Historical Re-Memories and Postcolonial Reality in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Early Novels

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Abstract
As a historical, economical, as well as political discourse that has acutely and epistemologically drawn the intellectual attention of political scientists, historians and the economists for ages, colonialism has been the postcolonial discourse that has profoundly attracted the literary critics over the years as well. This paper explores the postcolonial discourse in Ngugi's early novels namely; *Weep Not Child, The River Between* and *A Grain of Wheat*. It argues that albeit numerous literary writers have portrayed myriad of faces of colonialism in their masterpieces, it demonstrates that colonialism only wears a postcolonial mark, when viewed through the theoretical "viewfinders" of Aime Ceasire, Frantz Fanon, Albert Memi, Edward Said, Kwame Nkrumah, VI Lenin, Arif Derilic, Robert Young, exempli gratia.

***Key Words*:** Colonialism, Postcolonial Discourse, Ngugi, Early Novels

Introduction

Postcolonial theory is subject not only to critique and challenge from the outside but also from within **Pal, Ahluwalia (1).**

Paul Ahluwalia's position quoted above seems not far from the truth, given the wide-ranging disposition, theoretical concerns, goals, assumptions, as well as the scope-frontier of postcolonial theory, operating just like the other theories, within the ambit of literary studies, as a tool of literary analysis. Interestingly, this analysis is not restricted to the writings produced in such parts of the globe that once underwent imperial domination by the instrument of1884-85 Berlin conference orchestrated by Britain, France, Germany, Portugal, Belgium for instance and created the situation of

neo-colonialism in Africa, Asia, Middle-East and West Indies, where as Ato Quayson concurs with Paul Ahluwalia, "non-western modes of discourse as a viable means of challenging the west are formulated" (2) - "the outside", but it also interrogates the corpus of writings emanating from Europe and the United States by colonised and marginalised societies in Northern Island, the Aborigines of Australia, Canada, African-Americans, as well as North American subalterns, to use Gaytri Spivak's most widely used label, who, in *Postcolonial Literatures in English* (1994), Dannis Walder ranks as "one of the police officers of Postcolonial" (4) - "from within". Drabble and Stringer disclose that "criticism of empire and imperial practices originated from the colonies themselves" (566).

So, "Outside" and "Within", indubitably constitute some of the innumerable binary opposites that depict imperial Europe and it's formally colonized others across the globe in postcolonial criticism. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith, and Helen Tiffin call them "postcolonial world and metropolitan centre" (205). In Ania Loomba's view they are but a "colony and metropolis" (19), for Robert Young, one is "west" and the other is "non-west" (2), elsewhere in his masterpiece, Paul Ahluwalia describes them as "metropole and periphery" (1), and for Salman Rushdie quoted by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, Africa and the other formally colonized nations in all parts of the globe stand for "empire" and Europe, "the centre"(I). In "Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism", Arif Dirlik describes them as "west and the rest" (330). One rationale behind these varying multiplicity of binary labels could be postcolonialism, which incorporates, in the words of Ania Loomba, not only "the history of anti-colonial resistance and contemporary resistance to imperialism to dominant western culture" (12), but also states that"colonised societies participate over a long period through different phases and modes of engagement with the colonising power during and after the actual period of direct colonial control" (Ashcroft et al 194).

Colonialism: Origin, Nature and Forms

The term colonialism is derived from the Roman word 'colona' which means a 'farm', or a 'settlement' (Ania Loomba 1). In the words of Edward Said, "colonialism is the implanting of settlements on distant territories" (9). These "distant territories" undoubtedly bring about the notion of colonies in colonial discourse. Consequently, the Ghanaian Postcolonial critic Kwame Nkrumah argues that the "term colony originally meant settlement of immigrants in a foreign land. In an extended opinion, he argues further that a colony in a political sense is "either a settlement of the subjects of a nation or state beyond its own frontiers; or a territorial unit geographically separated from it, but owing allegiance to it" (9). It is against this backdrop that Kwame Nkrumah provides two types of colonies in modern colonial history. "There is the 'settlement' colony in which climate and geographical environment have favoured the establishment of sizeable European communities; while the others, regarded formerly, before the discovery of prophylactic drugs and the clearance of jungles, as inimical to the health of Europeans, usually gathered

