin's descendants. Zim, a direct descendant of Twin, maintains his ancestor's faith and has instilled in his daughter, Qukezwa, a deep belief in the prophecies.

Camagu spent much of his time in the United States, but after apartheid ended, he returned to South Africa to help rebuild his country. Camagu, however, discovers in Johannesburg that his country does not want his assistance and therefore decides to return to "exile." Camagu takes a 10-hour detour to Qolorha-by-Sea instead of going to the airport to see if he can locate the woman who had captivated him the night before. Although he is unable to locate her, he does come across two other women who appeal to various aspects of his personality. One is Bhonco's stunning and accomplished daughter, Xoliswa Ximiya.

Xoliswa Ximiya, the school principal of the local high school, defies convention and wishes to see her country grow in the same way as the United States has. Qukezwa, Zim's daughter, is the other attractive woman. In every way, she is unlike Xoliswa Ximiya. She has a reverence for the past and a link to the land that Xoliswa Ximiya would never have. As Camagu tries to connect with the portion of himself that has been in isolation for most of these years, the village's spirit is carried out in this search for Camagu's identity. Fenton (2015) states that the novel examines two opposing philosophies, believers and non-believers, concerning the potential development of the South African environment and people. The novel accomplishes this by introducing the character of Camagu, a South African who has been exposed to American western teachings and culture. Camagu, the protagonist, depicts his experiences inside a rural village, Qolorha by the sea, between two opposing communities of believers and nonbelievers. On the one side, the Unbelievers advocate for the expansion of the South African economy as well as the modernisation and westernisation of Qolorha by the sea through the establishment of a casino and resort, while the Believers reject this idea.

In most parts of South Africa, the fight between urbanisation and heritage preservation continues. Human Rights Watch (2019) reported that after receiving anonymous death threats, activist Sikhosiphi "Bazooka" Rhadebe was murdered at his home in March 2016. Bazooka was the chairperson of the Amadiba Crisis Committee, a community-based group established in 2007 in Xolobeni, Eastern Cape province, to oppose mining activity. Members of the community had expressed fears that the titanium mine proposed for development on South Africa's Wild Coast by Australian company Mineral Commodities Ltd would displace the community and ruin their habitat, culture and livelihoods. Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and the Northwest provinces of South Africa have all had similar mining experiences to Xolobeni.

In the novel, the believers are concerned that the construction of a casino and vacation resort would devastate the region's culture and natural environment. The novel highlights how people in the countryside of South Africa reject the standard westernised turn and development projects carried out by Western ideologies on developing areas such as South Africa, the novel's text emphasises the importance of preserving local South African traditions while rejecting Western ways and demonstrating how these cause harm to the economic development of South Africa. In the novel, the conversation between Camagu and Vathiswa supports the above assertions. Vathiswa draws Camagu to the debate about developers:

"This is a lifetime opportunity for Qolorha to be like some holiday resort in America. To have big stars like Eddie Murphy and Dolly Parton come here for holidays. 'That would be nice says' Camagu without much enthusiasm. "They go to Cape Town; you know Cape Town is now becoming a celebrity paradise. Qolorha can become one too if these conservative villagers stop standing in the way of progress. Don't you think so?" (2000, 74-75)

The above conversation serves as proof that as much as people want modernisation and urbanisation. They want those to come to them and not for them to leave their beloved villages for the cities to have access to modern facilities. This, however, causes fear to people who still want to preserve their heritage and conserve nature. Out of irritation, Vathiswa continues to say that:

"We cannot stop civilisation just because of some sentimental old fools who want to preserve an outmoded way of life" (2000, 75).

The novel contains two opposing philosophies, the Believers and the Unbelievers and that the struggle between the two strongly reflects the past colonial period, when the British were opposed to Xhosa ideas and

imposed their ideologies on them. The Westernised Development Project concept demonstrates how outside ideologies may compete with native people's ideologies, which value their land as more than a great investment.

