



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***SATIRE AS A FORM OF Native Resistance IN MONGO BETI'S
SELECTED NOVELS***

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SATIRE AS A FORM OF *Native Resistance* IN MONGO BETI'S SELECTED NOVELS

By

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**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

June 2016

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents both late and living and, to my lovely family for their love, patience, prayers and encouragement.



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

SATIRE AS A FORM OF *Native Resistance* IN MONGO BETI'S SELECTED NOVELS

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June 2016

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This study explores the impacts of colonialism on the political, economic and social life of the colonized native subjects through analyzing the selected novels by Mongo Beti. Despite the resistance, and struggle for independence by the postcolonial countries to decolonize their lands and people from the colonial occupation and their success in driving the colonizers out of their countries, they did not succeed in separating themselves from the political, social and economic influence of the imperialists. Thus, the people are disillusioned immediately after the so much desired and hard earned independence from the colonizers. The independence which promised so much has turned out to be a *chimera* as the situation in many African countries has deteriorated leading to socio-economic and political instability. These so-called independent countries are bedevilled with corruption, civil wars, political turmoil, among other factors due to absence of patriotism on the part of the indigenous people and external control from the “former colonial masters”. Through the use of satire, Mongo Beti portrays and criticizes these situations in one of the African countries in his literary works selected for this study (*The Poor Christ of Bomba, King Lazarus, Remember Ruben* and *The Story of the Madman*). Therefore, through the postcolonial concept of *Native resistance* by Frantz Fanon and by analysing the themes and characterizations of the selected novels by Mongo Beti, the researcher highlights the impacts of colonialism on the colonized native subjects represented by *mimicry, identity crisis, political turmoil, corruption, resistance*, among others. The novelist, Mongo Beti has his own understanding related to the impact of colonialism on the colonized native subjects in Cameroon. Thus, the study proves that the French colonial power triumphs its victory over the colonized native subjects in Cameroon as depicted in the selected novels.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

SATIRA SEBAGAI BENTUK *Native Resistance* DALAM NOVEL TERPILIH MONGO BETI

Oleh

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Kajian ini menyelidiki impak kolonisasi ke atas aspek politik, ekonomi dan kehidupan sosial penduduk natif yang dijajah melalui penganalisisan novel terpilih oleh Mongo Beti. Walaupun terdapat penentangan, dan perjuangan untuk kemerdekaan oleh negara pasca penjajah bagi menyahjajah tanah mereka, dan rakyat daripada penjajahan kolonial dan kejayaan mereka dalam menghalau keluar penjajah dari negara mereka, mereka gagal untuk mengasalahkan mereka dari pengaruh politik, sosial dan ekonomi imperialis. Oleh sebab itu, rakyat kecewa sebaik sahaja selepas bertungkus lumus mendapatkan kemerdekaan daripada penjajah. Kemerdekaan yang menjanjikan langit dan bumi sebenarnya menjadi *cimera* disebabkan situasi di beberapa negara Afrika telah bertambah buruk yang membawa kepada ketidakstabilan sosioekonomi dan politik. Negara yang merdeka tersebut dirumitkan dengan korupsi, peperangan sivil, kekacauan politik, di samping faktor lain disebabkan ketidakwujudan sifat patriotisme bagi pihak penduduk asli dan kawalan eksternal daripada “bekas master kolonial”. Melalui penggunaan satira, Mongo Beti memaparkan dan mengkritik situasi tersebut dalam salah satu negara Afrika dalam karya kesusasteraan terpilihnya dalam kajian ini (*The Poor Christ of Bomba, King Lazarus, Remember Ruben dan The Story of the Madman*). Oleh sebab itu, melalui konsep pascakolonial dalam *Native resistance* oleh Frantz Fanon dan dengan menganalisis tema dan pencirian novel terpilih oleh Mongo Beti, pengkaji menonjolkan impak kolonisasi ke atas subjek natif yang dijajah yang direpresentasikan oleh *mimicry, identity crisis, political turmoil, corruption, resistance*, antara lainnya. Pengarang novel, Mongo Beti mempunyai pemahamannya yang tersendiri berkaitan dengan impak kolonialisme ke atas subjek natif yang dijajah di Cameroon. Oleh itu, kajian ini membuktikan bahawa kejayaan kuasa penjajah Perancis, kemenangannya ke atas subjek natif yang dijajah di Cameroon seperti yang digambarkan dalam novel yang terpilih.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 23 June 2016 to conduct the final examination of Abubakar Mohammed Sani on his thesis entitled "Satire as a Form of *Native Resistance* in Mongo Beti's Selected Novels" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Satire is described as a technique through which writers expose and criticize the follies and corruption of an individual or a whole society by employing irony, exaggeration, humour, or ridicule. Satire aims at improving the society by criticizing its follies and foibles. A satirist deploys fictional characters in his work to represent real people in order to expose and condemn their short comings and stupidity. The *Oxford Dictionaries* online edition defines satire as “the use of humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people’s stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues” (2014).

According to some notable literary figures such as the famous poet and satirist of refute Samuel Johnson (1755), defined satire as poetry “in which wickedness or folly is censured;” however, this definition is limited to poetry. John Dryden, a renowned poet of the Restoration England, observed that the real purpose of satire was not only to criticize and ridicule but was to also serve as “the amendment of vices,” while Daniel Defoe describes it as “reformation” (1991, p. 780).