relatively small groups of business men, administrators, soldiers and missionaries, all of whom lived in an environment quite different from that of the mother country" (9). For Walter Rodney however, "colonialism has transcended trade" (272). Loomba seems to concur with Rodney's. This is why he argues that "colonialism is the take-over of territory, appropriation of material resources, exploitation of labour and interference with political and social structures of another territory or nation" (6). This is what Rodney sees as the act of appropriating "social institutions within Africa by Europeans" (272). This sort of ruling, for Loomba, is a conquest which further leads to the exploitation of the resources of the colonized by the colonizer and worst, denying them absolute right to their own political and economic structures so as to ensure an absolute control of the territory and the people. Walter Rodney shares an analogous view that "colonialism is the negation of freedom from the viewpoint of the colonized" (270). This is true in the sense that the colonized man is a slave man, devoid of freedom as well.

Yet, colonialism is much more than that as Edward Said testifies that "in the expansion of great Western empires, profit and hope of further profit were obviously tremendously important, as the attraction of spices, sugar, slaves, rubber, cotton, opium, tin, gold, and silver over centuries. So also was inertia the investment in already going enterprises, tradition, and the market or institutional forces that kept the enterprises going" (10). What is more, as Said aptly puts it:

> But there is more than that to imperialism and colonialism. There was acommitment to them over and above profit, a commitment in constant circulation and recirculation, which, on the one hand, allowed decent men and women to accept the notion that distant territories and their native people should be subjugated, and, on the other hand replenished metropolitan energies so that these decent people could think of the imperium as a protracted, almost metaphysical obligation to rule subordinate, inferior, or less advanced peoples (10).

Indeed, apart from profit, raw-materials and abundant wealth which imperialism brought to the mother land, in the opinion of Said quoted above, this system is also rooted on the fact that the Europeans have an in-born belief that they are superior races and that it is incumbent on them to rule the "other" in the distant territories who are inferior races to them. In concurrence with Said, Loomba opines that "the imperial country is 'the metrople' from which power flows, and the colony or neo-colony is the place which it penetrates and controls" (12). Equally important, in his famous book *Discourse on Colonialism*, Aime Cesaire tries to answer the question he poses as what colonialism is all about:

> To agree on what is not: neither evangelization, nor a philanthropic enterprise, nor a desire to push back the

> frontiers of ignorance, disease, and tyranny, nor a project undertaken for greater glory of God, nor an attempt to extend the rule of law. To admit once for all, without flinching at the consequences that the decisive actors here are the adventurer and the pirate, the whole sale grocer and ship owner, the gold digger and the merchant, appetite and force, and behind them, the baleful projected shadow of a form of civilization which at a certain point in its history, finds itself obliged for internal reasons to extend to a world scale the competition of its antagonistic economies (11).

It is crystal-clear for Cesaire that colonialism is not merely ruling of a weak country by a strong one, and establishing a trade of its own in that colony, or as a conquest whereby a strong nation invades and occupies a weak one, and at the same time seizing the entire political and economic freedom of the colonised nation, but as a deception, as the colonised agrees on 'what is not' which describes the colonized civilizing mission as a smoke-screen, aimed at exploiting the human and material resources of the colonized. This the latter accepts, indifferent of the consequences such blind acceptance may result. Kwame Nkrumah provides the statistics of how imperial powers such as Britain, France and Germany exploited Africa's natural resources in 1957 for the development of Europe. Britain: Tin ore and concentrates 19%, Iron ore 29%, Manganese 80%, Copper 4%, Bauxite 47%, Chrome ore 50%, Cobalt 82% and Antinomy 91%. France: Cotton 32%, Zinc ore 51%, Lead 85% and Phosphates 100%. Germany: Copper imports 8%, Iron ore 10%, Lead ore 12%, Manganese ore 20%, Chrome ore 20% and Phosphate 22% (1-3). Commenting on the statistics of Europe's colonial domination of the rest of the world in 1800 and 1914, Said argues thus:

> Consider that in 1800 western powers claimed 55 percent but actually held approximately 35 percent of the earth's surface, and that by 1878, the proportion was67 percent, a rate of increase 83,000 square miles per year. By 1914, the annualrate had risen to an astonishing 240,000 square miles, and Europe held a grand total of roughly 85 percent of the earth as colonies, protectorates, dependencies, dominations, and commonwealth No other associated set of colonies in history wasas large, none so totally dominated, none so unequal in power to the western metropolis (6).

