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Colonial Oppression and Postcolonial Trauma in Athol Fugard's Boesman and Lena

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Abstract

This paper examines postcolonial trauma in Athol Fugard's Boesman and Lena (1969). The study primarily focuses on Fugard's depiction of the intricate psychic complications of South African people who genuinely experienced colonial hegemony. It designates the play's appropriation of real individuals in the context of postcolonial trauma; whereby they underwent subjective conditions which had led to the culmination of their traumatic behaviors. Therefore, the analysis sheds light on Fugard's perception of colonialism as the crucial impetus of trauma which comes into prominence with the advent of the colonizers in South Africa. The study applies a qualitative methodology to interpret the characters as dramatic replicas of South African individuals suffering from the aftermath of colonialism. Furthermore, it follows a close reading and textual analysis of the play's characters via polarizing Stef Craps' concept of postcolonial trauma. Thus, the study's main finding is exploring the characters' trauma as a result of colonial oppression.

Keywords: Colonialism, Culture, Fugard, Oppression, Postcolonial Trauma.

Introduction

Post-colonialism has led to the emergence of many social and psychological phenomena that are closely associated with the destiny of the colonized nations. At the onset of colonialism, there had been a number of colonial enterprises that tried to subjugate the colonized territories for the sake of imperial or cultural dominance. As a result, the colonizers set forth new colonial disciplines that might lead to the construction of new states that belong to the metropolitan culture that represents "the repercussions of individual and collective *trauma*" (Stone et al., 2024, 125). The quest for colonial imperialism, therefore, has been interpreted by different discursive works whether fictional or non-fictional "whenever the dominant culture refuses to budge and (violent) force becomes certain, tragedy and *trauma* keep happening" (Ni and Wang, 2023, 149). The main premise for depicting the colonized nations is the imperial gradual development in the colonized nations and how they are affected by the colonizers' social norms or cultural traditions.

The study of the colonized nations' culture, for example, is highly significant due to the fact that the colonizers attempt to promote their culture and social traditions in the colonized nations. As a result, the influence of the colonizers upon the colonized people is immense; and it could be perceived

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through various critical approaches. At this point, the language of the colonized nations would be a subject for interpretation and discussion by “the prevalence and impact of trauma” (Stephany, 2024, 1). Culture and religion would be also other decisive factors that would be effective in delving deep into the thematic nuances of literary works dealing with the colonial plights tackled by colonial-related authors “as postcolonial trauma theorists have suggested, turn out to be traumatic not because of their novelty, but because they reproduce an effective continuity of treatment at a time when the expectation of the group has been changing” (Eyerma and Sciortino, 2020, 10).

The purpose of this study, however, is to explore the depiction of post-colonial trauma in Athol Fugard’s *Boesman and Lena* (1969). It looks into the colonial aspects of the play by shedding light on the roles of the major characters. It examines the play’s characters that embody the realistic experience of the colonized people in South Africa and how they are negatively affected by its oppressive fact. That is, the characters become psychically traumatic after the colonial encounters between them and the colonizers. Therefore, the study will apply Stef Craps’ concept of postcolonial trauma to examine the characters’ psyches affected by oppressive colonial residuals. This is because his main argument reflects the true sense of postcolonial trauma that accumulates after successive colonial experiences between the colonized and the colonizers.

Literature Review

Athol Fugard’s *Boesman and Lena* has been discussed from different critical perspectives. The running theme in Fugard’s plays is the oppression that black people face at the hands of the apartheid system in South Africa. The study conducted by Sahar Abd Al-Ameer Haraj and Haidar Laique Hashim (2016) focuses on Fugard’s significant contribution to the exploration of apartheid’s dismantling and the establishment of a democratic and antiracist society through his political dramas. Specifically, their study delves into the social relevance of Fugard’s works, with an emphasis on the recurring theme of the dialectic between the self and the other. Haraj and Hashim (2016) examine how this dialectic serves different purposes and yields varying effects across Fugard’s plays and a diverse range of characters (123). The authors (2016) maintain that Fugard’s plays serve as a platform for marginalized individuals to confront their marginalization and undergo transformative experiences that impact their psychological, mental, and physical conditions. The dialectic of the self and the other acts as a catalyst for character development, fostering personal growth and empowerment. As marginalized characters interact with the “other,” they navigate a hostile world that perceives them as outsiders, thereby necessitating the assertion of their own identity as a central objective within Fugard’s narratives; they write: “the dialectic of the ‘self’ and ‘other’ is cleverly shown by Fugard, who declares an important message for those who want to regain the self-image again. Fugard, through Lena, states that the concept of ‘self’ can be ensured through generosity, forgiveness, and self-denial” (Haraj & Hashim, 2016, 120).