However, Johnathan Swift’s definition is most famous as he says that “satire is a sort of glass wherein beholders do generally discover everybody’s face but their own, which is the chief reason for that kind of reception it meets in the world, and that so very few are offended with it”(1991, p. 780). The satirist is seen as a self-appointed guardian of standards, ideals, truth, and morals, as well as aesthetic values. Thus, satire is a form of protest, a sublimation and refinement of indignation and anger. According to Ian Jack, “satire is a born of the instinct to protest; it is protest become art” (1991, p. 780). Moreover, Ngugi wa Thiong’o in his book *Homecoming* says,

Satire takes for its province a whole society, and for its purpose, criticism. The satirist sets himself certain standards and criticizes society when it departs from these norms. He invites us to assume his standards and share the moral indignation which moves him to pour derision and ridicule on the society’s failings. He corrects through painful, sometimes malicious, laughter (1972, p. 55).

Furthermore, satire, irony, and humour are said to be interwoven. While satire is the mind or wits, irony is seen as the reasoning that is the rhetorical tool, and humour is the substance. Thus, satire is a genre of literature, and in some cases of performing arts and graphic, through which the follies, vices, abuses, and inadequacies are exposed to ridicule, basically with the sole-purpose of shaming individuals, and society itself, into improvement. Though it is mainly meant to be funny, its major

function is usually constructive social criticism, using wit as a tool and to attract attention to both particular and wider topical issues in society such as politics, religion, education, etc.

The common characteristic of a good satire is strong irony, sarcasm and humour. Raj Kishor Singh notes that “in satire, irony is militant — but parody, burlesque, exaggeration, juxtaposition, composition, analogy, and double entendre are all frequently used in satiric speech and writing. This ‘militant’ irony or sarcasm often professes to approve of (or at least accept as natural) the very things the satirist wishes to attack” (2012, p. 70). However, nowadays satire is found in almost all forms of expressions, including literature (poetry, drama, and prose), commentary, plays, television shows, and media such as lyrics. Detailed discussion on the characteristics of satire (irony, sarcasm, and humour) is given later in chapter three of this study.

The basic function of satire is to bring about some sort of political and moral changes in society by employing critical *humour*. The writer will thereby select a theme or a person with whom he finds faults and use humour to expose those faults to the public. In literary theory, it’s the desire of the satirist that the humour will have corrective effect, almost like a punishment for bad behaviour, at the end leading people to change their ways of behaviour and discourage others from behaving in the same manner in the future.

Since the main aim of the genre is to point out the faults in people, the satirist, therefore, usually relies heavily on exaggeration to achieve his aim. It is also a form of comedic criticism, but it sometimes uses harsh prosaic technique, not aiming at cruelty, but rather to point out faults in the society, government, human or individual condition. It aims at drawing attention to these faults, either to encourage a change or to bring awareness, and to even educate and sensitize, as we find in the selected novels of this study.

More so, satire is mainly divided into two different groups: Horatian and Juvenalian satire. The former is named after the Roman satirist Horace, as it deals with social vices through playful, light-hearted humour or wit. It also uses wit, exaggeration and self-deprecation to identify stupidity (rather than major issues) within modern society. This form of satire is found in the literary works of *Gulliver’s Travels* (1735) by Jonathan Swift, *Huckleberry Finn* (1885) by Mark Twain, *The Screwtape Letters* (1942) by C.S. Lewis, and *The Giver* (1993) by Lois Lowry.

But Juvenalian satire, which is named after Roman satirist Juvenal, uses scorn, ridicule and fury to address social vices. It also doesn’t involve humour but more of a pessimistic, ironic or sarcastic nature towards social and moral indignation. This form of satire is found in works such as *Brave New World* (1931) by Aldous Huxley, *1984* (1949) by George Orwell, *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) by Ray Bradbury, and *Lord*

of the Flies (1954) by William Golding, *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) by Anthony Burgess.

However, writers in Europe use satire in order to ridicule and sensitize the public on the vices of their societies, either political, religious, social, etc., which they consider as threats to civilization. They see it as an obligation on them to expose these vices and faults for the betterment of humanity and the society. They, therefore, use satire not for the fun of it, not only to make the audience laugh at the persons or ideas they make fun of, but to send messages as well. They use it to also warn the public against and change the public perspectives about the prevailing corruption and injustices in the society. As explained earlier on, the satiric styles of the two Roman poets Horace and Juvenal became famous models for satirical writers.

One of the most outstanding and famous satirical works is Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* (1885), where he uses satire as a tool to share his perspective and opinion about slavery, human nature, and many other topical themes which affected the American society at the time. Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1735) is one of the finest satirical novels in English literature. He unceasingly satirizes religion, politics, and Western culture such as colonialism. He also criticizes the party the political factions in England, the two rival political parties, the Tories and the Whigs, which dominated the English political terrain. Swift criticizes the trivial disputes between the two Lilliputian parties, ironically satirizing the minor disputes of the two English parties of the time.

In addition, satire as defined and explained above, is used by writers in order to ridicule for the purpose of correction through the use of irony, humour, and sarcasm, those vices or faults in the society which are considered as threats to civilization or to the existing cultures of the people. Thus, through satire, writers ridicule colonialism, Western religion, neo-colonialism, politics, cultures, education, corruption, and other social vices in the society by deploying varied satirical tools.