Ania Loomba has a parallel view. For him, “by 1930s, colonies and ex-colonies covered 84.6 percent of the land surface of the globe” (3). However, he also argues that not all parts of the globe were once under colonial occupation. The bottom-line is “only parts of Arabia, Persia, Afghanistan, Mongolia, Tibet, China, Siam and

Japan had never been under formal European government" (3). Robert Young, quoted by Morrissey argues that "colonization took place in Europe, Asia and elsewhere in the medieval and earlier periods, when the Greek, Roman, Chinese and Islamic empires advanced in geographically contiguous territories but largely without specific mercantile or state-driven logics of expansion.

The first modern trans-oceanic and state-driven global empire, however, was forged in the New World of the America by the conquering armies of the Spanish conquistadors from the late fifteenth-century" (18). For Lamber and Lester, "in its nineteenth-century design, colonialism was developed via *mission civilisatrice*, which was an ideological justification for aggressive territorial expansion enabled by technological innovation. The *mission civilisatrice* invoked the idea of bringing French civilisation, culture and language, together with Christianity, to the uncivilized and unenlightened, who were to be assimilated. This neat justification for superimposing the cultures and values of us on them was also a key feature in the contemporary British notion of a civilizing mission. However, both ideologies of empire had previous antecedents in the early modern Spanish and English colonial discourses in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that centred on notions of reform and assimilation" (320). This is modern European colonialism, which as Loomba argues, "was by far the most extensive of different kinds of colonial contact that have been a recurrent future of human history" (3).

According to Dan Clayton colonialism has historically operated in various forms as there have been over 70 empires in history. However, these are made of up ancient, medieval, early modern and contemporary, and geographically include, for example the former, Inca, Greek, Roman, Chinese, Ottoman, Spanish, British, Japanese and soviet empires (18). Asked by Loomba why did the Europeans established empires far away from their shores? Young responds that "by the late nineteenth century, the French, British and other European imperial powers were increasingly drawn into a competitive Global economic and political system whose central underlying objective was to combine the provision of domestic political and economic stability with the production of national prestige and closed markets in the international arena through conquest" (30-31)This view clearly explains that the objective of colonialism is market expansion outside the European continent for more profit gain which would boost its economy and earned it more reverence in the eyes of the rest of the world.

Moreover, in a bid to show the close correlation between colonialism and imperialism, Loomba argues that the latter is the highest stage of colonialism. One slight distinction he makes is that imperialism can function without formal colonies (as in the United States imperialism today) but colonialism cannot. In the introductory segment of VI Lenin's masterpiece *Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Dough Lorimer traces the origin and the development of the term. For him, the "term imperialism came into common usage in England in 1890s as a development of the older term empire by the advocates of a major effort to extend the British Empire in opposition to the policy of concentrating on national economic

development, the supporters of which advocates of imperialism dismissed as "Little Englanders".

The term was rapidly taken into other languages to describe the contest between rival European states to secure colonies and spheres of influence in Africa and Asia, a contest that dominated international politics from mid-1880s, to 1914, and caused this period to be named as the "age of imperialism" (1). For Lenin, imperialism "emerged as the development and direct continuation of the fundamental characteristics of capitalism in general". Consequently, it is but "the monopoly stage of capitalism". To crown all, imperialism is "the highest stage of capitalism" (91). This is owing to:

- The concentration of production and capital has developed to a high stage
- The merging of bank capital with the industrial capital
- The export of commodities acquires exceptional importance
- The formation of the international monopolist capital association
- The territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed (10).

Finally, "imperialism in its formal sense effectively ended with the retreat of the European empires as the twentieth century progressed, and this was due to a number of factors including: the Bolshevik revolution in Russia and the emergence of a powerful state opposed to western imperialism; their colonies effectively after the exhaustions and expenses of World War II; and finally the subsequent appearance of a new superpower on the world stage, the USA, which viewed existing imperial trading structures as an impediment to its own activities overseas" (Larsen 52).

Colonial Discourse in Ngugi's Early Novels

In his early novels, Ngugi unveils the baleful disposition of colonialism in Kenya, and by extension in Africa. The idea is to explicitly demonstrate how this enterprise has severely dehumanized, brutalized devalued and profoundly impoverished Africa.

