

# Ngugi's Depiction of Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism as an Intrusion in the Amelioration of the Third World Nations.

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## Abstract

The nations that were once under the grip of colonial power remains under the control of the Western countries in one way or the other even after the independence, and so they continue to be a under developed or developing country. The nations that are still not developed after the independence from the colonial regime are regarded as "Third World Nations". The colonizers in the name of colonialism and neo-colonialism repetitively targeted the Third World Nations. The westerners looted the resource of the colonies unceasingly even after the independence. The so-called third world countries, which possess the wealth and resources to support the seventy-five percentage of the world population ironically, could consume only twenty percentages of its own reserves remaining as one of the 'Poor' Third World Nations. Besides all these complications and strivings, Africa strains to enhance itself from the present position of Third World Country. This paper focuses on the brutal capitalistic government formed during colonisation and neo-colonisation that changed the life of the Third World Nation, 'Kenya' as portrayed by Ngugi wa Thiong'o in his novels.

**Key Words: Third World Nations, Kenya, Colonialism, Neo-Colonialism, Capitalistic Government.**

## Introduction

Literature aftermath the colonialism constantly depicted the suffering tales of "third-world nations" during colonialism- the lost identity, culture and traditional values of those nations and their shattered dreams masked under the veil of Western authority that uninterruptedly continued even after the independence in the name of financial aid and social security. The Westerners have assessed "Third World Nations" especially Africans as inferior to them and judged them to be capable of nothing. To the contrary, of Westerner's depiction about Africans, African Literature is rich in its culture, tradition and variedness. Either the Europeans failed to assess it or they do not have the mind-set to accept the equines of Africans to them in terms of creative productions. The common characteristic features of the postcolonial era that disrupted the peaceful life of the people in the colonies are unequal allocation of the land, newly formed government's structure and non-democratic nature of the government. These features of the post-colonial era are the remnants of the colonial rule in the colonies.

## Neo-Colonial Rule in the Third World Nations

The causes for these dilemmas should be analysed with reference to the Westerner's colonial policy. The newly formed government lacked governance skill and experience and it acted accordingly to the instructions of their western masters. It prompted tribal rivalry, discrimination among their own people and violation of the human rights. The features like unequal allocation of the land by the newly formed government, non-democratic nature of the government, discrimination and rivalry among their own people that prevailed during the post-colonial era stalled the development of the country. The nations that were once under the grip of colonial power remains under the control of the Western countries in one way or the other even after the independence, and so they continue to be a under developed or developing country. The nations that are still not developed after the independence from the

colonial regime are regarded as “Third World Nations”. The westerners looted the resource of the colonies unceasingly even after the independence. The so-called third world countries, which possess the wealth and resources to support the seventy-five percentage of the world population ironically, could consume only twenty percentages of its own reserves remaining as one of the ‘Poor’ Third World Nation. Besides all these complications and strivings, Africa strains to enhance itself from the present position of Third World Country. Kenya is one among the African nations, which is very rich in its resource and glorious past but remain a least developing nation where ninety percentage of the people lives under the poverty line. Despite of being the possessor of such a rich variety of resources and being a leading exporter to the First and Second World Nation, Kenya struggles highest rate of poverty. The famous African Writer Chinua Achebe states the state of neo-colonial African countries as “Europe had only made a tactical withdrawal on the political front and while we sang our anthem and unfurled our flag, she was securing her iron grip in the economic field” (Vinson 18).

### Novels of Ngugi wa Thiong’o

The novels of the writers like Ngugi wa Thiong’o gives the detailed account of the struggle of Kenya people during colonial period and these novel proudly remembers the warriors, who lost their life for the freedom of Kenya. The writers of East Africa had shown their extraordinary ability in presenting their novels. Some of the writers had presented their novels in a way to remember and glorify their country’s adored past. Ngugi wa Thiong’o is regarded as the Chronicler of East Africa who presented the memories of the past and also urged the people to fight against oppression, and subjugation by European colonial power. Ngugi wa Thiong’o is a socio political writer whose main concern is to present the true history of Kenya through his novels and their glorious struggle against the British Power.

