

THE REPRESENTATION OF MIGRATION AND YOUTH CRISIS IN MABANCKOU'S *BLUE WHITE RED*

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Abstract

This paper examines the representation of migration and youth crisis in Alain Mabanckou's *Bleu Blanc Rouge* (1998) translated as *Blue White Red*. The study seeks to explore African youth migration and the crisis associated with it as an effect of being colonised. Drawing on the works of Frantz Fanon, it argues that the novel reveals the crisis and the harsh realities of the life of an African immigrant in Paris and that there are two shades of African immigrants in Paris— those that went to learn the secrets of the West in order to improve the condition of their society and those that went as a show-off. Since African Youth migration as an effect of being colonized has not received much attention, this paper sets out to analyse the crisis attached to African youth migration in Mabanckou's *Bleu Blanc Rouge* as a product of youth crisis in relation to mental slavery and not as a desire to acquire more knowledge that will move their homeland to a better position in the world arena. The study shows how the novel represents Paris as a place of inequalities and disappointments as against the paradise on earth taught by the colonial journey. Through the analysis of the novel, this paper exposes the disappointments faced by young African immigrants and the disillusionment of the Parisian dream.

Keywords: Youth crisis, Migration, Frantz Fanon, African

Introduction

African youth crisis has been an ongoing discussion in postcolonial literature and has been dominated by narratives that frame it as either an effect of being colonised or as an effect of the failures of post-colonial Africa and their dependency complex. African youth crisis in relation to unemployment, identity issues, migration and what the future holds for the youth have preoccupied many critics who are concerned about the efforts of the youths in the developmental projects of their region. According to United Nations' demographic projections, Africa is the world's youngest continent (Moyele and Manlan, 2020) and the future of the continent will be shaped by the youth's in-depth knowledge of the status of its economy at large. It is a known fact that the youths are usually assets for the improvement and growth of the economy of their region; so, the transformation of the African continent requires the positive mind-set of the youthful population but regrettably, unemployment and poverty faced by

African youths expose them to many crises that sometimes push them towards the idea of migrating to the cities of their former coloniser in search of greener pastures.

The hopelessness and frustration faced by African youths in relation to unemployment and poverty have severe consequences as many of the youths resort to joining rebel groups to disturb the peaceful co-existence of their region. Youth crisis has been portrayed by many writers and critics who sometimes blame it as an effect of being colonized and some other time on the poverty level of many ex-colonies. This situation is very complex for the youths in ex-colonies as their psyches were affected by the formidable journey of colonization. Kelland and Sanchez (2018) while debunking the myths and misconceptions about the poverty level in the region and that Africans do nothing to help themselves affirm that the stereotype of African people as helpless and dependent on Western help is one that has been built by decades of well-meaning but arguably dangerous charity advertisements in the West. For them, there are countless examples of grassroots projects established by Africa, for African people.

In a situation where the region fails to address the stereotypes about Africa properly, the continent risks an exodus of youths who may seek opportunity elsewhere (Kariba, 2020). The exodus of African youths seeking opportunities elsewhere is the preoccupation of Alain Mabanckou, the author of the novel (*Bleu Blanc Rouge*) under study. *Bleu Blanc Rouge* is Mabanckou's reflection on the issue of African youth migration, with a deep concern for the underlying socio-political tensions and challenges that young people face in the cities of their former coloniser.

Mabanckou's portrayal of African youth migration to Europe in his novel *Bleu Blanc Rouge*, translated as *Blue White Red* is a fictional warning to the youthful population about the disappointment faced by young African immigrants and the disillusionment of the Parisian dream. Migration as an effect of being colonized is represented in Mabanckou's novel where the Congolese youths were portrayed in the light of illegal immigrants who travelled to France with the hope that the pasture is greener at the other side or in the countries of their former colonizers.

Bleu Blanc Rouge is Mabanckou's fictional representation of postcolonial Africa (Congo region in particular) where youths born in conflict-prone areas or abject poverty dream of being prosperous in the cities of their former colonisers without considering the challenges and the crisis that may arise in the cause of their journey to prosperity. This paper will begin with an insight into the existing literatures on the subject matter, about Alain Mabanckou and an overview of *Bleu Blanc Rouge* (1998). As Fanon cannot be discussed without making reference to postcolonial theory, this paper will use postcolonial theory as the theoretical framework as well as fanonian reading of *the Bleu Blanc Rouge* with a view to ascertaining that African youth migration to the cities of their former coloniser is an effect of being colonized and can also lead to crisis.