The authors conclude that Fugard’s political dramas offer a compelling exploration of apartheid’s dismantling and the quest for a democratic and antiracist society. By emphasizing the dialectic between the self and other, Fugard’s plays illuminate the diverse purposes served by this dialectic for marginalized individuals (130). In addition, the authors state that these purposes encompass empowering marginalized characters and enabling them to challenge the hostile world that perpetuates their marginalization. Nevertheless, the authors have partially overviewed the social aspect of the apartheid system. In doing so, the overall conflict within the partied system of South Africa has been overshadowed by the particularities of the ‘self’ and ‘other’. In this article, the general conflict that is running in the apartheid system will be tackled

through the lens of Stef Craps' postcolonial trauma.

In "Multiple Levels of Meaning and Liberal Existentialism in Athol Fugard's *Boesman and Lena*", Andrew Foley (2001) examines the utilization of language in Fugard's play *Boesman and Lena*, with a specific focus on its limitations and drawbacks. Foley acknowledges the practical necessity of narrowing the scope due to space constraints while recognizing the significance of this play as the pinnacle of Fugard's particularized linguistic style. It also acknowledges the importance of other elements of Fugard's dramaturgy, such as properties, lighting, movement, and gesture, in contributing to the overall meaning of the play (Foley, 2001, 47)

In addition, Foley (2001) highlights the limitations of Fugard's language despite his acclaim for creating dialogue that reflects everyday speech and verisimilitude. He argues that the emphasis on the individual level of meaning, encompassing personal conversations and immediate responses, often lacks depth and intellectual engagement (Foley, 2001, 47). The language remains largely at a literal level, offering limited exploration of complex themes or abstract concepts. Consequently, Fugard's language may fall short in providing a deeper understanding of the political and philosophical dimensions that could enrich the play. Foley (2001) asserts that Fugard's *Boesman and Lena* is quite different from his other plays, "Although Fugard's distinctive language usage - and particularly his utilization of multiple levels of meaning - is evident throughout the three Port Elizabeth plays of the 1960s, it is in *Boesman and Lena* that this usage finds its most prominent deployment" (42).

In this respect, Foley (2001) discusses Fugard's dramatic language by means of the relationship between *Boesman and Lena*, whereby the author has primarily tackled this at the beginning of the play. While this approach provides detailed insights into linguistic elements, it acknowledges the limitations of narrowing the analysis to specific moments. By doing so, there is a risk of overlooking the broader context and nuances that contribute to the play's overall meaning. In addition, there is the potential for the analysis to become a deconstructive exercise, detached from the essence of the play and its ability to capture diverse aspects of human experience.

In *Athol Fugard and Race Relations: Social Dynamics under Apartheid*, Ernest Cobena Dei (1993) examines Fugard's plays in the context of the apartheid system in South Africa. The study is commended for its comprehensive approach, addressing various aspects of Fugard's works and their societal implications. By analyzing the legislative framework that underpins apartheid, the study provides crucial historical and political context for understanding Fugard's allusions in his plays. It also explores the societal obsession with race and its consequences, shedding light on the systemic oppression experienced by marginalized communities (Dei, 1993, 19).

Another strength of the study lies in its examination of themes such as restricted mobility, human contact, and coping mechanisms within Fugard's plays. In addition, the researcher delves into the dehumanizing effects of apartheid and provides insights into the psychological and emotional toll endured by those subjected to its injustices. Furthermore, the study recognizes Fugard's exploration of brotherhood and highlights the challenges faced by interpersonal relationships in the face of racist ideologies imposed by society. The author also acknowledges Fugard's condemnation of violence and its portrayal as an inevitable consequence if the status quo remains unchanged (Dei, 1993, 19).

