



## A DISCUSSION OF PRE-COLONIAL LIFE AND COLONIALISM. AS AN ATTEMPT OF REVIVING ANCESTRAL THINGS IN THE. NOVELS OF NGUGI WA THIONG' O

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper attempts to explore the relationship between Pre-colonial life and colonialism as a process of decolonialization in Kenya. As Africa has been always looked at as an uncultured civilization, it also examines, to find the truth whether Africa had oral history, culture faith and language or not. It also interprets causes of revolt against the colonizers to bring back traditional and ancestral valuable things of the locals. It briefly covers political, social, linguistic, cultural and religious issues, interacted among the characters in the novels, encouraging a sense of indigenity. Assaults of the colonizers on indigenous things is verified and validated logically throughout the paper. It also finds the participation of the locals in Mau Mau Movement to liberate the nation from the Britishers, as they forcibly impose European things on the people of Kenya.*



**KEYWORDS:** Oral history, indigenous culture and faith, Assault on Indigenous things, Resistance to colonial things, confiscation of land.

### INTRODUCTION

African literature is opulent in contents to elaborate issues as contrary to the tendentious opinions of Europeans. It is prominently known as a slave narration but many African authors disproved it with literature full of qualities. We have been taught literature as a reflection of society, it is right when we go through African literature. The concept of it also altered when it went in the hands of writers of African origin, they have diversified it by bringing African issues in discussion. The contents in literature have been adopted from their lives to attract the attention of the world.

African literature is known as the Third World or subaltern literature: The misconception has been pasted on it without own history, culture and so on. But African authors have abundantly contributed to World Literature. Ngugi wa Thiong'O is one of the greatest authors who wrote a wide range of literature.

He was born on January 5, 1935 in Kamiriithu near Limuru. He, the son of Thiong' O Nduucu and Wanjika Wa Thiong'o, attended mission run school at Kamaandura in Limuru. Later he studied Karinga Independent School in Maanguu. He wrote novels such as Weep, not,

Child, *The River Between*, *A Grain of Wheat*, *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross*, *Matigari*, *Wizard of the Crow*. Marxist influence is seen on him and the same is evident in his writing as he stayed many days in Russia. His literature always emphatically discusses the issues, criticizes colonial policies and struggles to liberate colonial mentality to establish indigenous things. He wrote on culture and literature like *Homecoming*, *Decolonising the Mind* and *Moving the Centre*. He also crafted memoirs, short stories and plays. His literature deals with local, religion, leadership, exploitation, politics, marginalization and so on.

His technique of writing is very lucid to comprehend, he uses Swahili proverbs and words, Gikiya words in a big quantity to intensify the gravity of local issues in Kenya.

This paper discusses the exotic situations after colonialism, their own identity was erasing, the protagonists in the novels glorify the golden period in the past i.e. Pre-colonial life where they were not prohibited to live life as per tradition and religion: All the characters not only discuss about exotic things but try to annihilate them for the goodness of indigenous things.

Dr. Jaysukh D. & Hirpara in *African Reality in Ngugi Wa Thiong'O,s Fiction* has explored the influence of Marxism and fanonism. Durgesh V. Borse has delineated the process of historicizing the Nation in his literature in *Historicising the Nation: An Excavation of Ngugi wa Thiong'O,s Fiction*.

Indrasena Reddy has presented the awareness for indigenous things after colonialism, annihilating local history, culture, religion and even confiscating the land.

G.D. Killam has analyzed his intellectual growth as a post-colonial novelist, progress from colonial to post-colonial period.

Mala Pandurang's *Ngugi Wa Thiong'O: An Anthology of Recent Criticism* finds the crisis of consciousness and his oeuvre is the result of this active participation in social-political processes of Kenya.

Elleke Boehmer's *Gender and Narrative in the Post colonial Nation* has explored women's participation in revolutionary movement.

These scholars, cited above, have not covered the consequence of colonialism on Pre-colonial life in Africa which force them to revive indigenous and ancestral heritage in the forms of culture, religion, language, identity and motherland.

