

Original Paper

A Tussle for Decolonization of the Mind: Representation of the Whiteman in “A Grain of Wheat”

Khaleel Bakheet Kh. Ismail^{1,2*} & Yasir Arafat Mahfouz²

¹ Department of English Language, University of Dalanj, Sudan

² Department of English Language, College of Sciences and Humanities, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, KSA

* Khaleel Bakheet Kh. Ismail, Department of English Language, College of Sciences and Humanities, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, KSA

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Abstract

The main aim of this paper is to critically examine the representation of the Whiteman (the colonizer) in the African prose narrative context and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's "A Grain of Wheat" specifically. The thrust has emerged from the main concepts of the binary opposites postulated by the critic Franz Fanon regarding the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. Hence, the postcolonial theory is adopted as a literary analytical theoretical framework in this paper, for it works as a boundary line that explicates such texts. Via a close analysis of the selected text based on the tenants of postcolonialism, orientalism, Occidentalism its concluded that A Grain of Wheat is one of the literary texts that represents African elites' tussle for decolonizing the mind.

Keywords

decolonization, otherness, orientalism, postcolonial theory, binary opposites

1. Introduction

Most of the African elites believe that Western Colonization was built on the assumptions of the West that it represents the core center of progress especially in Africa. Colonizers saw the colonized as mere “binary opposites” as referred to by Franz Fanon. The colonists, who were perceived to be white, beautiful, educated, civilized Christians, were opposed to the native colonized labeled as black, ugly, uneducated, savages and pagans. For those colonizers, the only way of progress was European civilization and Christian religion, the notions which the colonized considered otherwise especially in the wake of liberation and decolonization movements which were led by the native elites during the 60s

and the 70s. In the case of Kenya, Poppy Cullen (2017, p. 5) claims that: “*Kenya, particularly because of Mau Mau, has featured prominently as ‘one of the classic cases’ in histories of British decolonization*”.

It is believed that, the power of literature to liberate minds, and to break the shackles of others’ preconceptions, has driven the rise of Africans telling their own stories and representing their own “Self”. Ngugi wa Thiong’o in his *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* has openly stressed the urgency of liberating and decolonizing African cultures and languages. Talking about Africa, he is conscious of “*the great struggle between the two mutually opposed forces in Africa today: an imperialist tradition on one hand and a resistance tradition on the other*”. He attributes the region to the spread of imperialism supported by similarly linked forces: “*The imperialist tradition in Africa is today maintained by the international bourgeoisie using the multinational and of course the flag waiving native ruling classes*”. He (1986, p. 28) argues:

The very fact that what common sense dictates in the literary practice of the other cultures is being questioned as an African writer is a measure of how far imperialism has distorted the view of African realities.

He usually insists on the responsibility of the elites to revive their own cultures and languages and utilize them on their daily life, which thereby, will open new frontiers to the world culture.

Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s writings stand as a direct denial and rigorous tussle for liberating and decolonizing the African people, culture and language from the bondage of imperialism and colonialism. His first novels were written in English, including his highly acclaimed 1967 novel *A Grain of Wheat*, centered on the state of emergency in Kenya’s struggle for independence and a village’s preparation for Kenya’s Independence Day celebration. Later he decided to primarily write in Gikuyu, the language of his own Kikuyu people of Kenya, believing that it is the responsibility of the elites to start the real liberation through their writings through the use of their native tongues.