Denouncing the Land Seizure

Land seizure is the first colonial conquest the texts vehemently denounce which little by little, began with the advent of the Whiteman: "they are there, beyond the ridges, putting up many houses and some taking the land" (7): Chege tells his son Waiyaki, in *The River Between,* the chief protagonist of the novel. "So the Whiteman came and took the land. But at first not the whole of it" (25), Ngotho reveals to his children in *Weep Not, Child.* Similarly in *A Grain of Wheat*, "soon people saw the Whiteman had imperceptibly acquired more land to meet the growing needs of his position" (11), the narrative voice tells us. All these indubitably illustrate how the settler colonizer dubiously confiscates Kenya's land for his egocentric needs. In *The Routledge Companion to Postcolonilal Studies*, John Macleod adduces the above assertion that "colonialism was so often a matter of terrain: seizing lands, attacking and disenfranchising the existing inhabitants of those lands, and changing the function,

prior purpose and meanings of the now-colonized terrain" (1-2). We understand from this that the land seizure is characterized by violence and force. Walter Rodney, in his *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* masterpiece reveals the magnitude of the unjust dispossession of Kenya's land by the British, naming some fertile segment of it as "Crown Land" and selling innumerable acres at cheap prices, all at the expense of the countless residue of Kenya's peasants made homeless: "after the Kenya highlands had been declared Crown Land, the British handed over to Lord Delamere 100,000 acres of the best land at a cost of a penny per acre. Lord Francis Scott purchases 350,000 acres, the East African Estates Ltd got another 350,000 acres, and the East African Syndicate took 100,000 acres adjoining Lord Dalemere's estate all at giveaway prices" (183). This demonstrates how the British land policy in East Africa, Kenya in particular turned several Kenya's peasants not only homeless but also how settler colonialism personalized foreign lands as its own, jeopardize the life of the innumerable Kenyans.

In the long run, the total confiscation of the land has some wide repercussions on Kenyans. First, it turns them powerless, as Rodney argued with the appropriation of the land "the native has lost power and power is the ultimate determinant in human society" (271). It also makes them landless; for they have no land to call theirs hence, they are but poor and homeless. Secondly, they are made jobless, who, as farmers, they have no land to cultivate and grow what to eat and sell. Thirdly, they become labourers, who work in the European farms and plantations that ought to be theirs, or their forebears' and in the homes of the white man that should be theirs as house boys and home-maids. Worst, some of them have been turned to squatters on their land, now owned by the white man. This is possible on the grounds that as Fanon opines "in the colonies, the foreigner coming from another country imposed his rule by means of guns and machines" (31). For him colonialism is an infamous enterprise and nothing makes it successful other than the use of force which silences and weakens the native, who is left with no alternative other than to be submissive. In *Culture and Imperialism* Edward Said asserts that "the main battle of imperialism is over land" (xiii). Said's words are not far from the truth, as the land conquest amounts to the conquest of the entire socio-economic, as well as cultural life of the entire people.

Much more than that, it is pertinent to note that the relationship between Kenyans and land transcends that of mother and her children. The reasons are not far-fetched. Firstly, the mother only feeds her children at a restricted duration while the land endlessly feeds the Kenyans and their domesticated animals. Secondly, as farmers and herdsmen, it is the prime source of their livelihood. Thirdly, it is in it that they are buried when they die. Fourthly, it serves as a medium through which they commune with their ancestors. Thus, apart from its economic significance, the land bears social, cultural, political, spiritual importance as well. It is against this background Ngugi wa Thiong'o argues that "land symbolises Kenyan economy which further determines its social cultural and political life" (*Homecoming*11). What is more, Ngugi argues further that "when the Europeans came to Gikuyu and

robbed the people of their land, they were taking away not only their livelihood, but the material symbol that held family and tribe together. In doing this, they gave one blow which cut away the foundations from the whole Gikuyu life, social moral and economic"(25). This is why Ngugi further expounds that "in the Kenyan scene over the last sixty years, you cannot separate economic and culture from politics. A cultural assertion was an integral part of the political and economic struggle" (27). For Ngugi, the economic, social, cultural, moral and religious significance of the land showcase that it is the life wire and the soul of Kenyans. Equally pertinent, land determines the elevated, social status of a man in Kenyan milieu; no matter how opulent such a man could be. In *Weep Not, Child* we are dumbfounded to be told that "any man who had land was considered rich. If a man had plenty of money, many motor cars, but no land he could never be counted as rich. A man who went with tattered clothes but had at least an acre of red earth was better than the man with money" (19). In *The wretched of the Earth*, Fanon argues that "for the colonised people the most essential value, because the most concrete is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and above all dignity" (34). So, for Fanon, the land conquest has led to the loss of not only the so much desired food it brings but the dignity and esteem of Kenyans.

