

**Gender and Culture in Postcolonial Zambia:
The Task of Writing the Life Experiences
of Yolanta Chimbamu Mainza Chona**

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Foreword

This project comes as the culmination of the graduate work I conducted while studying in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University. After completing an interdisciplinary undergraduate degree, this work came naturally to me, as I navigated between the spaces of anthropology, Zambian history and Zambian political history, transnational feminist thought, and methods of life history writing. The task of writing the life story of Yolanta Chona, within the context of the larger Zambian situation, required a familiarity with a range of disciplines and literatures. Essentially, the goals of this project were: to understand the roles of women in the public and private spheres in Zambia, see what hardships and luxuries they endured and what rights and responsibilities they enjoyed, by using Yolanta's life as a lens; to engage with the gendered ways in which colonialism and anti-colonialism changed Zambia, as well as to locate how Yolanta situates herself within her own hybridized culture; to understand Zambia's anti-colonial struggle and become familiar with the parties at play, taking into consideration how Zambia fits into the region of Southern Africa; and lastly to engage with appropriate biography writing methods and modes, working to incorporate interview material into the larger body of writing. This paper successfully fulfils these objectives as I discuss the main theoretical issues that emerge from Yolanta Chona's life story, provide some context to the environment into which Yolanta was born, and tell her story using many of her own words to do so.

Introduction

When I was four years old, in 1991, my family moved from Canada to Kenya. My earliest memories are of our house on the college campus in Nairobi where I grew up. Along with my older brother, I attended an international private school that served mostly missionary families. My parents were missionaries: my father was the Academic Dean of the Bible College that trained pastors, and my mother taught classes as well. As kids, we played with the children of the college students, who had come from countries all over Africa, including Ethiopia, Sudan, Zambia, and the Congo. My younger sister was born a year after we arrived. I learned Swahili and had an intimate experience of what it meant to be in Kenya.

In 1999, my family returned to Canada in the dead of winter. It was very hard for me as I had a hard time fitting in at school. I had no cultural literacy in terms of current television shows or movies; in Kenya we had had four local television channels. The first time I went to McDonald's I didn't know what they served. My parents didn't have enough money to buy me the newest, trendiest clothes, and I had such different experiences than the other kids that I found it hard to relate, and they found it hard to relate to me. I was weird and foreign and different.

A white girl in Canada, I felt like I was African. Everything was different in my new environment. Loss had been a part of friendships at my international school as people came and went but this loss was different. I had wanted to come to Canada and had been looking forward to it but it was not what I had imagined. In Kenya, I had somewhat stood out as a *mzungu* or foreigner, but here, I didn't wear my cultural difference on my skin. People expected me to be a normal Canadian kid, but I certainly didn't feel like one.

This project then grew from my desire to go back to Africa – an Africa that is now in the fifth decade of independence from British rule. I had always been interested in different cultures, alternate lifestyles, and human experiences – probably stemming from my diverse friendships at the international school – which led me to focus on Fine Arts Cultural Studies and African Studies in my undergraduate

degree. The subject-matter for this project is a culmination of the things I have studied up until this point, and the Faculty of Environmental Studies was the perfect, interdisciplinary setting in which to do it. On the surface, I was intrigued by the life of Yolanta Chimbamu Mainza Chona, on whom this project focuses. Her story is interesting in the way that might engage an audience; but on a deeper level, it speaks to some important issues. I was introduced to Yolanta through her son, Thomas Chona, who is a close friend of my family here in Canada. Her life story encompasses the environmental changes that occurred within Zambia as she straddles the colonial and anti-colonial eras, encounters issues of Black and White, engages with Christianity, and inhabits her womanhood in specifically negotiated ways. For this reason I have entitled this project *Gender and Culture in Postcolonial Zambia*.

Yolanta Chona's life is an extraordinary life to study because of her multi-faceted, multi-cultural, and multi-generational experiences. Born in colonial times in a rural village, but then living in the State House at the Zambian Presidential compound, and travelling as a Diplomat's wife, she has experienced both sides of privilege. I, myself, have always enjoyed certain amounts of privilege as a white, Western person, both in Kenya and here in Canada: privilege of which I was not always aware. But when I begin to think of my life as compared to Yolanta's, I can only imagine the privilege that must have accompanied being the wife of the Vice President in the newly liberated nation of Zambia. Privilege is often thought of in terms of absolutes – one has or has not – but through this work, I am starting to see it as relative. As I will show, I have come to understand through this work that a life like Yolanta's life, is a complex mix of privilege and pain, of power and powerlessness.

Within this paper, I have done my best to tell Yolanta's story, heavily relying upon her own words, within a framework of the larger Zambian situation. (I do not use the terms Northern Rhodesia and Zambia interchangeably but rather to signify the colonial entity and the postcolonial nation respectively.) The questions I intend to answer are, “What does it mean for me, a young scholar formed in a Canadian academy to write the life of a Zambian woman, and what does a close study of

Yolanta's life reveal about the challenges facing women in this period?'. There is no existing literature on Yolanta Chona, but my final product will highlight some of the events of her life and explore how she has made meaning from them. I will engage with the writings within the feminist, historical, and postcolonial discourses in order to gain an understanding of the contexts wherein Yolanta's life experiences have occurred. Juxtaposing interview excerpts and anecdotes of Yolanta's experiences with literature review on each of these subjects I will produce a record of Yolanta's life story. I will argue that Yolanta Chona critically navigates and makes meaning of her life experiences by using certain tools that were made available to her – education, Christianity, and a strong work ethic – thus allowing her to adapt to the environmental changes that occurred within her life, be they political, geographical, or relational.

After two semesters of coursework, I travelled to Lusaka, Zambia, to meet Yolanta and stay with her on her farm for ten weeks; a year later I returned for nine short days to glean some more before completing the task of writing this paper. Meeting Yolanta and being there with her in person made this project come to life for me in a way that it could not have if it were done through coursework and reading alone, as I was able to have an intimate experience of getting to know her in a personal way. I was able to learn so much in my time there.

In conducting this study, I found that I needed to reflect on my own social position before being able to approach the challenge of undertaking this study. I have described some of the results of that reflection above in terms of how it motivated me. Throughout the process of conducting the research I also continued to be self reflexive. Part of this reflexivity was my attentiveness to careful study of the context. For this work I drew on the work of scholars of colonization and of Southern Africa. The methodological tools emerging from these theories and from some veins of feminist research methodology were helpful in writing the life of Yolanta. I would argue that my approach can be helpful in writing the life history of any person different from oneself. I gathered primary information from interviews with Yolanta and specific members of her family, as well as by living with them and

spending time getting to know each of them. I recorded and transcribed the audio from the semi-structured interviews, and took notes regarding some more candid conversations and my own observations during that time.

In the first chapter I will begin by engaging in a theoretical discussion of the process of colonization in Northern Rhodesia, which is present-day Zambia, and examine the role of education in that process. This will provide a backdrop onto which Yolanta's life is set. I will then discuss hybridity as a process of cultural negotiation and how it relates to colonized peoples. Then I will look at anti-colonial resistance in Northern Rhodesia. These discussions will help me to answer how Yolanta's life offers a demonstration of the challenges the women in that time and place encountered. Next I will engage in a discussion of life history writing as a methodology to explain what it means that I am writing her story. I will explain that these are the particular tools that are helpful in writing the life story of another woman

In the second chapter I will provide some historical context for the specific Zambian situation. I will discuss briefly the Tonga social life prior to colonization and I will lay out some of the ways in which colonization transformed life for men and women. By looking at the society in which Yolanta was raised, and the particular form of colonization that occurred within Northern Rhodesia, this context will contribute to an understanding of the challenges that faced women at the time of Yolanta's birth and early life. I will then discuss education and Christianity's interjection in relation to colonization. Then I will discuss the anti-colonial efforts of which Yolanta and her husband were a part, and explain how women did and did not benefit from Independence.

In the third chapter I will tell Yolanta's story, referring to her own words, as it explains the challenges she has faced in her life and how she overcame them and carried on. Her story is not meant to be exemplary of the average Zambian woman's experiences but instead is one specific example of a woman who navigated several social spheres, political changes, and relational interactions and is at peace with her life's choices.

I will discuss the significance of Yolanta Chona's life, not just as a historical figure in Zambia's anti- and postcolonial history, but as a person whose experiences and decisions speak to issues such as African feminism, hybridity, and colonial education. I will discuss what it means that I have written her story, and how this contributes to a better understanding of women in Zambia's colonial, anti-colonial and postcolonial eras.

Chapter 1:
Theorizing Life History Writing in the context of Southern Africa: Colonization, Christian Education and Hybridity

Yolanta Chona's life encompasses the end of the period of British rule, the period of anti-colonial struggle that led up to Zambian Independence, and after. As I argue throughout this paper, the power of colonization in Africa and accommodation and resistance to it have shaped much of Yolanta's experience, but her life is neither an account of victimhood nor is it a triumphant account of the overcoming oppression. It is not a story of the ways in which indigenous African traditions are superseded by the extensive modernizing forces of the West or the reverse. In a sense her life is a constant process of complex negotiation with power at the level of the everyday. Her early life demonstrates both the extent to which European colonization reached into the lives of the Tonga people and the ways in which Zambians eluded its grasp and accommodated it on practical, banal levels. Yolanta's early adult life also enacts the ways in which these accommodations determined many of her adult choices. Later on, in the period after Independence she continues to negotiate the consequences of this mixture in her daily life.

In what follows I draw on four areas of scholarship to elaborate this pattern of accommodation and resistance. By engaging with scholarly discourses in the areas of engendered colonization, hybridity, anti-colonial resistance, and life history writing, I will explore some of the debates which frame my research. In a broader sense, these same research tools could be applied to writing other life histories of women in Africa in the twentieth century and are transferable in that way. This discussion will facilitate an understanding of Yolanta Chona's specific life story and the broad scholarly historical and cultural debates which form her singular life experiences. I begin with a brief discussion of colonization in Southern Africa.

1. Colonization in Southern Africa

Ania Loomba provides a helpful discussion of colonialism, explaining that the term can be used interchangeably with 'imperialism' (Loomba, 2005:7). Referring to the Oxford English Dictionary

definition, Loomba explains that colonialism means, “a settlement in a new country...a body of people who settle in a new locality, forming a community subject to or connected with their parent state; the community so formed, consisting of the original settlers and their descendants and successors, as long as the connection with the parent state is kept up” (ibid, 7). This very definition is paternalistic, as it negates the subjectivity of those being colonized; calling a place 'new' is one-sided and subjective in itself, for that locale is not new to those who have already made a life there. Loomba writes, “this definition...avoids any reference to people other than the colonisers, people who might already have been living in those places where colonies were established. Hence it evacuates the word 'colonialism' of any implication of an encounter between peoples, or of conquest and domination” (ibid, 7). She argues, as have many before her, that the essential point about European colonization, as opposed to other forms of colonization, is that it was the precondition for capitalist development. She reminds us: “The essential point is that although European colonialisms involved a variety of techniques and patterns of domination, penetrating deep into some societies and involving a comparatively superficial contact with others, all of them produced the economic imbalance that was necessary for the growth of European capitalism and industry” (ibid, 9).

This “variety of techniques and patterns of domination” to which Loomba refers includes the difference between settler and extractive colonizing – 'colonialism' referring to the overall process and system, and 'colonization' being the active process through which a colony was formed for the basis of resource extraction. The form of colonization seen by colonial Northern Rhodesia was that of an extractive nature, rather than a settler nature. As the British colonized various parts of the globe, their efforts took different shapes depending on the vested interests in each location. For example, a place like Kenya (British East Africa) was settled by a large population of British because of its suitability for farming and its pleasant climate. Northern Rhodesia, on the other hand, had a more difficult terrain and was therefore less appealing for settler colonialism. Britain's interest in the Rhodesias (both Northern and Southern) was mineral, and therefore, extractive. Where, in other

colonies, populations were displaced for British settlement purposes, the resettlement of the Tonga people was due to the building of a dam in the 1950s, which was used to extract hydro-electricity, as well as forced migration for extractive labour purposes.

This resettlement bears out one of Loomba's key points which is that colonialism forever changes the way people understand and relate to themselves and others. "Colonialism reshaped existing structures of human knowledge. No branch of learning was left untouched by the colonial experience" (ibid, 53). Because British colonialism penetrated every sphere of Northern Rhodesian life, as it did in many other parts of the world as well, it left irreversible epistemic change. It not only changed what people knew about themselves and others, but it changed *how* they knew what they knew. Colonized peoples are left with a different epistemological relationship to their world.

Within Northern Rhodesia's example of the colonial government appointed Chiefs on the ground, and the Headmen who were appointed beneath them. These were hierarchical forms of governing that allowed the British to keep their distance and did not require mass amounts of settlement within the colony: the British were able to use local men to control and administer their interests within the colony. "Direct colonial rule is not necessary for imperialism in this sense, because the economic (and social) relations of dependency and control ensure both captive labour as well as markets for European industry as well as goods" (ibid, 11). Imperial needs were met by utilizing a system of indirect, top-down rule which depended on structures of knowledge which both justified and produced relations of ruling.

Colonialism's arm of change did not solely impact those who were colonized, but affected the way both colonizers and colonized understood each other as well. "Colonialism expanded the contact between Europeans and non-Europeans, generating a flood of images and ideas on an unprecedented scale" (ibid, 54). These images, and the way they were received and digested produced the ways ruler and ruled understood each other and explained the cultures of the colonized to the British in ways which established clear boundaries of hierarchical difference. This can be explained by the example of

Edward Said's definition of Orientalism. Said explains that, "Orientalism is not a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions;...it is, above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment)..." (Said, 1978:12). For Said, Orientalism "has less to do with the Orient than it does with 'our' world" and 'our' understanding of Others" (ibid, 12). Colonial discourse not only changed the face of life on the ground in colonized places, but created new power relationships and ways of relating to oneself. In advancing this idea of colonization as an ideological system that produced the ways colonizer and colonized knew themselves and each other, Edward Said is drawing on Foucault and his ideas about how power infuses language.

Language and Power

Michele Foucault writes about language in relation to power and access to power. He writes about such things as 'exclusion', pointing out that, "We know perfectly well that we are not free to say just anything, that we cannot simply speak of anything, when we like or where we like; not just anyone, finally may speak of just anything" (Foucault, 1972:341). He writes about what is prohibited, and how there is a "privileged or exclusive right to speak of a particular subject", specifically mentioning sexuality and politics as those subjects (ibid, 341). Disallowing someone the access to the language with which to speak about politics certainly furthers their prohibition from accessing the conversation. Foucault discusses how the words of a mad man are ignored: "From the depths of the Middle Ages, a man was mad if his speech could not be said to form part of the common discourse of men. His words were considered nul and void..." (ibid, 341). I assert that within the Colonial project, the African was the proverbial mad person, their words not heeded, even as Foucault is solely looking at the European context, and not a transnational one. It would seem that the Colonial project would not want Africans to access the language and the institutions through which these languages are operationalized and

through which they could engage with their own politics. And yet, rather than the colonial government, it was the missionaries who delayed that inclusion – but for different reasons. Whilst the missionaries wanted to preserve the integrity of lifestyle and culture, they realized that to have access to language is to be able to participate and have input. “...For local people, the acquisition of Western-type education provided the *sine qua non* of personal betterment in terms of enabling young men to become clerks, engineers and teachers as well as opponents of colonialism” (Carmody, 1988:199). Once men and women were educated in English and began to be shaped in relation to the discourses of colonial governance, they could engage the colonial powers on their own terms and resist from within this language. Loomba shows that this had much to do with how anti-colonial nationalism took shape and Said argues that this led to both resistance and the persistent re-inscription of colonial relations in postcolonial settings (Loomba, 2005:53; Said, 1978:12).

The power of language is found in modes of production of meaning: a person's ability to represent him- or herself through language. The production of knowledge and discourse by the colonizers perpetuated the colonial project. Ania Loomba writes about the importance of literature to colonial and anti-colonial discourses, stating that, “If...language and 'signs' are the sites where different ideologies intersect and clash with one another, then literary texts, being complex clusters of language and signs, can be identified as extremely fecund sites for such ideological interactions... they play a crucial role in constructing a cultural authority for the colonisers, both in the metropolis and in the colonies” (Loomba, 2005:63). By the same token, knowledge production and self-representation on behalf of the colonized were made possible through language as well, as we see men like Ngugi wa Thiong'o and

Kenneth Kaunda writing about their circumstance and perpetuating their own anti-colonial discourse.

For, “literary texts do not simply reflect dominant ideologies, but encode the tensions, complexities and nuances within colonial cultures. Literature is a place where 'transculturation' takes place in all its complexity. Literature written on both sides of the colonial divide often absorbs,

appropriates and inscribes aspects of the 'other' culture, creating new genres, ideas and identities in the process. Finally, literature is also an important means of appropriating, inverting or challenging dominant means of representation and colonial ideologies (ibid, 63). As the colonized people began to gain access to the language, and therefore the power to produce knowledge, they gained the ability to speak on behalf of their people and overturn the colonial power. Further to a discussion of language, access, and knowledge, is a conversation about traditional knowledges.

Subjugated Knowledge

Foucault also writes about what he calls subjugated knowledges, describing them as, “those blocs of historical knowledge which were present but disguised within the body of functionalist and systematising theory and which criticism – which obviously draws upon scholarship – has been able to reveal” (Foucault, 1976:82). Alternatively, he explains that subjugated knowledges include, “a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated; naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity” (ibid, 82). Of course, within the colonial context, the subjugation of African knowledges was carried out by the Europeans.

The process of colonization creates a clash between knowledges – a conflict in which one form of knowledge will take precedent as more sophisticated and scientific and therefore more highly valued. One is deemed “naive” and “insufficient”, and Foucault states. In this case, European knowledge subjugated African knowledge by denigrating it as lesser and unenlightened. (Foucault works within a framework of prisons and psychiatric hospitals in Europe, and does not look at colonialism, yet his theories still apply.) An example is found in looking at farming technologies and techniques: the Tonga people had their own methods, which served them for centuries, but as the Europeans arrived, they brought with them equipment and methods that were new to the Tonga. When the European modes of farming became integrated into Tonga practices, their own, indigenous ways became obsolete, thus placing them on a lower tier of the knowledge hierarchy in play.

Foucault argues, “that it is through the re-appearance of this knowledge, of these local popular knowledges, these disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work” (ibid, 82). Once exposed to the newly introduced forms of knowledge, but still being conscious of the traditional forms, one can become critical of his circumstance. The question which I hope to explore throughout this paper through my examination of Yolanta's life is related to this question. I hope to show that colonialism does not eradicate all traditional knowledges and ways of knowing, and that for subjects like Yolanta Chona everyday life can involve the juggling and imperfect attempts to reconcile conflicting epistemologies.

English Language and Catholic Education

We will now take a look at one of the most important sites through which foreign knowledges to have impacted the Tonga, which was that of Western education through the Catholic church. The concept of teaching English in Northern Rhodesia is controversial for a handful of discursive reasons. As one student penned, he “wanted to be filled with the white man's knowledge...I wanted to know English because I thought if I went to town I could use English for seeking employment from the white men...At that time many white men did not know Tonga” (Carmody, 1988:197). At this point in time, formal education in English was a commodity that many people wanted. One mission school to consider is the Chikuni Mission, founded by French Jesuits in Tonga country. Although not the only of its kind, it emerged in the early part of the twentieth century and provided education to many Tonga men and women. As Carmody explains, “In contrast to the earlier years of the mission's life, from 1926 onward students came freely to Chikuni mission's schools, principally, it would appear, because of the opportunity it offered them to learn English” (ibid, 198). Learning English opened Northern Rhodesians up to opportunities to which they would not otherwise have had access. “When English became part of the curriculum and as the opportunity structure expanded with the growth of the copper mines in the late 1920s Africans, especially those in close contact with the modern sectors of the economy, desired Chikuni-type education. Even though job opportunities remained limited for

Africans, facility in English provided some access to what...[was] described as a new status system” (ibid, 198). It is exactly this opportunity that created the elitism of what became the ruling class of such nations as Postcolonial Zambia.