That is, colonialism created a kind of struggles among the colonized. In his acclaimed book “*Orientalism*” Edward Said (1987, p. 10) presents how the colonial orient was seen as the cultural European “Other” in the eyes of the colonized. He says: “*The Orient was almost European invention, and had been since antiquity, a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting happenings and landscapes remarkable experiences ... etc.*”. Hence, Said’s representation of orientalism as the other side of colonialism is mainly based on the idea of “Binarism” of Franz Fanon which negates the “Other” and privileges the “Self”. The “other” which is in a continuous struggle with the “self” (the colonizer and the colonized). This same concept is the base of most of Ngugi wa Thiong’o writings including “*A Grain of Wheat*”, which is going to be analyzed in this paper.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The initial controversy over the identity of the colonial and postcolonial African literary text was a logical offshoot of the doubts sponsored by the colonist ideology about the humanity of the African traditions, cultures, and Africa being seen as undifferentiated sociocultural context which is oblivious to

the passage of time (Heart of Darkness, the Dark Continent). Though, the basic identity as an African is not in doubt, an aspect of cultural heritage and identity is subjected to such a wide range variety of interpretations. That is, the most important problems related to African literature and novel in particular are the problem of representation and how for an African writer to present his own culture and heritage in a language that was not originally set for expressing Africanness of a literary text. The other problem which a colonial or postcolonial African literary text faces is the operational methodology: that is; how to theorize and how to use and apply these theories (specially the post-colonial ones which are built upon the idea of binary opposites) in the analyses and criticism of the African texts.

2. Methodology

This paper is a descriptive analytical research primarily depicts the idea of the binary opposites in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *"A Grain of Wheat"*, with special focus on Black/White, Colonized/colonizer, outsider/insider and Self/Other dichotomies. *"A Grain of Wheat"*, is used as the main source of primary data and textual analysis is done, guided by the tenets of the postcolonial theory.

Descriptions of actions and scenes, analyses of characters and language provide data for this study and are used to present the main arguments. Through close textual reading of the novel, changing circumstances of the characters, plot and the narrators' point of view, we investigate strategies employed by the author to map paths for emancipation of their characters, hence help finding the intriguing facts about the tussle for freedom and decolonization of the mind. Postcolonial theory with its different turns will be used as a literary approach and theoretical framework in this paper.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

In this paper, postcolonial theory is adopted as a literary framework for the analysis of the primary text. According to Bhabha (1994, p. 171), postcolonial criticism *"bears witness to the unequal and universal forces of cultural representation"* that are involved in a constant competition for political and economic control in the contemporary world. Moreover, Bhabha (1994, p. 171) sees postcolonial critique emerging from colonial experiences. He argues:

"Postcolonial perspectives emerge from the colonial testimony of Third World countries and the discourses of 'minorities' within the geopolitical divisions of East and West, North and South. They intervene in those ideological discourses of modernity that attempt to give a hegemonic 'normality' to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged, histories of nations, race, communities, peoples. Postcolonial theory formulates its critique around the social histories, cultural differences and political discrimination".

Hence, the colonial discourse and its aftermath have deepened the idea of centralizing the European languages and culture, which consequently led to a breakthrough in the tussle for liberation by the colonized. Ashcroft et al. (1998, p. 14) summarizes this state in the following context:

"Colonial discourse is implicated in the ideas of the centrality of Europe and assumptions about history, language, literature, and technology. Colonial discourse is thus a system of statements that can be

made about colonies and colonial peoples, about colonizing powers and about the relation between the two”.

Thus, the struggles of resistance and the profound articulations made by the intellectuals and writers do give a strong base to the anti-imperialist value system. Ngugi wa Thiong'o observes: "The sum total of all these blows no matter what their weight, size, scale, location in time and space makes the national heritage". It is this national heritage which is explored by the post-colonial theory; the first clear formulations of which have been laid as (anti) colonial discourse by Edward Said in his famous *Orientalism*.

According to Young (2001, pp. 383-426), postcolonial theory as a "*political discourse*" emerged mainly from experiences of oppression and struggles for freedom after the "tricontinental" awakening in Africa, Asia and Latin America: the continents associated with poverty and conflict. Postcolonial criticism focuses on the oppression and coercive domination that operate in the contemporary world (Young, 2001, p. 11).

Postcolonial literary theory can be defined as a dialectical discourse which broadly marks the historical facts of sociocultural decolonization, national liberation and identity actualization. It allows people emerging from socio-political and economic domination to reclaim their sovereignty; it gives them a negotiating space for equity. A number of theorists share this view, including Kenyatta (1968, p. 36); Bhabha (1994); Spivak (1988, pp. 197-221); Ashcroft et al. (1989, 1995).