Therefore, with the advent of colonialism, colonial religion, and Western education, many writers in Africa have taken up the challenge of using the genre of satire to criticize and draw attention to what they feel is abnormal in their societies. Themes ranging from social, political, and economic were treated during and even after so-called independence by many literary African novelists. The people in many African countries became disillusioned immediately after the long-awaited, hard-earned independence from the colonial powers.

These countries are embedded with corruption, political turmoil, dictatorship, and the socioeconomic stagnation and underdevelopment of the entire continent due to absence of patriotic indigenous leaders and owing to external control from the "former colonial powers". For instance, in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1969), Ayi Kwei Armah satirizes the level of moral and social decay due to

endemic corruption, particularly in Ghana and in Africa, generally, after independence through the characterisation of the central character, The Man.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o in *Devil on the Cross* (1987) also ridicules the rate of social and moral decay in independent Kenya, ranging from unemployment, sexual harassment, poverty, etc. Equally of note is Chinua Achebe's political satirical novel *A Man of the People* (1966) in which Achebe relentlessly exposes and criticizes the corruption that has become endemic in the political system in Nigeria after independence. In *Houseboy* (1966), Ferdinand Oyono satirizes the oppressive neo-colonial system which is inflicted on the people of Cameroon by the French colonial policy of assimilation.

Mongo Beti, whose literary works I found suitable for this study, is another famous satirical writer. His novels are considered as satiric because they ridicule European religion, colonialism, assimilation, politics, and Western education, and expose the form of *native resistance* against the system by the natives. He also criticizes the political system and the political leaders after self-independence in Africa.

Furthermore, Mongo Beti and his selected satirical novels turn out to be the appropriate choice for this study not only because of the relevance of the content of his works but also because of the colonial history of Cameroon, the setting of the selected novels. Beti, in the selected novels, portray the colonial Christian missionaries as puppets and agents of colonial administration and also demonstrates the *Native Resistance* against the colonial project by the native subjects. He also satirizes the impacts of the colonial contact on the native people such as identity crisis, mimicry, cultural denigration/crisis, corruption, and political instability. Mongo Beti combines both the Horace and Juvenal satirical styles in his works such as humour, scorn, ridicule, exaggeration, self-depreciation, and furry.

Historically, Cameroon, the setting of the selected novels for this research, was colonized by Germany before the coming of the French colonialists. Thus, Cameroon has a peculiar colonial history because it was colonized by three different colonial powers, all at different times. These were Germany between 1884 to 1914 and then France from 1916 to 1960, while the northern part was colonized by the British between 1916 to 1958. Moreover, Western education and Christianity played significant roles in the colonial enterprise in Cameroon; therefore, they became the dominant themes explored in many twentieth century Cameroonian novels, including Mongo Beti's *King Lazarus*, *Mission to Kala*, and *The Poor Christ of Bomba*, two of which are among the selected novels for this study.

Thus, Western education was used as an effective avenue of recruiting young men into Christianity by the French colonial administration through the mission schools. In fact, in the 1920s and beyond, there was a tremendous growth in Western education and Christianity in Cameroon, especially in the South, while the North remained mainly Muslim.

For instance, in 1961, 650,000 Catholics and 500,000 Protestants were censured in Southern Cameroon (Sundkler, & Steed, 2000, p. 750). Thus, the church played a major role, through the schools it established, in the spread of the Western-style of education and assimilating the native people in the region under the French colonial policy of assimilation in Cameroon, which, indeed, would later turned out to act both as a means of assimilation and, in some situations, a source of questioning that would lead to resistance against the colonial system, and political instability.

Similarly, the protagonists of the selected novels for this study, who are also themselves “educated” by their experience in Africa, would sometimes turn out to resist or at least consider the nature of their mission, such as Denis, in *The Poor Christ of Bomba*, who finds himself in a state of identity crisis. However, such conflict is treated by Beti in the selected novels, the significance and representation of which will be explored later in this study.

The novels of Mongo Beti turn out to be my appropriate choice for this study on satiric portrayal of resistance in Africa because of the relevance and suitability of the contents of his works to the study. Thus, within the context of satire and *Native Resistance*, this study sets out to analyse the selected novels of Mongo Beti: *The Poor Christ of Bomba*, *King Lazarus*, *Remember Ruben*, and *The Story of the Madman*.

Mongo Beti is considered by many scholars as one of the renowned satirist Francophone African writers from Cameroon. The Cameroonian-born writer Alexandre Biyidi Awala, alias Mongo Beti, died in 2001. He was one of the key Francophone African writers of the post-war and independence era. He attended Catholic mission and public schools in Yaounde and later studied literature and spent most of his life in France. His early writings exposed the tensions in colonialism and the social dislocation and disorientation in the lives of the colonized, Western educated and independent Africans.

His portrayal of tension is set right in his first novel *Ville Cruelle*, (*Cruel City*, 1957), the only work which wrote under the pseudonym of Eza Boto, which satirically means “the alienated people” or people without “authenticity or autonomy.” Beti’s popularity went beyond Cameroon and the Francophone nations, his works were widely read in many African countries, including Anglophone nations such as Nigeria, Ghana, The Gambia, and Kenya.