Walter Rodney outlines two things the Europeans achieved when they appropriated the lands of the people of their colonies. Firstly, they "satisfied their own citizens who wanted mining concessions on farming land. Secondly, they created the conditions whereby landless Africans had to work not just to pay taxes but also to survive. In settler areas such as Kenya and Rhodesia the colonial government also prevented Africans from growing cash-crops so that their labour would be available directly for the white settlers" (198). Rodney concludes with the words of Colonel Grogan, a colonial settler as saying "of the Kikuyu: we have stolen his land. Now we must steal his limbs, compulsory labour is the corollary of our occupation of the country" (198). Very much so, for this suffice to say that Rodney unveils how the goals and policies of colonialism dehumanize the natives under its cruel control.

Kenya's Reaction Against the Appropriation of the Land

Consequently, the Kiama and subsequently the Kenya's Land and Freedom Army popularly known as the Mau Mau, rises to challenge the appropriation of their land by the British not only to voice its collective resistance against the British colonial occupation, but also to regain the dispossessed land. In *The River Between* the Kiama grows infuriated in that:

> Take Siriana mission school for example, the men of God came peacefully. They were given a place. Now see what has happened they have invited their brothers to come and take all the land. Our country is invaded (64).

It is the embittered feeling that accompanies the unjust invasion of the land as the above extract portrays that forces them to fight the Whiteman whatever it costs. This is because "the Kiama wanted to fight for the land which had now been taken by the settler, missionary and the government" (109).

In *Weep Not, Child,* a novel, where the Kiama has metamorphosed into Kenya's Land and Freedom Army, we quickly discern what is to come, when Boro expresses his wrath and dismay over the people, who let the Whiteman takes away the land unchallenged. "How could these people let the white man occupy the land without acting" (27)? It is this burning rage in the young revolutionary's mind that inspires him to bravely attack his father, Ngotho, and all those men whose lands have been appropriated by the Whiteman and turned them labourers in the same land: "how can you continue working for a man who has taken your land? How can you go on serving him" (28) ? The "action" comes when Boro joins the The Kenya's Land and Freedom Army as soon as the State of Emergency is declared by Governor Barring in 1952, and he soon enough becomes its leader. The young freedom fighter valiantly shoots Jocobo, the rich black man and white man's loyalists, who is made the chief of the home-guards during the Emergency and Mr Howlands, the D.O. In *A Grain of Wheat* the challenge seems to be much harsher, as the Mau Mau leaders the likes of Waiyaki, Harry Thuku, and Dedan Kimathi, lost their lives all in their heroic and relentless struggle to get back the land. Yet, another leader Kihika, who takes over the leadership of the movement, takes arms as his predecessors against the Whiteman, which as he resolves is the last resort to get back what is unjustly taken away. So, as Boro, Kihika shoots dead the ruthless D. O. Robson during the Emergency and also launches an unprecedented attack against the Mahee Police Garrison in the Rift Valley recording a decisive victory:

> At night the valley was hidden in darkness, except for the light outside Mahee. It was quiet. The guards, following the example of their white officers, who were used to a life of indolence, for the name of Mahee itself was proof against any attack, had already drunk and gone to sleep leaving a few guards to observe the convention. Suddenly the night was broken by the simultaneous sound of bugles trumpets, horns and tins from inside the prison came a responding cry of Uhuru. The officer in charge aroused from the spell of whisky he had taken earlier by this commotion instinctively reached for the telephone, trying the magic feat of pulling up his trousers and ringing at the same time. Suddenly the hand that lifted the receiver let it fall, the trousers also rolled to the floor. The telephone wires had been cut, Mahee could not get help from the outlying posts caught unawares, the police made a weak resistance as Kihika and hismen stormed in. Some policemen climbed the walls and jumped to safety Kihika's men broke into the prison and led the prisoners out into night. The Garrison was set in fire and Kihika's men ran back to the forest with fresh supplies of

> men, guns and ammunition to continue the war on a scale undreamt of in the days of Waiyaki and Young Harry (16).