However, it is important to note the limitations of the study. While it focuses on Fugard's plays within the apartheid context, it falls short in fully examining the intricacies and specifics of the

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South African system. This narrow focus may restrict the discussion's ability to provide a comprehensive understanding of the political and social nuances unique to apartheid. Additionally, the main gap claims that Fugard's play addresses fundamental truths beyond a single society is a broad assertion that would benefit from further analysis and supporting evidence.

In conclusion, the study tries to explore racial harmony, social change, and individual actions as depicted in Fugard's plays makes a valuable contribution to the field of modern drama. The emphasis on individual attitudes, tolerance, and brotherhood in combating racism and driving social transformation is commendable. However, it is essential to acknowledge the study's limitations in fully capturing the complexities of the South African system and substantiating broader existential claims. Overall, this study provides valuable insights while also highlighting areas that require further research and exploration.

Conceptual Framework and Rationale of the Study

Craps (2013) traces the origin of trauma; and he relates it to some devastating events. In the main, he ascribes psychic trauma to violent incidents resulting in severe vehemence. These incidents had led to the formation of trauma as a reaction to oppressive treatments or disappointing facts about people and their lives: "most attention within trauma theory has been devoted to events that took place in Europe or the United States, especially the Holocaust and, more recently, 9/11" (Craps, 2013, 9). Therefore, psychic trauma begins in a negative atmosphere leading to the culmination and accumulation of detrimental psychological responses.

Craps (2013), furthermore, ascribes psychic trauma to the British Imperialism that had inflicted its severe rules and system upon the colonized nations. In this sense, trauma had got its oppressive insights by Eurocentric hegemony and ways of life. Trauma, consequently, had become a mixture of Western and non-Western relationships between imperialism and the colonized nations. In other words, the Western aspects of trauma are created by imperial blueprints attempting to spread their dominance on the colonized nations. It also comprises the influence of such imperialism upon the natives' life and well-being; Craps writes: "the trauma-ridden history of British imperialism that happened—and continues to happen—overseas, is symptomatic, it seems to me, of trauma theory's general blindness to, or lack of interest in, the traumas visited upon members of non-Western cultures. This Eurocentric bias is rarely acknowledged by those subject to it" (Craps, 2013, 11-12).

Craps, moreover, explicates the dichotomy between Western and non-Western factors of psychic trauma. The primary critical essence of psychic trauma originates in quasi-violent atmosphere, especially when contradictory culture oppose and negate each other. Consequently, cultural schism between Western and non-Western communities accumulates; and it comes into being as aversive to any ethical rule. In this case, non-Western culture is not properly recognized and it falls victims of psychic trauma. The implicative psychological nuances of psychic trauma are created in tense social milieus involving the colonized culture and the imperial colonizers: "a one-sided focus on traumas suffered by members of Western cultural traditions could thus have pernicious effects at odds with trauma theory's self-proclaimed ethical mission. If trauma theory is to adhere to its ethical aspirations, the sufferings of those belonging to non-Western or minority cultures must be given due recognition" (Craps, 2013, 13). In this way, suffering from psychic trauma has its conspicuous roots and origins in the destructive colonial implications of Western imperialism. This is because the colonized nations become subordinate to the foreign imperial culture.

Craps (2013) offers a discursive explanation of psychic trauma in terms of post-colonialism. This is because post-colonialism is widely connected with the way by which suppressed nations could not express themselves appropriately as they are oppressed and relatively silenced. As a result, he (2013) approaches the concept of psychic trauma through colonial oppression brought by Western hegemony. Such hegemony, in turn, is imposed upon the colonized nations where the natives become victims of cultural and social bias; and it is used “to illustrate the difficulty of trauma theory to recognize the experience of the non-Western other” (Craps, 2013, 15). Furthermore, Craps contends that the oppressive peculiarities of postcolonial trauma are stimulated by violence exerted by Western hegemony and inflicted upon non-Western minorities: “an exemplary European trauma results from an act of violence against a non-European other whose true nature is concealed, in this case by the language of accident” (Craps, 2013, 7).

The Eurocentric features of postcolonial trauma are elaborated by the discussion of complex traumatic reactions as a result of oppression. In the first place, Craps attributes postcolonial trauma to memories. Traumatic individuals suffer from previous colonial experiences, and they could not get rid of them as they constantly recall them when they as often as they suffer from oppression. Craps describes the past experience as an “affair” which leaves it negative psychological impact upon individuals because “the affair triggers a chain of memories as the woman relates the traumatic experiences” (Craps, 2013, 18). In this sense, past affairs, or experiences, play crucial roles in shaping oppressed people’s trauma as long as they tend to recall that past.