The closely related theory is Occidentalism which is "*the expression of a constitutive relationship between Western representations of cultural difference and worldwide Western dominance*" (Coronil, 1996, p. 57). But it does not represent the counterpart of post colonialism or Orientalism, but its precondition, a discourse *from* and *about* the West that sets the stage for discourses about the West's Other(s)—i.e., for Orientalism. Compared to colonialism, Occidentalism is the base upon which most of the colonizer/colonized differences were best articulated, as Mignolo (2000, p. 13) states:

If racism is the matrix that permeates every domain of the imaginary of the modern/colonial world system, "Occidentalism" is the overarching metaphor around which colonial differences have been articulated and rearticulated through the changing hands in the history of capitalism ... and the changing ideologies motivated by imperial conflicts.

They are that overarching metaphorical and differences, ideologically articulated otherness and the colonized/colonizer dichotomies fused with the imperial conflicts, which this paper attempts to overshadow via a close examination and critical analysis of *A Grain of Wheat* as a Colonial and Postcolonial text.

2.2 Representation of the Colonizers: A way Forward

A Grain of Wheat chronicles the events leading up to Kenyan independence, or Uruhu, in a Kenyan village. Gikonyo and Mumbi are newlyweds in love when Gikonyo is sent to detention camp. When he comes back six years later, Mumbi has carried and given birth to his rival's child. Instead of talking about their trials, a wall of anger separates them and they drift poles apart. Earlier, Mumbi's brother

Kihika, a local hero, is captured and hanged, and his comrades search for the betrayer. It is a deep mystery until the Uruhu celebrations as who exactly double crossed Kihika, when Mugo appears out of blue and confesses his guilt that he betrayed Kihika and caused his death.

The novel is formed of multiple narrative lines and, far from being linear in structure, dwells upon the flashbacks and shifts in time frame. In this way, the portrayal of different characters in different circumstances elicits varying viewpoints about the same situation. So, not only are there different centers of focus but also show the protagonists running parallel with each other, struggling, colliding, coinciding and at times getting fused together. The ultimate fusion of the narrative lines comes at the end of the novel when the reader learns of the final destinies of the protagonists, such as Mugo, Gikonyo, Karanja and Mumbi, etc.

Although, the basic premise of Ngugi seems to have been re-tracing the post-colonial history of the mother-land Kenya and exposing the colonizers' dictums of civilizing the darkest continents but at the undercurrent he cannot help *representing* them. His basic source for counter-discourse is none else but Conrad, who infused a spirit of rebellion in Achebe as well. Ngugi maintains that Conrad's justification of one type of imperialism slightly better than the other, in fact, impairs his vision. In one of his interviews Ngugi talked of Conrad and his concept of imperialism in the following way,

Conrad is very despondent when he comes to portraying workers' efforts to overthrow it or when he portrays people over racists in Africa in the Heart of Darkness or Asians in Lord Jim and others. There the people are made to look as if they were waiting for their parents or a white hero would come and save them (Rao, 2009, p. 167).

But Ngugi does not present the whites as torch-bearers or harbingers of a new civilization on a divine mission to civilize educate and deliver them from the clutches of backwardness, irrationality, dogmatic beliefs and darkest holes, rather he presents them as colonizers, usurpers and a band of ruthless people who have ruined the African civilization. And as Kenneth Harrow notes, even, "the storm aptly suggests the pervasive destruction caused by the white man's arrival and invasion" (Harrow, 2010, p. 251).