Most rural areas in South Africa are characterised by poverty. Rural poverty and persistent deprivation in South Africa can be attributed in part to the former homeland areas' lack of natural resource endowment. Perret et al. (2005) postulate that poverty is viewed as a political construct (such as poor endowment having been forged and organised by the apartheid system), in which rural poverty served the interests of dominant social classes by depriving them of resources. Du Toit (2017, 1) observes that:

“Rural and urban poverty have for more than a century been two sides of a single coin. They result, not from a growth deficit, but a particular kind of growth: a skewed and exclusionary form of development driven by core features of the economic structure and the regulatory environment. In South Africa, this path of growth has created a deep divide between urban insiders and rural ‘outsiders’ but this divide is not the result of a disconnection between rural and urban economies. Rather, flows from the direct but uneven, selective and adverse incorporation of South Africa’s rural black population into the core economy.”

Most areas of South Africa were deprived of capital that would have aided in the development of rural areas and townships because of colonialism. As a result, most rural residents have little choice but to embrace what little they have from nature. Tourism cannot be distinguished from tradition and culture. Traditional and cultural tourism, according to Kaplan (2000, 41), is linked to rural communities' traditional beliefs. These two aspects of tourism are seen as commodities that communities can sell to generate jobs and active investment.

3. Transculturation and Heart of Redness

Bhabha (1994) claims that accepting cultural variation and rejecting the notion of cultural dominance is a way of promoting cultural hybridisation. This understanding of cultural distinction allows for cultural hybridity without an implied or enforced hierarchy. Hybridity thus becomes a tactical redress of imperial dominance. Bhabha (1994, 3) further suggests that People should be taken “‘beyond’ themselves to return, in a spirit of revision and reconstruction,” according to social differences. Moving beyond oneself entails a shift away from predetermined identifications, which are the natural ways people think about themselves and toward an integral recognition of otherness, which accommodates cultural and social differences.

More closely the novel's key case, namely the cattle slaughter. Although it was destructive of the Xhosa's resources, Nongqawuse's prophecy in *Heart of Redness* (2000) can be understood in terms of Bhabha's resistance to colonial authority since it was meant to dismantle and eliminate white dominance. The sun would not rise until all the cattle had been slaughtered and the crops had been burnt, according to Nongqawuse's prophecy and a whirlwind would come and drive the settlers into the sea. Nongqawuse's warning was based on Christian beliefs of the resurrection of the dead and was not solely indigenous resistance to the invaders' dominance. It is a typical hybrid belief since it combines traditional African beliefs with elements of Western Christianity.

The Xhosa cattle-killing demonstrates its utility and significance since it was largely aimed at political emancipation from white settlers' persecution of the Xhosa in the 1850s (Montle 2020). It was a response to whites' endless land dispossession, which reduced natives to inferior beings who deserved no honour, or respect, or were doomed to slavery. Nongqawuse's cattle-killing vision was primarily intended to counter dominant depictions of whites as superior to blacks. This is evident in *Heart of Redness*:

“Nongqawuse had also pronounced that if the people killed all their cattle and set all their granaries alight, the spirits would rise from the dead and drive all the white people into the sea. Who would not want to see the world as it was before the cursed conquerors, who could kill even the son of their own god, had been cast by the waves onto the lands of the amaXhosa?” (2000, 86-87).

The belief in the afterlife entails a strong and strange fusion of African culture and Western Christianity, reinforcing Mda's narrative's hybrid theme. Cattle-killing in the 1850s was a hybrid cultural formation that arose in the sense of colonial dominance, rather than a bizarre Xhosa cultural tradition. It

embraced Western Christian philosophies while incorporating Xhosa values. Nongqawuse's prophecy of the dead's resurrection is a mix of Western Christian ideas and traditional Xhosa values that she learned from her uncle Mhlakaza.

In this way, her prophecy aligns with Homi Bhabha's definition of cultural transition, which states: "Cultural hybridities arise in moments of historical transformation" (1994: 2). It is important to note that the cattle killing's hybrid existence and conception are dependent on Mhlakaza's involvement in inducing his niece to prophesy. At the colonial mission, he was converted to Christianity and taught about the resurrection of the dead. Even though he was well-known in Qolorha for having converted to Christianity, he was regarded as a coward by the Qolorha villagers because of his alliance with the white man at the Christian missions. Nongqawuse could not have made such a prophecy given her age and her ashamed and confused physical condition. Mda explains Mhlakaza's position in the following way:

"Don't you see, all the words she utters are really Mhlakaza's medium. She is Mhlakaza's medium. She had vaguely heard of the teachings of Nxele about the resurrection...and the Christian version of it, as her uncle had been a Christian at some stage. She therefore decided to concoct her own theology" (2000, 283).