The very task of documenting a language both preserves and destroys it. To create a written form of a language and put it on paper is to freeze it where it is both kept for reference's sake, but also made static so it cannot evolve. One of the Fathers at Chikuni mission, “Fr. Torrend, who spent eleven years at Chikuni, was one of the first people to analyze the grammatical composition of Bantu languages [of which Tonga is a part], winning international acclaim with his work on comparative grammar. Among the materials he provides in *CiTonga* were class readers, St. Matthew's gospel, a grammar, dictionary, and primer” (Carmody, 1991:136). Others at Chikuni also worked on translating works into Tonga language in the newly created written form (ibid, 136). The irony of this preservation is that once a Tonga-English dictionary becomes accessible to Tonga people, their language becomes obsolete. Preserving the language catalyses the need for preserving it, for once people are no longer excluded from the discourse, to use Foucauldian terms, they have no reason to turn back. Because, as Foucault explains, “speech is not merely the medium which manifests – or dissembles – desire; it is also the object of desire” (Foucault, 1972:341). This is so vividly exemplified through Chikuni Mission's students' expressions.

In her introduction to Carmody's book on Chikuni, Elizabeth Colson writes, “As its educational role expanded it also helped to form many of those active in the struggle for Zambian independence. Former Chikuni students have held high political office since independence was won. [Of course Colson is writing about Mainza Chona; Kenneth Kaunda attended a similar school.] The Jesuits who founded Chikuni had not planned a political revolution but unwittingly they helped to bring one about” (Colson, 1992: xxvi). Quite contrarily, I assert that the Jesuits suspected what would happen if and when they began educating Tonga people in English; likewise, the Catholic church would be self-aware enough to realize its history. Father Moreau, who led the Chikuni mission, made a distinct and

intentional point of not allowing his missionary work to aide in the process of Imperialism; Moreau's intentions were not to disrupt society, but once that disruption was made (the order to teach in English), he may well have suspected where it might lead.

The widespread notion that the Church is homogenous and was hand-in-glove with Colonialism is a less than accurate painting of the situation. Missionary activity was complex and there were those who fought as allies of Africans as well as those did not.

In his book, *The Bible and the Flag* (1990), Brian Stanley writes about conflicts which occurred between the British government and missionaries on the ground in Kenya in the early twentieth century. Exemplifying the point that the two European interventions had differing agendas, Stanley writes that, “The relationship between missions and the colonial state in Kenya was far from being one of unambiguous harmony. Missionaries suspected the colonial administration of being half-hearted in its commitment to distinctively Christian objectives, and too inclined to yield to settler pressure – and their suspicions were well-founded. Colonial officials distrusted missionaries as purveyors of dangerously egalitarian doctrines which threatened the basis of white supremacy” (Stanley, 1990:153). In fact, Stanley credits the early notions of African nationalism partially to Christianity in saying that, “the combination of economic exploitation, Western education and Christian idealism proved just the right mixture to bring the developing embryo of nationalist politics to birth”(ibid, 50).

Stanley does not idealize Christianity or its historical mission work, but rather provides a critical analysis of the ways in which missionary work has been viewed in such a negative light. By exploring various situations wherein Christianity opposed Colonialism, he allows for a more thorough and critical understanding of what kinds of things were accomplished by missionaries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. (Granted, Stanley is looking primarily at Protestant examples, whilst the Chikuni example is Jesuit; nevertheless the outcomes are very much the same.) It is important to explore how missionaries acted in local struggles and how Christianity as a discourse developed in Southern Africa and to take into account the possibility of a more complex poistionality. Indeed a more

nuanced understanding reveals that missionary education has been one of the sites for the development of African hybridity. Stanley puts it this way:

Missions made their own direct contribution to the growth of nationalism, primarily through the medium of education. From the late nineteenth century onwards most missionary societies devoted more and more of their resources to education, particularly at the secondary and tertiary levels. Strategically, this emphasis was a function of their belief in the priority of establishing a truly self-governing church: educated indigenous leadership was a prerequisite towards autonomy...Many of the products of mission secondary schools or Christian institutions of higher education did indeed achieve prominence in church or political leadership; but they frequently became the articulators of nationalist protest in a way that some of their missionary mentors had failed to anticipate...Missionary education produced many of the leaders of the nationalist revolutions. Missionary ecumenism helped to weld those leaders together into cohesive elites...(ibid, 133-4).

It could be argued that elitism was never the Jesuits' intention, but producing well-educated men and women, with a Christian ideological framework, certainly was.

Tied to education and notions of racism in Africa is the issue of allowing room for Africans to execute critical thought – the negation of which has ingrained so deeply into the Western psyche by white supremacy and Western Imperialism that we find it hard to remove, even within academia. The racism that was so necessary in the Slave Trade, Colonialism, Apartheid, and other human atrocities runs so deeply that whites have a hard time accepting that Africans can make a critical thought. Even with the presence of Western education, such as Chikuni school and others, Western people are so quick to challenge the thought that a Zambian man or woman might choose a Western religion by their own free will. While there are many instances of Africans rejecting Christianity, as even Stanley writes (ibid, 15), there are examples of Africans critically choosing Christianity as well.

The controversy of the missionary impact on local culture is borne out through Stanley's example of missionaries attempting to civilize their subjects in India and South Asia. Father Moreau specifically did not want to upset Tonga culture, as he “appear[ed] to have had a profound respect for the Tonga people and their way of life. He spoke Tonga fluently almost from the time of his arrival at Chikuni. He befriended the local chiefs, the headmen, the ordinary village people, and he endeared

himself to many of the children...As one of the first converts put it: 'Fr. Moreau was an African with white skin'" (Carmody, 1991:133-4). Of course, by introducing notions of monogamy and monotheistic worship, he inevitably changed their culture. "On the other hand, he seemed to accept the Tonga tradition of bridewealth, *lobola*, provided it did not preclude the girl's freedom. Even though he did not entirely accept the practice of initiation of girls on personal and hygienic grounds, he countenanced a shortened version of it. As a 'dentist' to many Tonga, he discouraged them from removing their front teeth, *ki bangwa*, a traditional practice at puberty...He was, however, sensitive..."(ibid, 134) to some of the cultural practices of the Tonga people. Elsewhere, Carmody tells of the conflicts that arose between the local Tonga people and the Catholic mission over disagreements on the condemnation of polygyny (Carmody, 1988:201). Adherence to Western religion meant renouncing certain traditions and indigenous cultural precepts. The problematic, however, is not with the fact that missionaries changed culture, but rather in how we understand this change.

Stanley writes,

Perhaps the most pervasive [falsity] is the supposition that indigenous cultures prior to the missionary impact were in a condition of static perfection. This mythical view is itself a peculiarly arrogant form of cultural imperialism, founded on the notion that non-Western societies knew nothing of change or innovation until brought into contact with the modernizing West. On the contrary, almost all cultures exist in a state of perpetual flux, and represent an amalgam of diverse and often contradictory influences. The choice confronting indigenous cultures has not been between change and no change, but between a number of possible directions of change, some evidently more beneficial than others. This point carries general validity, but it clearly has particular relevance to the period of Western imperial expansion, when missionaries were very rarely the sole agents of alien cultural change to impinge on 'primitive' societies; in almost every case they formed part of a broader Western impact, often seeing themselves as brokers easing the transition of relatively isolated peoples into participation in an expanded community. The appropriate basis for evaluating the missionary impact thus cannot be whether the missionaries promoted cultural change or not, but whether the direction of that change was generally beneficial or not. By this standard, certain aspects of the cultural transformation produced by missionaries can scarcely be denied a positive evaluation. The missionary contribution to health care, primary and secondary education, and more recently, agricultural development has been substantial, and such material benefits have inevitably

and rightly altered existing values and patterns of behaviour. To insist that missionaries should not have promoted cultural change is, at the very least, to insist that these improvements in the quality of human life in the societies which received them should have been withheld (Stanley, 1990:170-171).

The project of missionary work in the context of the colonial and imperial projects of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was doomed to face scrutiny no matter what they did or did not do. To impart their ideologies and technologies was paternalistic to some; to withhold would be inhumane to others. I am not asserting that everything that was done by missionaries was anti-colonial, wholesome, noble, or humane, but I do think that the discourse has over-publicized the negative aspects at the cost of seeing the benefits. Instead of seeing Christianity as a facet of the colonial project, but rather as something which created a space for the forms of resistance that led to its demise, perhaps we can appreciate some of the work that was done in the context of understanding how the Africans themselves utilized it to their own advantages. As Kaunda and Chona were able to use their Christianity as a way to defend and promulgate Independence movements, we can begin to understand that Audre Lorde's words have a certain significance within this context. She writes, "For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change" (Lorde, 2007:2). If we can understand that Christianity helped in dismantling colonialism, we must also agree that it was not, in fact, one of the master's tools. Rather, perhaps it was a more powerful tool than colonialism itself.

The issue that academia takes with the adoption of Western religion by African nationals can be explained by Charles Taylor, in his book, *The Secular Age* (2007). Analyzing the way the West engages with spirituality and religion, Taylor pinpoints the heart of the inability to sympathize with the choice for religion: he explains that throughout the history of Western Europe, the default hegemony was that of a spirituality up until the modern age when there occurred a separation of Church and State. People lived a lifestyle that included religion in a way that Taylor terms "naïve", as it was not a critical choice on behalf of the individual, but rather a cultural norm. Taylor calls this "an 'enchanted' world.

This is perhaps not the best expression; it seems to evoke light and fairies. But [he is] invoking here its negation, Weber's expression 'disenchantment' as a description of our modern condition” (Taylor, 2007:12). In the contemporary Western world, we live in disenchantment: a cultural norm of non-spirituality, wherein only some people make the choice for religion. “We have also changed from a condition in which belief was the default option, not just for the naïve but also for those who knew, considered, talked about atheism; to a condition in which for more and more people unbelieving construals seem at first blush the only plausible ones” (ibid, 12). Most of Western society lives in this unbelieving territory.

Taylor continues by stating, “We have changed not just from a condition where most people lived 'naïvely' in a construal (part Christian, part related to 'spirits' of pagan origin) as simply reality, to one in which almost no one is capable of this, but all see their option as one among many” (ibid, 12). That is to say, in our postmodern world, we see our religious options and know that we can choose for ourselves, rather than following a hegemonic default. “That is, although everybody has now to be aware that there is more than one option, it may be that in our milieu one construal, believing or unbelieving, tends to show up as the overwhelmingly more plausible. You know that there are other ones, and if you get interested, then drawn to another one, you can perhaps think/struggle your way through to it. You break with your believing community and become an atheist; or you go in the reverse direction” (ibid, 12). The modern, often academic, inability to break with the default construal of unbelief explains why so many people have a hard time understanding why anyone else would make that break: “So much so that they easily reach for rather gross error theories to explain religious belief: people are afraid of uncertainty, the unknown; they're weak in the head, crippled by guilt, etc” (ibid, 12). These types of explanations are often offered when examining how Africans may have adopted Christianity.

Colson writes about the acceptance of Christianity by the Chezia people – a group of Tongas from the Gwembe valley who were massively displaced by the resettlement of 1957. While, “The resettlement

had shaken whatever faith the Chezia people had in the good will of the European-dominated government of the country...The belief in the power of various local spirits which had been held responsible for rains, harvests, and general well-being in the old neighbourhood areas had been shaken if not completely lost, when these spirits failed to protect the people from the move or to punish the Europeans for the acts of sacrilege in the destruction of local shrines” (Colson, 1970a:144). Because of recent upheaval and traumatic circumstances, the people were left wondering what to believe. But the bridge from their traditional spirituality was fairly simple: “They believed in God, who had always been a feature of Tonga religion” (ibid, 152). In fact, their practice of praying to deceased ancestors may have even aided in their ability to identify with praying to Jesus, who they understood to also be dead. Colson cites this as a point of controversy for the Tonga – that they not put faith in a dead man – but it would make sense that they might, given their traditional spirituality. Regardless of Colson's particular understanding, she found that the people of Chezia, and the Tonga in general, were quite receptive to Christianity in their own unique way.

This shift in religious belief on the part of an entire community is exemplary of one way in which colonial intervention imposed cultural change. This specific change demonstrates that throughout the experience of practising one's own culture, and being introduced to a new one, an individual is required to navigate through a negotiation of cultures that allows him or her to make sense of it. Loomba engages in a discussion of the way societies make meaning of signs, referring to Ferdinand de Saussure. She explains that, “language is not a nomenclature, or a way of naming things with already exist, but a system of signs, whose meaning is relational. Only a social group can produce signs, because only a specific social usage give a sign any meaning...The sign, or words, need a community with shared assumptions to confer them with meaning; conversely, a social group needs signs in order to know itself as a community” (Loomba, 2005:35). Cultural negotiation is the collective process of assigning meaning to signifiers – a negotiation of Tradition and Other creates a unique new system of signs. This duality of cultures is known as hybridity.

2. Hybridity

It is widely recognized by scholars of creolization and hybridity that colonization created new forms of knowledge and culture through mixing. Robert J.C. Young wrote about how colonization produced hybridity through the mixing of people and languages. As European powers came into contact with the local cultures they dominated, tertiary forms of culture, and therefore knowledges, came into being. “The globalization of the imperial capitalist powers, of a single integrated economic and colonial system, the imposition of a unitary time on the world, was achieved at the price of the dislocation of its peoples and cultures” (Young, 1995:4). However, it is important to note, and Young does make this distinction, that neither culture in this exchange is homogenous and pure, or static, before the time of exchange: cultures are fluid and constantly appropriating aspects of other cultures with which they come into contact, so the collision of a European culture with an African one (for example, the British with the Tonga) is not ever quite so binary, as each player has its own fluidity. That being said, the exchange which causes the hybridity is far more traumatic and potent than forms of exchange that occur between equal neighbours.

Young continues, in regards to the “dislocation of ... peoples and cultures”, that “This latter characteristic became visible to Europeans in two ways: in the disruption of domestic cultures, and in the increasing anxiety about racial difference and the racial amalgamation that was apparent as an effect of colonialism and enforced migration. Both these consequences for class and race were regarded as negative, and a good deal of energy was expended on formulating ways in which to counter those elements that were clearly undermining the cultural stability of a more traditional, apparently organic, now irretrievably lost, society” (ibid, 4).

Homi K. Bhabha writes about hybridity in the context of the creation of a national culture: “The 'locality' of national culture is neither unified nor unitary in relation to itself, nor must it be seen simply as 'other' in relation to what is outside or beyond it. The boundary is Janus-faced and the problem of outside/inside must always itself be a process of hybridity, incorporating new 'people' in relation to the

body politic, generating other sides of meaning and, inevitably, in the political process, producing unmanned sites of political antagonism and unpredictable forces for political representation” (Bhabha, 1990:4). Colonial, and therefore postcolonial, cultures are inevitably faced with the task of navigating old and new, foreign and traditional.

In approaching Bhabha's text, Ilan Kapoor refers to Said's work on Orientalism, explaining that colonial discourse invariably constructed their colonial entities' cultures as Other (see Said's *Orientalism*, 1978:2-3; Kapoor, 2008:6). Not merely referring to the part of the world we call the Orient, but rather the rest of the world not known as the West, Said explains how colonial and postcolonial discourse has been able to create a metropole/periphery, us/them, Occident/Orient relationship between the First World and the Third World (Said, 1978:12).

While Said distinguishes between British and French imperial Orientalism, as well as between colonial and post-colonial Western Orientalism, he argues that there is general continuity in the way West and East are depicted. Westerners tend to be characterized as 'rational, peaceful, liberal, logical...without natural suspicion' and Easterners as irrational, degenerate, primitive, mystical, suspicious, sexually depraved, and so on. What is important for him is that these representations are not neutral; drawing on Foucauldian discourse theory, he shows how they are laden with a 'will to power', a will 'to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different...world. In this sense, Orientalism is the 'enormously systematic discipline by which European culture [has been] able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period” (Kapoor, 2008:6).

Understanding this intentional relationship between colonizer and colonized is key to unpacking the intentional way in which culture was imposed upon colonized peoples. An entire discourse and hegemony of social hierarchy and power was created in order to justify furthering the colonial project, the result of which being the hybridized cultures that arose after colonialism was dismantled.

Kapoor continues: “Hybridity describes the way in which colonial/imperial discourse is inherently unstable, 'split' in its 'enunciation', so that 'in the very practice of domination the language of the master becomes hybrid” (Kapoor, 2008:7, quoting Bhabha, 1994:33). Kapoor explains that this

instability allows for agency of the people, empowering them to subvert the power (Kapoor, 2008:7). “What emerges...is a turning of boundaries and limits into the *in-between* spaces through which the meanings of cultural and political authority are negotiated” (Bhabha, 1990:4, italics in original). Essentially, hybridity's weakness lies in the cracks through which those who find themselves at the bottom of the hierarchy of power can assert themselves.

It was in this cultural grey area – somewhere between tradition and Westernization – that people like Yolanta and Mainza Chona found themselves. Having grown up in the village, learning traditional knowledges and spiritualities through traditional channels, they entered into the world of European missionaries, who introduced a foreign religion (I hesitate to call it a Western religion due to Africa's ancient ties to Christianity), taught a foreign language and foreign customs. They were expected to conduct themselves in a European way, wearing Westernized clothing, and utilizing Western domestic skills, and yet they remained Tonga people, living on Tonga land. The constant negotiation of cultural identity that is required of a person in this position can be taxing and confusing.

In his memoir, *Dreams in a Time of War* (2010), Ngugi wa Thiong'o, a Kenyan author, writes about a similar experience of living rurally and attending school while wearing a uniform. He describes the cultural negotiation with which he struggled as a young boy, trying to navigate through the two worlds to which he belonged. He writes, “School remains an environment totally different from the one of my ordinary living. I feel an outsider in our world, to which everyone else seems to belong. There are many things I don't understand” (wa Thiong'o, 2010:62-3). Straddling the two spheres – home-life with its traditions and banality; school-life with its unfamiliarity and novelty – wa Thiong'o had to find his place and work out his own identity in the mix. He recalls a time when he discovered the Bible, and was able to read it, learning of all the Old Testament stories. But he struggles to read it in the dim light of his home in the evenings (ibid, 67). This speaks to the contrast between his two worlds.

Moreover, in the second instalment of his memoir, *In the House of the Interpreter* (2013), wa

Thiong'o writes about how he returned home from his first term at the missionary secondary school to find that his village had been decimated and his family and neighbours had been ghettoized into a newly-constructed and highly monitored camp. He recalls, "Henceforth I was going to live out my life in a home that reminded me of the loss of home and a school that offered shelter but not the certainty of home. Both, ironically, were colonial constructs, but I heard that even they might clash at any moment and crush my dreams" (wa Thiong'o, 2013:39-40). wa Thiong'o found himself in a strange place of appreciating one of colonialism's interventions, and hating the other: this epitomizes the internal conflict of negotiating hybridity.

As a "Third Culture Kid" myself – one who grew up within a culture different than my parents', therefore creating a tertiary cultural identity – I can relate to this notion of hybridity. My own family, having moved from Canada to Kenya, practised our own culture in our home: eating familiar Canadian-style foods, watching North American movies, celebrating birthdays and Christmas like we would 'back home'; but outside of our walls there existed another way of life wherein many children did not have the types of toys we had, or listen to the same kind of music and stories, and we were exposed to that culture. Upon moving back to Canada, I could hardly identify as a 'normal Canadian kid', but I wasn't quite Kenyan either. I was this strange mix of not-quite-belonging. This is not unlike the experience of Yolanta or Ngugi wa Thiong'o, being raised in one life, exposed to another, and having to find their own identities somewhere in the middle.

As the people of Northern Rhodesia were negotiating their cultural hybridity, and being educated through Catholic schools, they were able to utilize some of what they were taught to their advantage. Just as the introduction of Christianity changed many aspects of African cultures, it also provided the tools for some of Africa's elite to dismantle colonialism. As an individual, Yolanta Chona was able to harness these tools to allow for her own meaning-making and navigation of her life experiences. By making the most of her education and her relationship to Christianity, she adapted to the larger societal changes in her life.