2.3 Theological Debates and Duplicious Whites

Ngugi's representation of the colonizers is subtle, mostly implicit and holistic. Whenever he refers to them through different characters or through an omniscient narrator, he takes them, on the whole, aiming at hegemonism and expansionism. Taking a holistic picture, the natives deem the whites virtually responsible for all the wrongs done to them. When the whites arrived in Kenya, they were perceived as "people with clothes like butterflies ... strangers with a scalded skin. ... a" and even for a church they were "given a temporary shelter" (Thiong'o, 1996, p. 10). All this reflecting that the whites, though welcomed for their religious practices, were not identical with Africans and were regarded as Others right from their advent. The whites are shown as hypocritical, perfidious and duplicious who enshrouded themselves in the religious robe to justify their claims of the natives and to ascribe a holy and divine justification to their advent in Kenya. But, the natives would perceive the whites as

strangers; thus amplifying and alluding to them as different and alienating themselves from them. The whites were hailed and identified as *strangers*, because the Kenyans would find no point of affinity and assimilation with them. They also gave a contemptuous and scornful look to their *scalded skin*, which was so scalded that, “the black outside had peeled off” (Ibid). So for the natives, the *burnt skin* of the whites would qualify them as nothing but the Others. It revealed to them that the whites were not even complete and perfect human beings and the Whiteness was but a deformity and a lack which would give natives a reason to glee. The natives express their apprehensions at the Christian myths narrated to them about crucifixion and the concept of trinity. It was virtually a naïve idea to them that, “God would let himself be nailed to a tree” (Ibid)? For them, God was the ultimate authority who was over and above everything and not dependent on anyone or not liable to punishment by any force whatsoever. But here, the whites are shown luring the natives by the religious hymns and imperceptibly acquiring more land. The initial acquiescence of the Whiteman’s philanthropist deeds was now being replaced by the growing anger among the elders who thought they were hoodwinked and duped by the deceitful whites. The elders of the land protested and “they looked beyond the laughing face of the white man and suddenly saw a long line of other red strangers who carried, not the Bible, but the sword” (Ibid). These swords are “Whiteman’s swords hung dangerously above people’s necks to protect them from their brethren in the forest” (Ibid). As far as the religious teachings and interpretations were concerned, the whites used to misconstrue, distort and twist the Biblical notions for their own good and ends. For example, when Kihika was a school boy, his teacher interpreted the lines from Bible, talking of the circumcision of women and calling it a heathen custom, and authoritatively announced that, “as Christians we are forbidden to carry on such practices” (Ibid), to which Kihika did not agree and said, “*This is not true, sir*”

“*What!*”

Even teacher seemed scared by the sudden silence. Some of the boys hid their faces, excited yet fearing that the wrath of the teacher might reach them. ‘It is just the white people say so. The Bible does not talk about circumcising women’ (Ibid).

Nevertheless true, the boy had to face the brunt and he was charged with blasphemy, although he escaped the punishment fortunately by running out of the show arranged in the church. The intolerant attitude of the British is again shown when Kihika gives the examples from the success stories of Indian freedom struggle against the British. When the Indians would cheer for freedom, “The British laughed; they are good at laughing. But they had to swallow back their laughter when things turned out serious. What did the tyrants do” (Ibid)?

2.4 The Whites as Others/Outcasts

In addition, it appears that the whites were treated as outcasts and therefore were given a place to erect a temporary shelter *yards away*, implying that the essential differences between the whites and blacks were like two banks of the river never to be bridged up. Moreover, the natives would deem their teachings not worth an iota of seriousness and would rather term the whites as mad men whose senses

might have ceased and “the hot water must have gone into his head” (Ibid). Religion apart, even the designs of cultural and political expansionism convinced the natives of the eccentricity of the whites. When the white man expounded that there was another country, “beyond the sea where a powerful woman sat on a throne while men and women danced under the shadow to cover the Agikuyu. They laughed at this eccentric man” (Ibid). All the above three things namely; the rule of the woman, the homage paid to her by all men and women and the Queen of England’s aspiration to spread her benevolence over the Kenyans and conquer Kenya showed nothing but backwardness and impotency on the part of the whites especially when compared with the Kenyans. It was so because the Kenyans had already experienced the rule of the women years ago and had undergone the period of political transition and evolution already, but the whites were shown experimenting with the *out-dated and obsolete methods* the Kenyans were done with. And it was only by impregnating the women that the Kenyans brought an end to the rule of the women. But, the whites have not been able to do so, thus appearing impotent for the above job. Harrow Kenneth encapsulates the whole situation in the following words;

The protecting shadow of the Christian woman, the white man’s benevolence and protection that hang over the land like a sword only form part of the larger irony of history for which the appearance of changing events is belied by the recurrence of oppression (Harrow, 2010, p. 258).

