CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF NEO-COLONIALISM OF AFRICA AS DEPICTED IN NGUGI’S “I WILL MARRY WHEN I WANT”.

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Abstract

The play “I will marry when I want” reveals a great thought that African people get when they face hard times which happen in their lives. In this play, what is revealed is a scenario of a village man called Kiguunda; this man was a farmer and a poor peasant who was living with his wife named Wangeci and his daughter Gathoni in their household. Across the road a businessman called Ahab Kioi wa Kanoru saw Kiguunda mending his chair, suddenly, a drunker passed through the road singing a song that portrays the main idea: “I will Marry when I want since all padres and nuns are still alive” Gigamba, the singer says that some colonial churches survives even today, and that they are just the same. He assures Kiguunda that the war was hard fought. On the contrary, Wangeci observes that the church has changed a lot as they know, but drums and playing guitar, in the church, sometimes use traditional tones.

Referring to padre (a priest or other Christian minister) and nuns (religious sisters), Kiguunda comments that religions in the country will drive them crazy, night and day they are invited to harrabee (fund raising) for the church; that system is not made only for catholic church but also for the others like the Anglican, Greek Orthodox, Gikuyu Independent, Salvation Army, and Protestant ones.

The crucial problems of new-colonialism should be resolved as quick as possible in african countries, as far as these countries really need freedom. It is not by the fact of attacking religion that the solution will be found, but by struggle for the self support. We need to be aware of this system of ruling African people so that we can think of the way of getting solution to it. And now as we diagnosis the sources and the cause of that system which is under developing African countries, we have noticed that, we, African sometimes are acting to the favour of that crisis. Moreover, we are misusing little things we are even able to rule ourselves. African people are called to be patient in whatever they do; little things brought by westerns often amaze them without knowing that throughout them, they are caught as consequence, the new form of pacific colonisation. Detecting this form, African people ought to be united.

Resumé

Je me marierai quand je voudrai est une pièce théâtrale du style africain qui revèle une grande réflexion lorsque les africains font face aux situations difficiles qui leur arrivent dans leurs vies. Dans cette pièce, on parle d’un home du village appelé Kiguunda; Cet home était un paysan cultivateur vivant avec son épouse et sa fille dénommées respectivement Wangeci et Gathoni. En cour de route, un homme d’affaire qu’on appelle Ahab Kioi wa Kanoru avait aperçu Kiguunda entrain de fabriquer une chaise traditionnelle; subitement, un ivrogne qui était de passage à coté d’eux était antrain de chanter: “Je me marrierai quand je voudrai aussi longtemps que les prêtres et soeurs sont encore vivants”.

Reagissant aux paroles de cet ivrogne, tout en ayant déjà compris son message, Gigamba s’attaque directement aux églises que celles-ci sont venues avec la colonisation et elles restent toujours les mêmes dans leurs habitudes. Prenant le parle Wangeci commente que l’église est déjà africaniisée comme les tam-tam et les guitars utilisés dans l’église utilisent le style du ton traditionnel de l’Afrique.

Se référant aux pretres (ou un autre haut dignitaire chretien) et aux soeurs religieuses, Kiguunda commente que cette religion se trouvant au pays les rend insensé; nuit et jour, ils sont invités au harrambee (collecte des offrandes) pour la croissance de l’église. Ce système n’est pas
seulement utilisé chez les Catholiques, mais aussi dans l’église Anglaxne, Orthodox, Gikuyu
Indépendant, Armée du Salut et les Églises Protestantes.

Les problèmes cruciaux du néo-colonialisme doivent être résolus plus vite possible dans tous
les pays africains concernés par la recherche d’une liberté totale. Ce n’est pas en s’attaquant aux
eglises qu’il y aura la solution, c’est plutôt lutter pour la conscience des africains de se prendre eux-
même en charge. Maintenant, comme nous diagnostiquons les sources et les causes de ce système
qui est entrain de sous-developper l’Afrique, il a été constaté que les africains eux- même contribuent
en faveur de cette crise. En suite, il ya d’autres facteurs que nous pouvons nous-même réussir
auxquels il faut toujours demander aux anciennes colonies, et à partir desquels une colonisation
pacifique voit le jour.