In the long run, Craps accentuates the importance of giving the non-Western oppressed minorities a strong voice to emulate their Western counterparts. That is, Western Eurocentrism should be replaced with an earnest and serious commitment to understanding postcolonial trauma within the wide scope of cultural imperialism. As a result, the concept of postcolonial trauma entails the notion of “breaking with Eurocentrism requires a commitment not only to broadening the usual focus of trauma theory but also to acknowledging the traumas of non-Western or minority populations for their own sake. ... the traumas of non-Western or minority groups must be acknowledged, moreover, on their own terms” (Craps, 2013, 19). Hence, Craps (2013) provides postcolonial alternatives to postcolonial trauma for the sake of empowering the suppressed colonized voices. In this case, the oppressed voices could be equal to the imperial culture; and they could recover from trauma in an appropriate way.

The rationale behind using Craps’ concept of postcolonial trauma lies in its significance to discuss the states of the oppressed minorities’ psyches. It could be suitably employed to interpret the selected play’s characters and their dialogues in order to locate the impetus of their trauma by analyzing their speech and interaction with each other. Furthermore, the concept could be properly used to explore Fugard’s depiction of postcolonial trauma in terms of the characters’ memories that are repeatedly triggered back, and, ultimately, they make the characters psychically traumatic. For this reason, the current study will apply the concept of postcolonial trauma to infer the implicit cause of the characters’ traumatic behaviors. Therefore, the textual analysis of the characters and their pertinent dialogues could be explicated rightly in relation to the dichotomy between colonial oppression and postcolonial trauma portrayed in the main course of the plot.

Analysis and Discussion

Fugard’s *Boseman and Lena* hinges on the core conceptual polarization of post-colonialism in South Africa. In this respect, the current study attempts to perceive the play through the lens of Craps’ (2013) postcolonial trauma highlighting the moments in the plot where postcolonial trauma affects the characters. Craps’ work explores the concept of postcolonial trauma, which refers to

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the enduring psychological and emotional effects experienced by individuals and communities as a result of colonial oppression. The focus is on the lasting impact of colonization on the collective memory, identity, and well-being of those who have been colonized. Craps (2013) argues that postcolonial trauma manifests in various forms, such as cultural alienation, internalized racism, and a sense of loss and displacement. By shedding light on these experiences, Craps (2013) enhances our understanding of the far-reaching consequences of colonialism and the importance of acknowledging and addressing postcolonial trauma for healing and empowerment. The play opens with a description of a couple named Boesman and Lena and their devastated life. They are genuine manifestations of postcolonial trauma negatively affecting their psyches:

A Coloured man—Boesman—walks on. Heavily burdened. On his back an old mattress and blanket, a blackened paraffin tin, an apple box...these contain a few simple cooking utensils, items of clothing etc., etc.

After a few seconds a Coloured woman—Lena—appears. She is similarly burdened—no mattress though—and carries her load on her head. (Fugard, 1969, 5)

Boesman and Lena, therefore, are the major characters who suffer from the experience of colonial trauma. They represent Fugard's obsession with dealing with the intricate states of traumatized people in South Africa. The characters, therefore, are used as dramatic vehicles to comment on the reality of postcolonial trauma perceived in the plot. In this regard, there are several vivid elements that reflect the experiences of postcolonial trauma perceived by Fugard's dramatic dexterity. Firstly, the heavy burden carried by both Boesman and Lena symbolizes the weight of the past and the enduring consequences of colonial oppression. Their physical loads, consisting of basic necessities and meager belongings, suggest a life of hardship and marginalization. This resonates with postcolonial trauma's examination of the lasting effects of colonization on individuals and communities, including economic struggles and limited access to resources "in the field of interpersonal violence" (Reid, 2024, 9).