Later, he adopted another satirically charged name, Mongo Beti, which means “the son of the soil,” and his writings were very critical of the post-independence governments and the influence of neo-colonialism and imperialism in Africa. He was a controversial figure with the political elites in Cameroon, where he returned after thirty-two years of exile in France and settled after his retirement in 1996.

Therefore, my choice of Mongo Beti is informed by the fact that most of the literary analysis on African novels has been done on Anglophone writers such as Achebe, Ngugi, Soyinka, and Chimamanda, and the British Empire as a whole, and that there has rarely been any research on resistance through the use of satiric tools on Mongo Beti's literary works, so far.

However, the researcher selected four out of six of the novels written by Mongo Beti because the dominant themes in the other two novels (*Cruel City* and *Mission to Kala*) are not so much relevant to the perspective of the present study. There is also scarcity of relevant literature especially on *Cruel City*. Furthermore, in some cases, the researcher avoided repetition of themes in order not to exceed the required pages for the research.

The novels selected mark or cover very significant thematic periods in the history of Africa in general and Cameroon in particular. Thus, *The Poor Christ of Bomba* and *King Lazarus* portray what happened during colonialism, while *Remember Ruben* portrays what happened during the struggle for self-independence, and *The Story of the Madman* depicts the post-independence period. All the selected novels satirize the social, political, and economic situations in Cameroon.

For example, in *The Poor Christ of Bomba* and *King Lazarus*, Mongo Beti satirically portrays the pre-independence era in Cameroon under the colonial administration of M. Vidal and Father Drumont, the priest at the Catholic Mission in Bomba. The story begins with Drumont announcing his plan for a brief tour of the Tala region, which he has abandoned for three years because of their resistance to the Christian mission and colonialism, by extension. But now he feels is the right time for the "good shepherd" to return to them.

During this tour of the Tala region, he encounters various challenges with the villagers, which include the opportunity to speak with the villagers and his significant confrontation with the regional witchdoctor, Sanga Boto. His regular warning against polygamy, banning of local traditions such as dances was met with resistance by the people. Father Drumont also learns from the colonial administrator, M. Vidal, during the tour, about the plan to construct a road through the region and the plans to forcefully engage non-converts in the road construction but to exempt the converts, which confirms and exposes the link between the two in the colonial project in Cameroon. It is also at the end of the tour that Drumont learns that the mission's women's school for brides-to-be and young wives run by the mission, the sixa, has been operating as a brothel. This exposes further the decadence in the mission he presides over in Bomba. He thus feels dismayed and ashamed, therefore, he decides to abandon the mission and return to France.

In *King Lazarus*, Beti presents another satirical story of Father Le Guen, who is the priest of the Catholic Mission to the Essazam people. He exposes and ridicules the Father's attempts at imposing Christianity on the people of the Essazam tribe.

Though Le Guen has many converts, his attempts at converting the Essazam Chief, the Essomba, fails. When the Chief falls ill, all expect him to die, especially his aunt Yosifa, who is a Christian convert, and the Father is unable to visit him because he is out of town. Therefore, in her attempts to save his life, she performs an unorganized baptism on him, and because he is too weak, he is unable to resist the baptism as he has done before he falls ill.

The Chief miraculously regains his health soon after the baptism. Despite doubting the baptism, Le Guen uses the opportunity to convince the Chief to convert. With the assistance of the Chief's aunt, Le Guen persuades him to change his lifestyle from the traditional to the Christian way of life by repudiating his twenty-three wives to only one, as a good Christian. His first wife, Makrita, and the whole community actively resist the idea.

Gradually, the situation leads to violent conflict among the tribes and the towns of the clans and the destruction of the peaceful co-existence among these clans. Subsequently, the colonial army arrives to restore order. The colonial administrator, Lequeux, expresses his concern over Le Guen's failure to adhere to the colonial administrative wishes that restrains him from seeking to convert the Chief. Consequently, the priest is removed from his position because of the disastrous outcome of his actions and his disobedience to the colonial administration, but not because of the crisis he created between the once peaceful African communities.

Beti, in *Remember Ruben*, satirizes and ridicules the type of political independence the French colonial authorities granted Cameroon. The novel depicts Cameroon at the verge of independence, and the Workers Union leader, Ruben (Um Nyobe), and his party PPP (UPC) are demanding full-fledged independence, the type of independence the French authorities are not willing to grant the colony of Cameroon. Therefore, during the election, the French colonial government supports the candidature of a more amenable person, Baba Toura, and then engages in the assassination of the local opposition leaders. Thus, Baba Toura's political opponents are assassinated by a ruthless gang of mercenaries with the support of the French authorities.

Consequently, Ruben (Um Nyobe) becomes the first victim and his supporters take to guerrilla tactics, fighting the French-backed government, leading to political instability in the Cameroon colony. Moreover, the novel satirizes the portrayal of an image of a period in time, the birth of political emancipation in a former French colonial territory, and beams some light on the post-colonial political developments in Cameroon.