**Key words:** colonialism, new-colonialism, freedom.

**Introduction**

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**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In the present article, we are looking for ways to understand what the play is talking about. As
the book does not show the mimes, we are trying to imagine through our reading where the
playwrights insist and raise the tone.

Kennedy X.J. and Gioia D. (2012:1089) assert that:” One way to sort through the material to
find the most useful information is to make a list of the important items” In character and
characterization, we think about the cluster which a prewriting technique works especially well for
visual thinkers”. In clustering, we build a diagram to help the researcher explore the relationship
among his ideas. Therefore we will have to make that diagram which will help to understand the
play in the situation African people face according to the colonizations.

In reading the drama, we also used the documentary drama; this is a strategy in which, we
combine experimental and realistic elements found in the drama, creating documentary works that
dramatized current events. Inspired by an actress playwright Anna Deavere Smith in Kennedy X.J.&
Gioia D. (2012:946) “ Anna Deavere Smith created an extremely innovation version of documentary
drama in which she performed all of the roles herself in bravura one-woman show. In using the actual
words of real people, the constructed performance pieces to explore complex social events such as
the race riots in Crown Heights””. In the case of the present work, this research is brought the
dramatized situations the reality African people face today

1.1. The language of criticism

There are two languages of criticism, the first ‘Opaque’, external, formalist, operating outside
the mechanisms of arts and taking those mechanisms as its objects; the second ‘Transparent’
internal, realist, operating within the world presented in the work. The first language throws upon the
screen of critical consciousness all the formal devices of a work in such a way that the eye is arrested
by them. Keesey D. (1994:119) states with the following questions:

*What happens when we read a novel, hear a poem, see a play? What is this interaction
between audience and work without which that work would have no meaningful existence
and certainly no value? The study of these questions says the reader-response critic, is the
chief business of literary criticism.*
However, before we go deeply with this study, we need to make some consideration. All of us agree that we are affected by literature which delights, disturbs, and often instruct.

1.2. Neo-colonialism of Africa, its approach

By its definition, Oxford Dictionary (2012) defines Neocolonialism (also Neo-colonialism or Neo-imperialism) as “the use of economic or political pressure by powerful countries to control or influence other countries”. It is the geopolitical practice of using capitalism, business globalization, and cultural imperialism to influence a country, in lieu of either direct military control or indirect political control, i.e. imperialism and hegemony.

This political meaning of "neo-colonialism" became popular usage in reference to the continued European economic and cultural control of African countries that had been decolonized in the aftermath of the Second World War (1939–45). Kwame Nkrumah, president of Ghana (1960–66), is believed to have coined the term "neo-colonialism," which appeared in 1963 preamble of the Organization of African States Charter and was the title of his 1965 book Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism (1965). As a political scientist, Nkrumah theoretically developed and extended, to the post–War 20th century, the socio-economic and political arguments presented by Lenin, about 19th-century imperialism as the logical extension of geopolitical power to meet the financial investment needs of the political economy of capitalism. In place of colonialism, as the main instrument of imperialism, we have today neo-colonialism [which] like colonialism, is an attempt to export the social conflicts of the capitalist countries…

The result of neo-colonialism is that foreign capital is used for the exploitation rather than for the development of the less developed parts of the world. Investment, under neo-colonialism, increases, rather than decreases, the gap between the rich and the poor countries of the world. Wa Thion’o (1982:30) presents the experience of his country by the following words: “The working class born in the new coffee, tea, sisal, sugar, and wheat plantations, the agricultural proletariat, and its counterpart, though small in number, led peasantry resistance”.