Furthermore, the presence of Boesman and Lena as "coloured" individuals highlights the racial categorization and discrimination that emerged from colonial ideologies. The term "coloured" itself reflects a legacy of racial classification and social hierarchy imposed by the colonial powers. This racialized identity carries with it a history of subjugation and exclusion, contributing to the collective trauma experienced by those who were subject to such categorization. The ethnic background of Boesman and Lena, consequently, includes their race which is different from the imperial culture. The imperial culture, in turn, is the major cause of their psychic trauma since imperialism inflicts severe oppressive treatment upon them. Fugard, in this sense, perceives psychic trauma in relation to the depiction of the major characters who are victims of colonial oppression. They develop complex psychic complexes due to this treatment.

The physical appearance of Lena carrying her load on her head adds another layer to the analysis. This image evokes the concept of carrying the weight of history, cultural memory, and the burdens of postcolonial trauma. The act of physically balancing the load on the head suggests resilience and endurance in the face of adversity, embodying the psychological and emotional strength necessary to navigate the aftermath of colonialism. The following quotation highlights the plight of both Boesman and Lena. It addresses the feelings of the oppressed in this racist society.

LENA: [...] My life. It felt old today. Sitting there on the pavement when you went inside with the empties. Not just moeg. It's been that for a long time. Something else. Something that's been used too long. The old pot that leaks, the blanket that can't even keep the fleas warm. Time to throw it

away. How do you do that when it's yourself? (Fugard, 1969, 16)

The psychic plight of Boesman resembles Lena's dissatisfaction with her living conditions. Fugard perceives the three characters as dramatic stereotypes of psychic trauma which emerges out of harsh experience. Lena, furthermore, embodies the concept of psychic trauma to a great extent because primarily she suffers from recalling her past memories and plights. As previously argued, recalling the past experience is an obvious sign of psychic trauma. Lena's statement about her life feeling old and worn-out encompasses a sense of fatigue, exhaustion, and disillusionment. This sentiment resonates with postcolonial trauma, where individuals and communities affected by colonial oppression often experience a deep weariness and a feeling of being burdened by the weight of history and the enduring effects of colonization. Lena's description of her life as something that has been used for too long further reinforces the notion of being worn out and depleted. It speaks to the erosion of identity, agency, and vitality that can result from prolonged experiences of oppression and marginalization caused by "*trauma* that may be found whatever the culture or country may be" (Harrower, 2024, 31). The comparison to a leaking pot and an inadequate blanket evokes images of deprivation, hardship, and the struggle to find basic comfort and security. This reflects the enduring consequences of postcolonial trauma, where individuals grapple with a sense of dispossession and a diminished sense of self-worth.

The question Lena poses: "How do you do that when it's yourself?" - encapsulates the profound challenge of overcoming postcolonial trauma. It highlights the complex nature of healing and moving forward when one's own sense of self has been deeply affected by the traumas of colonization. This question emphasizes the internal struggle faced by individuals to shed the weight of their past and find a way to redefine and reclaim their identities within the context of postcolonial realities. In *Memory Unbound: Tracing the Dynamics of Memory Studies*, Lucy Bonds et al. argue, that postcolonial trauma refers to the enduring psychological and emotional effects experienced by individuals and communities as a result of colonial oppression" (Bonds et al., 2020, 46).

Overall, this quotation from Boesman and Lena captures the themes of exhaustion, disillusionment, and the struggle for self-restoration that are central to postcolonial trauma. It reflects the psychological and emotional toll inflicted by colonial oppression and raises questions about the complexities of healing and redefining one's identity in the aftermath of colonization. The need for freedom and emancipation is important for individuals who suffer oppression and marginalization. Boesman and Lena, in this case, incarnate the essential notion of psychic trauma as they live in postcolonial life. They are employed as definitive dramatic components to unravel the contemporary dissatisfaction with colonial oppression and cultural imperialism in South Africa. They are in line with the drastic ethnic and cultural changes storming in South African peripheries which are the regional demarcations of postcolonial trauma. In *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma out of Bounds*, Stef Craps argues "Recognizing and addressing postcolonial trauma is crucial for the healing and empowerment of individuals and communities affected by colonial oppression" (Craps, 2013, 37). Again, Craps connects the concept of postcolonial trauma with the colonial conditions that lead to the formation of trauma. The following quotation presents the ongoing debate between Lena and Boesman concerning their futile and marginal life,

BOESMAN: Forget it. Now is the only time in your life.

LENA: No! 'Now.' What's that? I wasn't born today. I want my life. Where's it? (Fugard, 1969, 42).