Literature Review

Youth crisis in Africa in relation to African youth migration has been a recurring topic because it is unavoidable in postcolonial literature and it requires further interrogation.

The African youth narratives preoccupied many writers and critics with more emphasis on their identity, employment crisis, political activities, and their beliefs about the future, how they value education and their attitudes towards migration.

On African youth migration, Abay, Kibron and Mulubrahn (2021) maintain that urban growth in potential migrant destinations encourages youth migration. For Flahaux and Haas (2016) increasing migration out of Africa seems rather to be driven by processes of development and social transformation which have increased Africa's capabilities and aspirations to migrate, a trend which is likely to continue in the future. Kweitsu (2019) views African youth migration as a crisis from the growing belief that the grass is always greener outside the shores of Africa. Kalemba (2021) advances the argument that pre-migration of Black African youth draws on modernist notions of development associated with whiteness to position Australia as a developed place, and they have the expectation that the experiences of development would be available to them. Regrettably, those youths are aware of the dangers inherent in illegal migration yet, are willing to risk migrating to foreign countries and are likely to make themselves available for voluntary slavery due to increasing rate of poverty. Onyemelukwe (2018) on the novel under study affirms that Mabanckou castigates the French authorities for the marginalization of African immigrants and also sensitizes the public on the need to pay attention to immigrants in a bid to alleviate their despicable plight and make life better for them in the host countries. African youth migration crisis has been debated for years but scant attention has been paid to this crisis as an effect of being colonized, which is the aim of this paper.

Alain Mabanckou and the Selected Novel

Alain Mabanckou is a Congolese writer, born in 1966 in the city of Pointe-Noire. He is a professor of French and Francophone studies at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Mabanckou's writings explore new direction for the Francophone African novel, expanding upon earlier themes of exile, migration and travel as he explores the trials and tribulations that accompany those attempts at living between Africa and France.

Mabanckou's depiction of youth crisis is not from the perspective of living on the wrong side of the law but rather, from the frustrations, realities and inequalities faced by young African immigrants in Paris. *Bleu Blanc Rouge* is Mabanckou's analysis of the contemporary challenges facing the African continent and African youths in particular. Mabanckou tackles interesting facts about migration while comparing two migrant groups, namely the Peasants and the Parisians. The peasants are the economic migrants who leave the African continent to seek employment in Europe while the Parisians are mostly youths lured to France by the desire to acquire designer's clothes and to acquire wealth with fewer struggles.

In *Bleu Blanc Rouge* (1998), Moki is the Parisian that the Congolese youth seek to emulate because of his status in the African community. He travelled to Paris and

found success there which he used to lure Massala-Massala, a young Congolese and also the narrator of the novel.

Postcolonial theory and Fanonian Reading of *Bleu Blanc Rouge*

According to McLeod, in *Beginning Postcolonialism* (2000:22), freedom from colonialism comes not just from the signing and declaration of independence and the lowering and raising of flags. There must also be a change in minds and a challenge to the dominant ways of seeing things. Youth crisis as an effect of being colonised revolves around the lies implanted in the minds of the formerly colonised, (which make them to doubt the fertility of their land), the colonial order of things, the commonly-held assumptions about the West among others. Postcolonial discourse is the right tool for this study because of its effort in challenging the colonial order of things and the re-examination of what the ex-colonies have been taught as truth. Frantz Fanon is a postcolonial critic whose concern is more about the decolonization of the minds of the colonised from colonial ideas that make them to feel inferior.

Bleu Blanc Rouge is Mabanckou's postcolonial novel whose themes revolve around problems that Fanon prophetically raised about post-colonial Africa which include lack of development, inferiority complex, exploitation, dependency complex among others. Fanon's critical models or principles is required for the analysis of this paper as his ideas shed light on African youth migration crisis as an effect of being colonised. The lack of trust on the fertility of one's homeland has pushed many youths into the fantasy of Parisian dream as Mabanckou reveals in *Bleu Blanc Rouge*. Youth migrants face specific challenges and often find themselves in vulnerable situations, even if their hopes, dreams and ambitions are similar to other youngsters all over the world (Vitorino, 2020:15).