The struggle against neo-colonialism is not aimed at excluding the capital of the developed world from operating in less developed countries. It is aimed at preventing the financial power of the developed countries being used in such a way as to impoverish the less developed. Wa Thion’o N. (opcit) informs that «the first six months of 1982 were a watershed in the history of our country. Never before in Kenya, not even under British colonialism, there has ever been such a deliberate, carefully organized campaign of repression of ideas. What the regime really wanted of Kenyans was their unquestioning, blind loyalties to nyayoism, the philosophy of "follow my steps”»

After the independence of most African countries, the other plague appeared which seems not as heavier as the colonisation, the new colonialism. Characterizing this new colonialism, some cases which are not accepted in the life are still being used by those who are called the proletarians. Many people are detained without trial because they are coming from the lowest class that is why Wa Thion’o N. (opcit) cites some specific case of what usually happens in Kenya, his native country:

The regime later announced that it would directly control the books taught in schools and colleges. The net widened and outspoken politicians including George Anyona, were detained without trial. Khaminwa, a lawyer who took up cases of those critical of the regime was detained without trial.

This really shows that we still have a great task to fulfil; this practice cannot come to an end unless the union of African countries is not yet implemented. If the independence of African countries was obtained, that was the result of union among all pioneers of Africa.
1.3. Reading the play

Talking of the play, most of them are written not to be read in the book but to play in the different circumstances. Therefore, Kennedy J.X (2012:657) asserts his idea by these words:

> True plays are meant to be seen on stage, but equally true, reading a play may afford advantages. One is that it is better to know some masterpiece by reading them than to know them at all. Even if you live in a large city with many theatres, even if you attend a college with many theatrical productions, to succeed in your lifetime in witnessing, say, all the plays of Shakespeare might be impossible.

When we read a play on the printed page and find ourselves swept forward by the motion of its story, we need not wonder how and from what ingredients the playwright put it together. Still, to analyse the structure of a play is one way to understand and appreciate a playwright's art. Analysis is complicated, however, because in an excellent play the elements (including plot, theme, characters) do not stand in isolation.

In reading the play, we dealt with the secondary resource as far as it an interpretation or description of primary resource. A primary resource provides firsthand knowledge. For the illustration, the critic's evaluation of a film serves as secondary resource if it is written about the film. This is what Lunsford A.A. (2012:6) confirms in these words:

> Most research projects draw on both primary and secondary sources. A research-based essay on the effects of steroid use at a major league baseball, for example, might draw on primary sources, such as the players' testimony to congress, as well as secondary sources, such as articles or books by baseball experts.

RESULTS

1.1 The authors of the play

Ngugi wa Thiong'o

He is the most famous prolific writer in Kenya, born in Limuru in 1938 and educated at Makerere University (Uganda) and Leeds University in United Kingdom. Ngugi wa Thingo is an internationally known novelist, playwright and literary critic.

He is distinguished professor of English and comparative translation and director of international of writing and translation at the University of California at Irwin. A Kenya writer of Gikuyu descent, Ngugi is the author of various novels and plays.

In 1978, he published the first modern novel even written in Gikuyu called “Devil on the cross”. His critical works include Home coming (1972). He was forced into exile in 1982. Then, Twenty two years of exile will come to an end: Said Ngugi in 2004 when he came back.

He was named James when he was baptized into Christianity in primary school, but latter he came to reject that name because he saw it has part of colonial naming system when Africans were taken as slaves to America and were given names of plantations' owners.

Ngugi wa Mirii

He was born in Romolo (Kenya) in 1951. He studied secondary education in Ngenia and later worked in Kenya posts and telecommunication. He obtained a Diploma in Adult Education at “Tha institute of Adult studies”, University of Nairobi and then joined the institute. He became involved with peasants and workers in community development at kamirithu, Limuru
1.2. The play

*I will marry when I want* is a controversial written and played first in Gikuyu language, the native language of the authors of the play and one of the famous languages of Kenya. The title in that native language is *Ngaahika Ndeenda*. It was performed in 1977 by an amateur group from Kamirithu, a village outside Nairobi, where Ngugi wa Thiong’o lived. *Ngaahika*

