



DISCUSSION ON COLONIALISM AND INDEPENDENCE OF KENYA IN NGUGI WA THIONG'O'S *A GRAIN OF WHEAT*

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Abstract

"Colonialism is not a thing of the past, it is the current economic reality" said **Celine Semaan**. Colonialism is ultimately an immoral and oppressive practice. British Colonialism affected Kenya politically, socially and economically. Kenya experienced changes after being colonized by Europeans. The British colonists and the Kenyan freedom fighters opposing futures for Kenya. The Mau Mau fighters from Thabai seek to push "the whiteman " completely out of Kenya. Both the colonizer and colonized worked for their own country. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, himself a native Kenyan talks about his own country's struggle for freedom and Independence from Britain in his novel '*A Grain of Wheat*'. The whole novel takes place before and on the days of Uhuru. Kenyans against colonial rule in Kenya. On December 12, 1963, Kenya declared its independence from Britain. After their Independence

all the kenyans get their land back and can express their voice freely. Here I have discussed Colonialism and independence of Kenya in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat*.

Key words: colonialism, Mau Mau, independence, slavery, poverty

Colonialism is the act of one nation controlling another for economic gain. Britain's colonization in Kenya affected the country's religion and culture, education and government. By colonizing Kenya, the British seized their lands to trade the products made by British industries. Kenya had good lands for farming so the British wanted to take advantage of this. The Germans also colonized Kenya. European colonization in Kenya had a large impact on Africa's religion and culture. And also colonization in Kenya changed their clothing. The British saw colonizing Kenya as a way to get more power. Colonialism impacts include environmental degradation, the spread of disease, economic instability, ethnic rivalries, and human rights violations issues that affect one group's colonial rule.

Colonialism had many demerits. The economic condition of the people of colonies became very low when raw-materials are taken away from their countries to the mother country. The colonizers treated the colonized people as slaves and properties. Slaves can be bought, sold and traded. Africans were enslaved throughout the centuries. Colonization settles a group and takes political control over it. Kenya has kept the leading economic position in East African region. Poverty plays a major role in Kenya because of their economic condition and the main reason for poverty is colonization.

Postcolonialism is the critical study of the critical legacy of colonialism and imperialism. It seeks to build a better understanding of colonial life. Postcolonialism examines the social and political power relationship that sustains colonialism and

neocolonialism including social, political and cultural narratives surrounding the colonizer and the colonized. Postcolonialism gives the idea about the colonizer's generation of cultural knowledge about the colonized people. As a literary theory, postcolonialism deals with the literatures produced by the peoples who once were colonized by the European imperial powers. *A Grain of Wheat* is a post colonial novel which narrates the incidents of the colonial period.

The present time of *A Grain of Wheat* is the four days leading up to Kenya's Independence from British colonial rule in December 1963. A grain of wheat, unable to hear an order to stop running. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o' first novel, *Weep Not, Child*, which is written from a child's perspective, ends with the beginning of the Mau Mau rebellion and the approach of the emergency. But for the rural community of Thabai, the time of rejoicing and optimism is also edged with suppressed anxieties and guilds. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o speaks with a clear political awareness of the context of Kenya's colonial history. Europeans settled in the central highlands, later to be called the White highlands to describe the racial dimension of settler activity. In *A Grain of Wheat* the emergency has been over for seven years.

The Mau Mau, officially known as the Kenyan land and freedom army. The Mau Mau rebels began to attack their political opponents. They often attacked other Africans for being loyal to the British or refusing to take the oath. For four years from 1952 to 1956, the Mau Mau fighters operated from the forest of Mount Kenya. Members of these groups would emerge triumphant in the post emergency period. The Mau Mau revolt was clearly instrumental in forcing the British government to undertake immediate political reforms.

The Mau Mau uprising, also known as the Mau Mau rebellion was a war between Kenya land and freedom army. In this novel there were some characters who had joined the Mau Mau and fought for their own country. One Of the characters was Kihika who joined the Mau Mau as a young man and he killed the cruel district officer Robson. Mugo is the protagonist and introverted villager of Thabai, who betrayed Kihika. Kihika was captured and hanged. There were other two Mau Mau fighters who believed that Karanja was the one who betrayed Kihika. Karanja was a also from Thabai but he did not join the freedom movement but he started to work for the whiteman. But other Mau Mau fighters worked hard and gave their lives to their own people.

The Mau Mau uprising had shaken the British colony. On December 12, 1963, Kenya declared its independence from Britain after the big struggle. The narrator delivers Kenya's independence in his novel A Grain of Wheat. The celebration of independence is called Uhuru day. The whole novel takes place before and on the days of Uhuru. The villagers from Thabai were eagerly waiting to celebrate Uhuru. The games and speeches delivered by the village elders. Though they got their independence the poverty level of Kenya has increased.

As a native Kenyan Ngugi Wa Thiong'o expresses their sufferings and also Independence of their own country. In this novel the Mau Mau fighters accept to give their lives for their own country. Their hard work and sacrifice and also unity is the reason for their independence. **"Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter"** said by Chinua Achebe. Colonization affected not only Kenya but also North America, Australia, India and Africa. Colonization did not end with Independence. In today's world we are facing caste, religion, richest and the poorest. How

the Mau Mau fighters struggle for their independence. We should also prevent these issues by unity.

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