However, labour markets in developing countries in general, and in Africa in particular are unable to absorb annually the hundreds of thousands of new job seekers, and this lead many to seek employment opportunities elsewhere (Tamar, Sujata and Jamie, 2019:140). African youths that travel abroad in most cases face the crisis of getting a good job despite their qualifications and many resort to doing menial jobs in the face of inequalities and discrimination. According to Everatt and Sisulu (2017:16), the legacy of job reservations has particularly serious implications for Africans in the job market. Those white who always boasted that 'my vel is my graad' (my skin is my degree) have benefited at the expense of blacks who may have been better qualified: income, pensions, housing, subsidies and other benefits are all tied to the job one holds.

Fanon's idea on *The Wretched of the Earth* about youth migration is in line with what Mabanckou revealed through the character of Moki, the young African immigrant, who speaks French "le Français de Maupassant lui-meme" (the tongue of Maupassant) like the Parisians instead of the broken French spoken by the Lingalas as

evidence of being superior among his folks and quoting and citing from memory, the most famous passages from the great French authors. For Fanon:

The fact that the newly returned Negro adopts a language different from that of the group into which he was born is evidence of a dislocation, a separation (1952:46)

According to Drabinski (2019), Fanon's reflections on language, racism, and colonialism begin with a wide claim: to speak a language is to participate in a world and to adopt a civilization and if speaking a language means participating in a world and adopting a civilization, then the language of the colonized, a language imposed by centuries of colonial domination and dedicated to the elimination or abjection of other expensive forms, speaks the world of the coloniser. This study believes that the idea of speaking in the tongue of famous French authors is an effect of being colonized. The journey of colonization placed the colonial language over the indigenous language and the colonized struggle to emulate their style in order to feel like them which is evidence of dislocation.

The youthful population, in a bid to act and behave like Moki who just returned from Paris, are lured into the idea of leaving their homeland with the hope of finding success at the other side without considering the crisis that may arise in their new destination. This scenario is peculiar to Africa as a result of what the journey of colonisation did to their psyche. For Fanon, Negroes who return to their original environment convey the impression that they have added to themselves something that was lacking. They return literally full of themselves (1952:42). Moki returned to his homeland with remarkable achievements which pushed many youths into the crisis of believing what the colonial journey planted in their psyches.

The colonial journey demonized, ridiculed and declared inferior the knowledge system of many former colonies in an effort to justify colonization. The effects of this negative justification have done more harm than good among the youthful population who struggle at all cost to travel abroad for a better life. This study upholds Mabanckou's effort in unmasking the crisis that awaits the youthful population whose only energy is channelled towards leaving the shores of their continent, especially the undocumented immigrants who face serious problems in their new destination.

The narrator of *Bleu Blanc Rouge* reveals that Moki, the African immigrant in France, returns home speaking French (which is the language of the coloniser) as against the Pidgin and Creole that is very common with the everyday life of the African community in Diaspora and elsewhere. For Fanon, to speak as the colonized is therefore to participate in one's own oppression and to reflect the very structures of your alienation in everything from vocabulary to syntax to intonation (Drabinski, 2019). Although, Fanon further condemns the speaking of the pidgin version of colonial language as he views this as a form of participation in inferiority.

The character of Moki in *Bleu Blanc Rouge* (2008) is a representation of Fanon's idea in *Black Skin, White Mask* (1952). For Massala-Massala, the narrator of the novel:

Moki had two faces. He wore several masks. One mask for the country. Another for Paris. His confidence bowled me over. I could put up with it—I just had to refuse to answer him. His authority bothered me. An authority attained simply because he had been the first to have tread upon this land of dreams. He was in his world. It was up to me to find my place. A little place that suited me ... (*Bleu Blanc Rouge*, 1998:88).