Ngugi Wa Thiong'O belongs both to Pre-colonial and Post-colonial period, as he knows each and everything *Weep Not, Child* is concerned with personal life of the writes. connects with the aftermath of Mau Mau struggle. In 1985 the British government established East African Protectorate in Kenya, achieving political and religious benefits. Even the fertile highlands has been proclaimed as reserved for white settlers. As a result many-locals joined Mau Mau. During colonial period, missionary schools had been established to sow the seeds of the Westener's culture and religion Pre-colonial lifestyle was in more danger. Local language was banned in the schools and circumcision rites had been restricted by the colonizers. The following lines clearly indicate the Pre colonial life was still imitated as

" Home was especially a nice place when all the brothers and many village girls and boys come in the evening and, sitting around the fireplace in a big circle, they would gossip, laugh and play" (*Weep not, Child*, P.N. 22)

Njoroge in *Weep not, Child* has a great love for his old religion and ancestors. His brother gets involves in Mau Mau he has to depart the school. His father, Ngotho, is heavily worried for the loss of ancestral land. Many locals go under colonial influence and embrace

European way of life. The colonizers applies 'divide and rule' policy, dividing them non-Christians and Christian.

*The River Between* throws light how locals have been separated into groups by the river, Honia. The Honia is a symbol of division. The life-line of Kenya, Honia, is shrewdly used to strengthen Colonial authority. Many Europeans like Hugh Trevor-Roper call Africa as 'unhistoric'. Many intellectuals in Africa started to submit testimonies. The father of Waiyaki not only demonstrates but shows the hill of God at the south of Kameno and the tree of Murunga, the creation and creator's history. Evidences of religion and culture are not available in black and white but the knowledge is orally transferred from one to next generation. It is also archalogically believed that the first man in the world ran on the mountain of Kenya. If a man originated there, then he must have tales of history, life-style, culture and faith. There was an ancient university University of Timbuktu, Mali founded in 982 A.D. a center of learning Waiyaki's father informs him thus.'

*"A big Mugumo tree stood hear the edge of the hill, It was a huge tree, thick and mysterious Bush grew and bowed around it. And there the ancient tree stood, towering over the hill, watching, as it were the whole country. It looked holy and awesome. It was the tree of Murengu, Kameno and the other ridges lay in peace and there was so sign of life, as one stood on the hill of God."* ( *The River Between* P.N.15,16)

The author seems to be interested to glorify local freedom fighting movement, Mau Mau to decolonize the land. He calls them as courageous freedom fighters rather than terrorists. All small and large sections of the society littered in the corners of the land gather together to resist colonial policies, Colonialism is the cause of integration in Kenya, forgetting their petty strifes to push up the process of decolonization.

The Britishers not only propogate Christianity among the colonised but use swords to suppress the revolt of the colonised. The exploitation of the colonised was so serious that they had no proper land to grow crops, no clothes to wear, no food for stomach, no beds to sleep, no medical facilities to the deceased. The colonised remain subjugated, subaltered because they became landless and homeless. Moreover the people of Kenya has no choice. to live at wills on account of colonialism. The following lines present subjugation and poverty of the colonised thus:

*"We have only asked for the thing that belonged to us from the time of Agu and Agu. Day and night they made us dig. We were stricken ill, we often slept with empty stomachs, and our clothes were just rags and tatters so that the rain and the wind and the sun knew our nakedness. It was not even because we loved country."* ( *A Grain of Wheat* 1.N.64)

Colonialism occured no doubt for political and economic benefits, it destroyed indigenious things in Kenya. Social, culture and religious structures have been shaken and the idealogy of Europe has been sown in the locals. Intellectuals educated from missionary schools raised their heads up against colonial authority and created unity in them. Land, names, old faith, culture, rituals have been deliberately wiped out.

All the novels by Ngugi abundantly present Pre-colonial things as a great weapon to revive indigenious things. The authors discusses the strife between the colonised and the colonizers, Some of the colonised dare to utter against the Britishers and encouragement in the local strenghtenced against the colonizers. Nation is stood in historicizing it, creates an uproar to regain their land, culture, old faith and so on. Everyone distribute oral history and religion among themselves. as an answer to those tendencions views of Europeans. Local indigenious things are magnamiously elaborated in the conversations and descriptions in Ngugi Wa

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Thiong'O's fiction. The process of decolonialisation commences from the great love for Pre-colonial life style and indigenous culture and religion.

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