Kihika's brave onslaught quoted above at Mahee translates Frantz Fanon's theory of violence in confronting or challenging colonialism. Being a violent enterprise, through the use of force, colonialism requires violent response in equal measure by the natives if anti-colonial resistance is to succeed as Kihika has triumphed at Mahee. In the words of Fanon, "the colonized man finds his freedom in and through violence" (68). Similarly for Fanon, "the starving peasant, outside the class system, is the first among the exploited to discover that only violence pays. For him, there is no compromise; no possible coming to terms; colonization and decolonization are simply a question of relative strength" (47), as Kenyans have bravely acted led by their valiant revolutionary heroes.

The Physical and the Psychological Impacts of Colonialism

Ngugi also denounces colonialism through the physical and psychological anguish of some of the principal characters in the novels. Ngotho is one of such colonial victims in *Weep Not,* Chid. Physically, the man has been dispossessed of his ancestral land, which has turned him poor. He is conscripted during the First World War and is forced to carry heavy load for the Whiteman. Ngotho is turned a labourer by Mr.Howlands, working in his ancestral land, earning barely ten shillings a month, and living in Jacobo's land which by custom and law should be his land. Hence, he is now a squatter on the land produced by his labour and sweat. In the words of Aime Cesaire "wherever there are colonizers and colonized face to face, I see force, brutality, cruelty, sadism conflict"(21) Cesaire is right, and Ngotho is a victim of these theoretical views.

In the pre-strike speech meeting, he is injured by a police man after he attacks Jocobo, accusing him for siding with the white man at the expense of his people, and finally his arrest and torture during the Emergency on the suspicion that he is a Mau Mau which eventually leads to his death. His sons: Njoroge, the hero of the novel, and Boro, are also victims of similar suffering and dehumanization. Njoroge is withdrawn from Siriana Secondary School and is mercilessly tortured on the bogus suspicion that his entire family is Mau Mau, which further ends his educational dream. This is why Fanon laments that "when the native is tortured, when his wife is killed or raped, he complains to no one" (73).

This is so in that the native is powerless and controlled. Thus, Ngotho and his family are archetypical of millions others whom for Cesaire "fear has been cunningly instilled" in them. They "have been taught to have inferiority complex to tremble kneel despair and behave like flunkeys" (22). In another view, Fanon is disillusioned that "the settler-native relationship is a mass relationship. The settler pits brute force against the weight numbers. He is an exhibitionist. His preoccupation with security makes him remind the native out loud that there he alone is master" (42).Therefore, what has transpired to Ngotho, Njorege, his son, as well as his wives

points to this reality. Like his father, Boro too has been to the Second World War. When he returns home, he becomes landless and jobless. This frustration makes him drunkard, always gloomy and solitude. He is arrested after shooting dead Mr.Jocobo the chief of the home-guards and Mr.Howlands, the D.O. both of whom are responsible for the tearing apart of his family and the death of his father. His brother Kamau who also runs to the forest is also arrested. Ngotho's wives Nyokabi Njoroge's mother and Njeri also suffer from the brutal torture of colonialism as they are detained and humiliated either. Minor characters such as the Barber and Nganga are unjustly killed during the Emergency.

Psychologically, the old man lost his son Mwangi in the Second World War which he himself fought for the Whiteman. Secondly, he refuses to take the oath of secrecy that would automatically turn him Mau Mau, who like his son, Boro, must fight to regain the lost land. Thirdly, Ngotho is psychologically traumatized on the grounds that the taking away of his land means that he is driven from his economic, cultural and spiritual latitude. According to Fanon "when the native is confronted with the colonial order of things, he finds he is in a state of permanent tension.(41) as Ngotho has bitterly and profoundly experienced.

In *The River Between,* the physical suffering caused by colonialism is unequivocally discernible as the white settler appropriates the personal and ancestral lands of the Mukuyu-Kameno ridges, as well as their neighbouring ridges such as Muranga, Nyeri and Kiambu as Chege, the novel's hero's father, Waiyaki, one of the descendants of the famous Gikuyu seer, Mugo wa Kabiro reveals to his people in Kameno. "See them, the butterflies". Butterflies? You have never left the ridges, they are there beyond the ridges, putting up many houses and some taking the land" (7). This appears to be the beginning of the conquest for the subsequent development in this physical conquest turns out to be catastrophic as the white man alienates the land near Siriana, "forcing many people to move from places they had lived in for ages while others had to live on the same land working for their new masters"(60). What has made this development successful is that "the white people are now pouring into the interior in greater numbers" (110).