Although Yolanta Chona's life began in a way that was common within her culture, one cannot say that she is exemplary of the average Zambian woman. My task here is to look at her life within the larger context, examining how she navigated the colonization and decolonization processes in Zambia. Methodologically, part of my question has to do with how to negotiate the difference between us which Said so eloquently theorizes in his classic work: what does it mean that I, a young, white, Western woman, write that story? To answer this question, I must look at Life History Writing as a methodology.

3. Life History Writing

Life histories are a genre of work to themselves. Norman K. Denzin wrote a book about biography writing as a qualitative research method. Within “Interpretive Biography”, Denzin writes, “...that real, concrete subjects live lives with meaning and these meanings have a concrete presence in the lives of these people. This belief in a real subject who is present in the world has led sociologists to continue to search for a method that would allow them to uncover how these subjects give subjective meaning to their experiences. This method would rely upon the subjective verbal and written expressions of meaning given by the individuals being studied, these expressions being windows into the inner life of the person” (Denzin, 1989:13-4). Within the context of this work, Yolanta Chona is the subject whose words and expressions give insight into how she has made meaning within her own experiences. Further to what Denzin was saying, he continues: “Derrida has contributed to the understanding that there is no clear window into the inner life of a person, for any window is always filtered through the glaze of language, signs, and the process of signification...Hence there can never be a clear, unambiguous statement of anything, including an intention or a meaning” (ibid, 14). From this, we can begin to understand the complicated relationship between the subject and the observer.

Ardra L. Cole and J. Gary Knowles write, among many other things, about “Understanding Yourself as Researcher”, explaining that, “The way we research is a reflection of how we orient ourselves to the world – our epistemological and ontological assumptions. We need to understand

those assumptions before we begin, and we need to use that self-awareness as a guide throughout the research process...The values, beliefs, experiences, perspectives, and physical, social, and contextual characteristics that shape who we are, as well as the passions, commitments, and motivations that drive us, are all very much present when we assume to carry out our role as researcher” (Cole & Knowles, 2001:48-9). Cole and Knowles also discuss how a subject-observer relationship must be based on “Care, Sensitivity, and Respect” (ibid, 43); they also provide an interesting explanation of the development of a life history research project as “serendipitous” (ibid, 57). However, perhaps more importantly, they also discuss the variances within life history research approaches, and their roles within literature.

The task of writing, or speaking, for another individual is laden with controversy. Linda Alcoff writes, “The recognition that there is a problem in speaking for others has arisen from two sources. First, there is a growing recognition that where one speaks from affects the meaning and truth of what one says, and thus that one cannot assume an ability to transcend one's location. In other words, a speaker's location...has an epistemically significant impact on the speaker's claims and can serve either to authorize or disauthorize one's speech” (Alcoff, 1991:6-7). Using my words in place of Yolanta's in telling her story invokes my positionality in place of hers, making my words mean something different than her own: I cannot know her story the way she knows it, and I bring my history and status with me. Continuing, Alcoff states, “The second source involves a recognition that, not only is location epistemically salient, but certain privileged locations are discursively dangerous. In particular, the practice of privileged persons speaking for or on behalf of less privileged persons has actually resulted (in many cases) in increasing or reinforcing the oppression of the group spoken for” (ibid, 7). In this instance, my relationship with Yolanta is certainly one of different epistemic locations, but not necessarily one of different privilege, or of oppression. I would argue that Yolanta enjoys some forms of privilege within her own society (the wife of an important politician; an elderly woman in a culture where age is respected; relative affluence, etc.) and I, in mine. What is important to acknowledge is

that we have our own respective positions of privilege within our own locations, much of that stemming from our differences. However, we do have a common, shared community within the church. This is one of the points of connection, to which I referred in my introduction, that allows us to find common ground.

Providing a definition of “biography”, Cole and Knowles write, “This is a structured account of a life written by another, usually according to literary conventions. Denzin lists the following as characteristic assumptions of biography: the existence of others; the influence and importance of gender and class; family beginnings; starting points; known and knowing authors and observers; objective life markers; real persons with real lives; turning-point experiences; and truthful statements distinguished from fictions” (Cole & Knowles, 2001:16). Citing Denzin, Cole and Knowles identify what is called “Interpretive biography”, which means, “the process or method of doing biography – 'creating literary, narrative, accounts and representations of lived experiences. Telling and inscribing stories” (ibid, 18). Similar to biography as a form, and helpful for my purposes, Cole and Knowles outline narrative, which, “is variously defined, influenced by a researcher's orientation and discipline. Generally speaking, narrative method in research is based on the assumption that human experience is episodically ordered and best understood through a reconstruction of the natural narrative order in which it is lived. Significance is given to the personal, temporal, and contextual quality of connections and relationships that honor the complexities of a life as lived as a unified whole” (ibid, 19). As Denzin states, “...biographies are conventionalized, narrative expressions of life experiences” (Denzin, 1989:17). One of my largest tasks in this project is to continuously be self-reflexive. In this endeavour, I have found Nancy Hartsock's (1983) Standpoint Theory to be very helpful. Hartsock, in her explanation of her concept of standpoints, writes that, “If material life is structured in fundamentally opposing ways for two different groups, one can expect that the vision of each will represent an inversion of the other, and in systems of domination the vision available to the rulers will be both partial and perverse...The vision of the ruling class (or gender) structures the material relations

in which all parties are forced to participate and therefore cannot be dismissed as simply false” (Hartsock, 1983:354). To apply this theory to the context of Yolanta and myself, one can see that our visions of each other will “be both partial and perverse”; we exist in two different classes, to use the Marxist language Hartsock invokes. I need to acknowledge at every point in the process who I am: my background; my class, race, privilege; my age; my status as a student; my biases; my limitations; my culture; and the list goes on.

I tried my best, specifically within the interview portion of this work, to leave my preconceived notions and ideas at home and just listen to what Yolanta had to say. I let her know that I never wanted to make her uncomfortable with the questions and conversation. The most important part of research ethics is participant consent, and that is an on-going provision. Methodologically, I foresaw the interviewing to be semi-structured, informal, conversation-like questioning. I wanted to ask very open-ended questions and just allow her to speak freely. Essentially, this is how the conversations turned out. There were times when I video- or audio-recorded the interviews, and other times where I simply asked questions and we chatted; I later jotted down notes from the conversations.

Carolyn G. Heilbrun wrote a short book entitled, “Writing a Woman's Life”, which facilitates an understanding of the role of women within biography writing both as subjects and observers over the years. I found this text to be particularly helpful in giving me some perspective into what it means to be a woman writing another woman's life. Heilbrun asserts, “I suspect that female narratives will be found where women exchange stories, where they read and talk collectively of ambitions, and possibilities, and accomplishments. I do not believe that new stories will find their way into texts if they do not begin in oral exchanges among women in groups hearing and talking to one another. As long as women are isolated one from another, not allowed to offer other women the most personal accounts of their lives, they will not be part of any narrative of their own” (Heilbrun 1988:46). In a juxtapositional vein, John A. Garraty wrote in “The Nature of Biography” about what it means for a man to write his father's biography: “Books of this type run to extremes; they tend to be either very

good or very poor indeed. Intimate knowledge is a priceless asset; close personal ties are a threat to objectivity” (Garraty 1957:156). He continues to elaborate on the pitfalls of writing the life history of someone close and of personal significance to the author, as it disallows for objectivity, if there should be any. Sidonie Smith writes in regards to (auto)biography that, “Some categories are formalist, such as genre and history; others indicate terrains of debate, such as experience, subjectivities, and sexualities” (Smith, 1998:3). Smith, and other second-wave feminists like her took up the task of writing female life histories.

Feminist Theory

To contextualize this work, it is important to understand the history of feminist life histories. Several feminist writers have discussed what it means for women to write and speak for themselves. While this piece is not an autobiography, but a biography of a woman written by a woman, it finds itself connected to the autobiographical works of second-wave feminists, such as bell hooks' memoir, *Bone Black*. The female voice is in question here, and some feminist scholars have constructive contributions to bring to the table. Awa Thiam, in her book, *Speak out Black Sisters*, claims that “Black women have been silent for too long” (Thiam 1986:11). She takes up questions of silencing, oppression, and finding their voice: “Women must assume their own voices – speak out for themselves. It will not be easy, and the ones who up to now have been enjoying all the privileges – the men – and who have been making use of women's voices, will not give them up easily. As they have begun to realize the extent of women's liberation movements today, they may have some inkling of danger” (ibid, 11-12). Central to the fact that I will be writing about another woman's life is the confidence that can be put in knowing that only a woman can truly grasp the gravity of another woman's experience.

That being said, I can do little more than acknowledge the problem of my own whiteness within this situation. Discussing how white Western feminism took precedence over African feminism, Oyèrónké Oyewùmí writes that, “...the fact that Western women were the researchers studying other women was seen as proof in itself that they were better off in their own situation, this was evidenced by

their new-found position as creators of knowledge. This 'positional superiority,' to borrow Edward Said's term, put them in a powerful position *vis-à-vis* Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans, male and female” (Oyewùmí, 2003:29). I cannot negate decades of feminist thought prior to my own research; I can only acknowledge that this critique has been applied to works such as this, and assert that this project is a joint effort between myself and Yolanta Chona as I refer and defer to her own words. I hope to be a facilitator – a conduit – through which she tells her own story.

Sandra Harding writes that, “Standpoint theorists analyzed causes of the gaps between the actual knowledge and power relations and those desired by women's movements” (Hesse-Biber 2012:46); Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber writes, “Feminist standpoint epistemology borrows from the Marxist and Hegelian idea that individuals' daily activities or material and lived experiences structure their understanding of the social world...Early critics of standpoint epistemology argued that it collapses all women's experiences into a single defining experience and pays little attention to the diversity of women's lives, especially to the varied experiences of those women who differ by race, class, sexual preference, and so on” (Hesse-Biber (ibid, 11) .

Working Transnationally

In this process, I identify with Minnie Bruce Pratt, as she is highly conscious of her position as a white woman, raised in Christianity in the United States. I take a cue from her, acknowledging my own identity as I explore Yolanta's: I must be continuously cognisant of my own positionality and biases. Tiyaambe Zeleza, commenting on the historiography of African women, writes that, “Despite the proliferation of the literature on women, including women's history, women remain largely invisible or misrepresented in mainstream, or rather 'malestream', African history. They are either not present at all, or they are depicted as naturally inferior and subordinate, as eternal victims of male oppression” (Zeleza 1997:81). I believe this speaks volumes in terms of the importance of telling a story like Yolanta's. I intend to portray Yolanta Chona as the strong woman I know she is. I believe her story crosses boundaries, challenges assumptions, and depicts an untold thread of Zambian history. I am

honoured to help her preserve it.

Different ethnic and cultural groups function with different constructions of gender than the white Western narrative provides. Further to this end, Ruth Frankenberg writes about how race, colour, and sexuality also become centres of difference, discrimination, and oppression. “The very use of the term 'race' raises the idea of difference, for 'race' is above all a marker of difference, an axis of differentiation. What kind of difference race is and what difference race makes in real terms are the questions that are contested in competing modes of thinking through race” (Frankenberg, 1993:138). Frankenberg, as well as Marilyn Frye, both write about whiteness, and how that creates an experience of privilege. Frye writes, “Being white is not a biological condition. It is being a member of a certain social/political category, a category that is persistently maintained by those people who are, in their own and each others' perception, most unquestionably in it...If one is white one is a member of a continuously and politically constituted group which holds itself together by rituals of unity and exclusion, which develops in its members certain styles and attitudes useful in the exploitation of others...” (Frye 1992: n.p.). As Zambia is situated in Southern Africa, which has a long and taxing racial history, racial difference has factored into my research in its own unique way.

It is important to frame gender, race, culture, and class as social constructions, not assuming they exist inherently or essentially. I have explored literature on the construction of 'female', including Judith Butler's work on the performativity of gender. Butler states that, “gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of the abiding, gendered self” (Butler 1988:519). Postcolonial feminism and transnational feminism engage with the ways in which women in the Third World negotiate womanhood and gender differently than those of us in the West. Culture informs the ways in which a woman performs gender.

Anne McClintock's book, *Imperial Leather*, has been integral to my investigation on race, gender, nation, class, and Othering. Central to McClintock's writings is the notion of intersectionality:

that factors of powerlessness and marginalization compound one another. Within feminist thought, issues such as racial difference or disability or queerness are not simply parallel disadvantages, but rather they layer upon each other creating more profound marginalizations. “Gender here, then, is not simply a question of sexuality but also a question of subdued labor and imperial plunder; race is not simply a question of skin color but also a question of labor power, cross-hatched by gender. Let me hasten to add that I do not mean to imply that these domains are reducible to, or identical with, each other; instead, they exist in intimate, reciprocal and contradictory relations”, writes McClintock (McClintock, 1995:5). For African women in colonial situations, blackness was not a minority, but was certainly a site for marginalization. And yet for Yolanta Chona, her social standing shifted as she joined her husband as Zambian elite by gaining access to education and literacy, and through his career as a politician. In this way, her relationship to privilege changed as her environment changed.

Ankie Hoogvelt discusses the Postcolonial situation of Imperialism, looking closely at the Sub-Saharan African scene. Mineral-rich Zambia became a participant “of the *internationalization of production* itself when giant firms from metropolitan countries began to integrate mine-to-market production chains vertically across the globe” (Hoogvelt 2001:23, italics in original). With a Marxist underpinning, Hoogvelt contributes to the conversation on Imperialism in her book, *Globalization and the Postcolonial World: The New Political Economy of Development*. As Yolanta Chona's husband worked towards Independence for their nation, and achieved it, all of this sets the stage for how Zambia operates today.

In my endeavour to complete this project, I have examined the necessary facets of writing Yolanta Chona's story and demonstrating how she makes sense of her experiences. By engaging with the ways that colonialism and education, hybridity, and anti-colonial resistance shaped her environment, I have laid the foundation for understanding the challenges which faced women in this period. I have also explained some of the challenges of writing the life story of a woman across differences of race, age, culture, and social circumstances.

Chapter 2: A History of Colonialism and Anti-colonialism in Zambia

Yolanta Chona was born in 1936, a period which experienced enormous change in Africa. Her life experiences cannot be understood without attentiveness to the social, political, and cultural context of Southern Africa in the twentieth century. As Yolanta is from the Tonga community of Zambia, I will briefly sketch some aspects of Tonga society prior to colonization and then lay out some of the ways in which colonialism transformed life for both men and women. I will highlight some of the gendered aspects of colonization during this time. Finally I will sketch the anti-colonial struggle which led to Independence. Drawing on Colson, Vickery, Jaspan, Neill, and Virmani, the main argument I wish to make is that British Colonization transformed Tonga society in terms of labour, land tenure, governance, and education. While the anti-colonial movement attempted to reverse this process, ultimately it achieved a reluctant accommodation with Western modernization often drawing on the tools of colonial discourse to wage its struggle.

Scholars of Zambian culture have shown that colonization altered land tenure by privatizing land that was traditionally held in common. It drew men into wage labour by encouraging migrant labour on the mines and left women to carry out agricultural labour with the help of children. Governance was transformed through the creation of dependent chiefs. Western education (often alongside Christianity) was introduced and traditional spiritual practices were eroded. Anti-colonial movement drew on racial tensions, frustration with oppressive legislature, and the unbalanced economics of extractive industry.

Precolonial Zambia

Prior to colonization Zambia was inhabited by the Bemba, Lenje, Lunda, Soli, Chokwe, Lozi, and Tonga peoples, as well as a number of other, smaller groups of people. Each group had its own language and customs, leadership structures, and beliefs: the Bemba were largely subsistence farmers that moved around once the fertility of the land was exhausted; the Lunda had a king and a hierarchical

political structure; the Chokwe had not recognized a dominant leader or leadership structure. The Tonga people, to which Yolanta Chona belongs, lived predominantly in the Gwembe Valley and on the Plateau in what is now Zambia's Southern Province. The Gwembe Valley is located between the Zambezi River (to the south and east) and the Kafue River (to the north) in the Southern Province of Zambia; the Zambezi River provides a border between the two Rhodesias (Colson, 1960). Some Tonga people live on the Zimbabwe side of the Zambezi River, and the Lozi live to the south around Livingstone.

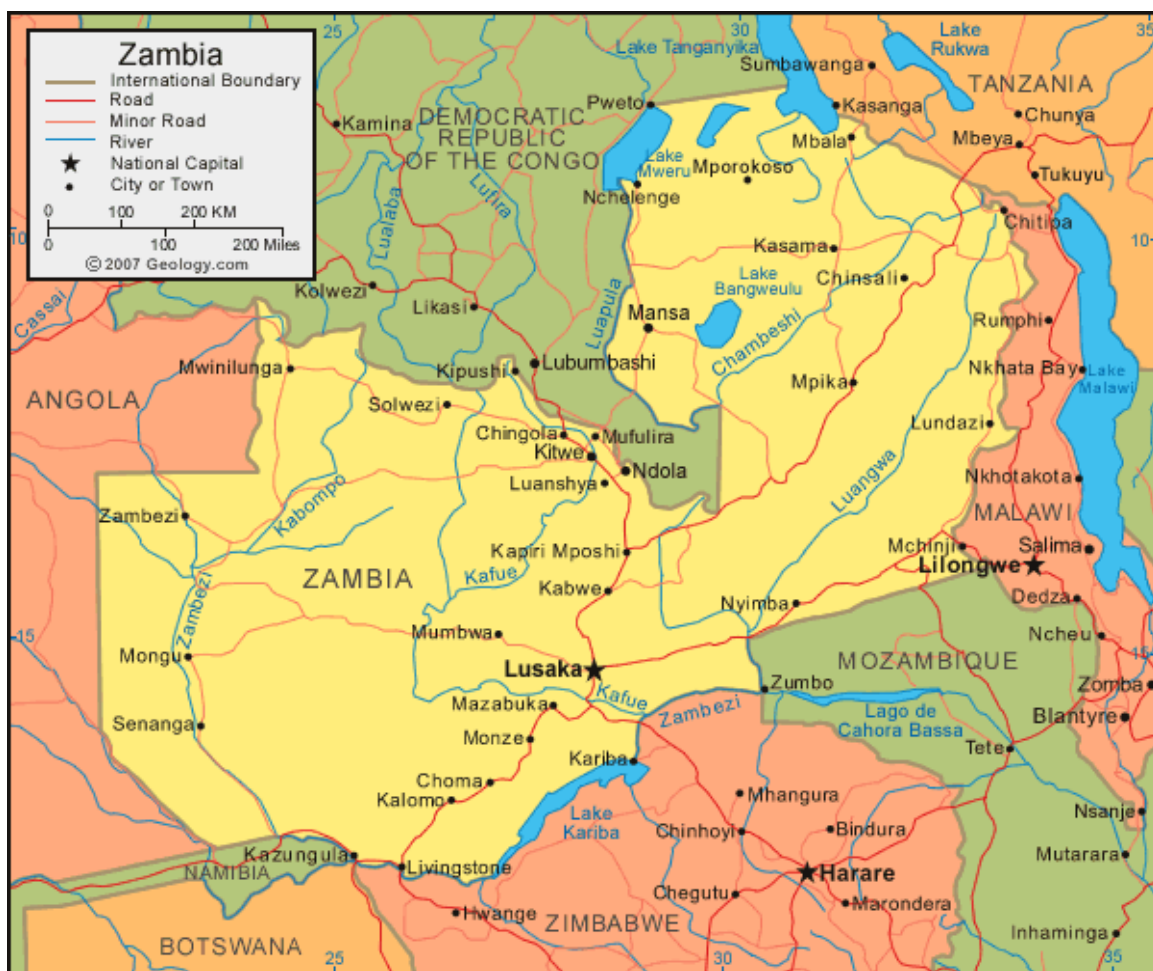


Figure 1: Map Zambia Taken from Geology.com
<http://geology.com/world/zambia-satellite-image.shtml>