Nongqawuse prophecy tends to be a composite concoction based on the quotation. Mhlakaza was influenced by Christian philosophies from the West, which he translated and integrated into African cultural beliefs. Because of this, Nongqawuse's prophecy is a hybrid. Nongqawuse's uncle, Mhlakaza, was a hybrid himself, combining two opposing philosophies to form his ideology.

Camagu, the novel's central protagonist, spent several years in the United States of America. He grew up and received his education up to the doctoral level in that region, but his stay did not transform into a clone of the West despite his Western identity, he adheres to traditional African values. Camagu regrets the loss of his cultural identity as a result of his long stay in a foreign country (America), where he has lost his original identity and wishes to reclaim it. He wants to go back to his cultural roots and rediscover them. This reevaluation occurs as a result of his relativisation of the experience he gained in America. It is inadequate for his incorporation into African society, according to him. He realises that the new reforms will help people rediscover their identity by wearing Xhosa costumes, which is one way of raising traditional culture. This happens when he tries to take part in traditional celebrations as a way of reconnecting with his African roots, which he has lost touch with for a long time. The following occurred in *Heart of Redness*:

"Camagu is filled with a searing longing for an imagined blissfulness of his youth. He has vague memories of his home village, up in the mountains in the distant inland parts of the country. He remembers the fruit trees and the graves of long departed relatives" (2000, 65).

Camagu, the protagonist in *Heart of Redness*, is based on the author's own life. Zakes Mda was born and raised in the United States, where he earned his doctorate. It means that Mda represented his stance and attitudes toward the new South Africa through his main character. Mda also tackles the question of cultural conservation and restoration through Camagu. Camagu wants to form a cooperative society to manufacture "traditional Xhosa costumes and accessories, such as beaded pipes and shoulder bags, for sale in Johannesburg" (2000, 185). Clothing is well understood to be a part of the culture. Traditional culture, as depicted here by Xhosa costumes and beaded pipes, should not be dismissed, according to Mda, but should be preserved because it preserves people's identity and cultural uniqueness.

This cultural preservation is enshrined in Bhabha's hybrid process of rejecting colonial stereotypes that portray African culture as primitive, heathen and doomed to extinction in favour of Western fashion, which is equated with development and advancement. Camagu's project to sell jewelled pipes and Xhosa clothing in Johannesburg, an entirely Europeanised region, demonstrates the importance of preserving traditional culture while incorporating it into a new, capitalist government in a way that favours indigenous people.

Tradition, in this opinion, should be preserved even in modern cultures because it reflects people's original identities. Indeed, these beaded pipes and Xhosa costumes, which will be sold to white visitors, will transform them into hybrids because, while carrying European culture, they will appear in public as Xhosa people due to the clothing they wear.

Another indication of cultural hybridity is Dalton's need to teach Camagu how to negotiate Lobola at Zim's house. This can be seen in the following conversation: Camagu advises Dalton, "Let's take it before they change their minds." They are unable to change their minds. It is customary to bargain... Dalton whispers back, "to try to push them down" (2000, 279). Dalton, a white man, is forced to teach Camagu, a native Xhosa, about the complexities of Xhosa culture, in this case, the art of lobola negotiation. Mda clearly demonstrates that culture is a question of identity rather than race. Camagu's hybridity is also visible when considering his Western influences, he decides to learn and appreciate traditional fashion:

"He is pleased to see that there are some people here who still wear Xhosa costume.... It is sad, he thinks, that when nations of the world wear their costumes with pride, the Xhosa people despise theirs" (2000, 61).

Camagu's dissatisfaction with Western civilisation is foreshadowed when he learns that white people keep dead people's heads in exhibitions: "He was surprised to find that there were five dried-out heads of the so-called Bushmen kept in boxes in some backroom of the museum" (2000, 193). The fact that holding dead human bodies, especially black ones, is a way of dismantling the black race has shocked Camagu. In African culture, the deceased are revered and it is inhumane to show their bodies to strangers.