In *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* Ania Loomba discloses that "both the colonized and the colonizer moved: the former not only as slaves but also as indentured labourers, domestic servants" (9), as the relationship between the Whiteman and Mukuyu-Kameno ridges has later turned out to be. For Cesaire, "between the colonizer and the colonized, there is room only for forced labour, intimidation, pressure" (21). Much worsen that, the missionaries confiscate more lands building churches in the regions as part of their evangelical missions in Africa, with their centre at Siriana. With the construction of a Government post, the people of the ridges are forced to pay heavy taxes, whose meaning they do not decipher ab-initio. Consequently, "some people were already working on the alienated land to get money for paying taxes" (62). As Walter Rodney puts it "they worked away from their shambas in order to pay for taxes or because they are forced to do so" (178). Indeed, the words of Rodney are not from the truth as the tax they pay out of the insufficient

wage they are paid is heartless and exploitative.

Psychologically, by appropriating their personal and ancestral lands, colonialism turns most of the people in the ridges homeless. They also earn a low-wage as labourers, house boys and maids which is insufficient for them to cater for their family. However, the deep polarisation between the two ancient arch-rival ridges Mukuyu and Kameno, following the white man's arrival, and particularly through his evangelical activities is no doubt one of the profound psychological impact of colonialism suffered by the people in these ridges. "The white man had come to Siriana and Joshua and Kabonyi had been converted. They had abandoned the ways of the ridges and follow the new ways" (8). Although Kabonyi subsequently breaks away and returns to his tradition, the success of the missionary, through Joshua, which brings in more new converts into the new religion, established Mukuyu as Christian strong-hold and Kameno as traditional strong-hold. The former condemns the latter as pagans and that their biggest time-honoured tradition of female circumcision is "wholly evil" (59), while the latter condemns the former as traitors, who abandon their tradition in preference for the new faith. This pervades tension in the regions, as elders in Kameno conclude that contaminating the tradition with the white man's ways and the new religion would but ignite the gods' wrath which would further bring total destruction in the ridges. The slightest signs are the draught and the little rain.

The subsequent development catapults the tension high. First, the white man forces those who refuse to embrace the new faith in preference to their tribal custom to leave Siriana and from now on, no child would be enrolled into the school unless he/she renounces circumcision. Secondly, the Kiama, a cultural movement founded by Kabonyi, one of the breakaway converts in Kameno declares it mandatory for the members to take the oath of allegiance which will deter them to betray the tribe, or contaminate the ways of the white man with the ways of the tribe. It is these conflicts that endanger the life of the chief protagonist Waiyaki. Studying at Siriana, the young man has to leave school in that, he cannot denounce circumcision and betray the tribe, for which reason he is circumcised.

Second, his brain-child project of building community secondary schools as part of his communal efforts to improve education in the ridges and to put his theory into test that education is the needle that will patch the gap of disunity between Mukuyu and Kameno eventually run the young visionary into trouble; as Kiama suspects him to be in league with the white man after taking the oath. Couple with that, Waiyaki suffers another psychological trauma as Nyambura, Joshua's daughter whom he dearly loves refuses to accept his marital proposal as her father would not let her get married to Waiyaki who refuses to accept the new faith, in spite of him being educated in the Whiteman's ways. All these lead to his downfall in the long run. This is why Fanon laments that when the native is confronted with the colonial order of things, he finds he is in a state of permanent tension (41). By this, Fanon denotes that colonial humiliation, misery, tyranny, and brutalization cause an endless tension to the colonized.

In *A Grain of Wheat*, the early Mau Mau leaders appear to be the first physical victims, brutalized by colonialism. Waiyaki, the first "warrior-leader" to challenge the Whiteman is apprehended and buried alive at Kibwezi. "Waiyaki and other warrior-leaders took arms" (12) and it is this counter-challenge that led to his downfall. Similarly, Young Harry, who takes over from him is also arrested and is sent to an exile. This is because "Harry denounced the Whiteman and cursed that benevolence and protection which denied people land and freedom (12). This the young liberation leader must do, in that, in the opinion of Rodney "violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction, it makes him fearless and restores his respect" (74).