The analysis of *Bleu Blanc Rouge* shows that Moki had two different personalities which he used to deceive and lure the youthful population into crisis in Paris. Mabanckou's depiction of the crisis faced by youths in Paris was revealed by Massala-Massala who was lured to France by Moki, the Parisian. Massala-Massala affirms that his disappointment started the first day he got to France with Moki, in place of meeting a descent apartment; he was welcomed by a negative sign on the gate of the apartment:

What struck me from the first day was the sign at the entrance of the front gate, which read that the building, our building, was under demolition. The number of the Municipal by-law was written in red. Work was planned to build a school and kindergarten cafeteria. To quell my fears and astonishment, Moki repeated his turn of phrase, which I finally fully understood: Paris is a big boy, he said. Yes, a big boy, all grown up now and vaccinated. Forget about Moki from the country. Do not ask yourself questions and content yourself with achieving the purpose that led you to come all the way here (*Bleu BlancRouge*, 1998:88).

The journey of colonization depicts Europe as paradise on earth, where people succeed and live a better life with ease but Mabanckou's portrayal of migration to Europe is evidence that things are not really rosy for the youthful population that move to the countries of their former colonizer for greener pasture. The narrator of the novel reveals that the surroundings of their apartment in Paris were a jumble of dilapidated, mismatched, lifeless furniture, eight storeys building without elevator to get to the last floor, poorly lit and smelled of dew and they were the only occupants in the entire building. Mabanckou's depiction of the poor condition of the room where the migrants sleep is an indication that youth migration could lead to crisis in their new location as

against the picture of Paris as paradise on earth painted by their ex-colonizers. In *Bleu Blanc Rouge*, the narrator reveals that all the occupants in the room are all Africans; no one knew what anyone else did during the day as they usually return very late and leave very early to earn a living:

His friends arrived very late at night, like felines, masters of the art of positioning their steps on the wood staircase without making it creaks. In the room, they whispered, popped open Heinekens, ate roast chicken, and went to bed around 2:00 a.m. to get up at 5:00 a.m. We would wake ourselves the next morning, piled together like Cadavers tied to some sort of mass grave. To sleep, you had to put a superior intelligence to the test and do without all those hindering positions, such as stretching out lengthwise or spreading your legs and hands. Space would cost you: a sharp dig of an elbow or knee, as needed (*Bleu Blanc Rouge*, 1998:89).

For Massala-Massala, who was doing well in the Congo region before he was deceived and lured to France by Moki, the Parisian, the crisis he faced in Paris was not necessary as he was earning a living through his peanut farming, with the mother and younger sister while his father always got his pension at the end of each month. For Fanon, it is better to go hungry than to eat one's full in slavery.

Mabanckou's *Bleu Blanc Rouge* also depicts police harassments as one of the major crises the African youth face in Paris. The narrator of the novel made reference to the constant police harassments and brutality faced by African immigrants in Paris and how it hindered their peace of mind, pushed them into unplanned expenses and denied them freedom of movement among others:

While I was shopping, a police car emerged from a side street. I also had to play cat and mouse with the forces of law and order. Stealthily disappear from the scene. Along with the illegal merchants or those without legitimate status to stay in France, we would disappear into the crowd. I looked to the left and to the right and hastened my steps until I got to the next street. When needed, I dive into a café and ordered a glass of Monaco to wait until the danger had passed (*Bleu Blanc Rouge*, 1998:92).

Mabanckou's reference to the crisis faced by undocumented African immigrants in Paris is a justification that migrating to the city of the former colonizer does not guarantee success without struggle rather it sometimes places the youth in a

more difficult situation than what they faced in their homeland. The freedom they enjoyed in their homeland will be indirectly taken away from them as they are always looking out for the police and also avoiding many scenes that could land them in the hands of the police. For Massala-Massala, many Africans in Paris faced police harassments on a daily basis, even while doing a small business to earn a living. He made this discovery on his first day at Chateau Rouge, where Africans sell exotic ingredients from Africa:

Small groups of Africans spoke in patois at the top of their lungs and burst out laughing in eruptions of festive happiness. They tried on clothing and shoes in the cafés across the street. North Africans sold watches, handbags, and cassette tapes along a side street, keeping their eyes open and necks craned like cautious storks to guard against a possible round-up by the cops (*Bleu Blanc Rouge*, 1998:91).