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Boesman's statement, "Forget it. Now is the only time in your life," conveys a sense of urgency and an emphasis on the present moment. It suggests a desire to move forward and leave behind the burdens and traumas of the past. This resonates with postcolonial trauma, as individuals and communities affected by colonization often grapple with the need to reconcile with the past while striving for a better future. Lena and Boesman need a stable and good future because they suffer from the oppressive hegemony of colonial imperialism. They feel that they could not gain such a future except by fanciful imagination and wishful thinking. They do not find any outlet for their psychic problems; and they strive for more social and psychic stability, which they did not find long ever before the advent of postcolonial oppression.

Lena's response, "No! 'Now.' What's that? I wasn't born today. I want my life. Where's it?" challenges the notion of leaving the past behind. Lena's rejection of the present moment highlights the impact of postcolonial trauma, where individuals feel disconnected from their own histories and a sense of continuity. The question of "where's my life?" underscores a yearning for a genuine sense of self and a search for a meaningful connection to one's own experiences and identity.

This exchange reflects the complexities of postcolonial trauma, where individuals may struggle to reconcile the need for healing and moving forward with the desire to honor their past and reclaim their own narratives "on the experience of extreme traumatic incident" (Muldoon, 2024, 48). The tension between Boesman's emphasis on the present moment and Lena's insistence on the significance of her life history reflects the multifaceted nature of postcolonial trauma and the challenges individuals face in navigating their personal journeys of recovery and self-empowerment. In the next quotation, we can identify elements that reflect the experiences of postcolonial trauma. On a rare occasion in the play, Boesman explains his own dilemma and trauma:

BOESMAN: [...] I could stand there! There was room for me to stand straight. You know what that is? Listen now. I'm going to use a word. Freedom! Ja, I've heard them talk it. Freedom! That's what the whiteman gave us. I've got my feelings too, sister. It was a big one I had when I stood there. That's why I laughed, why I was happy. When we picked up our things and started to walk I wanted to sing. It was Freedom! (Fugard, 1969, 53)

Boesman, consequently, is the core figurative character employed by Fugard to convey the psychic state of traumatic minority to the reader. The play provides the reader with the primary clues to understand the different complexes of their psyches. In this way, Fugard uses the characters as a tool to comment of the position of traumatized people who suffer from colonial oppression in South Africa. Boesman's statement about standing straight and feeling a sense of freedom captures a fleeting moment of liberation within a context of ongoing oppression. His mention of the word "freedom" highlights the complex relationship between the colonized and the concept of freedom bestowed upon them by the white man. This reflects the postcolonial trauma experienced by individuals and communities, where the promise of freedom often falls short of the actual lived experiences of marginalized groups.

Boesman's remark that he had "feelings too" emphasizes the individual and emotional dimension of postcolonial trauma. It suggests that despite being marginalized, he possesses a rich interior life with desires, hopes, and moments of joy. This challenges the dehumanizing effects of colonialism and asserts the individual agency and humanity of those who have been subjected to its oppression. The contrasting emotions Boesman describes, from laughter and happiness to the desire to sing, signify the power of brief moments of liberation in the face of ongoing hardship. These fleeting moments of freedom become significant acts of resistance and sources of resilience, as individuals

strive to maintain their humanity and find moments of joy despite the oppressive circumstances they endure. Strikingly, Boesman's speech reflects the inner features of psychic trauma stimulated by colonial oppression. Fugard makes deliberate remakes and thematic implications about their psychic trauma by means of their harsh experience.

Similarly, In *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma out of Bounds*, Craps argues that "the enduring consequences of colonialism shape the experiences and narratives of individuals affected by postcolonial trauma" (Craps, 2013, 34). The above quotation reflects the complexities of postcolonial trauma. It portrays a moment of fleeting liberation within an oppressive context, highlighting the tension between the promise of freedom and the realities of ongoing marginalization. The expression of individual agency and the pursuit of happiness in the face of adversity speaks to the resilience and resistance exhibited by individuals experiencing postcolonial trauma. It underscores the importance of recognizing the multifaceted experiences of those affected by colonization and the ways in which moments of freedom can serve as acts of defiance and sources of strength.