Another reason for the inability of the women to rule is narrated a bit later when a woman ruler is narrated to have “overreached herself, removing all her clothes, she danced naked in the moonlight” (Thiong’o, 1996, p. 10). The men were awe struck and, “the moon played on her: an ecstasy, a mixture of agony and joy hovered on the woman’s face. Perhaps she, too, knew this was the end: a woman never walked or danced naked in public. She was removed from the throne” (Ibid). So, it was on a premise that women were unable to rule and they were prone to swaying in the flow of emotions combined with a very deep sense of superiority imbibed in the very genesis of the natives’ civilization that labeled the whites as strange, eccentric and insane. They are shown to be weaker selves incapable of having the reins of their kingdom and women in their hands.

2.5 The Tyrannous Whites

The whites are shown as ruthless and violent creature unleashing terminal wrath over the natives for their rebellion and non-compliance. The local defiant voice namely those of Waiyuki, Harry and Kihika were silenced and crushed mercilessly. They had,

denounced the white man and cursed that benevolence and protection which denied people land and freedom. They had amazed them by reading aloud letters to the white man, letters in which he set out in clear terms people’s discontent with taxation, forced labour on white settler’s land, and with the soldier settlement scheme which after the first big war, left many black people without homes or land around Tigon and other places (Ogude, 2010, p. 91).

It is evident that the natives characterized the whites as the harbingers of brutality, bloodshed, injustice and exploitation of both the Kenyans as well as their resources. They had grabbed their possessions and

left them impoverished and helpless. The teachings of the *Bible* were put aside and the teachings of lust, greed and gun had begun. The natives believed that they were clearly robbed off and betrayed by the whites in broad day light. Addressing their treachery, Kihika thus unfolds the truth to the people, *We went to their church. Mubia, in white robes opened the Bible. He said: Let us kneel down to pray. We knelt down. Mubia said: Let us shut our eyes. We did. You know, his remained open so that he could read the word. When we opened our eyes, our land was gone and the sword of flames stood on guard. As for Mubia, he went on reading the word, beseeching us to lay our treasures in heaven where no moth would corrupt them. But he laid his on earth, our earth* (Thiong'o, 1996, p. 10).

Kihika's fiery speeches inflamed the people and recharged them against the whites' occupations of their lands. His dissenting note appealed to the people and they applauded when he un-earthed the whites' schemes. The whites were portrayed by him as shrewd, cunning and highly mischievous working for nothing else but for the sake of the Queen and the British Raj. He was worshipped as a hero but then, his tragic fate doomed him to the end when, after being trespassed by a fellow named Mugo, he was hanged. He was made a horrible example and his body lay dangling on the tree for many days. The imaging of the whites as tyrants was not confined to the Kenyans borders only; rather it included all those parts of the world where the British had subjugated the lands and the people in order to execute their colonial agenda. When Kihika and Wambuku are discussing the foreign occupation of the Kenyan lands, they explicitly deem the whites as thieves and dacoits saying, "in any case, whether the land was stolen from Gikuyu, Ukabi or Nandi, it does not belong to the white man" (Ibid). The enslavement and imprisonment of the black emerging voices against this tyranny was expedited by the whites at large to teach them the lessons. However, as a counter strategy, the blacks, in their private parties, would carry out the mimicry of the whites and make fun of them through mock-imitation. One such example is at the tea party where at the announcement of the tea being ready Wambuku asked, "Have you become the Europeans, taking tea outside in the wind?