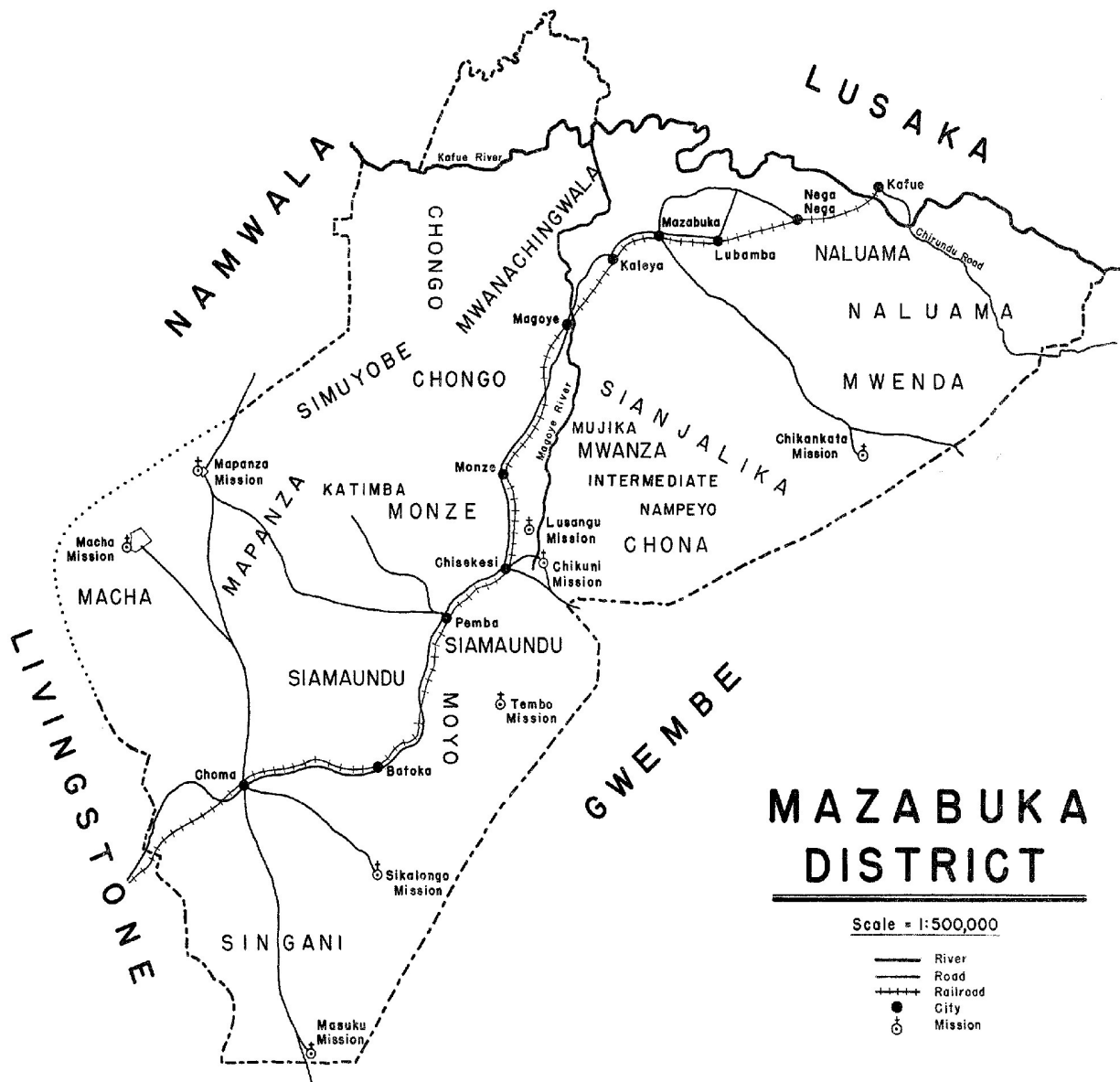


Figure 2: Map of Tonga Country in Zambia, taken from Colson, 1958.

Prior to British colonization, the Tonga lived and worked as subsistence farmers. Where some scholars assert there was no formal leadership that they could recognize, other scholars suggest that the Tonga had chiefs who wielded some degree of local authority. Men, women, and children cooperated in the agricultural efforts that allowed each family to provide for its own. The Tonga kept cattle, goats, and chickens, and grew maize and other vegetables. Traditionally, people used a *calabash*, or gourd, to

fetch water from the stream and cut their own wood for fire. The most important crop was and still is maize but additionally, the Tonga people survived on millet, sorghum, groundnuts, groundpeas, cucurbits (gourd vegetables), okra, and sesame (Jaspan, 1953:44). At the onset of colonialism-induced cash-cropping, which Colson attributes to 1921-5, the Tonga people still farmed for their own subsistence, adding the occasional sale of cattle and chickens (Colson, 1958:11-12). In the early 1920s that the Tonga began integrating the “hoe and axe as the essential tools” (ibid, 11). The cash-cropping economy was based largely on the same crops depended on by the previous subsistence economy. They resisted more modern modes of agriculture and economy, preferring to rely on subsistence practices in terms of techniques and technologies, such as ploughs (ibid,11,74). A 1945 survey concluded that eighty-four per cent of Tonga people were still living a subsistence existence at that time (Jaspan, 1953:44).

The Tonga of Nampeyo remained largely subsistence-based until much later than other Tonga people of the region: trading and selling were “only sporadically and by an occasional person”; sometimes the men were known to “lose both time and original capital” in their extra-economic endeavours (Colson,1958: 78). Some of the items traded and sold by the Tonga people included: beer; honey; roots and mushrooms; ropes made of bark; planks of wood; pelts; dried meats; livestock; chickens, ducks, and their eggs; and vegetables and fruits (ibid, 78-79). In addition to these items, there were crafted items such as: baskets; clay pipes; wooden bowls, stools, spoons, and drums; spears and axes; small pieces of furniture; and musical instruments (ibid, 78-79). Nampeyo's distance from the railway meant lower prices and bulkier sales; while women preferred to trade maize for their clothing or small luxury goods, men were more adept at trading in currency (ibid, 74). Therefore, families depended more on the trading done by the men than by that of the women. Men became more integrated into the cash economy while women remained in the subsistence sphere.

The Tonga were not concerned with land ownership prior to European intervention. Colson reminds us, “Though in the past land for the Tonga was shared in common neither sold, rented nor

inherited, the new conditions of cash-crop production following on the alienation of much land by Europeans have resulted in an incipient but growing land shortage” (ibid, 45). People lived on the land without a sense of dominance of it.

Unlike land, cattle were owned very specifically by individuals. The keeping of cattle determined the livelihood of the Tonga and were symbols of wealth. The Tonga relationship to cattle exemplifies traditional gender relations and divisions of labour. “Traditionally the main division of labour was between the sexes. Men cleared the bush and carried away heavy trunks of trees, cared for livestock, and were warriors and hunters. Women performed most of the agricultural work, cooked, and cared for their children” (ibid, 48). One of the key uses of cattle in Tonga society was bridewealth, wherein cattle would be traded between families in the purchase of a bride. (Vickery, 2007:94). Cattle were often lent and borrowed within clans, and killed at funerals, weddings, and initiation ceremonies (Jaspan, 1953:46).

In keeping with male and female roles, it can also be noted that pottery was women's work, while other craftsmanship was men's work (Jaspan, 1953:47-8). Where women and children were responsible for de-cobbing maize, the men carried it away to the graneries (ibid, 48). While most of the trading was conducted by men, some women sought to participate in business ventures: beer, for sale, was brewed by women. “The best field for financial profit is in beer-making, and this is entirely in the hands of women...Most women brew a few times a year...” (Colson, 1958:85).

Tonga spirituality is often referred to in the literature by Western scholars as witchcraft. Colson refers to this practice as the “Cult of Shades” – a shade being the ghost which is left behind at a person's death (Colson, 1960:122). More simply put, the spirits of ancestors are inherited by living relatives. “Adults are usually inherited ... by a member of the lineage of the same sex”, wherein a diviner or sorcerer anoints the receiver with oil (ibid, 122). A shade remains close to the individual for the duration of his or her life, and is passed on from the original inheritor when he or she dies.

Essentially, shades are unpredictable and unmanageable. “Knowledge of the shades comes

through divination which always seeks to answer specific questions dealing with matters of misfortune” (ibid, 144). Offerings of beer are made to the shades to negotiate grievances and appease them. “The ordinary individual uses medicine to drive ghosts from his vicinity and hopes that the known shades will help to protect him from the evil of the ghosts” (ibid, 123). People carry the shades of their ancestors throughout their lives and have to facilitate and tolerate their behaviours and demands.

In addition to praying to the spirits of ancestors, the Tonga also believed in the existence of a supreme God. Many of the Tonga revered the Chief of Monze (a local community), as a religious figure. A highly important and respected chief in the area, Chief Monze was deified amongst the Tonga. He was worshipped as a god and “...by the time of British penetration into the area an incipient political role had been added. Monze's religious pre-eminence can be traced to the period before the passage of David Livingstone through Victoria Falls” (O'Brien and O'Brien, 2007:63). The Tonga prayed to Monze for rain, as he was a rainmaking chief – as opposed to Chief Chona, who was a warrior (ibid, 65). After harvest, the Tonga people celebrated, thanking Chief Monze for the rain. “As Colson points out, the Monze shrine still retains its importance for Tonga life. The three-part annual *Lwiindi* (rain festival) held there continues to be well attended as indicated by the numbers at the 1982 gathering” (ibid, 64). As agriculture was central in Tonga life, rain was crucial. These festivals were, and still are, important to the Tonga, spiritually as well as socially.

Colonization in the 19th Century

Colonization of what we now call Zambia, (formerly known as Northern Rhodesia), was linked, as I will show below, to the establishment of a vast empire of privately owned mines in Southern Africa. This resulted in the privatization of land that had hitherto been held in common. For the purpose of taxation, communities were organized into a series of administratively created bureaucratic units under chiefs and headmen who reported to the colonial state. As men were drawn into wage labour in mines in part to meet the new cash economy, there were changes in the gender division of

labour between men and women which impacted subsistence farming negatively. When a large dam was constructed to generate power for the mines, some of the Gwembe Tonga were displaced from their ancestral lands and severely impoverished. All this did not take place without resistance, but in the long term it nevertheless impoverished Africans in the context of the expansion of global capital, creating new racialized classes and new relationships, and ultimately making the Tonga subordinate in their own land.

Colonization was initiated by the British South Africa Company (henceforth BSAC) under Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902). Later on the British state supported imperial expansion of mining interests: BSAC was a private, imperialist company which began the process of colonizing the Rhodesias. The discovery of wealth in the form of minerals (such as copper) and other resources incentivized the British to move in (Neill, 1966:308). Founded in 1889, BSAC sought to exploit the mineral resources of the region, in a “more visionary, less practical” way than its pre-existing counterpart, the National Africa Company (ibid, 308). The BSAC was intent on extracting labour from native peoples of the region, sometimes forcing migration, and often causing resistance in the form of uprisings (Meebelo, 1971:192).

Of course the BSAC did not stay in power in Northern Rhodesia forever. According to Vickery, “Three closely interrelated processes propelled the imperial system...in the late nineteenth century. First was the surge of global expansion and colonial conquest by the major Western European powers. Second was the transformation of the southern African sub-continent into a vast mining complex. Third was the northward movement of the frontier of European settler communities” (Vickery, 1986:35) Since “the British government did establish a Protectorate in” Southern Africa in 1885 (Neill, 1966) after the Berlin Conference in 1884-1885, the region belonged solely to British interests. Vickery reinforces that, “All three elements – British imperialism, mining capital, and white settlement – were embodied to some extent in the person of Cecil Rhodes” (ibid, 38). But his imperialistic sympathy could only be effective for so long up against competing powers in the region, without

governmental support: the Portuguese endeavoured to connect their east coast (Mozambican) and west coast (Angolan) territories, while native kings, the Germans, and the Afrikaners all presented opposition. “For these reasons, too, Rhodes needed a governmental framework which would guarantee sympathy with his interests and allow him a wide latitude in pursuing them; a British government, needless to say, was best” (ibid, 38). Once the Rhodesias became subject to British colonial rule, things changed all over again.

Since the “British Government recognized headmen and chiefs”, these would be created by British colonial officials after formal British colonization took place (O'Brien, 1983:23). Where some informal leadership may have existed in the form of respected community members, the British made the leadership of their appointed chiefs official. Chiefs were used as a means of controlling local populations in the interests of the colonizing powers. It was the duty of the Chief and his Headmen to exert the Administrative orders (Jaspan, 1953:50). The Copperbelt region of Northern Zambia was of huge interest to imperial and colonial powers, but required large amounts of labour; the British attempted to incentivize local labourers with economic means but, as Meebelo suggests, this was little motivation to Tonga men. Labour scarcity has been blamed on this disinterest in Western-style remuneration. “This unwillingness to become wage-earners seems to have been common amongst most African communities, and the reason for its existence is not far to seek”, according to Meebelo (Meebelo, 1971:85). Since Tonga people did not use a cash system, they were hesitant to accept wages that were useless within their own economic system (ibid, 85).

Meebelo also alludes to speculation that the local people were wary of slavery and distrustful of Europeans with promises of compensation. This led “the B.S.A.C. Administration, like other colonial governments, [to recruit] labour through chiefs and [use] it on the strength of the custom of communal labour which seems to have been general among African societies” (ibid, 86). Likewise, the British used the chiefs for collecting taxes which were imposed on local people. Colson suggests that “Northern Rhodesia began collecting tax...in 1904...” (Colson, 1960:11) whereas, according to

Meebelo, “In 1901, a hut tax was introduced in North-eastern Rhodesia” (Meebelo, 1971:86).

Regardless, the cash provided by labouring for the British was necessary in paying these mandatory taxes. “The imposition of the hut tax in 1901 on the people...together with the activities of recruiting agents, ushered in an era of labour emigration unknown during the province's two decades of European influence, and it appeared as if the Administration had achieved its objective of galvanising the supposedly indolent and indulgent African male population into taking up paid employment in white farming and industrial centres” (ibid, 88). Life as Zambians knew it had changed forever.

The BSAC found it effective to divide the nation into districts to aid in controlling it. Meebelo writes about the nine districts into which north-eastern Rhodesia was divided, and Colson writes about the Northern Rhodesian Gwembe district within the Southern Province. The Gwembe Valley and Plateau are the regions within Southern Province (as it is known still today) where the Tonga people dwell. Each district is divided into chieftaincies; “These for the most part are administrative creations rather than indigenous units” (Colson, 1960:15). Referring to the works of Elizabeth Colson, Dan O'Brien states that the Tonga were an “amorphous”, “stateless” people, who are actually “a creation of British bureaucracy” for the purpose of colonial administration and organization: “It would seem then that the Tonga were the antithesis of their neighbours the Lozi, who had, prior to European contact, a king ruling a geographical area”(O'Brien, 1983:23). According to Jaspan, “Villages are known by the names of the headmen; formerly the name changed with each headman but now the successor takes the name of the last headman”, which is why the town of Monze has Chief Monze's name, and Chona Village continues to be known by that name (Jaspan, 1953:50).

One particular Rhodesian chief “distinguished between those whose power came from the Government and was directed to the taking of census and collection of tax, and those whose power came from the spirits of the region and was directed to rainmaking and curing illness” (O'Brien, 1983:24). The successful leadership of a given chief was often based on whether he was already respected as an important man within the community. In a similar vein, looking at the Tonga context,

“Few Valley Tonga think of the chief as being the legitimate fountain-head of authority. Instead they see him as an agent of the central administration at the District Headquarters” (Colson, 1960:162).

Villages also had headmen, who served under the chiefs within their respective neighbourhoods; headmen are respected as dispute-resolvers and decision-makers in the communities (ibid:31, 163). Due to a lack of BSAC administrators on the ground, chiefs and headmen were relied upon for adjudicating local cases and arresting and prosecuting offenders in accordance with enforcing tax laws (Meebelo, 1971:115). The BSAC remained in control of Northern Rhodesia until “thus in 1924 Northern Rhodesia became a protectorate under the Colonial Office”. (Kaplan, 1979:25).

In the early days of British intervention in Northern Rhodesia, men generally had more contact with Europeans than did women. The introduction of wage labour in the form of farming and mining, brought on by the British South Africa Company (BSAC) and later the British Colonial government, disrupted the social balance and left women to pick up the pieces of caring for their families and keeping their communities together. Of course wage labour was necessary in paying the mandatory taxes imposed by the British; men had little choice but to participate. Since women still supported themselves with subsistence agriculture, they maintained some autonomy in the absence of the men. “But few women left the Valley” (Colson, 1960:32), and yet certainly women were affected in many ways by the labour migration to which the Gwembe Valley and Plateau fell victim.

Like most other areas of Tonga life, European contact had an impact on the gendered divisions of labour. “[In the 1950s] the introduction of the plough...altered this division. Men and boys guide the plough, though women participate in the joint operation by following behind and sowing the seed in the furrows. Women still do most, though not all, of the weed scuffling” (Jaspan 1953:48). Such new introductions did not reduce women's work, they merely altered it.

Kaplan confirms that men and women within Tonga society had a specific gendered division of labour which changed through colonialism and then again through Independence. “Men and women are subject to quite distinct role expectations in most sections of Zambian society. In precolonial Zambian

cultures, women were typically responsible for child care, cultivation of fields, and food preparation. Men cleared fields, hunted, and occupied themselves with social and political matters” (Kaplan, 1979:95). While these roles might vary over time and between people groups, they were fairly consistent. Kaplan also asserts that some unofficial political power was attributed to women within certain regions, but that, “The relative position of men and women changed considerably in Zambia during the twentieth century. In a subsistence economy, the roles were relatively clear but balanced each other” (ibid, 95). However, colonial intervention negated and removed women's power, by integrating their own forms of leadership: “The colonial regime replaced indigenous political structures and increased the power of a few chiefs (generally male) as Native Authority administrative officers” (ibid, 95). Matrilineal hierarchies and women who had had power prior to colonialism were no longer recognized as local authorities.

De-territorialization began for the Gwembe Tonga people in 1956, when a dam project was initiated at the Kariba Gorge, “convert[ing] 2,000 square miles of the Gwembe into a vast lake and forc[ing] the resettlement of some 57,000 of its inhabitants” (Colson, 1960:1). This resettlement, which began in 1957 and continued into 1958, caused many problems for the Tonga people – those displaced, and those not – because residual land was insufficient for their farming practices and they did not want to move too far away from their kin (ibid, 7). There was also a lack of trust in the colonial government's communication surrounding the project. “Their resentment was exacerbated since few believed that the resettlement was due to the creation of a lake within the Valley. They did not believe that Kariba Dam could flood the region for any distance above the dam. Their experience of dams had been of small earth dams which flooded only a few acres, of power plants, of those of Bulawayo and Livingstone, which displaced no one. They were convinced that the talk of the lake was a blind under which the Europeans were planning to seize the area for European farms” (ibid, 2). The displacement negatively affected those who were forced to move, but also those whose land was moved onto, as now their land was more crowded than in previous generations, and this strained their resources.

Colson discusses the disparities in censuses and population estimates due to the forced displacement of so many people. In addition to the resettlement of 1957-58, population changes would have occurred due to conflicts and raids between the Tonga and their surrounding counterparts. Colson confirms that, “the area was being raided intermittently by Kalolo-Lozi from the Upper Zambezi, by Ndebele from the Southern Rhodesian highlands, and by Chikunda slave traders from Mozambique” (ibid, 9). The Tonga had specific and unique relationships – good and bad – with neighbouring people groups. Evidence like this demonstrates the dynamism of life in Africa outside of European involvement: not only did the local people take issue with British colonial actions, but they had historically constituted relationships and struggles with each other and these complicated the relationships of ruling.