The domineering and authoritative control over the non-western countries by the western countries to annex the wealth and labour of the non-western countries to foster their country’s capital is the crucial principle of colonialism. Colonialism in other words, seized the identity of the native people and made them feel outlandish in their own country. On the other hand, the nations that were not developed after the independence from the colonial regime are regarded as “Third World Nations”. This state of neo-colonial era was clearly explained by Kwame Nkurmah who coined the term ‘Neo-Colonialism’. The words of Kwame Nkurmah on neo-colonial state of the colonies was quoted by Monika Sethi in her article *In Pursuit of Uhuru: Ngugi’s Matigari* as

The neo-colonialism of today represents imperialism in its final and perhaps its most dangerous stage... in place of colonialism as the main instrument of imperialism we have neo-colonialism. In the neo-colonial stage, the imperial powers control the newly independent countries of the third world through a multiplicity of military and political but mostly economic strategies which include: .. “continuing economic dependence on the colonial economic blocks; economic infiltration through capital investments, loans, and, unequal concessions and finances directly controlled by colonial powers (5-6).

### Ngugi’s depiction of Brutal Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism

African writers like Ngugi, expressed the depressed state of the colonised people by the forced labour on them and the alienation created by the depressive state of the people within their own family. In Ngugi’s *Weep Not Child*, the conversation between Kamau and Njoroge voiced the alienation that had drawn upon the family by the interruption of Colonisation.

“Do you see those distant lights?” . . . . Njoroge peered through the darkness and looked beyond. Far away a multitude of lights could be seen. Above the host of lights was the grey haze of the sky. Njoroge let his eyes dwell on the scene. Nairobi, the big city, was a place of mystery that had at last called away his brothers from the family circle. The attraction of this strange city that was near and yet far weakened him. He sighed. He could not yet understand why his brothers had just decided to go. Like that (WNC 44).

Kamau and Njoroge's conversation expressed the voice of Ngugi who conveyed the reality of the family in the colonised nations that had been estranged by the strangeness of western influences. Ngugi wa Thiong'o has communicated the effects of colonialism on the family in the colonised nations. During the Colonial era, Europeans used the natives as their tool to achieve their goal. Europeans' favour towards a particular tribe or a particular person created conflict between themselves.

In his later novels, Ngugi has fearlessly mentioned the African leaders who after the freedom of Kenya have submitted to the whims and fancies of Europeans for the benefit of themselves. Kanaventi Dominic commented that

...Ngugi manages to expose the corruption of contemporary Africa, the encroachment of African authoritarianism and dictatorship; the cruelty and brutality of the once loved-everybody African leaders, and how western aid is abused to prop up the worse dictatorships to survive with their brutality in Africa. In fact it exhibits the irony of how the west appears not to see or notice the corruption, while the people watch hopelessly as their corrupt leaders are wined and dined by western powers... The story is an expose of the writer than white African dictators who betray the cause of the war against white colonialism, who betray the spirit of African nationalism, who will never agree to relinquish power on they have tasted the splendour of presidential places, the honey and the caviar, while their people's children's peel off through starvation and kwashiorkor.... (1).

Ngugi in *Weep Not Child* vividly represented the woeful situation of the people who lost land and were made to work as labourers in their own land during the imperialistic era. The natives were forcefully removed out of their lands. Mau Mau became more popular as they fought for the country's freedom sacrificing their life and comfort, more and more people joined Mau Mau by the utter frustration created by the Europeans who treated the natives as slave animals and plundered all their wealth.

Conditions went from bad to worse. No one could tell when he might be arrested for breaking the curfew. You could not even move across the courtyard at night.... It was said that some European soldiers were catching people at night, and having taken them to the forest would release them and ask them to find their way back home. But when their backs were turned they would be shot dead in cold blood. The next day this would be announced as a victory over Mau Mau (WNC 93).

These words of Ngugi picture the cruelties of Europeans who not only robbed the hard work and the belongings of the natives but also pilfered the basic rights of the natives as a human being. Ngugi's novels *The River Between* and *A Grain of Wheat* also express the malicious nature of Colonizers who used the labour power of the natives for their own benefit and the wickedness of Europeans who killed number of innocent native peoples in the name of terrorism.