"Yes, yes, true Europeans but for the black skin", Karanja replied, imitating a drawling European voice. Everybody laughed. "You do it well", Njeri said (Ibid).

2.6 Knowledge and Power Nexus

In their portrayal of the whites, the natives portray them as essentially biased and indifferent to the blacks, with certain pre-meditated and inherited hatred towards them. They are shown having unjust opinions and observations of the natives and unable to think with impartiality. Particularly, the administrative machinery and the missionaries were never free of these follies of exhibiting their bias towards Africa and Africans evidently. For example, when one of the forest researchers aims at establishing the research centre at Githima, "he wrote letters to anybody of note and even unsuccessfully sought an interview with the Governor. Mad they thought him: science in dark Africa" (Thiong'o, 1996, p. 33)? Science could not be introduced in Africa, merely because it was a dark continent; it was such a cogent justification for the scientific mind of the whites! At another occasion the whites are shown sparing no moment and opportunity to belittle, undermine and stereotype the

blacks. When Mugo is arrested and being interrogated by Thompson, he becomes furious because of the non-co-operation of Mugo and while thumping his feet on ground looked and Mugo noticing, “the man’s face seemed vaguely familiar. But then it was difficult to tell one black face from another: they looked so much alike, masks” (Thiong’o, 1996, p. 133).

The undistinguishable features and over-emphasis on them clearly marks the whites as stereotypists. Not only this, rather astounded, Thompson-a white investigator- would call the blacks the vermin, shouting at them and while pointing towards Mugo ordered his officers to “eliminate the vermin” (Ibid). It seems that the blacks’ portrayal of the whites reflects them as extremely narrow-minded who dwell upon racism to justify even their plans of development and appearing only as obscurantists.

The whites’ moral demeanor is not even incorruptible, because they are seen as liars and antipathetic towards the blacks. During a conversation about the blacks, Dr. Lynd and Thompson give access to their impenetrable corners of mind where hatred rests for the blacks. Since Thompson’s dog was killed by the black dacoits, Mrs. Thompson had started hating the blacks outrightly. Dr. Lynd asks her, “Don’t let it worry you, he said, his eyes vaguely following the dog.

I tried not to, but-but-I hate them. How can I help it? Every time I see them I remember-I remember” (Thiong’o, 1996, p. 10).

The whites are also perceived as liars because when the dog of Thompson jumped at Karanja and Thompson in return unleashed anger at Karanja, Dr. Lynd appeared on the scene and assured of his dealing with the matter, but practically he did nothing. So, when the boy sees him next day expecting him to have dealt with the issue, Dr. Lynd desperately approaches him asking himself, what did he want? The dialogue begins;

“‘Yes?’

‘I took the letter’.

‘So?’

‘I want to thank you’.

Thompson remembered his lie; he stared at the boy and passed on. On second thoughts, he called Karanja.

‘About that dog’

‘Sir?’

Don’t you worry about it, eh? I’ll deal with the matter’.

‘Thank You, sir’” (Ibid).

In fact the real problem was that he himself did not want to undergo any trial if even any complaint had been filed by Karanja because the transition of power—from blacks to whites-was taking place and he wanted to avoid confrontation at all costs. Therefore, he told a lie to the boy and drifted himself away. The same impression is being reinforced by Gatu, a detainee from Nyeri, who says that, “I will tell you something. Believe it or not, but the white man just wants to break us with lies” (Thiong’o, 1996, p. 10). And Gatu ardently believes that it is because of these hegemonic and supposedly Machiavellian tricks

that the whites have been able to maintain their control, otherwise the whites are inherently so coward that, Napoleon's "voice alone made the British urinate and shit on their calves inside their houses" (Ibid). The British are tricksters and are enveloping their cowardice in such unmanly guises.