These raids, which had been going on for centuries and continued into Colson's time, were not the only thing, however, to leave the Tonga weak: “Women and children were taken as captives; men were more commonly slain. Epidemics and famines were also common and continued into the twentieth century. Many died in the smallpox epidemics of 1893 and 1925-6, while a smaller epidemic occurred as recently as 1948; the 1918-19 influenza epidemic swept through the Gwembe”(Colson, ibid, 9). Both epidemics and raids were the causes of social change for the Tonga, as cattle, which was affected by both, is of much importance to their way of life.

The role of formal education also impacted engendered labour as, “Schooling was linked to the new economic roles occupied by men” in the later years of colonialism (Kaplan, 1979:95). It made more sense to provide education for boys, who would one day earn financial income with it, thus making a return on the investment whereas girls, who would likely continue do domestic work, were less worthy. Looking at a more urban setting, Kaplan writes that, “Women kept largely to their customary activities, minus responsibility for producing the family food supply. The balance thus shifted in the cities toward the male breadwinner, who controlled the money” (ibid, 95). Further, since women, especially, got married so young, formal education conflicted with social responsibilities,

meaning they “could attend only sporadically” (ibid, 95). That being said, as Kaplan points out, “mission churches often emphasized education for girls in spite of the obstacles” (ibid, 95-6). These mission schools were responsible for educating the most prominent leaders, who eventually lead Northern Rhodesia to Independence.

According to Elizabeth Colson, colonial administration delineated groupings and consolidated neighbourhoods. Yet the nature of the Tonga people is to be welcoming to visitors. Colson writes, “While this political evolution was taking place, the Tonga were also becoming consolidated as a self-conscious ethnic group in contrast to other peoples of Zambia and Rhodesia [Zimbabwe] as they had never been when neighbourhood and vicinage reflected their parochial universe. Their new sense of Tongahood has clashed on occasion with the existence of the three political divisions created by the administration...” (Colson, 1970b:4). That is to say, where, before colonialism, the Tonga were fairly amorphous, they were now becoming quite conscious of their differences from neighbouring people and the British because of the boundaries being drawn by the British. Here they came to know themselves differently through colonization: something which would ironically enable collective resistance.

Nevertheless, “During the colonial era, Tonga neighbourhoods received and absorbed a large number of aliens” (ibid, 5). Colson highlights that, especially due to the labour migration, people came and went, and the Tonga absorbed foreigners. This speaks to the specific situation of Colson herself, who as a young anthropologist, was welcomed and integrated into the community: she is even known as *Kamwale*, which means “little girl” - a term of endearment, as she was so young when she first arrived.

Since British colonialism was initiated by imperialistic companies rather than the state itself, it was not involved in education in the colonies right away: there was no educational policy on behalf of the British in Africa for quite some time. “Following trails blazed by the missionaries, the British Government's involvement in formal education in Africa came later... (White, 1996:12). The nature of

British colonialism was a system of indirect rule which did not seek to micromanage its projects or over-administrate its endeavours. In fact, “Britain's *laissez-faire* attitude towards missions in the colonies relieved it of the responsibility of educational administration and policy formation...The strong influence of the missions in the British colonies eventually led to...the development of a dual system of education, with mission schools and state schools existing side by side. The dual nature of this system diminished with time, as the British Government responded to pressure from White settlers to invest more in education in its dependencies” (ibid, 13; italics in original). That being said, places such as Northern Rhodesia, that saw fewer settlers than other colonies, saw less of this push towards state school implementation. Nevertheless, “Statistics reflect that an increase in British colonial spending during the period 1930-1950; enrolment doubled in Northern Rhodesia”, as it tripled and quadrupled in Nigeria and Kenya respectively (ibid, 13). This is confirmed by Clignet and Foster who argue that, “Education was, for the most part, left in the hands of the missions and other voluntary agencies...Gradually, the separate colonial governments took over general direction of educational policy, but little effort was made to control the output of the schools...”Clignet and Foster, 1964:194-5).

Clignet and Foster explore the differences between British and French colonial policies, highlighting how they reflected upon education. They argue that the indirect rule and assimilation policies (British and French, respectively) for which the colonizing powers are known were more balanced than stark as policies may have intended and literature reflects. These forms of control were manifested in educational policy. When the British government did intervene into the educational sector in its colonies, it formed the “Advisory Committee on Native Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies, which later became known as the Advisory committee on Education in the Colonies”; in 1925 the Committee published its Memorandum on Education Policy citing four recommendations: that the government control the administration of education but cooperate with voluntary organizations such as missions; that education be adapted to meet local needs; that local languages be used in primary schools; and that girls' education be paid more attention (White,

1996:13).

The British approach to colonial education was to help Africans to continue to work as agriculturalists as this was “a prerequisite for good citizenship” (ibid, 20). They implemented vocational and agricultural schools that 'met the needs' of the local people and educated them in their own languages. However, both White, and Clignet and Foster stipulate to the difference in policy and execution. White writes that, “...the British explained the position: 'We are not advocating an education to produce labourers. On the contrary, we envisage an education for Africans designed to enable them to understand their environment and lead the most complete life that is possible in it’” (ibid, 20). The British government did not have the intention of producing an educated elite, however that is what Clignet and Foster suggest happened when it, “allow[ed] Africans access to British higher institutions...it is clear that the range of educational opportunities open to Africans was far greater in British than French territories, and from an early period a few individuals were able to reach the highest rung of the educational ladder” (Clignet and Foster, 1964:195). Only a select few were able to reach such echelons.

The Chikuni mission school, in Zambia's Southern Province, near the town of Monze, offers an example of a missionary school. It was founded by a French Jesuit priest in 1905 (Carmody, 1991:131). The founder, Father Joseph Moreau, was a French peasant whose theology included valuing poverty as a virtue, and service-oriented work (ibid, 131). Moreau clung to his wish not to disrupt Tonga culture, but to teach more efficient and successful agricultural methods to the people in their own language. This school provides a peculiar example of a French-originating school installed within a British colony.

In the early stages of Chikuni Mission, girls were taught domestic skills by the Nuns, so as to perpetuate their roles as housekeepers and mothers as a part of the process of creating Western families. Since “the traditional practice [was] cattle herding for boys and early marriage for girls...it was seen to be unnecessary and uneconomical to send [girls] to school” (Carmody, 1988:197). Moreau “did not

initially wish to disturb the traditional pattern in regard to girls' education...Indeed, what the Sisters of Notre Dame [at Chikuni] developed even in the 1930s did not include a strong academic education but: '...dressmaking, soap-making, mat-making, laundry work, knitting, crocheting'"(Carmody, 1991:133). In later years, girls were given both a domestic and an academic education at Chikuni School. This conforms to the process of "housewifization" identified by Maria Mies (1986:110) and Rhoda Reddock (1994) in other colonial locations in which new meanings were given to the sexual division of labour. Through formal education African women were taught to be housewives within the private and domestic area of life. They acquired skills which would integrate them into modernity through particular practices of femininity. Men on the other hand were educated to be wage earners and were expected to provide for familial needs through work in the public sphere which afforded them access to the family wage. The education that girls and boys received was different, as they were trained for their respective positions within society. This is reminiscent of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's experience in being shown the inside of a British home in an orientation of culture as part of an English lesson (wa Thiong'o, 2013:19-22).

Anti-colonial Efforts

Anti-colonial resistance in Northern Rhodesia hinged around three main issues: racial tensions, oppressive policing, and the economics of extractive industry; they were enacted by three main groups of people: unionized mine workers, unified protestors, and women. Given its geographical location within the region of Southern Africa, Northern Rhodesia struggled with much of the same racist ideology as its neighbours, Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), and South Africa. "Moreover, colonial policy in Northern Rhodesia, which secured for white settler occupancy wide belts of the most fertile lands on the Tonga plateau while confining the African population to overcrowded Native Reserves inevitably generated much resentment of colonial settlers and administration in the Tonga villages. The transmission across the Zambezi into Northern Rhodesia of color-bar attitudes born of southern settlerdom also enlarged the scale of racial tension" (Dixon-Fyle, 2007:107). Black Africans were

tired of facing racial laws that prohibited them from accessing the same leisures and privileges as Whites.

One important example of oppressive, racist legislature and resistance to social control is the alcohol regulation beginning in the early part of the twentieth century. “With the development of the copper-mining industry in Northern Rhodesia in the late 1920 and the concomitant growth of the Copperbelt towns and mining compounds, colonial authorities sought much stricter regulation of brewing and drinking by Africans” (Ambler, 1990:296). Armed with racist ideologies that suggested that Africans were aggressive and dangerous when drinking, British colonial authorities put laws in place to prohibit the sale of European beer and wine to Africans, as well as the traditional practice of brewing beer in towns where it could be enforced (ibid, 298). “The consumption of bottled lager beer was an emblem of the European life-styles and values that [African Soldiers in World War II] had been encouraged to aspire to and which separated them from the masses of Africans; the law forbidding that consumption continually reminded these members of the African élite that in a racist society like Northern Rhodesia those aspirations were chimerical” (ibid, 298). These laws remained a point of contention up until Independence was won (ibid, 302).

Yet the people resisted in their own ways, by protesting in unified groups, ignoring laws, boycotting beerhalls when they were allowed access, and resuming their traditional brewing practices. (Though it was mostly men who frequented beerhalls, brewing was women's work, so they were invested as well.) “Thus when the authorities used police to suppress beer production, the brewers fought back. Some women organized themselves into mutual support circles so that if arrested they could raise fines and quickly get back into business” (ibid, 304). Their efforts saw some results as the laws were amended over the years.

Liquor laws were not the only issue being debated, as the political parties themselves were fighting racial battles. By 1962, all of the parties were White except for UNIP, which was blended. It was believed that “...whites...[were] dictators and oppressors of the Africans in Northern Rhodesia.

UNIP believe[d] that political domination by a minority [was] not democratic but despotic...hundreds of Africans were killed, beaten, or thrown into jail without cause or trial. It is important, for the understanding of this explosive situation, to realize that for some time...the country [was] under an undeclared state of emergency...In short, Northern Rhodesia [was] operating as a police state” (Soko, 1962:16). Enacting senseless violence upon citizens, arresting protestors and anti-colonial spokespeople, “the colonial government [was] content to pursue its policy of terror and oppression” (ibid, 16).

By the close of the Second World War, Britain was tired, and exhausted of its resources; and Africans were tired of their presence. The British pushed harder for more economic gain from the mines in Northern Rhodesia's Copperbelt. But the more the workers toiled, the more money was leaving their borders. The workers were disgruntled, but instead of being spread across the colony, living isolated, subsistence lives, they were centralized and unionized, so they used it to their advantage. In 1947, “it was agreed [by the administration of the British Protectorate] that Africans in their industrial capacity could be represented by trade unionists with an industrial-urban base instead of by tribal representatives from rural societies...” (Heisler, 1971:127). Politicians were able to visit these unions and rally them for the cause. Numbering at least 100,000 at the time, they were a significant force in the resistance (ibid, 125).

The 1950s saw the beginning of the era of Freedom Fighting in Northern Rhodesia. Racial tensions were high, and post-World War II economics and Cold War politics were inciting greater resource extraction from the colonies on the part of the British. It was at this time that the Kafue Dam was built and people were displaced from their homes. Access to food was limited and prices were discriminatory (Kaunda, 1963:76). People were frustrated and wanted change. Men such as Kenneth Kaunda, Harry Nkumbula, Simon Kapwepwe, and Mainza Chona began organizing politically and led the colony through an anti-colonial resistance. Politicians travelled throughout the country raising money and holding protest meetings; the African Nation Congress was gathering support all over the

region. “New branches were established throughout the Southern Province, which was to have the largest number by early 1956...With active Congress branches now operating in the townships of Mazabuka and Monze, shop boycotts were resumed...” (Dixon-Fyle, 2007:118-9). Tonga labourers were encouraged to walk off the job at settler farms, and to resist and refuse Administration policies (Dixon-Fyle, 2007:112;115-7). As many of the prominent men during this time had come from mission schools (Dixon-Fyle, 2007:111), they used their influence within the church to build community and gain followers (Dixon-Fyle, 2007:112).

Kaunda held several positions in the years leading up to Independence, working alongside Mainza Chona, after having met him whilst in England. It was also at this time that Kaunda met a shop-keeper named Rambhai Patel who introduced him to the highly influential writings of Mahatma Ghandi (Kaunda, 1980:15). Arrested on a few occasions for anti-colonial publications, Kaunda did not lose spirit (Kaunda, 1963:108). In 1958, things were getting tense, and Kaunda feared violent uprisings like he saw in neighbouring countries (ibid, 95). Taking a very Gandian stance, Kaunda had to act in prevention. Seeing that Nkumbula, a colleague who fell to the right of Kaunda's left-leaning, socialist agenda, was taking his leadership in a dangerous direction, and disagreeing with him on many fronts, Kaunda broke away from the ANC to form the Zambia African Congress rather than oust Nkumbula from his position as leader of the ANC (ibid, 98). In March of 1959, Kaunda and some of his comrades were arrested by the District Commissioner in Northern Rhodesia for their anti-federation efforts (ibid, 104).

Initially, Mainza was associated with the Africa National Congress (ANC) in Northern Rhodesia, which emerged after the Kaunda's Zambia Africa National Congress (ZANC) was banned. Mainza worked alongside another party, the African National Independence Party (ANIP), streamlining their interests to create a merger of the two, now called the United National Independence Party (UNIP). Once released from prison, Kaunda aligned himself with UNIP and was voted President on January 31, 1960, “unopposed, thanks to Brother Mainza Chona who kindly stepped down to the

Deputy Presidency of the party” (ibid, 139). Mainza had thought Kaunda was better suited for the job.

The Women's Brigade or Women's League, emerged as a branch of UNIP that supported women's interests. On many occasions the Women's Brigade staged non-violent protests, as well as made recommendations to the party on behalf of women (Macolo 2010:78; Adhikari, 2009:194). One woman who was particularly active and well-known in the Women's Brigade, was named Julia Mulenga Nsofwa. She is more widely known as Mama Chikamoneka, a name she took on for anonymity for safety purposes in the beginning, meaning “it will be seen”. Yolanta remembers her as being a dynamic old lady, who did a lot for Zambian freedom. In 1961, Mama Chikamoneka staged an infamous protest where she, and other women, appeared at the international airport upon the arrival of Northern Rhodesia's Secretary of States for the Colonies Ian McLeod from England. The women bared their breasts in defiance and protest of colonialism. Yolanta had gone to the demonstration, prepared to participate, but Mama Chikamoneka sent her home, as she was carrying her small twins. The protest had a profound affect on Mr. McLeod, as much of Mama Chikamoneka's work was effective.

Coming alongside Kaunda's notion of equality is the discourse of tribalism within postcolonial Zambia. Kaunda's hope was that Zambia would be a united nation not of disparate tribes, but like-minded citizens. “With any luck, this generation will think of itself not in tribal terms as Bemba, Lozi or Tonga, but as Zambians. This is the only guarantee of our future stability” (Kaunda, 1966:121). Whilst Kaunda himself was not technically Bemba (being that his parents had come from Malawi, across the border), he considered himself so, and his friend Kapwepwe certainly was. Mainza Chona was the son of a Tonga chief, but their interests in national independence connected them. A recent media critique asserted that, “At independence in 1964 Zambia's first president naively thought that Zambia had entered a new era of post-tribal politics...The first post independence UNIP convention saw a very bitter tribal fight. The Bemba-Tonga pact had at the UNIP convention bitterly defeated the Lozi-Nyanja alliance...In fact, it was during this time, that some UNIP stalwarts started doubting Kaunda's loyalty to the Bemba tribe since he had Malawian parentage” (Munshya, 2013: n.p.). Kaunda tried to

emphasize his allegiance to the Bemba chief in Chinsali, and asked Kapwepwe to abdicate in favour of appointing Chona as vice-President so to balance out the Bemba-heavy government (ibid, n.p.). Kaunda implemented an effort called “Tribal Balancing” to prevent upset.

Crucial to Independence and the Zambian Constitution is the report on the Chona Commission, a document formulated by Mainza Chona at Kaunda's request. “In March [1972] vice president Mainza Chona, who had replaced Kapwepwe in late 1970, was appointed to chair the National Commission on the Establishment of One-Party Participatory Democracy. After extensive open hearings throughout the country, the commission produced its report, which became the basis for legislation in December officially establishing the one-party participatory democracy as the governmental structure of the Second Republic” (Kaplan, 1979:39). The Chona Commission heard the insights and concerns of the local people all throughout Zambia and factored in their ideas to produce the report. While the report deals mainly with the structure of the democratic government going forward, it does note, “that protection from discrimination on the grounds of sex be included in all relevant sections of the Constitution” (The Chona Commission, 1972:10). That is to say, that women should be treated equally to men; whether or not they actually are is perhaps another question. In the next chapter, I will discuss how certain facets of Independence were beneficial to women, and how some women still do not have access to a better life.

Much of the literature focusing on education and the anticolonial struggle in Colonial Northern Rhodesia contains only figures regarding men. Kaplan's book discusses access to education and literacy rates, but in using gender-neutral terms is solely referring to the male experience. Even the section on Kaunda's Humanism, as outlined in the Zambian Constitution, refers to men in its conversation on egalitarianism. The struggles of women in the context of national liberation are therefore far less well archived than those of men. The significance of my work is that it intervenes in this absence. Writing the life of Yolanta Chona is therefore one effort to explore the ways in which women took part in and reflected on the changes that were taking place. It is also a way to explore in

qualitative ways how women's subjectivity was reconstituted in the decades before and after colonization.

In this chapter I have laid out some of the ways in which Tonga social life was impacted by colonialism, in a gendered way. Focusing on pre-colonial village life, colonialism, education and Christianity, and the anti-colonial movement, I have set the stage onto which Yolanta Chona's life can be read. I will demonstrate how Yolanta used the tools of education and Christianity to navigate the changes in her world.



Figure 3: A Hut in Chona Village. Photo Credit: Diane Whitelaw.

Chapter 3: For us the food was plenty: The Life Experiences of Yolanta Chona

The lived experiences of Yolanta Chona tell a vibrant story of how one woman negotiated change in her environment throughout her lifetime. By reading her story through the theoretical frameworks I have set up, I will show how she critically engages the conflicting social and political context to make meaning of her life. Her story demonstrates how hybridity is negotiated on an ongoing basis in order to thrive in an ever-changing world. This life history will depict how Yolanta made meaning of the colonial and anti-colonial changes to her people's traditional lifestyle, and how she used her privileged access in critical ways to navigate through these systems of change to produce meaning. Juxtaposed with the experiences of her sister, who led a very different life, I will show how access to and utilization of such tools as education, language, and Christianity allowed for a much better quality of life and vastly different experiences. But Yolanta is not merely a product of Western colonization and all that went with it. She remembers her early cultural education and subsistence labour in her village and draws on some of these teachings to negotiate her life today as a farmer of traditional crops, in the present. In other words, Yolanta's life at the everyday level is a constant negotiation of life experiences and the product of this is a form of Zambian hybridity in which she selects and mixes the symbolic and material vocabularies .

In this chapter I describe her childhood experience as far as possible using her own words. In so doing I hope to make clear the complex ways in which colonization interacted with indigenous systems at the level of childhood education, rites of passage and Christianity.

Life in the Village was Hard

Yolanta Chimbamu Chona was born into a modest family in the Chona village, in the Tonga region of Nampeyo in Zambia's Southern Province in, what she estimates to be, 1936. The youngest of five children, all daughters, Yolanta was favoured by her father, Malambo, who was a Headman in Chona Village, under Chief Hameja Chilala Chona. Malambo and his wife Chiile worked hard on their

farm to provide for their family, and never lacked food. While it was indigenous land, Black Africans could not be owners of the land and the area worked by her father was owned by white settlers. They were not wealthy, but they had what they needed; Yolanta has pleasant memories of her childhood growing up in the village.

Malambo had a wife prior to Chiile, but she passed away before he remarried. He has children from that marriage, but after their mother's death, they went to live with their mother's family. Despite being Yolanta's half-siblings, she did not grow up with them nearby. Subsequently, Malambo chose only Chiile as his wife, and Yolanta recalls that he treated her well and was never rough with her.