1.3. The Plot

The play talks about Kiguunda, the farmer and a poor peasant who was at home with his wife Wangeci and his daughter Gathoni; there a businessman called Ahab Kioi wa Kanoru saw Kiguunda mending his chair suddenly a drunk passed through the road singing:

*I shall marry when I want
Since all padres are still alive
I shall get married when I want
Since all nuns are still alive*

Thereafter Kiguunda comments that religions in the country will drive them crazy, night and day they are invited to *harrabee* (fund raising) for the church, the church of white padre and virgin Mary, the Anglican church, again the Greek Orthodox, Gikuyu Independent, salvation Army, select of Deep water. All religions are thrown in their court yard, now comes the sect of poor religion. Harambee, harambee, harambee. He asks if this is an other profitable business.

Wangeci reinforces to explain to Kiguunda that people who are going to that church they usually pay a tenth of all they earn or harvest. Angrily, Kiguunda sing in mimicry: *the devil I must be crushed*! Days are going on and Gathoni is growing up, her mother asked her when she would get a husband who may help her mainly leave their poverty; but the lady reacted by saying that if she has not got a husband, it is because the parents didn’t want to take her to school and instead made her their slave, toiling for them, etc. As Gathoni was beautiful, Kioi and Jezabel (Kioi’s wife) in order to take her as their daughter-in-law. Therefore, Kiguunda recalls, saying:

*That was long before the state of emergency
Your heels used to shine bright
Your face shines like the clear moon at night
Your eyes like the stars in heaven
Your teeth, it seemed were always washed with milk
Your voice sounded like a precious instrument
Your breasts were full and pointed like the tip of the sharpest, then as you walked; it seemed as if you were whistling beautiful tones.*

An other day, Kiguunda, wangeci, Gigaamba, and Njooki (Kioi’s friends) are all seated as if intense discussion. They are eating porridge, but the time was getting dark and Wangeci has to light the hurricane lamp.

Kiguunda tells Gigamba that it is obvious that Kioi does not want his son to marry from mere pagan family. Njoki insists that the rich never marry from poor. On the other hand Gigamba wonders how religion came to be inserted into the matters of marriage. He comments that the religion was brought by the whites; that is why even today the catholic religion is still called Roman Catholic Church, P.C.E.A. (Protestant Church of East Africa) belongs to Scottish protestant. The Anglican Church belongs to England, and Orthodox belongs to the Geek, the Baptists belong to the American.
And those which demand the tenth demands, he wonders where the tenth goes. White men don’t care of poverty of blacks, this is seen in these lasts are begging on the roadsides in their own land, some of them are dying in white men tea plantations others are dying in white men’s factories. In spite of these words, these two friends of Kioi sustain their position by singing: Believe in God and he will take care of your problems……

Gigamba remembers a priest who was still around preaching. Who used to tell Wan Njeeri in the call, convincing him to repent, and confess the oath to reveal where the other fighter’s were hiding. Patriot son Wa Njeeri just short saliva into the feloow’s priestly mouth and told him that the patriot would never betray the other patriots to foreigner because of his belly.

Gigamba says that some colonial church survives even today, and that they are just the same. He assures Kiguunda the war was hard fought. Wangeci comments that the church has changed a lot, as they now beat drums and playing guitar, in the church, sometimes using traditional tones. Njoki says, the song is the same, the words are the same, and the aim is also the same.

Njoki puts in, that marriage is between a man and a woman, a covenant between the two people, their flesh and souls becoming one, without money caring it. Love pulled love. Love the price of love she says that things have changed, that today it is not one human being that marries another, property marrying property this house marries that house. Hearts being taken to the market and they customer is asked. how many kilos of love do you want? That is why you find that even if modern couplego to church or to the district commissioner, with the rings and flowers, they don’t spend more than two nights together. Gigamba adds that they go to church as a fashion. Some go back to the church only on the day they are being buried. Wangeci tried to dismiss Gigamba’s point of view, but this last reinforces his argument by saying that it is because of church we are poor.