In *The Story of the Madman* (2001), Beti satirizes the political turmoil which trails the attainment of independence in almost all African countries. He criticizes the successive leaderships coming to power through military coup d'états. This is fictional realism. He also exposes the role of the former colonial powers as the

master-minds of the political instability in the society. In this novel, the village chief, Zoaételeu, is a descendant of the Mendouga lineage. He undergoes different tortuous experiences under the various regimes depending on his actions or inactions in the frequent changes of government. The traditional setting becomes unsettled just because of political expediency.

However, the role of Mongo Beti is obvious in the formation and development of the African novel. The African novel's ramifications are reflected in the varied models of study, particularly from the Western perspective. The African novel has been reassessed through intellectuals and critics, either from the West or Africa, as viewed from the perspective of the modern era. Mongo Beti's literary works, whether the early novels that were written before independence such as *Cruel City*, *The Poor Christ of Bomba*, *Mission to Kala*, and *King Lazarus* or those written after independence such as *Remember Ruben* and *The Story of the Madman*, highlight and satirize different historical stages for the Cameroon African novel.

The critics and researchers who are concerned with Mongo Beti's literary works generally approach their studies from varied views, and most of these studies have only focused on the practical criticism that is related to the main themes, symbols, and images and to what extent the African novel has developed through shifts in themes, styles, and techniques. However, there are limited studies that stress on the satiric portrayal of resistance and the impacts of colonialism in the settings of the selected novels.

However, the gap between the previous research and present research can be attributed to the scarcity of relevant literatures that are translated into the English language from the Francophone countries. This can be blamed to the emphasis given to the Anglophone literatures and literary writers over their counterparts from the Francophone nations.

In other words, the present study has taken careful steps in avoiding a repeat of previous studies so as to maintain the uniqueness and originality of this work. However, the uniqueness and originality of this study arise from its combination of four different novels by Mongo Beti, who satirically represents a biting description of the missionary and the colonial world, and the social and political impacts of their activities on the native people of Cameroon. This research analyses these selected novels, which represent different historical periods of the setting, Cameroon, focusing on the satiric and the biting portrayal of the missionaries, the colonial administration, the native resistance, and the impact of the colonial system on the social and political lives of the native subjects in the settings of the selected novels.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Many researchers have studied a number of Mongo Beti's literary works, mostly as postcolonial novels. Parkinson, T. S. (2003) examined three novels from Cameroon

written in the French language: *Le pauvre Christ de Bomba* and *Le Roi miracle* by Mongo Beti and Rene Philombe's *Un Sorcier Blanc a Zangali*. The study investigated the parallels between post-colonialism and Liberation theology. It utilized postcolonial theories of *Orientalism* and *theology* in its analysis. Gaffin, V. H. (2004) investigated the Western concept of postcolonial literary theory and its relevance to African Mission literature, among others. There has rarely been, however, any work on satire on Mongo Beti's novels.

Moreover, the selected novels for this study have been studied and discussed separately by previous researchers either in the form of academic journals or dissertations. However, the gap between the previous studies and present research can be attributed to the scarcity of literature translated into the English language from the Francophone countries because the emphasis is given more to the Anglophone literary writers than to their counterparts from the Francophone countries.

Likewise, each novel has been studied separately, that is, with no relation to the other as far as themes in the novels are concerned, using a separate theoretical framework. Therefore, this research seeks to address those gaps by tackling a new theme of resistance through satire using Frantz Fanon's concept of *Native Resistance* in the selected Mongo Beti's novels. Thus, there is rarely any study that has the conflation of the selected novels and theoretical framework of the present study.

Furthermore, my choice of Mongo Beti is, from among other reasons, informed by the fact that most literary analyses, criticisms, and research studies have concentrated on Anglophone writers and the British empire as a whole. Therefore, this present research study seeks to address that gap that also exists between the Anglophone writers such as Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and Ayi Kwei Armah and the Francophone writers such as Mongo Beti, Ferdinand Oyono, and Maryama Ba by undertaking a research study of texts written by Mongo Beti and applying the themes on the setting of the selected novels, Cameroon.

Meanwhile, Ferdinand Oyono, who later abandoned his literary career and joined active politics, has written only three novels, and only *Houseboy*, which is in the form of a diary, has been widely read. Maryama Ba's *So Long a Letter*, which is a depiction of the female condition in African fiction, is her most popularly read novel out of three she has written.

However, unlike other Francophone novelists, Mongo Beti's novels were translated into the English language and many other foreign languages, which gave him a lasting international reputation over others. Therefore, Beti's literary works were read in many parts of Africa, including the Anglophone countries like Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya. For instance, *The Poor Christ of Bomba* (1956) became a classical literary text in the 1970s and 1980s in Nigeria and other African countries. His writings, as mentioned above, were political satire, which were more critical of

colonialism, the post-independence governments, and the influence of neo-colonialism on Cameroon, in particular and, by extension, on African nations. Moreover, there is a scarcity of research in forms of dissertations or articles in journals that discuss any of Mongo Beti's literary novels selected for this study. Hence, the researcher is going to review some of the research studies that discussed some of Mongo Beti's selected novels for the purpose of situating this dissertation's new contribution within the existing thematic perspective of the chosen novelist's selected works.

For example, Watts (2011) offers a straightforward and general analysis of the text. However, the writer did not mention any specific theory used, but a close reading of the article indicates that concepts such as *exile* and *alienation* dominated the analysis. This, therefore, depicts a gap between this article and my study, though, using the same author and same novel but differing in the choice of focus and also the choice in theoretical framework.