Violence in Rodny's view is but a cure to the colonized predicament state but also gives him latitude and voice to challenge the colonizer. The Thabai townsfolk that protest in procession for the release of Harry Thuku at the State House for four consecutive days also suffer the physical torture of the white man, as the police opens fire at them, killing one-hundred and fifty people at the scene. "On the fourth day they marched forward singing. The police who waited for them with guns fixed with bayonets, opened fire. (13)". According to Frantz Fanon, "the colonial world is a world cut into two. The dividing line, the frontiers are shown by barracks and police stations. In the colonies, it is the policeman and the soldier who are the official, instituted, go-betweens, the spokesmen of the settler and his rule of oppression" (29). Kihika, the next liberation fighter of the movement falls into the white man's trap as he is hanged shortly after he is arrested. During the Emergency, many young men and adult, including Gikonyo and Mugo, two of the principal characters were apprehended and taken to various detention camps. Women, the only human creatures left behind, beside their children and the old were forced to dig a trench around Thabai, a penalty for supporting the Mau Mau with food, fighting in the forest. What is more, they were also forced to demolish the old Thabai village and moved to a new site, where the new Thabai was to be constructed as a penalty against Kihika's unprecedented and triumphant attack against Mahee Police Garrison. In the absence of the men, women became their family's bread-winners who had to look for food for themselves, children and in some instances mother-in-laws, before the curfew law commenced at 6. Most of them offered themselves cheaply to soldiers for bread to survive.

Psychologically, the Thabai village folk and by extension the Kenyans at large are inwardly distressed by the heavy taxation first opposed through letters by the Young Harry. The presence of soldier settlement established after the First World War which turned most of them homeless and the Emergency laws has put them into a state of trepidation. The restriction of their movements by the Emergency on their land, soil, and country which apparently is a breach of their social and political rights deeply eaten their soul. This is also true to those detained at the detention camps, who in addition they slept in hunger, and wore rags and tattered clothes in spite of rain and sun. Consequently, The Mau Mau Nyeri oath officer Gatu, becomes a practical joker and a prison-comedian that entertains the prisoners with songs and mimicking the

walk and speech mannerisms of white officers and warders, all out of the psychological anguish that torments his soul day-in,-day out. He eventually hangs himself in the prison.

Similarly, colonialism separates Gikonyo from Mumbi, his wife, the woman he profoundly loves which deeply troubles his mind in the detention camp. In the end, he renounces the oath to be released from detention and reunite with his wife in spite of the implication involved. He yet, suffers another psychological agony as he discovers that Karanja, who was made the home-guard during the Emergency and his arch-rival, impregnated his wife. All these have been possible because in the colonial stage as Cesaire argues is where the colonized battles with "taxation, theft, rape, compulsory crops, contempt, mistrust, arrogance, self-complacency, swinishness, brainless elites, degraded masses. No human contact but relations of domination and submission which turn the colonizing men into a classroom monitor, an army sergeant, a prison guard, a slave driver, and the indigenous into an instrument of production"(21). The words 'taxation', 'theft', 'rape', 'mistrust', 'compulsory crops', 'degradation' 'inferiority complex', 'fear', 'despair' depict some forms of physical and psychological sufferings the colonized severely experienced in every minute of their colonized existence.

Conclusion

Therefore, colonialism in Africa had caused varying degrees of oppressive and suppressive miseries and despairs throughout its longest period in history. Given the textual substantiations from Ngugi's three early novels, re-read through the postcolonial literary viewfinder, it is crystal-clear that this enterprise, enslaved, impoverished, underdeveloped, denigrated, depopulated, traumatized, and annihilated Africa and Africans in innumerable number of ways, in addition to misrepresenting the history and culture of the continent. These did not merely cause profound and intolerable physical and psychological anguish to the colonial victims involved, but also bulldozed their socio-economic, as well as cultural freedoms, which tumbled down into pieces as would a wall.The three novels primarily examined in this work therefore elicit the colonial and postcolonial ethos that could be linked to the present socio-cultural, socio-economic and the overall realities of the situations captured in Ngugi's major novels.

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