At Kioi’s home

A big well-firshed house sofaseats, T.V, radiogram, plastic flowers on the table, and so on. On the wall there is board written “Christ is the head of this house, the unseen guest at every meal, the silent listener to every conversation”; there is also a picture of a hairy Nebuchadnezzar turned into an animal. Jezebel, Ndungire and Hellen eat all sorts of dishes on the table.

At Kiguunda’s home

In his home, the interior is very different from what it was in the previous scene. New things are seen, including pieces of furniture and utensils. There is a picture of Nebuchadnezzar like the one in Kioi’s home. All this were copied from Kioi’s house.

Wangeci feels sorry for her child, but Njoki consoles her by telling her that she will come, that their children will come back. Gigaamba asks Wangeci where Kuguunda is, she says that she does not know, that he might be in a beer hall. She adds that ever since he lost his job, he had become married to Chibuku liquor, and he has lost his piece of land unfortunately.

Gigaamba and Njoki are surprised. Wangeci tells them it was announced on the radio. She recounts the story how they went to Kioi’s wife to take the gun; but he didn’t get that gun. The solution for Kiguunda is to catch Kioi, unfortunately Kioi dismiss him from his job.
Source

Exposition:
This play has a chronological plot, where by events move on from the beginning till the end.

Rising action:
Kioi and Kiguunda abnormal relationship begins, with kioi planning to convert Kiguunda into Christianity for his own benefit, and Kiguunda thanking Kioi after the marriage of John Muhuuni. This last is Kioi’s son and Gathon (Kiguunda’s daughter.

Conflict
Kiguundas and Kioi’s covert Gathonic impregnation by John Muhuuni

Crisis
Kiguunda misbehaves towards his boss, forcing him to walk on four at sword point

Climax:
Jezebel intervenes and succeeds to rescue his husband she finds the gun, but Kiguunda escapes

Falling action
Kiguunda in the worst situation after being expelled from his wage labour. The expelled Gathoni turns into a drunkurdness.

Resolution
People realized their common enemy and uniting to fight against exploitation and neo-colonialism

Flash back
When Gicaamba narrates about what happened before and during the colonial period, Njooki’s decision John Muuhuni to not take Gathoni to marriage succeeded. It was the same case to see how Kioi succeeded to grab Kiguunda’s land after having been after it before.

3.2 Characterisations

Main characters
Kiguunda: Farm labourer
Form
Taking into account on form, there has been a substantial use and application across features of form like; title, genre, sub-genre, setting, plot, characterization, language use, dramatic techniques and general literary techniques as will be put into detailed elaborations bellow

Genre
“I will marry when I want” is a drama play such as one seen in a theatre, or a story written to be acted out by actors on the stage. It has proved to have a strong and immediate impact on the audience more due to its nature and mode of presentation.

Sub drama (genre)
“I will marry when I want” is sub drama, because it is written to be acted on the stage, the play has very humorous, and main character does not face a serious fall or death, it is thus more of a comedy than a tragedy.

3.3 Setting

Geographical setting = Kenya (one of east African countries)
Temporal setting (time) = Life in Kenya after independence.
Sociological setting (situation) = Exploitative environment. The case show how even though Africans have got independence, white people are still exploiting blacks in different manners of the life.

Cultural setting = Maintain and never betray the African traditions

The real setting has been used in order to make the play more realistic.

3.4 Style

Language use

The playwrights use common and standard English with the African sociolect. In the dialogues, however, they have used the normal conversational style; characteristic of many modern plays, rather they have made the language attain powerful appeal achieved by poetry. Use of abusive language, Wa Thiongo N. (1994:108) “women are useless, a woman is a pot full of poison”, here Kiguunda is insulting women also, Wangeci on the other side insults her husband in this reaction: “You are not the one talking, its liquor speaking through you” Wa Thiongo N. (1994:108)

3.5. Dramatic techniques

The playwrights have chosen some characters to narrate events, like Gicaamba, who explain many things about what had transpired before independence and some mimes how the situation in like currently.