Camagu's trajectory from Johannesburg to Qolorha was driven by his self-discovery, as he sees his science and Western skills as inadequate for full incorporation into modern South African society post-apartheid. Camagu's frustration with his identity as a returned exile who is not yet rooted, his lack of integration into post-colonial South Africa, the numerous deaths that have plagued the country and his participation in shameful social acts such as sexual intercourses with rural women like his maid in Johannesburg are all symptoms of his frustrations and dissatisfaction with his identity as a returned exile who is not yet rooting. Since he has not built a meaningful relationship with his own, he cannot yet have satisfied, meaningful sexual intercourse. The following are examples of his involvement in heinous actions as depicted in *The Heart of Redness*:

"His unquenchable desire for the flesh is well known. A shame he has to live with. Flesh. Any flesh. He has done things with his maid, a frumpy country woman who has come to the city of gold to pick up a few pennies by cleaning up after disenchanting bachelors that he would be ashamed to tell anyone. Yet he did these things with the humble servant again and again" (2000, 30).

Camagu wants to start a new life based on recreating his Cultural heritage through his fascination with the makoti, especially with NomaRussia, whom he met briefly at a Hillbrow wake, singing angelically. He chose to accompany her to Qolorha on the spur of the moment, suddenly shifting his path to the airport to a new exile in America. Later, in Qolorha, his optimistic choice of Qukezwa over Xoliswa Ximiya, a well-educated and Western fashion-conscious woman, demonstrates this hypothesis. Simultaneously, this is a rejection or relativisation of Western identity and understanding, which becomes irrelevant to his incorporation into African life.

Due to his white skin and Xhosa cultural knowledge, John Dalton is also culturally and particularly linguistically, a hybrid. Mda expresses himself thus: "Dalton is a white man of English stock. His skin is white like the skins of those who caused the sufferings of the Middle Generations. But his heart is an umXhosa heart" (2000, 6-7). Dalton's hybridity stems from the fact that, despite his father's opposition, he has been completely immersed in Xhosa traditions since childhood. He was also a harsh critic of his fellow white men, who spent their time extolling their colonial authority over the indigenous people. He went from being a white man to being a man of colour:

"In his youth, against his father's wishes, he went to the initiation school and was circumcised in accordance with the customs of the amaXhosa people. He, therefore, knows the secret of the mountain. He is a man. Often, he laughs at the sneering snobbishness of his fellow English-speaking South Africans. He says they have a deep-seated fear and resentment of everything African and are apt to glorify their blood-soaked colonial history" (2000, 7).

Circumcision is evidence of cultural assimilation and verification of a man's development in African culture, especially in the Xhosa tradition, which confirms Dalton's hybrid status. Dalton is portrayed by Mda as a new form of post-colonial white South African who has prioritised his African identity over his European cultural heritage. To the Unbelievers, however, Dalton seems to be contradictory: he is white, but he opposes Western modernity and development. They are baffled by his hybridity. Mda demonstrates this in the following way:

“What is sad is that he has now been joined by John Dalton, the white trader. Are whites not the bearers of civilisation and progress? Then why is Dalton standing with the unenlightened villagers to oppose such an important development that will bring jobs, streetlights and other forms of modernisation to this village?” (2000, 75).

As a modern South African book, it is interesting to emphasise that the conflicts between Believers and Unbelievers expose Mda's way of calling for the abolition of the apartheid system's division and hate. The tumultuous history of South Africa should be forgotten, giving way to a united South Africa with no divisions based on skin colour. Mda's declaration through his powerful and hybrid character, John Dalton, white-skinned but Xhosa-hearted, strongly supports this:

“What now with weapons?’ asks Dalton. ‘Because I’m going to fight!’ answers the angry elder. ‘Oh, no! Not the war of the Believers and Unbelievers again. Will you people ever stop your silly wars of the past?’ (2000, 162).

John Dalton is a proponent of repentance and redemption. John Dalton, like the other characters in *The Heart of Redness*, is Mda's way of demonstrating that the time is right for South Africans to come together and rebuild their country. However, the building of the casino zone, for example, may be destructive to the reconstruction of a new South Africa. In this regard, the character of Qukezwa, daughter of Zim, the Believer, is intriguing. Like the other characters in *The Heart of Redness*, she has a dual personality. In this case, Qukezwa expresses her opposition to Qolorha's transformation into a Westernised city by emphasising the cultural and ecological harm that economic modernisation would bring to the region. She predicts that the casino and gaming city would have a wide range of effects, including the villagers of Qolorha losing their land and becoming economically impoverished.