In *Understanding Postcolonial Traumas*, Abigail Ward argues that "they will, at least in part, still hold the oppressors' values and beliefs. As a result of this attachment to the oppressors' ethics, the oppressed can achieve only partial liberation" (Ward, 2013, 175). The following quotation corresponds to the same idea in which the oppressed is emotionally attached to the oppressor and is having conflicting ideas regarding their relationship. Boesman dialogue in the next quotation clearly shows his troubled relationship with the oppressor. His way of emancipation is strikingly descriptive of his desperation,

BOESMAN: [...] One push. That's all we need. Into gaol, out of your job . . . one push and it's pieces. Must I tell you why? Listen! I'm thinking deep tonight. We're whiteman's rubbish. That's why he's so beneukt with us. He can't get rid of his rubbish. He throws it away, we pick it up. Wear it. Sleep in it. Eat it. We're made of it now. His rubbish is people. (Fugard, 1969, 55)

Boesman's statement about needing just one push to shatter their current circumstances reflects the desperation and frustration resulting from the oppressive system they face. The mention of going to the goal and losing a job highlights the cyclical nature of marginalization and the limited opportunities available to individuals living under the weight of colonial oppression. This reflects the postcolonial trauma experienced by those who continually face societal and economic barriers that hinder their progress and perpetuate their marginalized status. Boesman undergoes a severe colonial experience which leaves its impact upon his psyche. He becomes utterly traumatic as he faces and confronts many barriers brought by colonial oppression. They are portrayed as tools of imperialism that are deprived of the minimum requirements of their life's needs, like freedom and economic prosperity.

Boesman's assertion that they are "whiteman's rubbish" underscores the dehumanizing effects of colonialism and the inherent racism embedded within the system. The term "rubbish" signifies the systemic marginalization and disposability imposed upon individuals and communities by the colonial powers. It reflects the postcolonial trauma of being reduced to objects or discarded remnants, stripped of dignity and agency. The imagery of picking up and wearing the white man's rubbish encapsulates the ways in which marginalized individuals are forced to endure the remnants of a system that devalues and discards them. This imagery speaks to the intergenerational effects of colonialism, where the trauma of marginalization becomes deeply ingrained within their identities and experiences. Boesman's description of the whiteman's rubbish emerges out of his disappointment as a colonized individual. He reacts against colonial oppression by using words

which meticulously describe his traumatic state. He feels that he could not cope with the current social and cultural situations because they are profoundly distorted by the presence of hegemonic imperialism. Fugard focuses on these characters as they lead difficult living conditions when they interact with their colonizers.

In *Trauma*, Lucy Bond and Craps (2020) state that “the trauma of colonization often manifests in various forms, including cultural alienation, internalized racism, and a sense of loss and displacement” (Bond & Craps, 2020, 65). The sense of loss and alienation in the play can be seen in Lena’s argument with Boesman: “LENA: [...] Why must you hurt me so much? What have I really done? Why didn’t you hit yourself this morning? You broke the bottles. Or the whiteman that kicked us out? Why did you hit me?” (Fugard, 1969, 59).

In this sense, Lena’s plea, “Why must you hurt me so much? What have I really done?” encapsulates the pain and suffering endured by individuals within the context of postcolonial trauma. Lena’s questions convey a sense of injustice and confusion, as she questions the reasons behind the violence inflicted upon her. This reflects the cycles of abuse and power dynamics that are often perpetuated within marginalized communities affected by colonization.

Her reference to the broken bottles and being kicked out by the white man highlights the external sources of violence and oppression that shape their lives. Lena questions why Boesman directs his aggression towards her when there are other culprits responsible for their plight. This raises issues of internalized trauma and the ways in which individuals within marginalized communities may unintentionally perpetuate violence among themselves as a result of the trauma they have experienced.

Lena’s inquiry about why Boesman did not direct his violence towards himself further underscores the complex dynamics of postcolonial trauma. It suggests a deep yearning for self-reflection and accountability, as well as a recognition of the harm caused by internalized aggression. This speaks to the psychological and emotional toll of postcolonial trauma, where individuals grapple with their own experiences of victimization while also navigating their own capacity to cause harm. Lena and Boesman, in this case, are dramatic replicas of the colonized people. They incarnate the sense of postcolonial trauma since Fugard portrays their personalities as being caught in severe violent actions. As argued earlier, postcolonial trauma comes out of oppressive violence and vehemence which make individuals obviously traumatic.