African immigrants in Europe also face the crisis of not having the right paper to work and live a decent life. Many of these immigrants travelled with tourist visa that can only last for a short period of time without considering the crisis that will strike when their paper expires. This scenario is also evident in the novel under study and it stands as a warning to the youthful population whose psyches were manipulated and made to believe that Paris is paradise on earth while disregarding the realities on ground which includes: inequalities, disappointments, lack of freedom among others. Massala-Massala, the narrator of the novel affirms that:

I had the excuse of not having a single document that gave me the right to work immediately and venture out in the street without fear of bumping into a police officer. My visa did not allow me to stay in France for a long sojourn. It was a tourist visa, the same exact kind that allows you to visit a country not set up shop there for good. I needed papers. Different papers, if I wanted to stay in France for a long time. Otherwise, I would be undocumented (*Bleu Blanc Rouge*, 1998:90).

Massala-Massala was lured to Paris by Moki, a Parisian, who made him to believe that Paris is another paradise on earth where people who are destined to succeed in life. Regrettably, Massala-Massala met the opposite of Moki's story about Paris on arrival. Massala-Massala's second disappointment in Paris was when he discovered that he travelled with a tourist visa which cannot allow him to secure a decent job. Due to his present condition and for the fact that he is the latest arrival, he was asked to take care of the cooking for all the occupants in the room until he could

become active. Despite the fact that he knew nothing about how to prepare dishes back home, Massala-Massala accepted the task without complaining, because the Parisian predecessors must be respected without complain. He convinced himself that he could do miracles since he had watched the mother and the only sister prepare food back home. The helplessness of Massala-Massala's situation made him to accept his faith with the consolation that leaving the shores of his continent is a big step in the life of any youth and he decided to look at things differently, since nobody back home would get to know that he slept on the floor or lived in a dilapidated building in Paris.

On the idea of inferiority complex, Fanon's *Black Skin, White Mask* (1952) investigates the psychology of colonialism, which is an examination of how colonialism is internalized by the colonized, how inferiority complex is inculcated and how Black people end up emulating their oppressors. Mabanckou's *Bleu Blanc Rouge* presented characters who struggled with inferiority complexes as they upheld the idea of inferiority complex through their actions and activities.

Mabanckou's depiction of inferiority complex among the Congolese was evidenced through the character of Moki's Father, a Congolese that always talk about France in his village council meeting despite the fact that he had never visited the country. Moki's father upheld the idea of inferiority complex among his folks through his rejection of the African style of dressing:

Moki's father was aware of his growing influence. The reverence people paid him began to make him lose his head. He wasted no time in adopting the latest fashions. He abandoned all his traditional clothing and preferred to wear clothes straight from Paris. From that time on, he wore gray trousers made of virgin wool, well pressed with sharp pleats. No belt, but tricolour suspenders (blue, white, and red), a white dress shirt, a black fedora, and the kind of good black shoes you wear to church. Suddenly he looked like the American blues singer John Lee Hooker. He strolled around the neighbourhood, chest out, head held high, both hands in his pockets (BBB, 1998:40).

This study views the inferiority complex displayed by Moki's father as a bad influence that could push the youths in his region into crisis. Youths are influenced by what they observe and by modelling. An ambitious youth after watching Moki's father parade the neighbourhood, wearing designer's clothes and looking like an American singer will want to emulate him. As the question of emulation comes in, the youth could resort to all forms of activities or dealings to migrate to the country of their former colonizer just like Moki, without considering what awaits them there.

The fact that the ex-colonies continue to choose European cultures and doctrines over their own means they still view themselves as inferior and inadequate. Inferiority complex can be a threat to the youthful population as many are thrown into the crisis of working hard to get themselves out of their condition. In a bid to get themselves out of their plight, many youths resort to stealing, kidnapping and many other forms of immoral acts while others may decide to migrate to the countries of their former colonizers who made them to feel inferior, debased them and described their land as a place of all forms of negativities, the heart of Darkness (Conrad, 1902).

Youth crisis as an effect of being colonized emerged from the stereotypes and generalizations about many ex-colonies and their inhabitants and they all came from the formidable journey of colonization. The negative depictions of most ex-colonies sometimes push the inhabitants outside the shores of their continent for greener pastures without considering the inequalities, the disappointments and resignation that awaits them over there. The crisis that awaits the youthful population in the countries of their ex-colonizers is the main preoccupation of Alain Mabanckou in *Bleu Blanc Rouge*. Colonialism reduced many ex-colonies to a lifeless region, a place where corruption triumphs and morals decline:

For Colonialism, this vast continent was a den of savages, infested with superstitions and fanaticism, destined to be despised, cursed by God, a land of cannibals, a land of niggers (Fanon, 1961:128).