Chiile gave birth to thirteen children, all daughters, but only five lived beyond infancy. The first child passed away, but the second, Rita Elita, lived to be an adult. Rita was grown and married by the time Yolanta has her earliest memories. Next, a set of twins was born, but only Elizabeth Chinyama survived. Yolanta is unable to estimate the years the two eldest were born, as her own birth year is just a guess. After Elizabeth, there was a set of triplets and two more daughters (in an order unknown) who all passed away before Lucia Mulekwa was born in approximately 1932. About two years later, Maria Himala and her twin were born; only Himala lived. Lastly, another two years later, Yolanta Chimbamu arrived. Named for her father's sister, Chimbamu means “beautiful”. Yolanta has always been close with Himala as they grew up doing everything with one another. They are the only two still living today.

Chiile mourned that she had no sons. She had always wanted a son to care for her, especially once she grew older, but she had only given birth to daughters. For a time, however, one of Malambo's nephews came and stayed with the family, and did a lot of work on the farm.

The family home was a mud house in the village across the river from the Chief's village. There were a few rooms, separated by mud walls and open doorways. Yolanta shared a room with Himala and they slept on the floor together there until Himala left as a young adult. Malambo would make small mattress-like structures on which the family would sleep. Sometimes they were made of sticks

and leaves, or woven reeds from the river, or even a cow hide. *“But by those days...sleeping-wise, sometimes it was very difficult. Sometimes you sleep on the floor...But when I grew up...my father had to cut some stick...about four of them, or six, yeah, about six of them”*, she recalls, demonstrating the weaving of dried reeds with her hands. She continues, *“...I'm not trying...to paint a bad picture. (Laughs). I don't want to...paint a bad picture, but I'm telling you the truth. What I have experienced”*. If they had a sack for maize, they might stuff it full of leaves and use that as a mattress, too, but they always had decent blankets, as far back as Yolanta can remember.

After rising early and attending school all morning and up until roughly two o'clock in the afternoon, the daughters helped their parents with domestic work on the farm. Since she was the youngest, Yolanta did the least. The girls' help was needed most during the rainy season, when there was more work to be done. She says, *“If I go to school, when I come back, they will tell me where I will find them, especially during the rainy season...Where they will go and they plough, and they will tell me that they will find us in a certain place. So that when I come back from school, I eat, after eating, I found them. But it was very nice...I had a very small hoe, so that I could learn how to...”* help in the field and work alongside her parents. Yolanta's education consisted of both informal experience in the village and formal education at the local school. Unlike children in urban industrialized societies she was a working child as is common in subsistence economies. Through this work she learned the skill of farming in ways which were age appropriate and she also learned the value and importance of food production.

She says her parents taught her to work hard and have a good work ethic. *“Me, I almost, although I can say I was not spoiled, I am the last born. Normally always when you are the last born, people they think you can be spoiled, but I was not spoiled myself”*, she insists.

Sometimes Himala and Yolanta would stay with their eldest sister, who was already married. Rita lived nearby, in the same village, as her husband was from their village. She recalled, *“Yeah, my big sisters, the three of them, got married, but of course, the eldest. When I become a person with...”*

memory, yeah so I found that she was already married. But the two, they were not. I saw them being married, two of them. Yeah”, she says, referring to Elizabeth and Lucia. When Elizabeth, the second-eldest, got married, she also lived nearby. Yolanta also remembers seeing Himala get married. All five girls got along well: Yolanta never remembers any fighting or quarrelling amongst them.

The girls were not allowed to play with their friends after school during the week so they did not have much social interaction, *“Unless you arrange with your friends to go, especially on Saturday. On Saturday you could go out. Just, you know, the small children, but always there must be someone who is older, someone who is older than you, who would take you there. You would go there and get some...There is a wild, edible, relish...Yeah so we could go there, in the forest, and dig. After digging, you come back, wash it. Then you come back and you cook it”*, she explains. The children learned how to cook by preparing the relish they had found. Saturday was also the day the children would walk to the stream to bathe.

Living on a farm, there was always plenty of food to eat. *“For us, the food was plenty. My father was very particular about that”*, she states. Yolanta's father, Malambo, kept goats and cows. They drank the cows' milk, but used the goats for meat. They survived on the staple *nshima*, or corn meal, which is common in Sub-Saharan Africa. *“Mmmhmm the food was plenty. And my mother also, she always had somewhere where she could keep the food for us...Otherwise, in my parents' home, we didn't experience any hunger. At least to my knowledge, I didn't experience any hunger at all...I could, you know, eat breakfast, but of course breakfast, the sour milk”*, she remembers, referring to the porridge they would make from *nshima* and sour milk. They grew maize and other vegetables on the farm as well, including groundnuts and okra. Growing these foods was common within her village. Yolanta never preferred vegetables growing up, except for okra, and a dish made out of dried pumpkin leaves and groundnuts. Occasionally Malambo would slaughter a goat for them to eat, or, alternatively, he would kill a guinea fowl or a *kudu* – a local animal similar to an antelope.



Figure 4: Nshima with Kale Relish. Photo Credit: Diane Whitelaw.

Within Tonga culture, the man is always served the first plate; then the children are served, and the mother eats what is left. The families in the village would eat communally. Each family would cook what they had, but the men would sit and eat together, while the women and children ate in a separate group together. Yolanta recalls that not all the families had enough or as much as she and her family had: *“And myself, I can say I was used to have good food, I can say that. Because some people...they didn't have what myself I had”*. This, however, would likely not have been the case if all thirteen daughters had lived – thirteen children would have caused quite a strain on the family's resources.

Chiile was always concerned that Malambo had enough, as he had no teeth, and needed his food to be mashed up. As far back as Yolanta can remember, this was the case: Malambo's teeth had all

fallen out. So Chiile would make his food – even his meat – into a pudding-like texture, but he always had enough, and often shared with his beloved Yolanta.

One of Yolanta's fondest memories from her childhood is attending the rain celebration after the harvest each year. *“After harvesting, like this time now, Senior Chief Monze, all of the Batonga people would...go there, to celebrate what God has given us..... maybe, this time, they will celebrate in July. I don't know which date. But normally every year there is a very big event. But at the village, they have it...each village will brew some beer...Then at the end, after six days, on Sunday, they will start...going to Malende...you know what Malende...to there...those people that are buried there...my ancestors...we will go there, and...pray...you know they used to pray with the, you know...”* she explains. *“Mhmm.. So, they could...early morning, they could go there. Yeah and pray...to tell them that 'we have harvested, everything is okay. So please, you pray for us'...something like that. Then after that, when they come back, but there should be some drums. Yeah, they used to drum and people, celebrating...village by village...Twice a year. In January or February, and then August...July to August. They will celebrate and each household would brew some beer. Then after that they would drink, you know, chatting, dancing, and so forth.”* This was, and still is, an important part of Tonga life, and the celebrations stand out in Yolanta's memory as wonderful times in her childhood. Her description of these experiences emphasize the remembering and commemorating the ancestors but her words suggest a consciousness of monotheism in ways which imply a kind of double consciousness in which she moves between indigenous spirituality and the commonality between this and the Christian emphasis on one God. *“ But they knew God was there. But they used to pray to their ancestors”*.

Most nights, after dinner, parents would sit around the fire and share songs and stories with the children, especially in June. The children would listen and learn. A strong emphasis was put on the songs that were sung at festivals. Children would learn by watching and listening. Even as they learned to pound maize using a mortar, they would learn songs. The stories that Yolanta remembers were about how life is, and how to live it well. Sometimes the stories were about children who

behaved badly, as warnings that demonstrated how life can be hard.

Yolanta recalls some of the stories that were told to her, and she passed them down to her children. Many of the folk tales involved indigenous animals and were similar to that of the Tortoise and the Hare. One of the stories referred to the puberty ritual of having the front teeth knocked out; when later asked about their teeth, modest, humble girls would hum with their mouths closed, but proud, arrogant girls would sing loudly with their mouths open, as if to brag about the removal. While some stories had songs interjected into them, they were often anecdotal with a moral or lesson at the end. Many times the moral or cultural value being highlighted was hard work or humility, as those were things the Tonga people certainly emphasize as important qualities to maintain.

Although the Tonga people are matrilineal, they are not matrilocal. “On marriage, the bride moves to her husband's home wherever this happens to be, even if it is in another neighbourhood” (Colson, 1960:96). This is consistent with Yolanta's experience of moving across the river to her husband Mainza's homestead, and spending much of her married life with her mother-in-law there. Colson expands on this by stating that, “Usually therefore a woman moves into a village where she already has some tie with various of its residents. If she marries within her own village, she still moves to her husband's homestead” (ibid, 96). Yolanta's memory of her two eldest sisters living nearby – within the same village – with their husbands also re-affirms this. Further, that Yolanta's mother, Chiile, and Mainza's mother, Chinyama, were both from Pemba but married men in Nampeyo suggests that the two villages were friendly.

Tonga families tended to reside in what Colson terms 'homesteads', which consisted of a hut or two for a single family, or a cluster of multiple huts housing several families; each village contains several homesteads (ibid, 94). Whilst polygyny was common amongst the Gwembe Tonga, Colson highlights certain regulations and prohibitions regarding intermarriage and co-wife kin relationships. In a culture where many men had multiple wives, Malambo only had one. Yolanta understands this as a matter of choice rather than an issue of wealth, as even poor men could take a second wife.

The leadership or dominance within a homestead may be vague and unspoken. According to Colson, “Where several brothers live together, the oldest may serve as an informal leader to co-ordinate some activities...His authority is still minimal” (ibid, 101). Moreover, “The women of the homestead are even less clearly ranked in relation to one another or to the men of the homestead. They must accept orders from their husbands, but they usually refuse to listen to those that come from any of the other men. A woman must also listen to her mother-in-law, at least during the early years of her marriage” (ibid, 101). To some degree or another, matriarchs had authority within the family.

Since lineage can be proven through motherhood, but not essentially through fatherhood, the chieftom is not passed down from a chief to his son, but rather through the chief's sister to her son. So, whilst Yolanta's husband Mainza's father was Chief Chona, Mainza could never be chief; rather, his cousin – the son of Hameja's sister – became the succeeding chief. This tradition of succession may serve to refute the scholarly notion that the Tonga did not have internal leadership prior to colonization.

Each of Yolanta's elder sisters, including Himala, had their teeth knocked out at puberty, which is considered a mark of beauty in Tonga culture. For some reason, of which Yolanta is not aware, she managed to escape this. *“I think I was very lucky because she, when they took her [Himala's] teeth, I was already...up, you know, I said, 'why? Why you agree?' And because she is a quiet person, she doesn't talk much. (Laughs) So, she couldn't explain of course because when, when they take the six teeth, yeah six...yeah they are six! Six! Just boom boom, everything...cut. Very painful and one broke. So it took her for quite a long time the one which broke to come out. Yeah, it was very difficult. Until when we got our Independence that is when they took it out. Mmmm. Yeah it was a beauty thing... Me, I escaped it. I don't know how I escaped it. (Laughs) I think I was more beautiful and black. That is how I was. Yeah when I was...becoming...a girl, sophisticated girl... I found...when I looked at the mirror, I found that I was really a beautiful girl. Of course my auntie, the one I am named, her name was Chimbamu, yeah so that is the name of Chimbamu. What it means, it means beautiful. Yeah so I escaped it myself, and some of my friends, they didn't knock off their teeth. Yeah”.*

As Himala explained, even if a girl did not want her teeth knocked out, sometimes members of the community would come and kidnap the girls, taking them to a remote location, and knock out their teeth against their will. Then they are held there overnight. Himala was brave and did not cry, despite having four teeth removed this way. Since Yolanta and some of her friends did not have their teeth knocked out, and her parents had advised Himala not to, Yolanta believes that this tradition was dying out by the time it was her turn to go through it. However, it was practised until the time of Independence.

Pursuant to the puberty ritual or initiation ceremony, Himala stayed inside the house for three months; *“Yeah but...when...they knock off your teeth, that is the time when you pass puberty. Yeah when they see it, because you become soft and the face so nice, they just see it that this girl now, she is a grown up person. They put you inside the house. Before they, after knocking your teeth, they put you inside the house. Before...they were putting...for six months. Uh huh. But for me, I was there for one month. Yes, they put me in one month. So after one month, it depends if they want...to put you more. But because they could not do that because I was going to school. Yeah because I was going to school. So they put me one month. About fourteen, fifteen years. So, then after then they take you out, they have to celebrate...for me, you don't have to do anything, just sitting down and doing the music. You have to beat there is a...calabash, two calabash. One is big, one is small.. you play with it. You put some, the arm things here. Which made the sound good. Mmm then you just play those. You sleep, they give you food, yeah, and you don't you don't talk to anybody who you don't know. No when you are inside. You just (whispers). Then when you come out, now, they have to celebrate, yeah they have to dance the whole night and so forth, as they were doing...you remember? As they were doing at home...And for that matter, you know those days, no washing. No washing. Mmm until they say now is time to come out. They announce and people would come and dance the whole night. Then in the morning, they would take you to the river, yeah, they would take you to the river, women only, they take you to the river and the one woman would be in front of you, and the ...from there, you go into the*

water, they would take you into the water and go down. And then after that again, you go down, the third time you come out. And they cover you so nobody should see you. Then when you go back to the house you'll find they will say, they will put an animal you know, in front of the doorway. They put an animal. People there, people here, they will lift you. I don't know what it means. They will lift you, give to those people across the animal...Then they will bring you back, then you will go inside the house. Then from there and what you put, the beads, they will plait beads up to here [points to her temple] to cover the face. Yeah for the whole ceremony. Like this time now, that's when they will take you now to go in front of...the house and that's when they'll take out the ...like a veil and take out like a veil” explains Yolanta. Himala had gone through it about two years prior. The parents of the girl being initiated decide for how long she should be kept inside the house, which is why Yolanta's time was short.

Education and Christianity

Yolanta began school when she was about seven years old. She explains that a child was allowed to attend when she could reach her arm over her head and touch the opposite ear: at this age she would be old enough to learn. Yolanta had one dress for school, which she would wash often and wear everyday. The local primary school, started by Chief Hameja in the early 1940s, was located on the other side of the stream from Malambo and Chiile's homestead, in Chona Village. Yolanta's eldest sister, Rita, did not attend school, but the rest of them did. Of all the daughters, Yolanta went the furthest with her education. Himala only completed Standard Two, while Yolanta completed Standard Eight. She speculates that her parents invested in her education because she took it seriously and did well. She enjoyed school, especially English class, as it came easily to her and she did well in it. To this day, she loves reading and learning. She never enjoyed math, and claims to never have been very good at it: *“And the teacher used to, I wasn't good in maths. I wasn't really good in maths. The teacher could say, 'come and go that side in the corner' and he could make mental arithmetic. He would start saying, '2+2?' and the one who knows will say, 'oh, 4'. Yeah. He will start saying that until*

you are...But sometimes for me he could just say 'come back' (laughs) which was not good. Yeah”, she jokes about her struggle. Even though the village school taught children in Tonga – her mother tongue – it was hard for her to learn numbers. In those days, they would write on the dirt floor. “Yeah, on the floor. And then later, then they introduced the slate, the small boards. That's what they introduced. Then from there, they started writing on the board, on the black board. The teacher would write. Then you'd start...repeating. 1, 2, you know, up to 10. Then twenty until you make 100. Then you go on”.

In addition to academic subjects like reading and arithmetic, Yolanta and her peers were taught domestic skills at school, like making mats made out of dried reeds. They would use these mats for seating at the school.

Yolanta recalls that her parents believed in God, but prayed to their ancestors. Her father believed in the spirits of his ancestors, but saw that Christianity was good for his daughters. *“My father...he had a small place where he could...pray...he puts one stick here and one stick here (parallel) and after that, there would be one stick as if he is closing...in the evening...he could cross the stick ...meaning he has closed the door to his ancestors. And then in the morning he could...open, take out that stick and put on the other side. And he had...five...instruments...witchfinder...because he could take the two here and one on the floor and the other one, the two here and he could make like (claps) and then put it on the ground and when...one goes somewhere and the other somewhere, he could say no...to the man who has come to him...what has happened to the child...or the big person...if he's sick...they were normally coming to my father to find out why this person is sick. Then he could hit those things on the floor and then after...say...no he is sick because you didn't give the child the name...very complicated! (Laughs) People would come to him always when a person is sick...for healing...then after that, then he will tell that man...go and get a certain root...so that he can give it to the child and become okay”.* To this day, people in the village still practice this witchcraft.

Yolanta grew up watching her father practice his spirituality, although she never spoke to him about

how she disagreed with it. Perhaps if he had lived longer, and she was older, she would have felt comfortable speaking to him about it as a Christian, but being her father, that would have been a difficult conversation. She, herself, does not agree with witchcraft and does not believe in demons and bewitching. She does not want to *“bring these complicated things on [her] body”*; if she is sick, it is not because someone has bewitched her, but rather it is perhaps because she ate something bad for her. She believes that God is the only one who can heal. She believes that Father Moreau did very good work in bringing Catholicism to the Tonga people.

At a certain point, Yolanta was sent to Chikuni, to the Jesuit Boarding School nearby, to pursue her education. She was the only daughter who went, and she is not even sure why her parents chose to send her; her best guess is that it was because her father was so fond of her. She was baptized there at age fifteen. Whilst at Chikuni, she did some work for the Nuns so that they would make her another dress.

On May 24, 1953, Yolanta married a man named Mainza Chona, the eldest son of Chief Chona and his senior wife, Chinyama Muuka N'gandu. *“At first, I must thank God for my wedding, because He, He was always guiding us, both of us, and...it was very nice”*, she states. Their parents had known each other for a long time; their mothers were close friends who had come from the same village in Pemba. She had grown up knowing Mainza, as they lived in neighbouring villages, although Mainza was a few years older than she (Mainza's estimated birth year is 1930). *“Well um we come from the same chief – he was the... son of the chief. I was the daughter of a village headman. Yeah I knew him... because the parents were together. They came to the same area. Yeah, they were friends. Yeah my mother and his mother. They were friends”*.

Yolanta, who was about seventeen years of age at the time, was in Standard Four at school at Chikuni Mission, *“Well...I don't know how he saw me, but...because...the villages were nearby so how he saw me, I don't know. Then after they he sent someone...one of the girls but young, yeah, he brought a letter...to me. So he said, can you give it to her? So she gave me the letter and I read it. And then*

again I replied, I said no, I don't want. Yeah so I said no, to be a girlfriend... to be a girlfriend first. So I said no. Then again he said, no, I want you. So later on that is how I agreed. I said, okay, it's okay. So he gave me some...beads, which you put on like a necklace. So he gave it to me so I received it then that means now I am a girlfriend of him”, she recalls, smiling.

Yolanta is not sure whether or not this marriage was arranged by their parents as some marriages are; she did, however, feel she had a choice in the matter: “...we kept just like that, seeing each other. But for the first time...in our tradition, we were not supposed to disclose that my boyfriend is this one. We were, we were trying to hide it so that the parents should not know. So then after that, then his parents approached my parents to say that you know, we would like to marry your daughter. Yeah so from there they ask whether you would like to be married or what. But he was working and I was in school in Standard 4.”

Though he was working in Livingstone, he came to Chikuni Mission and asked the Fathers there, who he knew very well after having attended the school himself, if he could see Yolanta. “He came and asked permission so that he could see me at school. The fathers told me someone wants to see you outside. So I said who could it be? Then I tried, I thought but who could it be? But who? Anyway later on I had to come outside. Then the father talked to him and he talked to me, because he explained....everything to the father...then from there, then we talked about it. So he said, 'no me, I have already arranged it'. I said, 'no but I'm still...No, I haven't finished my Standard 4'. He said, 'no, me I want to marry you'. [Laughs] ...so he talked to him, he said, 'you want to marry this girl?'. He said, 'yes I want to marry her'. He said, 'are you going to look after her properly? You know that you have to look after this one properly as she is a young girl'. He said, 'I will do'. So he agreed so that is how...he talked about it with the father and agreed. He told the father, 'I would like to marry her, to have a wedding on the 24th of May 1953'”, she recounts humorously. So, after the school year concluded in May, and she had completed Standard Four, Mainza and Yolanta were married at Chikuni Mission, near Monze, Zambia.