One of the major wicked tactics followed by the Europeans was to weaken the native resources and companies that provide economic support to the native country to make the colonies dependent on them financially. This motive of Europeans and their true nature was characterized by Ngugi in his later novels *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Wizard of the Crow*. In *Petals of Blood* Ngugi explains how the Europeans had used the native leaders as tool to make the people surrender them for economic and security expenses. The local power mongers who cared only for their own profit exported the primary and raw materials to western countries. Number of scholars like Kant, Smith and Diderot is against the barbarity of the colonialism. They questioned the ideology of European nations' 'duty' to civilize other nations. They opposed the view that the natives benefited from the western nations colonialism. Ngugi wa Thiong'o uses this conception in his novels to question against the oppressive European nations. Ngugi through his characters represented that the westerners in the name of colonization have plundered the wealth and resources of the natives. Mostly all the works of Ngugi's characterize the cruelty of the westerners. Ngugi's works *Weep Not Child*, *The River Between*, *Matigari*, *Devil on the Cross*, and *Wizard of the Crow* represented the plundering of the wealth and labour power of the people by the colonizers. In *Matigari*, Williams was characterised as the Westerner who loots the wealth of the native and makes them his slaves to work in their own home. Matigari built his home by his own hands but Settler Williams who do not have any possession over the house of Matigari, took over the possession of Matigari's home and makes Matigari his servant. He and his family were to work for Settler Williams and live outside. Settler Williams embody the entire colonial power that took over the wealth of the people, and reaped where they did not sow. In the name of development of the country and civilising the tribes, the Europeans and other colonial nations looted the wealth of the colonised countries and made their mother country to flourish.

The builder sleeps in the open,

The worker is left empty-handed,

The tailor goes naked,

And the tiller goes to sleep on an empty stomach? (Matigari 98).

These words of Matigari represent the reality of the neo-colonial state of Kenya. The reality of the post colonialism in the African country is exceedingly miserable. The European masters after independence had a grip on the colonised nations through the security and financial aid. They do have the local masters who were appointed by the westerners as their puppet leaders in the native country who worked for the profit of the westerners. They alleged the reality of the independence as the freedom of the colonised countries. Ngugi wa Thiong'o's novels vividly illustrates this alleged reality in the neo-colonial Kenya and its masked leaders. White people selected few of their loyalists and handed over the power to them while providing freedom to the colonies. These masked leaders remained loyal to their western masters and acted according to their commands without bearing in mind the welfare of their country. Ngugi has expressed this state of society in the neo-colonial period in his later novels like *Devil on the Cross*, *Matigari* and *Wizard of the Crow*. In *Wizard of the Crow*, the Ruler is represented as autocratic who characterize the leaders of the third world nations. The Leaders of the neo-colonial Kenya boasted themselves as the protector of peace among the people. The ministers too act accordingly to impress the ruler and acquire a powerful position to make themselves rich through bribing and corruption. In *Wizard of the Crow*, the Ruler appointed Titus Tajirika as the chairperson of the Marching to heaven project. Titus Tajirika considers it as an opportunity to enhance his wealth through corruption. He was overwhelmed with joy as he was to welcome the delegates of the World Bank who had come to enquire about the Marching to Heaven project for which the Ministers of Aburiria had applied for loan in the World Bank. The ministers and the Businessmen like Tajirika were joyful for the Project of Marching to Heaven as it will help them in multiplying their mammon capital through contracts that yield them bribes. On the other hand, another group of the people who too were happy because of the arrival of delegates from the World Bank are the beggars. They gathered in front of the hotel in which the meeting between the delegates and ministers is to happen. Ngugi sarcastically states this difference through his work to make the people understand the reality of the neo-colonial government that aids the capitalists to grow richer and makes the poor, poorer.

There were always beggars loitering around those kinds of hotels at all hours of day and night. But that night they were there in unusually large numbers, looking for all the world to see like wretchedness itself. The blind seemed blinder than usual, the hunchbacked hunched lower, and those missing legs or hands acted as if deprived of other limbs. The way they carried themselves was as if they thought the Global Bank had come to appreciate and even honour their plight (WOC 73-4).

Through his writings, Ngugi has clearly depicted that the primary reason behind the hindrances in the progress of the third world nations' is the Westerner's Colonialism and Capitalistic centered Neo-colonialism run by the people who were loyal to their western masters. Ngugi have also urged the people to revolt and resist the capitalist centered government through his novels.

## Abbreviations

**WNC** - Weep Not Child

**WOC** - Wizard of the Crow

**TRB** - The River Between

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