Furthermore, the researcher selected four novels for this study as against one selected and analysed in the article. Similarly, in a doctoral dissertation, Jick (1996) studied Mongo Beti's earlier works *Cruel City* and *The Poor Christ of Bomba*. The study depicts the writer as one who passionately concerns himself with socio-political events in his society in Cameroon. Thus, the research examines the portrayal of socio-political themes in the selected novels by Mongo Beti using Marxist theory as the basis for his analysis. He argues that it is difficult to divorce politics from literature when discussing Mongo Beti's works and that all Beti's literary works except *Mission Termine (Mission to Kala)* are politically engaged in the struggle for liberty. While his pre-independence works are aimed at fighting against colonialism, the post-independence works are directed at the neo-colonial puppets of the former colonial masters. However, in all the reviews and commentaries on Beti's work, there is no full-fledged satirical study of Beti's literary works similar to the one this present study has carried out. It seems that none of the studies have addressed this topic with the theories used in this research.

In summary, from all the dissertations and articles published in journals and other publications available on the literary works of Mongo Beti, there are none that are topically related with the present research nor did anyone select and combine the four novels (*The Poor Christ of Bomba*, *King Lazarus*, *Remember Ruben*, and *The Story of the Madman*) and discussed them as works of satire as this researcher selected and did for this research study. Although some of the studies used Postcolonial theoretical concepts in their analyses, none utilized the theoretical framework I have chosen for this research (*Native Resistance*). Moreover, there is also a scarcity of studies on three of the novels I have selected for this study, *King Lazarus*, *Remember Ruben*, and *The Story of the Madman*, which further justifies the significance of my study.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective this study is to investigate the impact of French colonialism on the native subjects through analysing the themes and major characters of Mongo Beti's selected works.

The specific objectives are represented in the following points:

- Explore the satirical depiction of the roles of the colonial missionaries in relation to their link with the colonial administration in the selected novels.
- Examine the satirical portrayal of the native subjects as the embodiment of *Native Resistance* in the selected novels.
- Analyse the satirical depiction of the impact of colonial experience on the colonised subjects in the selected novels.

1.4 Research Questions

This study intends to answer the following questions:

- i. How does the novelist satirically depict the relationship between the colonial missionaries and the colonial administration in the selected novels?
- ii. In what form does the novelist satirically portray the native subjects in the selected novels?
- iii. What is the relationship between the colonised subjects and colonialism and to what extent does colonialism relate to underdevelopment as satirically depicted in the selected novels?

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is comprised of Frantz Fanon's concept of *Native Resistance* from the postcolonial literary and narrative theories. Both shall be utilized to investigate, examine, and analyse the thematic and the technical fabric of the selected novels for this research study. However, literary theories and criticism such as those of Homi K. Bhabha, Ania Loomba, Edward Said, and Anthony Appiah, among others, will also be relevant, and some of their concepts are independent.

Colonial power might leave a negative imprint on the colonized subjects about their religious, political, socio-economic, and cultural lives. The genre is thus concerned with the social, cultural, psychological, and political lives of the postcolonial subjects in the postcolonial nations, while the genre also depicts the effects of colonialism and the new forms of colonial domination, imperialism, which comes after decolonization. According to Young:

The term 'postcolonial' has been the subject of protracted and sometimes ingenious discussion (Appiah 1992; Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1998; Loomba 1998; McClintock 1994; Shohat 1992; Slemon 1994). Many of the problems raised can be resolved if the postcolonial is defined as coming after colonialism and imperialism, in their original meaning of direct-rule, domination, but still positioned within imperialism in its later sense of a global system of hegemonic economic power (2001).

In other words, according to Said (2002); Ashcroft, Griffins and Helen, among others, described postcolonial literature as writing which has been "affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day".

Moreover, the term postcolonial is said to be notoriously hard to define. According to Abraham (2008, pp. 376-393), post colonialism, to some literary critics, started as a 'temporal marker' signifying the period after decolonization. Although most of what we have as postcolonial took place during this period, post colonialism has little concern with period marking because even most of its renowned theorists, such as Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Homi K. Bhabha, and others belong to the colonial period. However, this study, as stated earlier in this section, intends to utilize the postcolonial concept of *Native Resistance* to locate the thematic concerns of the selected satirical novels of Mongo Beti. A detailed discussion is provided on this aspect in Chapter 3 of this study.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The situation before independence was decried as characterized by exploitation of the colonized subjects and their societies: oppression, racism, and cultural alienation (in the form of assimilation in French colonies and direct/indirect rule in the British colonies). The independence, which promised so much, has proven to be a *chimera* as life in many African (and indeed third world) countries/nations has deteriorated in spite of the so-called modern times.

The people became disillusioned immediately after the much desired independence. These so-called independent countries are bedevilled with corruption, political turmoil/power struggle, dictatorship, and socio-economic backwardness, which lead to stagnation and underdevelopment of the entire continent due to the absence of patriotism on the part of the indigenous leaders and external control from the 'former colonial powers' in the form of imperialism.