Her case centres on the fact that once the gambling city is built, the residents of Qolorha will lose the advantages of their traditional lifestyle because the casino and gambling city developers will own most of the property. She is actively interested in environmental conservation and her outlook is forward-looking. Qukezwa condemns the casino from a pragmatic, technologically educated position, rather than from a conventional, conservative standpoint. Despite her lack of experience, she demonstrates her ecological knowledge by teaching knowledgeable people like Camagu about environmental issues. She gives them the following instructions:

“The seed can lie there for ten years, but when fire comes, it grows. And it uses all the water. Nothing can grow under the wattle tree. It is an enemy since we do not have enough water in this country. If the umga can be cut without permission because it spreads like wildfire, so should the wattle...most of the elders nod their agreement...one mutters his wonder at the source of Qukezwa’s wisdom when she is but a slip of a girl” (2000, 249).

As a result, Qukezwa is a hybrid, a modern, feminist woman who is still deeply embedded in her culture. Qukezwa's opposition to the casino is also a strategy for decolonising the new South Africa. It is part of her commitment to destabilising neo-colonial influence, comparable to Nongqawuse's 1850s opposition to colonial authority and subjugation. Although both Qukezwa and Nongqawuse reject colonial mastery, their approaches to achieving their goals are vastly different.

Qukezwa used persuasive reasons to persuade the citizens of Qolorha to oppose the casino, while Nongqawuse favoured the destructive cattle-killing scheme. As a result, Qukezwa Zim, one of Mda's central

protagonists, can be thought of as a modern-day Nongqawuse. Despite her pregnancy, her grandmother confirmed that she was a virgin. Mda explains it this way:

“Of course, the village is divided on the matter of the child, as the grandmother long since proclaimed that she had not known a man in the biblical sense. And no one can question their expertise in these matters” (2000, 250).

Qukezwa's confirmed virginity is a hybrid conception, like the Christian conceptualisation of the Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ's mother. Qukezwa called her son Heitsi even after she gave birth, in honour of the Khoikhoi prophet Heitsi Eibib, whose efforts to liberate his people are close to the Christian Moses' efforts to liberate the Israelites. The following is an example from *The Heart of Redness*:

“Heitsi Eibib prayed, ‘Oh, Tsiqwa! Father of fathers. Open yourself that I may pass through and close yourself afterwards.’ As soon as he had uttered these words the Great River opened, and his people crossed. But when the enemies tried to pass through the opening, when they were right in the middle, the Great River closed upon them and they all perished in its waters” (2000, 24).

This portrayal of Christian miracles to Africans strengthens the hybrid ideas that underpin the novel *Heart of Redness*. Unlike Qukezwa, Xoliswa Ximiya is oriented towards Western modernity, denying tradition in all forms and encouraging all villagers to go beyond cultural confines that she finds barbaric and uncivilised. This is how Mda describes it:

“For Xoliswa Ximiya, isiXhosa costume is an embarrassment ... because she thinks it is high time her parents change from ubuqaba - backwardness and heathenism. They must become amagqobhoka - enlightened ones - like her. She has bought her parents dresses and suits in the latest European styles” (2000, 48).

Conclusion

This paper has delineated the impacts of the African tradition and modernity with Mda's *Heart of Redness* used as a case in point. It has been noted that modernity and tradition are not mutually exclusive or are diametrically opposing domains. Scholars such as Montle (2022) affirm that the pedigrees of the African cultural watershed in today's Africa could be traced from the advent of colonialists in the continent who propagated Western cultures, thus, the genesis of modernity at the expense of African traditional systems. Equally important, the paper also highlighted how Zakes Mda's *Heart of Redness* promotes a synthesis of the two: hybridity of modernity and tradition through Xoliswa Ximiya. This character exemplifies this conflicted hybridity in the novel, but Mda's main character Camagu is an example of a new African identity that has effectively hybridised Western and African culture. Therefore, it is crucial to reviving African traditional systems to co-exist with modernity in the present day to elude the menacing impacts that ensue when one of the two predominates the other.

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