In the play, it is required to play:

This manner is used for the purpose of giving the advance picture of what is narrated, now and then for example picture given by Gicaamba about what happened before independence and show people how things look like.

Mimicry:

There are imitations; they are mostly used for sarcastic purpose. The playwrights have employed mimes in several instances for example:

When Kiguunda imitates the way the other characters say or sing. Also Njooki who imitate the way the exploiters walk.

Songs:

Songs are use in the play to entertain the audience and intensify some message. The song gives presents the attention to the listeners and the message through the song is well understood even outside the audience.

2. Discussion and findings

The play describes how a multinational company, in collision with a bank and members of the indigenous African upper class, cheat poor farmers by taking his land on which the company plans to build an insecticide factory. It goes on to show how the farmers and workers gradually realize that they are being exploited and alienated.

A powerful appeal for people’s unanimous rebellion against exploitation brings down the curtain at the end. Generally the play criticizes the post independent period of Kenya; the play features the
situation as it was in Kenya soon after independence. It touches almost all the aspects of the society such as political, economic, social, and cultural; reflecting some social realities as any piece of literature is required to do.

Really, what Africans get as consequence are some political evidences, what usually happen in the societies is contrary to the expectation of the people, that after independence everything would have been well as long as the African have taken charge of their own affairs. Contrary to the expectations people witness only the exchange of power from white masters to black ones and seeing no change at all. Economically, it is featured that only a handful indigenous upper class aids the exploitation of the majority by foreigners. The few indigenous upper class takes the role of overseers or watch dogs of multinational companies which care only about making profit at the expense of masses.

We also learn about the question of land appropriation of which productive land is in the hands of a few indigenous upper members, while the majorities are landless or own dry pieces of land, striving to earn a living from it. The poor has to seek employment from the same exploiters, but they remain totally landless and poor.

The political and economic settings gives that socially the society is divided into stratum of the upper and lower class or a category of first marginalized. The upper class enjoys all the social privileges such as best shelter, clothing, transport, education etc, while lower class survives in poverty.

Finally we picture a section of the society that is so much affected by foreign values. The Kioi’s have adopted a foreign culture and they look down upon their traditions to the extent of having prejudice in African tradition, such as marriage, naming the new born, worshipping etc. Some poor black people wish to be assimilated, e.g Kiguunda’s daughter, Gathoni, etc.

3. Conclusion

As far as all African people are concerned, the matter of culture and religion was taken from the white people who colonized Africa. In the play, indigenous become ridiculous when they face new system even brought by white people; this issue is one of the neo-colonization of African countries. The different religions as said Gicaamba are also another way of alienating poor African peasant; even that church which ask tithe to every harvest cannot be taken of the exception. However, African people should not ignore that the church is one of the organisations which struggle against vandalism and preach peace and liberation from evil acts. Normally neo-colonialism should not take the religion and its rites. The arrival of religion is African salvation, not only for kingdom inheritance but also the organisation for their wealth.

What we must know in this play I Will Marry When I Want, which pays us much attention on the new way of living with regards to all traditional life of peasant need to be revisited at all. Those forms are the ways which come as how to plague Africa but when we try to analyse them, they are a new form of colonialism. So, this play gives an idea how we can struggle against that form of colonisation, we can struggle against such kind of colonisation and we have to avoid influences over our last colonies; when they come with different aids, Africans are immediately submitted to their needs and exploit whatever they want in our own countries. Therefore, what we have to do is to get much attention and look for the miscellaneous ways we will develop ourselves; for instance to build ourselves the nation with industries to develop our traditions and if possible to get our own fashions so that Africa cannot depend on western civilisations.

Despite the years 1960’s are over, we thought that freedom is coming progressively, the observation of the fifty year from independence of most African countries shows really that they have to afford for the true independence.
References