The situations in Nigeria, Kenya, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Sudan, Mali, and Somalia among many other countries in the continent are cases to point out. Even in countries that have not experienced internal strife in the form of civil war, there has not been absolute peace. However, this research is original given that there has rarely been any full study on Mongo Beti's

literary works or on any Francophone writer on satiric portrayal of *Native Resistance*, so far.

Consequently, this study becomes significant as it deals with Mongo Beti's *The Poor Christ of Bomba* (P.C.B.), *King Lazarus* (K.L.), *Remember Ruben* (R.R.) and *The Story of the Madman* (S.M.), the third and the latter of which little (if anything) has been written on so far, and it will address the gap of near absence of critical analysis of literary works from Francophone writers in the English language. A further significance of the study is that it aims to explore the satiric depiction of the complicit link between the Christian colonial missionaries and the colonial endeavour and their role in accomplishing the colonial project.

The study is also significant in the sense that it will investigate the socio-political impacts of the colonial encounter on the native subjects in the selected novels. It will also examine the reaction, in the form of resistance, of the colonized subjects against the Western colonial system. These issues depicted by the novelist in the selected texts are worth examining.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The selected literary works of Mongo Beti satirize the themes of colonialism, colonial religion, resistance, and the impacts of colonial contact on the colonized subjects in Cameroon. All the selected novels stress satiric depiction and project the colonial oppression and domination of Cameroon, the role of the Christian religion and the missionaries in facilitating the colonial project, the resistance of the people and the impacts of the colonial system on the social, economic, cultural and political development of Cameroon. The novels focused on in this study are *The Poor Christ of Bomba*, *King Lazarus*, *Remember Ruben*, and *The Story of the Madman*. All the novels mark or cover very significant periods in the history of Africa: during colonialism, during independence (after colonialism), and after independence.

The author in *The Poor Christ of Bomba* and *King Lazarus* satirizes the pre-independence era under the colonial administration of Lequeux. In *The Poor Christ of Bomba*, which critics describe as Beti's master piece, is a humorous but devastating critique of the follies and brutalities of colonial administration and the colonial Christian mission under Reverend Father Drumont, who after resistance by the native people returns to France due to frustration. The novel also satirizes the impact of the encounter on the native subjects.

While, *King Lazarus*, which is described as a continuation of *The Poor Christ of Bomba*, is dominated by the presence and activities of Reverend Father Le Guen among the Essazam tribe. The mission is apparently strictly that of evangelization — dissemination of the Catholic Creed to the 'heathen' Africans, whose lives are characterized by everything un-Godly. The tribe's leader is Chief Essomba Mendouga, a great consumer of palm wine and married to twenty-three wives. This

is just one of the things Father Le Guen, who is also seen as working for the colonial administration under the guise of religion, is working against. Even though Chief Essomba is converted in the end, his old habits of having many women and relapsing into traditional ways are hard to divorce. Also, people reacted against the steps taken by the colonialists to change the tradition. These actions lead to serious communal clashes among the various tribes and clans under the Kingdom.

In *Remember Ruben*, Beti also satires and ridicules the kind of independence the French colonial administration granted to the people of Cameroon. In the novel, the author portrays Cameroon at the verge of political independence, and the Workers Union leader, Ruben (Um Nyobe), and his PPP party (UPC) are demanding for full-fledged political independence, without interference thereafter by the colonialists, a demand the French authorities are not willing to grant the colony of Cameroon. Therefore, on the eve of independence, during the election, the French colonial authorities support the candidature of a submissive person, Baba Toura, and thereafter engage in the prosecution and the assassination of the local opposition leaders in Cameroon.

Henceforth, Baba Toura's political opponents are persecuted and assassinated by a ruthless gang of mercenaries with the support of the French colonial administration. The main opposition leader, Ruben (Um Nyobe), becomes the first victim; therefore, his supporters take to guerrilla tactics, fighting the French-backed government, leading to political instability in the country. Moreover, the novel satirizes the depiction of a period in the time of the birth of political emancipation and political instability in a former French colonial territory and sheds some light on the postcolonial social, economic, and political developments in the country.

The Story of the Madman (2001) delineates successive leaderships coming to power through military coup d'états. This is fictional realism. Beti powerfully satirizes the former colonial powers as the master-minds of the instability that is popular in the continent. In this novel, the village chief, Zoaételeu, is a descendant of the Mendouga lineage. He undergoes different torturous experiences under the various regimes, depending on his actions (or inactions). The traditional setting is unsettled just because of political expedience.

The novel is an open window into the psyche of the African people, weighed down by centuries of tribal strife, scarred by years of colonial invasions, enslaved by colonial and neo-colonial repression, and crushed by current political turmoil. An attempt will be made at tracing the strand that links Beti's tenacity in the struggle for emancipation when other writers abandoned their vocation and joined ranks to dine with the powers that be. Beti's concern with the issues of colonialism is very clear. In his novels he reveals the process and the consequences of colonialism/imperialism on the socio-cultural and political lives of the people.

The textual analysis focuses on the major themes and characterizations of those selected literary works of satire which indicate the reality of colonized societies, the role and link between the colonial administration and the colonial Christian mission in reshaping the social, cultural, and political lives of the colonized subjects, and the attempts by the native subjects at resisting the colonial enterprise.