For this study, the negative depiction of African continent by the West pushes the youthful population into the idea of migrating to the countries of their former colonial masters. *Bleu Blanc Rouge* presents Moki, a middle-aged man, who migrated to Paris and found success, as he used his wealth to change the poor condition of his family in the Congo region. Moki returns home every dry season to show off his wealth and to entice young girls, who despise their present condition because Moki says it is not ideal. Moki is the character that many of the youths in his city seek to emulate, from his dressing to the way he speaks. Massala-Massala the narrator of the novel reveals that Moki is the paradigmatic figure that all young men seek to emulate (*Bleu Blanc Rouge*, 1998:14), because of the transformation he brought to the father's house within a short period of migrating to Paris. For Fanon, this obscene emulation among the youthful population of many ex-colonies needs to be eliminated to avoid youth crisis. Fanon's idea about emulation in his book *The Wretched of the Earth* is that humanity expects other things from us than this grotesque and generally obscene emulation (Fanon, 1961:178).

The shift of perception from a youth facing crisis due to the effects of colonization to the youth rising above the Western definition of who they are can be attributed to Mabanckou's engagement and commitment in the novel under study. African youth migration is a crisis that brings about dislocation of the youth from their

root and culture and it also intensifies inferiority complex which is an iniquity that must be eliminated for the African youth to be relevant to his continent. Mabanckou's *Bleu Blanc Rouge* (1998) portrays two migrant groups, namely, the Peasants and the Parisians. The peasants are the economic and sensible migrants who left the shore of their continent in order to seek knowledge or employment in Europe while the Parisians are made up of African Dandys, whose members comprises of youths lured to Europe by the desire to acquire designer clothes in order to display their acquisitions on their return to their homeland.

Fanon's idea in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) that Negroes who return to their original environment convey the impression that they have added to themselves something that was lacking is evidenced through the characters of the Parisians -The title given to those that made it in France or young immigrants who try to distance themselves from the miserable economic and political circumstances of post-colonial Africa (Dundy, 2013) in the novel under study.

Mabanckou, through the character of Moki, reveals the soured relationship between the two migrant groups in the novel and also tackles the myth and the disappointment behind the Parisian dream:

We challenged our adversaries on their own turf. To encourage them to answer us, we upset them a bit with our insolence. We treated them as if they were poorly dressed; we told them that they were incapable of dressing Parisian style, incapable of speaking of that city, of expressing themselves in French, of citing from memory the most famous passages from the great French authors (BBR, 1998:58).

The analysis of the novel under study highlights the discrimination between the Parisians and peasants and how the Parisians looked down on the Peasants in Paris while comparing their dress code, where they live and their social gatherings which are part of the fundamental issues of the day that Fanon engaged in his writings. For Fanon in the opening chapter of *White Skin, Black Mask* (1952) colonialism is a total project that does not leave any part of the human person and its reality untouched. The journey of colonization touched all parts of the formerly colonised and this is the reason why Fanon was more concerned about decolonization of the mind of the formerly colonised that make them to feel inferior about their culture and knowledge system.

Bleu Blanc Rouge is Mabanckou's commentary on the realities that awaits African immigrants in Paris and the crisis that follows on the discovery that they have to choose between keeping a firm hold on their roots and adapting to life in a new country despite the harsh realities. The analysis of the novel shows that the Congolese youth have a firm believes that all are rosy outside the shore of their continent and the

immigrants do not want to admit defeat. Mabanckou's depiction of how the narrator of the novel *Massala-Massala* went to prison in Paris and was later deported because he was caught after a failed attempt to sell metro passes purchased with a stolen cheque book is a warning about the dangers and crisis that awaits undocumented immigrants in Paris:

In frustration, the taller one shook his finger at me and yelled, "All right, get this one out of here!" While the black guy twisted my arms, the short man seized the opportunity he had been waiting for to kick me in the butt. Several weeks had already passed since I had found myself in the darkness of the Seine-Saint-Denis jail for the first time. I was alone, cloistered, in a cell in the A wing, B building, fourth floor (*Bleu Blanc Rouge*, 1998:124).