In *A Grain of Wheat*, at many occasions, the natives portray the whites as compiling, editing and propagating many negative epithets about them. For example, Thompson, a civil servant in Africa, scribbled notes about the Africans titled as *Prospero in Africa*, which run like the following: "The Negro is a child, and with children, nothing can be done without the use of authority" (Thiong'o, 1996, p. 10), and later on he maintains that

Every white man is continually in danger of gradual moral ruin in this daily and hourly contest with the African. In dealing with the African you are often compelled to do the unexpected. A man came into my office yesterday. He told me about a wanted terrorist leader. From the beginning, I was convinced the man was lying, was really acting, perhaps to trap me or hide his own part in the movement. He seemed to be laughing at me. Remember the African is a born actor, that's why he finds it so easy to lie. Suddenly, I spat into his face. I don't know why, but I did it (Ibid).

2.7 The Subversion of Postcolonial Epithets

The whites as portrayed by Ngugi in this novel are reduced to the size of the dwarfs because of their irrational, prejudiced, immoral and inhumanly behaviours throughout. Ngugi's reading of the whites' confessional thoughts reveals that the natives look at the whites through dark glasses, taking them to be evils incarnate. The very irrationality that the whites ascribe to the blacks seems to have interwoven into their own character. That is why when he spat into the Negro's face he did it out of no reason at all. Moreover, labeling Africans as actors, passing stereotypical statements, thinking of them as nothing more than children all these depict whites as suffering from many character-complexes in the eyes of the natives. Quite interestingly, the blacks, who themselves were subject to the charges of idleness and lethargy, labeled whites with the same as the story of Gikonyo-a black's rise to wealth, although on a small scale, carried a moral every mother in Thabai pointed out to her children saying, "his wife and his aged mother need no longer go rub skirts with other women in the market. This is only so because their son was not afraid to make his hands dirty. He never slept to midday like a European" (Ibid).

The blacks' perception of the whites as oppressors and exploiters is manifest at many occasions. The whites, through their bottle-necked tight control of the commercial as well as political empires strengthened their grip and maneuvered the system for their own benefit. The police stations were yet another example and Kihika could not help saying, "destroy that, and the white man is gone, he rules with the gun, the lives of all the black people in Kenya" (Thiong'o, 1996, p. 10). They established many detainees' camps to unleash the horror and terror in order to intimidate and tame the natives. In one of the episodes, the detainees speak of those frightful experiences denouncing the whites. Ngugi documents that in the following words,

The rhetoric tone was seized by the detainees who rose to speak. They talked of suffering under the white man and illustrated this with episodes which revealed their deep love of Kenya. In between each

speaker, people would sing: Kenya is the country of the black people (Thiong'o, 1996, p. 65).

In this way not only they show their resentment towards the oppressive forces of the whites but repudiate their claims of being the masters of the Kenyan land and populace. So much so, that even the train which was introduced by the colonizers in Kenya, was thought to be an *iron snake*, that terrified the blacks in the beginning but later on they came to know that, "the snake was harmless, that the red strangers themselves were touching it" (Thiong'o, 1996, p. 71). This was a sigh of relief for the blacks and it manifested the mistrust in everything that belonged to the *red strangers*. It were these red strangers "who had ended the tribal wars to begin the world wars" (Ibid), thus threatening rather ruining the world peace, as native noticed and perceived it.

The slow and lazy manners adopted by the blacks are an example of imitation and blabbed talk to scorn and belittle the whites through stereotyping. The mimicking and miming of the whites continues in the stories of Gatu who narrates an unexpected meeting with the Queen of England in the detainees' camp. It unfolds like the following;

"You can imagine my surprise when I saw the famous Queen-Queen of England. She said (mimics her voice): 'Why are you living in this dark place? It is like a cold, dark cell in prison'. I lay there on the grass. I could see she was quite surprised, naturally, because, I was not impressed with her blood-stained lips. 'I like it where I am'. I told her lying on the ground. She said (mimicks her): If you sell me your valley, I'll let you ... once. Women are women you know. 'In my country', I told her, 'we do not buy that thing from our women. We get it free'. But man, my own thing troubled me. I had not seen a woman for many years. However, before I could say anything more, she had called in her soldiers who bound my hands and feet and drew me out of the valley. I have just come from there, and that's why, gentlemen, I am back with you here in case you are surprised. 'Man', he said after the laughter. 'I wish I had agreed at once to satisfy my thing which troubles me to this day'. They went on laughing. 'Show us how he walked', one of the men called out. Gatu stood up and mimed the whole drama amid appreciative murmurs and comments" (Thiong'o: 1996, pp. 108-109).