Parts of the wedding were traditional Tonga customs, while others incorporated elements of the church's influence. *“When it happened...first, it happened at home – customary law, yeah”* she tells of her ceremony in the village. She says that the priests did not object to the traditional practices, *“As long as after the traditional way and the you go to the Christian way. Then after that you had to come to the...District Commissioner here in Lusaka to be registered. Yeah so that is what happened. Everything went on very well”*. The Fathers at Chikuni held Mass for their ceremony. After the ceremony, a reception was held at Mainza's elder sister Agnes Hangala's house, also at Chikuni Mission.

The couple received four pounds in wedding gifts, and *“it was quite a lot of money!”*. Yolanta remembers her wedding being very nice, with dancing and celebration. Unfortunately, her family was unable to attend the church wedding, as it was quite far from their village and they were too old to travel. She has one photograph from the day, which the Sisters at Chikuni had taken and sent to her, and for which she is very grateful. They stayed in the village for one week before moving to Livingstone, where Mainza was working. He introduced her to his friends and some important elders there.

Here intimate and gendered subjectivity in relation to marriage in some ways is created in the mission school. In this account Yolanta and her husband conformed to some extent to the Western pattern of courtship (for example through the written letter as writing would have been an innovation) but did not do so completely. Indigenous knowledges existed alongside Western knowledges with the knowledge of the educators. Their marriage ceremony is a pertinent example of how they negotiated their cultural identity by incorporating aspects of traditional culture and Western Christianity. Their relationship to the Western interventions of education and Christianity would have been rare amongst the Tonga as they were not examples of the common individual but rather village elites whose parents had been chosen to rule by the colonial administration. I have demonstrated herein the ways in which colonial administration and education shaped human subjects both through governance and language.

Adulthood and the Anti-colonial Struggle

When Mainza and Yolanta were married, Mainza already had a daughter, Margaret, from a previous relationship. Yolanta became good friends with Margaret's mother, and considered them part of the family, but Mainza chose Yolanta for his wife rather than stay with the mother of his first child. Some people never realized that Margaret was not, in fact, Yolanta's daughter, since she was – and still is – so close with the rest of Chona family.

Not long after her wedding, Yolanta experienced the loss of her father. *“My father passed away in 1954...before I had Mona. He passed away in February 1954. And he fell from the tree...he ...was weeding, but my mother went back home after going in the morning. Then she went back home in the afternoon. My father remained at the field. Then from there nobody knows. He went either to fetch the fire wood or...I don't know. He was alone. Nobody knows. But we found that a branch of a tree...was on him. It came down so...they found he was already dead. The following morning that's when they found him. Yeah...and ...he had almost decomposed. Either he was striked...by a snake. Nobody knows. When they went there, the body was bad. But anyway my mother found that because he was...normally...late to come by eighteen hours...but when it came to eight o'clock then my mother told my brother-in-law to say 'the old man hasn't come...but why?' and that is when they had to take a lamp to go to the field to see what happened...and they tried to search...they couldn't find him. So until in the morning they went back, that's when they saw him. He was finished.”*

Yolanta speculates that his death seemed to say, *“Now that all my daughters are married, I am free to go”*. She was so sad to see him go. She had felt comfort knowing that he was always there to look after them, especially with the lack of a brother. Even Chiile worried that there would be no one to look after the girls when their father died.

Yolanta gave birth to her first child, Mona Dimuna Munsanje Chona, in 1954. It is customary to return to the mother's place to deliver the firstborn in Tonga tradition. *“When I had Mona, I got sick. But first I went home to the village because that was our system. When the first born came, you had to*

go and deliver to your mother's place. So I ...came back to the village from Livingstone to my village. But first I went to my mother-in-law, and then I went to my mother's. By train. Yeah...then from there, by train...Livingstone to Chisekesi, I went to my sister-in-law...then after that, Mark Chona, he took me to the village. Then I stayed there...I had eight months pregnancy. Then I got sick at my mother-in-law's place. Then after he transferred me to my parents'...I went back to my parents' but still more I wasn't feeling well. Then...they decided to say 'no', I should go to the hospital. Then I went to Chikuni hospital. So I stayed there for a month and I gave birth. And it was very funny because I really...I was very sick...then the other day...without knowing that...I want to give birth...so...I ask my mother...'let's go to the [washroom]!'...so that I could wash my hands...we went there...we came back. Then again, I wanted to go back....by the time when I got up...it was for me, so...it was a terrible thing...so I got up from the bed and the child came out! (Laughs) Just like that! Without any pain, without anything at all. No pushing, no what. It's just ...that is Mona now!'” She began to feel better and was released, but the problems came back, so she was re-admitted, and she and Mona remained there for two months. They did not tell her right away what was wrong but she found out later it had been hypertension.

In 1955, Mainza had applied and been accepted to study law at Gray's Inn in London, England. “*So they accepted him and then after that I had to go to the village to stay there and himself, he went to England for three years. Then after that I stayed at the village where he left me to the uncle... I had five months pregnancy...with Elizabeth....in Mujika.... I became sick again. When I was seven months pregnant...same problem. Then I said, I asked my in-laws...his uncle...so I asked him, 'I would like to go to my mother'...but my father was already dead. I said,'I want to go back to my mother'. He said, 'I will find out the way how you can go'. Then later he gave me two people with two bicycles...but I was very sick. Then they took me, I took Mona, and we went to the village...the other one had the child, and the other one had to carry me. But not really carry me but ...on the bicycle and pushing. Not walking myself...so when I reached near home, I found that my mother also sent two people...to come to Mujika to collect me ...but we met on the way. So we exchange. Then the time came, I delivered. Easily. But*

now the pain now was there...terrible! I was sick but what could I do. I went back to the hospital...after...in Livingstone...after birth, and she was only two weeks. So I told my mother, I said, 'no, because now I'm too weak, I can't do anything, I can't lift up myself, so let us just go to the hospital so that if the baby die, if I die, the baby will be in the hands of the hospital people'. So I said, 'let's just go'". Once she arrived at the railway station there, she found a policeman to help her get to the hospital. Since Zambia was not yet independent at this time, the policeman was a white man, but fortunately he took compassion on her by listening to her blood pressure and calling an ambulance. She stayed in the hospital for three months until her blood pressure returned to normal.

"The nurses, they looked after me, very well. The sisters...when I say the sisters, the nuns. So they looked after me. Every Sunday they were taking me to church. ...and they used to come just to chat with me. They were very friendly...Elizabeth was...she was quite a big baby...so...then after that they took me, when I was discharged, they gave me free ticket and they took me to railway station. Because by that time it was very difficult...for a person just to go on her own...but anyway they took me by car...take me to the railway station....then after that...I came to Chisekesi...and they contacted the fathers in Chikuni so that they could meet me...because it's a long way...so when I didn't see them, the train left me at night. At the waiting station. But I slept there, with other people...then after that...early in the morning, I had to walk to go to Chikuni...from Chisekesi to Chikuni...I think...fifteen kilometers. I walked, then middle, then the Fathers, they came. They asked, 'Are you Mrs Chona?'. They said, 'oh sorry sorry...we didn't...come to meet you yesterday. So that's why now we have come to fetch you'...I had to carry the babies on the back...so they picked me there...so after picking me, they took me to my sister-in-law because her husband was a teacher...she received me well...so then after that, Mark Chona came and took me...to the village. Then I stayed there to my mother-in-law, I didn't go back to where I was, to his uncle's place. So my mother-in-law decided for me not to go there, we should stay together with her there. So all the way, I stayed with her for three years. So from there, Mona now was a big girl. She could wash Elizabeth (laughs) and in fact, I should...the picture, but I don't know where

it is. The picture where Mona is washing Elizabeth.”

In 1959, “My husband come back from London. It means he had finished the course so he came...yeah...so from there, we moved to town in Lusaka, and he came to fetch us with the children. We settled down in Lusaka – Matero [an affluent part of town]. Then from there, after that...he was just trying to be a politician. But not immediately. He had...a job, one of the lawyers. Then he didn't want to really to be out of politics. But of course people were coming saying we want you to join us...he joined. Now I was pregnant to Tom. And then he was now almost a full politician,. He resigned to where he was working...so, from there...he was going around the country but he left us where we were staying in Matero. Then after...that is when now he said, 'no I think t is better for you to go back home because I'm not here for a long time'. So that is when I had to pack my things to go to the village...back again to the village.”

Because of her previous health conditions, Yolanta went back to the Livingstone hospital to deliver Thomas Hameja Chona, their first son – named for Chief Hameja Chona. Fortunately, her health was fine this time, and she did not need to stay for long. So after having Thomas, Yolanta went back to Lusaka to tie up loose ends before moving back to the village while Mainza travelled to Tunisia and England for work.

In 1960, Yolanta's mother, Chiile, passed away. Yolanta went back and forth between her own village, her mother-in-law Chinyama's village, and Lusaka a few times before settling back in Chona Village with Chinyama for the next three years

From Lusaka, Mainza was sent by colleague and future president Kaunda to England as a UNIP representative. Just after Mainza had left Lusaka, and landed in Harare, Zimbabwe, the colonial police came looking for him, hoping to arrest him for his anti-colonial efforts. Luckily, he was already gone, sparking a myth that he had a special, invisibility cloak that protected him from the police. (It is said there is a coat of his hanging in a National Museum, signifying his escape from the colonial police; similarly, the Lusaka Museum features a bush pig's tooth, used as a charm to dispel the

authorities from Mainza's home, in addition to a walking stick used by a colleague of his, that made him invisible from police whenever he carried it. These myths created hope and unity amongst Zambian nationals who fought for Independence.) Mainza stayed in London for a year before returning home to Yolanta and his family.

While he was away, Mainza left a bike for Yolanta so she could travel from the village to Monze to buy sugar, flour, butter, and salt. Occasionally he would send money, as well. The Nuns at Chikuni had invited her to the convent to coach on her some domestic skills. She spent a month there, and then went back to the village, where the Nuns paid her six pounds per month to teach the other women what they had taught her.

Soon after Mainza's return, Yolanta found herself pregnant again, now for the fourth time.

“From there...now here are the twins now, came. So I was pregnant to the twins...born in '61, December 2nd...so we were already in Lusaka again...so...we stayed there, but since I was always sick, so I was afraid...because of the experience I had...from Mona to Elizabeth, I said, 'no, I should be monitored by the doctors'. So I was continuing to go there...for the doctors to see me. So they were seeing me all the time...and when I have four months themselves they said, 'you have five months'. I said, 'no, it is four'. they said, 'no, five months'. When I say six, they came to seven...when I...was seven months, they said it's eight months. Then they admitted me again, in the hospital. But the other doctors, they wanted to operate me, they thought the child is dead...so...I said, 'no', they said, 'yes', I said 'no', so we were pulling each other. One doctor...said to me to have an operation. So when he came to the hospital they admitted me and he examined me he found that the baby is not yet moving. So they took me to the x-ray that's how they see there are two babies. I was eight months. Themselves they thought I was...now approaching nine. I said I am eight...so...later on, that is when they had admitted me. Then they discharged me. Then the day for giving birth, they took me to the hospital to find that there are 2 babies. So from there, I gave birth to twins.” She named her twin girls Agatha Yuka Boti Chona and Rosemary Kaoli Nangoma Chona. (There were some Japanese visitors the day

the twins were born, so they were given the names Yuka and Kaoli in their honour.) *“But Kaoli was not fully...they said she needed eleven ounces to be a full baby. I stayed for two weeks for her... She was a bit small than the other one.”* Yolanta's health was strong but since Kaoli was not fully developed, she stayed in the hospital for two weeks until she gained another pound.

Now Mainza had become the National Secretary of UNIP. He worked hard raising money and support for the party, so it was safer that Yolanta and the children remain in the village with Mainza's mother. As a family, they did not have much income, so their friends really helped them out and worked as a community, knowing that Mainza was contributing to their national Independence. He was well-educated and well-respected.

Zambia, or Northern Rhodesia as it was known, did not fight an official war for its Independence, but that is not to say that people did not die. There were times of conflict, wherein the ANC and UNIP were fighting against each other, as well as the Colonial Authorities. Since Mainza was such a prominent leader within UNIP, he was often the target of violence, and Yolanta often felt he was in danger. People would tell her that she would be killed, but she did not believe she had done anything to warrant any attempts; nevertheless, both she and Mainza felt it would be safer for her to stay in the village with the children and her mother-in-law, than to be in Lusaka. She often worried about Mainza, even though there were people guarding him. When she heard no news, she would pray for his safety, that nothing would happen to him, and that he would come back to them safely. She was grateful that the children were too young to understand what was going on.

In 1961, Mainza faced charges by the Northern Rhodesian Colonial government for a publication speaking out against colonialism. Although he was convicted, he was out of the country at the time, representing UNIP in Tunis at the All African People's Congress; he was able to take refuge in England until the charges were dropped over a year later.

In those days, Yolanta was busy being a home-maker and a mother, but she did manage to attend some of the Women's Brigade meetings. She would often host meetings and guests in the

village. Most of the meetings happened in the larger towns and cities, but Yolanta was living in the village, so she was unable to attend very often. Transport to and from the village was difficult for the people holding the meetings, and Yolanta's young twins kept her from travelling much. Unlike some of the women involved, Yolanta was not outwardly political. She largely kept out of public life and saw her role as within the home.

Finally, in January of 1964, Zambia gained its Independence, and Mainza Chona was appointed Minister of Justice. Yolanta and the five children moved to Lusaka to be with him. In March of that year, Yolanta gave birth to Josephine Chimunya Chona, in what she describes as a very easy delivery: she was admitted and discharged on the same day. Two weeks later, Mainza sent Yolanta, with Josephine, to London, England, where she studied English for three months. He wanted her to have the same experience he had had, being able to travel and live abroad. She enjoyed her stay there.

Later that year, Mainza was appointed Minister of Home Affairs, and they remained in Lusaka. Once school commenced for the year, Mona was sent to Chivuna in Southern Province and eventually Chikuni; Thomas went to school in Kasiya, Southern Province; Elizabeth and the twin, Yuka, went to Chivuna, and Kaoli remained in Lusaka to attend Roma Girls Secondary School, since she was relying on her twin too much and was not engaging socially very well on her own. It was very important to Mainza and Yolanta that their children – even the girls – receive good education. Yolanta wanted them to have opportunities, to be able to choose their own course and succeed in life, so that when she and Mainza grew old, they would be able to look after them. In 1965, Yolanta delivered Patrick Mutinta Chona, called Tinta. (Mutinta is a name that can be given to either a boy or a girl child, meaning that they came after two or three siblings of the opposite sex: in this case, Tinta was born after Josephine, who followed the twins, leaving three girls between himself and his brother Thomas.) *“No problem to Jo and no problem to Tinta...I gave birth to them in the morning, the afternoon I am out. The two of them. From there...God helped me. I don't know how. Otherwise, that was my life and...I had Tinta...two boys. I wanted to have actually more boys than girls. Because before...our parents they*

were telling us that if you have got more...boys, then you are protected. If you haven't got ...boys, then you are in trouble. If something happens, nobody can rescue you...my mother, before she died, she really cried for it...for not having a son...I have just left you without a brother...so...it really...she didn't like it. She wanted to have one...at least one boy. But she didn't have. We were all...girls. Yeah two boys.” Her two sons look after her, just as her mother hoped they would. “Very well thank you! They are really doing the job well done, I can say. Well done. So otherwise, God has helped me...to have two boys and five girls. And I managed and I was praying to God that these children ...the seven children of mine, God should guide me what to do...and I must make sure that ...to help their father, I must prepare to help him. Not to do anything at all, not to be excessive, to be beautiful, putting things...I was preparing that my children go to school...to finish at least grade twelve. I was praying for that. When Tinta completed, I was very happy. I was really happy that all of them had completed grade twelve. I felt so good I have done what I wanted. Otherwise there I am. All my children, they are really...they have got their own job.”

Over the years, Mainza held many Ministerial positions in Zambia, including Minister of Presidential Affairs, Minister of Central Province, and Minister of Legal Affairs. In 1969, Kaunda appointed Mainza the Zambian Ambassador to the United States of America. The family moved to Washington, D.C. with Mainza, where all of the children attended school except for Thomas, who was sent to a boarding school in Boston, Massachusetts. Mainza's assignment as Ambassador only lasted nine months, but since Elizabeth did not like living in the United States, for being teased and bullied about her accent at school, she returned to Zambia earlier than the rest of the family, and went to school at Chivuna. Yolanta enjoyed living in Washington, D.C., recalling that transportation was easier than in Zambia, and it was a really nice place.

During Mainza's career as a minister and a diplomat, Yolanta was viewed as a mother of the nation, who supported her husband in his position. As part of a very intentional curriculum on behalf of the mission education she received, she was groomed to be a Western-style housewife, looking after

the home and the children as European and American women did. Maria Mies (1986) discusses the process of “housewifization”, which I expanded upon previously, and to which I will return again later. Rather than have a powerful political career herself, she was expected to fill the role of wife and supporter, and she did that very well.

Upon returning to Zambia, Yolanta took courses to be a typist, as that was something she wanted to do at one point, and she worked as a receptionist at a local freight company, as well as in a German company. During that time, Mainza worked as the Vice President of Zambia under President Kaunda. She stopped working when he became Prime Minister in 1973. He held that office from 1973 until 1975, and again from 1977 until 1978, serving as the Minister of Legal Affairs and Attorney General in the interim. After 1978, Mainza backed off from government work, and served as the Secretary General for UNIP until 1981.

In 1982, Mainza's younger sister Lucy died while giving birth to a son, who was named Luciano. A relative took small Luciano in, but Mainza asked if he could raise his nephew. A short while later, Yuka gave birth to a son, Puncharello Mulenga Chama. However, since she was too young to look after him, Yolanta and Mainza took him in as well. So in addition to their own seven children, they raised their nephew and grandson as their own.

In 1984, Kaunda appointed Mainza to be his Ambassador to China, so Yolanta, Josephine and Tinta, and the two young boys, Luciano and Puncharello, went and lived with him in Beijing until 1989. Yolanta enjoyed living in China, and even picked up some of the language, as they were there for five years. She could even go out and do the shopping by herself. She recalls that the people were very friendly. After returning from China in 1989, they went to France, this time without Tinta, where Mainza was the Ambassador yet again. This assignment lasted until 1992, so despite finding it a nice place, Yolanta had less of an opportunity to learn the language.

Because of Mainza's career, Yolanta has visited nearly thirty countries: of course Zambia, the United Kingdom (where she met the Queen), the United States, China, and France, where she spent

time living; but also Ethiopia (where she met Haile Selassie), Zimbabwe, Botswana, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, the Congo, South Africa (she knew Nelson and Winnie Mandela), Burundi, Egypt, Algeria, India, Yugoslavia, Romania, Portugal (where she met the Pope), Germany (East and West, after the Cold War), Italy and Vatican City, Vietnam, North Korea, Hong Kong, Argentina, Canada, and Australia.

After returning from Paris, Mainza set up a law office in Lusaka; he spent the rest of his career working there and serving as a UNIP Member until he passed away in 2001. The hardest thing Yolanta ever went through was the passing of her husband. She had lost three of her sisters already, and recalls that those were difficult to get through, but Mainza's death was the biggest struggle for her.