In *Decolonizing Trauma Studies: Trauma and Postcolonialism*, Sonya Andermahr maintains that: “Without negating the lasting, profound impact of trauma, postcolonial trauma narratives often also demonstrate that resilience and growth are possible in the aftermath of traumatic wounding” (Andermahr, 2016, 12). In the following quotation, Lena discusses the idea of freedom in their harsh circumstances: “LENA: [...] What’s your big word? Freedom! Tonight it’s Freedom for Lena. Whiteman gave you yours this morning, but you lost it. Must I tell you how? When you put all that on your back. There wasn’t room for it as well” (Fugard, 1969, 62).

Lena’s statement about the big word “Freedom” highlights the irony and complexities surrounding the concept within the context of postcolonial trauma. Lena associates the word with her own personal sense of freedom, asserting her agency and reclaiming her own version of freedom despite the hardships she faces. This reflects the resilience and resistance exhibited by individuals affected by postcolonial trauma, as they redefine and reclaim their own narratives and interpretations of freedom.

Lena’s remark that Boesman received his freedom from the whiteman in the morning but lost it

signifies the limitations and transient nature of the freedom bestowed by the colonizers. It suggests that the freedoms granted may be conditional, superficial, or easily taken away. This reflects the postcolonial trauma experienced by individuals and communities who find themselves in a state of continual negotiation with the powers that have historically oppressed them. The characters of Lena and Boesman exemplify the concept of postcolonial trauma because they live in postcolonial social milieus. They are blatant victims of colonial oppression as indicated by their dialogues and speech. There are some signs of their trauma, including loss of liberty, deprivation, poverty, and oppression. They could not cope with the dominant imperial culture; and Fugard approaches this reality by dint of the mistreatment inflicted upon the colonized people though they are natives and the original residents of their homeland. In this sense, Fugard projects his authorial views of postcolonial trauma through the characters and their behavioral manifestations of psychic trauma that develops and matures within the context of suppressive colonial oppression.

The imagery of putting all the burdens on Boesman's back, leaving no room for freedom, underscores the weight and constraints of the postcolonial experience. It symbolizes the sacrifices and limitations individuals face within a system of oppression, where the pursuit of freedom is hindered by the burdens and hardships they endure. This speaks to the resilience and determination of individuals to assert their own agency and seek liberation despite the challenges they face.

Conclusion

This study examined post-colonial trauma in Fugard's *Boesman and Lena* (1969). It has unraveled colonial oppression as the effective lurking motivation of the characters. The analysis accentuated Fugard's treatment of psychic trauma from a postcolonial perspective. Therefore, the main finding of the study is the exploration of foreign colonialism as the essential cause of the characters' trauma. That is, the characters suffer from oppressive treatment at the hands of their colonizers. The study emphasized Fugard's thematic description of foreign colonialism as the metropolitan hegemony which inflicts its severe colonialism upon the colonized people in South Africa. Consequently, the study identified the colonial confrontation between the colonized people and the colonizers as the crucial factor of the characters' psychic trauma after the end of colonialism and during their postcolonial life.

Another integral finding of the study is the psychological post-colonialism attributes of trauma. To clarify, the typical characteristics of post-colonialism is the cultural and social impact of its disciplines upon the colonized people. Once colonialism arrives in the colonized territory, it changes its inherited customs and traditions that represent its original and native cultural peculiarities. As a result, colonialism leaves its apparent influence on the inherited culture. However, it undergoes drastic changes when colonialism ends. The end of colonialism entails the beginning of a new era known as postcolonial life. In this way, the colonized people, who are the native people, co-exist with the cultural residuals left by their colonizers. Nevertheless, the current study highlights post-colonialism from a psychological perspective. It is discussed as a result of the gradual and accumulative development of the characters' trauma. In other words, post-colonialism could be connected not only with culture and society but also with trauma and the human psyche, i.e., the psychological attributes of post-colonialism. Hence, the study's methodology depended on Craps' conceptualization of postcolonial trauma and how it negatively affects the characters' psyches. By applying Craps' arguments, the major outcome of the study is the exploration of colonial oppression is the primary impetus of the characters' postcolonial trauma.

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