The above extract from the novel encapsulates the whole miming drama and the stereotypical discourse that not only focused on the common whites but instead also targeted the highest and the noblest figure no less than the Queen of England. The mimicry of her manners of discourse as well as her gait reduces her to the stature of a laughing stock for the blacks and becomes the source of amusement for them. It also refers to the westerner's "moral laxity and sexual degeneracy" (McLeod, 2007, p. 22), so long attached with the Orient.

When the whites discuss the Africans and their ongoing onslaught against them, they look at the blacks contemptuously and are never ready to believe that the blacks can survive without them even for a day or two. In his deliberations with Margery, Thompson concludes that,

"'Perhaps this is not the journey's end', he said, at last,

'What?'

'We are not yet beaten', he asserted hoarsely. 'Africa cannot, cannot do without Europe'.

Margery looked up at him, but said nothing" (Thiong'o, 1996, p. 166).

So, the freedom movements and *blacks' rebellion* against the whites are looked down upon by the whites and in their underestimation of the blacks they are convinced that the blacks are incapable of self rule and cannot sustain and survive without the governing structures and the white administrators. Again, Ngugi shows to the readers the unmasked faces of the whites who consider themselves inevitable and indispensable for the survival of the blacks. But Margery's silent and dubious stare at Thompson does not seem to reinforce his ideas and notions.

However, the blacks' valuation of the whites, till the very end of the novel, remained consistent. They considered the faces of the whites as "inscrutable" (Ibid, which is a synonymous of mysterious, and the mystery enshrouded their faces because of their mistrust in the blacks, that is why whenever they looked at Mugo, they looked with, "cold eyes" (Ibid). This leads us to yet another episode where these cold eyes and inscrutable faces behave very unpredictably and display unmanly manners. When Mugo went to D.O's office to report the whereabouts of Kihika, the response of the white officer was highly insulting and humiliating. Ngugi presents him as a giant who is swelling in his might and is suffering from deeply entrenched superiority complex. After having listened to Mugo,

"The D.O. again stood up. He walked round the table to where Mugo stood. He held Mugo by chin and tilted his face backwards. Then quite unexpectedly he shot saliva into the dark face. Mugo moved back a step and lifted his left hand to rub off the saliva. But the white man reached Mugo's face first and slapped him hard, once. 'Many people have already given us false information concerning this terrorist. Hear? Because they want the reward'" (Thiong'o, 1996, p. 199).

There is no doubt that this hatred begot hatred in the very hearts of the blacks as well. Therefore, a day before the Uhuru, Koina entered into Dr. Lynd's house and shouted at her saying,

"'Let me never see you again in this country', he told her as he felled her dog with panga blows, 'do you hear? Let me never see your face in Kenya again!'" (Thiong'o, 1996, p. 21).

All these situations ended up when the blacks moved into the forest taking up arms and fighting for their rights. Now, the whites were perceived as nothing else but enemies.

3. Conclusion

The multiplied hatred towards the whites was mainly because they considered the blacks as sub-humans or animals, always behaving wildly and never succumbing to the whites' *civilized dictums*. Moreover, they also had the realization that whites' usurpation of their material resources is wholly unjustified. In fact Ngugi believed that if colonialism involves colonizing the mind, then resistance to it requires decolonization of the mind, and therefore, in this process of decolonization the iconoclastic images of the whites were to be removed, broken and made to crumble down from the minds of the colonized. Thus, he like Achebe endeavors to establish the identity of the colonized and label the whites with all the stereotypes that they would profusely use for the natives.

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