Thus, the study explores through the texts the vision of the writer involved with the satiric portrayal of social and political impacts of the metropolitan powers on the Cameroonian society under the guise of religious missions and the resistance against it by the native populace as portrayed in the selected novels. Therefore, the selected literary texts addressed in this study are sufficient to uncover the social and political impacts of the colonial encounter on the Republic of Cameroon, even after independence.

Through the researcher's analysis and argumentation, he confines himself to the selected literary works, regardless of the other works of the novelist. Thus, the scope of the study is limited to the title, topic, novelist, selected literary works, theories used, and concepts of the theories, methods, the main themes, and characterizations used in the analysis. The scope of the study is sufficient to achieve the purpose and objectives of the study.

1.8 Research Methodology

This present research aspires to locate the novels of Mongo Beti in the realm of literary works of satire depicting themes of resistance against colonial oppression and domination. The study, therefore, shall rely mostly on the selected texts and other relevant secondary sources. The primary sources shall be *The Poor Christ of Bomba* (P.C.B.), *King Lazarus* (K.L.), *Remember Ruben* (R.R.), and *The Story of the Madman* (S.M), while the secondary sources shall include relevant textbooks, publications in academic journals, and internet sources.

The study, being a textual analysis, shall not require interviews and the use of questionnaires. The theoretical approach to be applied shall be the literary concept of *Native Resistance* according to Frantz Fanon. This aspect will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3 of this study.

The study comprises seven chapters, including introductory observations and concluding remarks. Therefore, Chapter 1 deals with the introduction to the topic of the research. It discusses the general background of the study, justifies it, gives the statement of the problem, and provides the significance, scope, the research questions, as well as the objectives behind conducting such a study, and the theoretical framework of the study.

The second chapter deals with the review of relevant literature related to this study. It provides a historical background of Cameroon, the setting of the selected novels, which also covers its colonial history to the present day. The chapter also provides a discussion on the life history of the author of the selected novels for this study, Mongo Beti, and a plot summary of his literary works is also provided in the chapter. An important aspect of the chapter is its attempt to provide a review of critical, relevant, and related studies pertaining to the topic of this thesis.

Chapter 4 deals with analysis of two of the selected novels for this study: *The Poor Christ of Bomba* and *King Lazarus*. Chapter five covers the analysis of two novels, which are also *The Poor Christ of Bomba* and *King Lazarus*, but discussing different themes from those discussed in Chapter 4, and Chapter 6 focuses on three of the selected novels: *The Poor Christ of Bomba*, *Remember Ruben*, and *The Story of the Madman*.

1.9 Definition of Terms

1.9.1 Satire

According to Swift, J. “satire is a sort of glass wherein beholders do generally discover everybody’s face but their own, which is the chief reason for that kind of reception it meets in the world, and that so very few are offended with it” (1991, p. 780).

1.9.2 Satirist

This refers to the writer who sets “himself certain standards and criticizes the society when it departs from these norms. He invites us to assume his standards and share the moral indignation [...] pour derision and ridicule on the society’s failings. He corrects through painful, sometimes malicious laughter” (Ngugi, 1972).

1.9.3 Irony

Is seen as a rhetorical device, literary technique, or contrast between reality and appearance, and that which “consists in stating the contrary of what is meant” (Partridge, 1997).

1.9.4 Sarcasm

This “is an indirect form of speech intentionally used to produce a particular dramatic effect on the listener; reader” (when ridicule or mockery is used harshly) (McDonald, 1999). Haiman defined it as “an overt irony intentionally used [...] as a form of verbal aggression” (1998).

1.9.5 Humour

This deals with the emotional aspects of humans. They are amused; to smile or laugh at something funny. It is witty banter of characters, while sometimes it is characterisation itself or ironic situations or absurd that gives humour to a literary work.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter provides the background of the study in which the researcher defines the literary genre of satire and also discusses the types of satire, its functions, and also provides some examples of some renowned satirists such as Samuel Johnson, John Dryden, Ian Jack, Daniel Dafoe, Jonathan Swift, Jane Austen, and Ngugi wa Thiang'o, among others, and their literary works, both from among Western writers and those in Africa. The brief history the Republic of Cameroon, which is the physical setting of the selected novels, is also discussed, from the colonial period to the post-independence period.

A brief biography of the novelist Mongo Beti is presented in the chapter, which highlights his literary and political career, both inside Cameroon and while in exile in France, and a brief discussion on the selected texts for this study is also provided in the chapter. The chapter then covers the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, the theoretical framework, significance of the study, scope and limitations, and research methodology.

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

“The Portrayal of Working Class People in African Novels: A Study of Festus Iyayi’s *Violence*” published in *Advances in Languages and Literary studies*. ISSN 2203-4714 Vol. 5 No. 4 p. 38; August, 2014.

“The Doubly Oppressed: The Portrayal of Female Characters in Mongo Beti’s *The Poor Christ of Bomba*” published in *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*. ISSN 2200-3452 (Online) Vol.4 No.3 p. 89; December, 2014.

Conferences Attended

The 10th Malaysian International Conference on English Language Teaching (MICLET 2014), held at The Golden Palace of the Golden Horses, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

8th International Online Language Conference (IOLC 2015), held between 2-3 March, 2015 (Online).

9th Malaysian International Conference on Languages and Cultures (MICOLLAC), held in Penang, Malaysia from 16th to 18th August, 2016.