Mabanckou's depiction of the frustrations and disappointments faced by African immigrants in Paris is a calculated attempt to show that the realities of life outside the shore of the continent cannot be hidden for too long. This was evidenced through the character of *Massala-Massala*, who was jailed in Paris and later deported while the character of *Moki* was used to educate the society that there are also painful details about African immigrants who come home to show-off their success and to lure the youthful generation into the fantasy of Parisian dream.

The analysis of *Bleu Blanc Rouge* reveals that the youthful population gets into the crisis of migrating out of the shore of their continent because of the stereotypes about their homeland. The journey of colonisation left a negative effect on the psyche of the youths who were made to believe that they cannot make it in life except outside their homeland. When *Massala-Massala* got to France and discovered that Paris is only but a place of inequalities and disappointments, he blamed himself for abandoning his studies and not believing in the fertility of their land, as the family lacked nothing while surviving on peanut farming. *Massala-Massala* thought of the different questions that will be thrown at him the moment his kinsmen discover that he has been deported and he blamed himself for having a negative opinion about himself and for his inability to succeed in Paris like *Moki* who lured him into the idea of migrating to Paris:

I imagined their response: "What the hell will you do in the white man's country? You abandoned your studies a long time ago!" The other obstacle was my negative opinion of myself. I was hard on myself. I did not accord myself a single positive Quality. I saw the dark side of things and imagined only the worst. Convinced that I was a good-for-nothing, lacking self-motivation, I thought of myself as a sluggish, spineless character, incapable of resisting the vicissitudes of life outside my own country (*Bleu Blanc Rouge*, 1998:33).

Mabanckou's reference to the deportation of Massala-Massala who was still in school and also involved in peanut farming before he was lured to Paris shows that the idea of migrating to Europe can and had always led the youthful population astray. Drawing on Fanon's idea in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) "European achievements, technology and lifestyle must stop tempting us and leading us astray (1961:176). Massala-Massala was led astray because he only saw the dark side of everything and imagined the worst, as he journeys in life.

This study believes that the stereotype about Africa which is deeply rooted in the colonial journey left a negative impact in the psyches of the colonized. Mabanckou's portrayal of the effects of the colonial journey among the youthful population is a way of showing that many youths migrate out of their country because they feel they can only be successful outside their homeland. The analysis of the novel under study reveals that youth crisis does not always revolve around violent acts by the youths or the younger generation but can also be considered from the perspective of the inequalities, disappointments, disillusionment and the realities of life faced by young immigrants outside the shore of their continent. The deportation of Massala-Massala, the narrator of the novel is a revelation that aside the crisis faced by the young immigrant on arrival in Paris, that more crisis may arise if there is a deportation case eventually. For Head (2019) efforts have been made to extend citizenship to undocumented immigrants under certain conditions, but these efforts have so far been blocked by policy makers who favour large-scale deportation. This is evidence that the ex-colonial masters are not bothered about the outcome of the decisions taken by their former colonies so long as it does not affect their economic gains.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Mabanckou's depiction of the tragedy, the realities of the life and the confusion faced by undocumented immigrants outside the shore of their continent is an attempt to show that the grass is not always greener at the other side and that the paradise on earth painted by the journey of colonialism about the West has always led the youthful population astray. This study suggests psychological and cultural liberation of the African youths in the face of their plight. African youths must lose the mentality they have had up till now and believe in the fertility of their land. The youthful population should avoid blame-game in their life struggles, as blaming the formidable journey of colonisation and the failures of the older generation will not change their condition. The youth should commence a search of what could help or what they can do to salvage the discouraging challenges facing them in their homeland. The youthful population should drop some of their attitudes and pick new ideas and ways that will impact the upcoming generation.

The youthful population should embrace peace, believe in their culture and knowledge system and participate actively in the building of Africa. Young African immigrants should in place of luring their fellow youths into crisis outside their

homeland, share their personal and other people's positive experiences that have led them to succeed in life. Lastly, there should be employment opportunities that will discourage the youths from migrating where they will be under-employed and the youth should stop seeing the society as an agent of change rather than themselves.

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