Mainza had been sick with prostate cancer and the two had travelled to South Africa for him to be hospitalized. *"He died in South Africa. I was alone. It was very hard. It was very hard because I didn't expect it. I didn't expect it...because when I left him to go where I was staying, we talked nicely and...he didn't show me that he was going to go...So I left him nicely and ...as he said, 'no, tomorrow because I am going for the operation', so they could insert some of the things...but ...it was very hard for me. Where I was staying it was just like...far...so in the morning I got up and start going...one of the taxi men was taking me there. So when I arrive there, they told me, 'no, he is still in the [operation] theatre'. I waited and waited...when I asked they said, 'no he's still in the theatre'. But I'm sure...because he died on the bed...after operation. He never recovered. So they...did put him in the room...the waiting room so that he could recover but he didn't. So I waited and waited and waited but...I asked but he didn't come out. Maybe I don't know...maybe they were afraid of the reaction...what I was going to...so later, I had to ask again but they keep on promising me to say, 'no, he hasn't'. Until I heard the voice of a doctor...his doctor...saying, 'no just tell her'...yeah...but they were coming towards....so when the doctor came, he sat with me... I could see that something has happened because he sat with me, holding my hand, again telling me that...'I'm very sorry that your husband...couldn't...he is no more'. And so...I said, 'now I'm alone doctor, what do I do?'. I said,*

'who? There is nobody'...so I was staying in the hotel...when one gentleman who was looking after us, when he heard the news and he came...so...I told him and the doctor...he kept...on comforting me and so forth...I was crying and what do I do now? I'm alone here. He told one of the nurses to come and sit with me and then they brought in the body. Nothing to do. And then the man who was looking after us he came...he said, 'after now...we want to take the body and put it in the mortuary'. So they phoned Mr. [Mark] Chona...I phoned Jo...so...the man...who was looking after us...he said, 'now,...let's go to the hotel' and then after we go to...his house. So...because our tradition...it's very difficult. If you are not related, you can not go...meanwhile the husband has died...it is a bad thing to go to someone's house. So I insisted, I said, 'no you leave me in the hotel. I'll be there'...he said, 'no, we can not let you be yourself in the hotel alone' and he started packing my things. So he took me to his house...from there...I think the following day, Mark came. He was looking after us...very good man. And we were staying there before they arranged it. We were staying at his house. And then Kaunda came. Kaunda came then after that, we had Mass for him...because he was being visited by the priest. The priest came. And he told me...'we'll have Mass tomorrow in the morning before the body is taken'. So we had Mass there, with other Zambians...and one of...my friends – the father was a vice-president to begin with since Independence – the daughter...Mr. Kamanga's daughter...because she was in South Africa...she came so we could be together with that girl until I went to the airport with her until we...left. We left with Dr. Kaunda. He accompanied me from South Africa to here, Zambia. So we found many, many, many, many, people...many many people – I think I have never seen such a crowd – at the airport. And at the house also. There were so many people then after...I think after...two days...then they arranged the Mass...at...where we were going to church at Roma...Elizabeth was not there...Tom was not there...Elizabeth was in Nigeria. She found me at the church...then after the Mass, we left for the village. And even there, there were so many, so many people. And Dr. Kaunda was there and the late Mwanawasa was there...those were the prominent...some of the ministers and friends...he was buried there near the father. He didn't want...he wrote, 'if I die, I don't want to be to the royal

family's'...he wanted to be with the local people. But ...Mark said, 'no, it cannot happen'. Then he was buried there with his father, the mother..”

The Difference Education Makes

Contrasting the life that Yolanta has lived is the life of her sister, Maria Himala. Although they grew up so closely together, their lives took very different trajectories. Rather than being pursuing higher education, Himala left home after finishing only Standard Two to find work in Mujika. She speaks very little English. Not long after, she got married to a first cousin, Andrew Cheepa Hamanenga, there. The father of the groom was not only a Headman in Mujika, but also the brother of Yolanta and Himala's mother, Chiile. The marriage was arranged by the parents of the bride and groom, so instead of Cheepa proposing to Himala, it was decided for them. At the time, Himala did not object. Elizabeth Colson – *Kamwale* – planned the wedding. Colson had been staying in Mujika at that time, and knew Himala's husband's family well.

After some time, they began fighting and it became a very toxic relationship. Himala bore eight children, but only six lived through infancy. After her firstborn, she had a girl and a boy who died while still nursing; then she bore twin boys, then two successive daughters, and another son who has now passed, but left behind children of his own. After moving away from Mujika to Mumbwa, Cheepa took two more wives. When the second wife got sick, she went back to her family to be cared for.

Cheepa became an alcoholic and was a very violent and angry man. On several occasions he beat Himala and their children, threatening to kill her. On one occasion, she was out working in the field when he found her and the children. He sent the children home, and forced Himala to climb a tree so he could kill her there. Luckily, a man was riding by on his bicycle, so Himala called out to him, and his presence there prevented Cheepa from killing her that day.

Finally, when Yolanta and Mainza were in the village for a funeral, Yolanta decided enough was enough. She had seen the way Cheepa had treated her sister for so many years and decided it needed to stop. So during the funeral, she announced that Himala would be leaving Cheepa and would come and

stay with her. Of course the community members were not happy to hear that Himala was leaving her husband, but Yolanta sternly put her foot down and said it would be better for them to kill her than make Himala stay. She said it is as though she is now the father: she is in charge and able to make such a decision. She knew that Himala would not live much longer if she had to be with that man. Her children had not even received any education. Something needed to be done. Fortunately, Mainza supported Yolanta on this. So they took Himala with them when they left. They put her in a house they had bought in Mazabuka (in Southern Province, just north of Monze). She was responsible to fetch her own water and look after herself there, but they knew she was better off.

Her children were scattered amongst various relatives. For a time, Yolanta and Mainza had looked after Paulette, the younger daughter. In fact, Paulette was a grown woman by the time she found out who her real mother was, as so many people had cared for her and her siblings, and Himala had not really been one of them. In later years, Yolanta retrieved Himala from that house in Mazabuka (where Paulette and her family now live), and Himala has since lived with Yolanta.

The disparity of experiences between the two daughters, who grew up so closely together, is vast. Yolanta was able to finish Secondary School and choose her own husband; Himala was not so fortunate. The trajectories their lives took went in such opposite directions, and yet now they can be found living in the same house again. Despite their age difference being only two years, you can see the toll that all the hardship has taken on Himala's face. She is kind and gentle; she keeps very quiet. She loves to laugh, but has had a lot of sadness in her life. She enjoys reading, but does not know much English. Life was not good to Himala, except where Yolanta could help.

Making meaning of Yolanta's Philosophy

For Yolanta, the need for Independence was simple: as long as her father was farming someone else's land, they would never be free. *“By that time life was very hard. Very very hard.”* The land he worked was owned by a white man, and he worked for that man. Now because of Independence, she owns her farm and has the papers to prove it. She is very proud of this. Although the Tonga did not

traditionally own land individually, and this was not a virtue to them, land ownership is now important. Yolanta values the fact that she owns the land on which she lives. Now in Lusaka, her farm is not even on traditional Tonga land, but it is hers, and that possibility is a result of the work of Independence.

While she does not speak in political terms, or push any political agenda, she believes that her people needed to be freed from colonialism. Her role was to support her husband through his work and raise the children. Mies explains, "...that colonization did not affect men and women in the same way, but used the particular capitalist sexual division of labour to bring the labour power of Africans under the command of capital and the White Man" (Mies, 1986:97). In the same way, de-colonization affected men and women in different ways. While Yolanta tried to perpetuate or mimic the work of her mother, through village life, she inevitably became the housewife within the nuclear family that was the product of colonization in Zambia (Mies, 1986:97). Mies states that, "...the proletarian women cannot fight against men, as bourgeois feminists might do, but must fight against the capitalist class together with men; ...This process of creating the bourgeois nuclear family in the working class and of the housewifization of proletarian women...can be traced in all industrialized and 'civilized' countries" (Mies, 1986:108-9). Yolanta's life demonstrates that this was also part of the process in British colonies like Zambia. As Mies argues housewifization and colonization are two "closely and causally interlinked" processes. Yolanta's life bears this out. While her mother was a subsistence producer on the farm, Yolanta filled the role of the Western housewife in the nuclear family and later on once her husband died, she returned to the practice of subsistence production in the later period of her life. She learned the role of the housewife at school and is groomed for it by the curriculum she is exposed to there. This curriculum is clearly very different from the one which her husband would have experienced. Her choices are a result of the colonization of her people and the educational system that it introduced that brought her to that point.

Likewise, women did not benefit from Independence in the same ways as men, as I touched upon earlier. A close reading of the differences between the lives of Yolanta and Himala makes it clear

that only certain women enjoy an improved quality of life – at least within their generation – and that is largely a result of how they positioned themselves in relation to men. Had Mainza married Himala, things would have been very different for all of them indeed, especially due to Himala's lack of proficiency in English. Yolanta's education alone was not enough to maintain her status as an elite through the anti-colonial process, but rather it was her marriage to Mainza that afforded her the relative affluence and privilege she has enjoyed throughout her adulthood. I argued previously that her education led to her marriage, but in itself was not enough, for she did not use her education as a stepping stone to a career outside the home, as her daughter Elizabeth – a widowed Supreme Court Judge, raising four children – did. Independence largely benefited men, as even to this day, access to education for girls is a struggle. While some strides have been made (for example, that women can now own property), women such as Himala, who received very little formal education, continue to remain oppressed by the current systems of capitalism and imperialism. Himala's marriage did not advance her social position, and she was not able to do so on her own, for lack of education.

Yet even as some women were active in the anti-colonial movement, there is a discrepancy in the accessibility to and promulgation of the existing literature on women in Zambia's Independence movement. Very little has been written about how women engaged, and to what end. Women such as Winnie Mandela and Sally Hayfron (the wife of Robert Mugabe), even Betty Kaunda, were very much a part of the public sphere, but Yolanta was a quiet supporter of her husband and his career.

She does speak to the importance of unity, across races and difference. She believes that people should be able to be together, just as she and Elizabeth Colson can sit together and enjoy friendship. Colonialism stood in the way of such unity. Just as life was very difficult through the struggle, she knew that her husband and his colleagues were working hard to provide a better future for the people.

Yolanta believes that Father Moreau and the others at Chikuni did very good work for the Tonga people. She values education – as demonstrated by her wish to see all of her children complete secondary school – and knows that it made a hugely positive impact on her own life. (It should be

noted that her children went much further than secondary school: Mona and Yuka both work in London, England; Elizabeth is a Supreme Court Judge in Lusaka; Thomas holds a degree in photovoltaics; Kaoli works for the Zambian government in Luapula Province; Josephine works for the United Nations in Paris, France; and Tinta works in advertising in Lusaka.) They are all quite Westernized – they have negotiated their own cultural hybridity, especially after having lived abroad and been exposed to such cultures as American, Chinese, and French. They do not remember the colonial days, but they have incorporated some of the Tonga customs which their parents passed on to them (such as language and songs) into their own hybridized identities.

Moreover, she believes that Christianity allowed a better life for herself and her family. She is hardly outspoken about her theology, but her lifestyle speaks where her words do not. Every day she prays and thanks God for her family, for the food that she eats, and the life He has given her. She attributes this faith and understanding to her experience at Chikuni Mission.

From my interviews and time spent with her, it has become clear that the thing she values most (after family) is hard work. She says this is an ethic which was instilled in her by her parents, as village life is very hard. If a person does not work, she does not eat, quite simply because she has not made food for herself. When I asked what motivated her to get through the hard times, she answered, *“By working...You keep on...you don't stop, you keep on trying. You keep on trying to get what you want. So otherwise it was really, really hard. It was very hard.”* Even while going through such tough times as her husband being away, travelling for his own work, raising all those children, and then surviving him, the thing that has kept her going is work.

Even now, at the age of seventy-eight, she can be found working in her fields, growing her vegetables. Her farm is reminiscent of Tonga homesteads, as she has her house, and her daughters Elizabeth and Josephine have also built houses on the land. She built her house with her own hands, and helped dig the foundation herself. Her aim is for their farm to be as self-sufficient as possible, growing as much of their own food as they can so not to have to buy it in town. She is always busy

doing something, whether it be weeding and hoeing, or taking the maize off the cobs, or weaving mats inside the house. She does not like to sit idly. I could tell, even as I borrowed her mornings for interviewing, she was anxious to get out into her fields. This could be interpreted as resistance to capitalist modes of production: after living all over the world, her choice is to live in a similar way to her village upbringing in a communal, subsistence homestead.

Prayer also sustained her and got her through. She believes that God will speak to her through the Holy Spirit and encourage her to do good things. It was important to her to be a good parent and look after her children, despite how hard life could be. After the birth of her first, Mona, even though times were hard, she knew she had to look after that child herself so she would strap the baby on her back and do her work, lest someone take the child away. *“When I had Mona, I could not...give someone....always I felt...I have to have my baby...I...really...wanted to...my baby,...to be together, not to... give it to someone...no...I had to put it at the back and go and work. Draw water, firewood.”*

Having her children depending on her pushed her to work hard and do her best.

When I asked what kind of legacy she would like to leave her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, she said it should be that they should work hard. When her husband died, she thought to herself that she should just keep working – every day, to look after herself, and of course, her sister, Himala.

Recently, Yolanta was presented with a medal of honour, as a National Freedom Fighter in a ceremony held by current President Michael Sata. Some of the other women who worked in the struggle were also honoured, and former President Kenneth Kaunda attended the ceremony. Despite being given a national honour, Yolanta remains so humble and does not brag. Sometimes she will jest, *“I am the daughter of a village Headman!”* when she is not given her way at home, but she never asserts with any degree of seriousness that she is of any political importance. On one occasion, I overheard her frustrations with some electricians who had come to do some work on the house but handled the situation badly; she said, *“We did not fight for Independence so these men could be so*

foolish”. I read this as pride in a job well done: she remembers the work that Mainza and their peers put into attaining national freedom, and she was angry that some of the younger generation might not appreciate what they had done. Despite valuing humility, I believe that achieving Independence – as problematic as some postcolonial times may have been – is something of which she is proud.

Yolanta's life has been a constant negotiation of maintaining tradition modes and accommodating modern elements. I would argue that as much as colonialism changed many facets of Tonga life, Yolanta has been able to keep hold of some knowledges and practices. She took advantage of the education which was made available to her, which opened up avenues of privilege and allowed her exposure to alternative lifestyles and knowledges. By utilizing Western education and Christianity, which were brought to the Tonga by Europeans, and the work ethic which was instilled in her by her parents and community, she has managed to adapt and thrive in the midst of all of the changes in her life: in childrearing and familial deaths, in relocating both locally and globally, and in seeing her nation's birth first-hand, she has been able to make sense of her experiences with these tools.



Figure 5: The Chona Homestead in Chona Village. Photo Credit: Diane Whitelaw



**Figure 6: Yolanta in front of her house in Chona Village, May 2013.
Photo Credit: Diane Whitelaw**



**Figure 7: Yolanta and Diane decobbing maize at the farm in Lusaka East, July 2013.
Photo Credit: Gloria Milimo. Used with Permission.**



Figure 8: Yolanta's Medal of Honour. Photo Credit: Diane Whitelaw



Figure 9: Diane and Yolanta, July 2014. Photo Credit: Gloria Milimo. Used with Permission.

Conclusion

By looking at the theoretical discussions surrounding colonization and education, hybridity, anti-colonial resistance as they relate to the Northern Rhodesian/Zambian situation, as well as life history writing as a methodology, I have engaged with the tools necessary to document the life of Yolanta Chona. I have also provided a historical framework onto which I was able to tell Yolanta's story – using largely her own words – in an effort to uncover what challenges a woman in her setting may have faced. I have done my best to argue that Yolanta Chona constantly negotiated meaning by selecting and mixing elements of the colonial context and elements of Tonga education in a very intentional way, in order to make meaning of the changes she encountered within her lifetime in Zambia.

I have demonstrated that the education to which Yolanta had access was not common, but rather a privilege that was not afforded to all of her peers, including her own sister. The education she received through the mission school was a highly gendered one. Through no striving of her own, she benefited from attending a mission school, and received the currency of education and knowledge which, I would argue, were critical factors that led to her marriage to Mainza Chona. A man with ambition, purpose, and drive, Mainza knew he needed a strong and educated woman by his side, and that Yolanta had attended the same school as he put her in his sights as an optimal candidate for marriage and the life he foresaw he'd live.

I have argued that Christianity and in particular mission education was also a tool that was critically utilized by the Zambian elite as they struggled their way to Independence. This mission education offered her both the means to upward social mobility that led to her marriage, but it also taught her skills in home economics. In Yolanta's own life, Christianity helped her through difficult circumstances; the Christian community to which she belonged provided support in material ways as well as spiritual ones. Her faith helps her make sense of the changes in her life, and helps her to persevere, especially after suffering the loss of her husband. In the midst of her negotiations of cultural

hybridity, Christianity, in addition to education, is among the assets which she passed down to her children, and many of them have taken it and made it their own. She believes their lives are better for it.

Yolanta was not on the front lines of the anti-colonial struggle like the women who demonstrated bare breasted in front of the British envoy. Her role was largely to be a mother to the nation, standing by the political figure for the public eye to see. I have also argued that Yolanta's work ethic has allowed her to adapt to the changes in the world around her, as she did her best to support her husband and family through both subsistence agriculture and work outside of the home. In her old age now she still tends to her farm. Work has given her purpose and meaning as widow: as the seasons come and go, she has reason to carry on and be productive.

I have learned a great deal about how to write the life of a woman who is in many ways different from me. First, I found I needed to find a point of connection with Yolanta. Because we come from different cultural backgrounds, and are very different in age (she is roughly fifty years my senior), it could not be assumed that we have much in common. Yet I found it necessary to be able to relate to one another on some level. It was important that we see eye-to-eye in some way. I believe that being introduced to Yolanta as a friend by her son allowed her to be open towards me. Her son's endorsement of me – and his encouragement for her to participate in this project to begin with – created a trust for me on her part from which this study certainly benefited.

Secondarily, I found it important to be familiar with the historical context and background from which Yolanta emerged. Having a firm grasp on the history of colonialism in Northern Rhodesia, the anti-colonial struggle, and the postcolonial situation of Zambia was crucial to my ability to locate her story's significance within its setting. My success in approaching the interviews relied on all of the reading and coursework I had already undergone. Attaining helpful and informative answers depends on asking the right questions: historical context allowed me to know which questions to ask. This was especially clear in my second visit, as my questions were that much more honed and intentional.

Thirdly, I learned that in the process of interviewing, it was so important to ask open-ended questions and allow Yolanta to answer them in her own way. Avoiding questions that seek to elicit a certain response, I had to let the conversation take its own path. That meant sometimes diverting from my intended line of questioning to allow Yolanta to tell me what she felt was important that I know. Sometimes the answer I received was not the answer I expected; rather, it often taught me more than I was expecting to learn. Once I figured this out, I let Yolanta lead the way because the answers to my questions weren't always as important as what she felt I needed to hear.

Lastly, I worked hard to cultivate my relationship with Yolanta. Her ability to trust me was and is paramount to her answering my questions. By the end of my first visit to Zambia, we had become friends, and our interviews were more like conversations wherein she imparted her wisdom and experiences to me. In my second visit, we had one conversation in which we both got emotional, talking about the struggles in our lives, and it was clear to me that she trusted me as a friend. As she is an elderly woman now, I think she has a certain perspective on life – retrospect – that allows her to talk about such things in a particularly meaningful way, and I am grateful that she would share her thoughts with me.

I believe that in the time I spent with Yolanta, her retrospection has been a site for meaning making and understanding both her own story and mine and as she told me her story – even as she decided what to share and what to withhold – she made meaning out of her experiences. It is significant that after travelling around the world and being exposed to various cultures, the life she has chosen for herself since her husband's death is much like that of her mother: she has returned to the subsistence farming that she learned as a child and grew to love. After playing the housewife – a role she was taught at school – she has come back to what she learned in her home. She has incorporated things such as running water and electricity, but lives very similarly to the life she described to me as difficult. There were probably anecdotes or events she hadn't given any thought to in years, but my questions required her to conjure up those memories and re-live them with a new perspective. Just as

the process of cultural hybridity negotiations is on-going and never static, her relationship to her own experiences morphs and changes over time. As her life spans the colonial, anti-and postcolonial eras of Zambian history, she has travelled the world, and her relationships have come and gone, she has been able to make meaning and understand the gravity of her experiences through the lenses of the formal and informal education she received, Christianity, and a strong work ethic.



**Figure 10: Himala sitting in front of Yolanta's Lusaka House, July 2013.
Photo Credit: Diane Whitelaw**

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