



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**A New Historicist Study of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's Anti-(neo)colonial Novel, *Petals of Blood***

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aims at investigating how Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's novel, *Petals of Blood* gives a close analysis of the pre-and-postcolonial history of the colonised through the recurrent use of anecdotes which have been eroded and destroyed during the British colonisation period of African lands, especially Kenya. Using new historicism theory as espoused in Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt's (2001) *Practicing New Historicism*, as a theoretical framework, this research will unearth how Ngũgĩ's anticolonial-postcolonial narrative, *Petals of Blood* depicts the Kenyan cultural norms and society and the damage caused to them due to colonisation. As New historicism deals with reading a text through its historical context to understand why a particular text has been written and under which circumstances it has been produced, the study has therefore traced new historicist concepts and their strategic employment by Ngugi (1977) in the novel to better explicate and contextualize his narrative, an effective illustration of writing back to the empire.

**Keywords:** African Literature, Context, Neo-Colonialism, New Historicism, Thick Description

**Introduction**

New historicism was pioneered by Stephen Greenblatt to understand literature through its context by studying the background behind written literature and what influenced the writer to write that particular literary work. New historicism is all about text with context; text alone is insufficient for giving its meaning: "The notion of culture as a text has a further major attraction: It vastly expands the range of the objects available to be read and interpreted" (Gallagher and Greenblatt, 2001, p. 9). New historicism claims that we must consider the writer's personal beliefs and environment which plays a vital role in helping to understand a writer's reference of meaning or intuition. Furthermore, a critic is affected by his beliefs and environment, so subjectivity plays a vital role in new historicism. "We ask not only what stories were occluded, but also how they have been concealed from view to facilitate the elaboration of a closed system" (Gallagher and Greenblatt, 2001, p 82). For new historicism, without considering all the above essentials, one does not understand the work of literature of a particular period. Time occupies a central place in new historicism, as a new historicist looks at a particular period to know what a writer wanted to say and the things that could have affected the writer's beliefs because it is time that affects literature and influences different works at different times. New historicism question's human identity and asks the questions such as what is our cultural identity? How does it control human mental capacity through social and ideological conditions? Because "Humans are astonishingly Malleable; our identity is formed only through lifelong training toward humanity, and this is the reason our specie is both perfectible and corruptible" (Gallagher and Greenblatt, 2001, p. 5). The subjectivity of the writer and the identity and beliefs of the writer is very important in new historicism and they are considered while reading a book. Culture also occupies a central place in new historicism as it is a culture through which one can look at a writer's personal preferences and things that he might not like to include in his work. Also, for new historicism to look at a particular culture, texts

present a perfect opportunity. Analysis, writes Clifford Geertz (1973) in the essay, "Thick Description" is a process of sorting out the structures of signification. This study tries to bring to the limelight the anticolonial structure of the novel, *Petal of Blood*.

In this respect, the novel *Petals of Blood* gives us a birds-eye view of the situation in Kenya, both before and after the independence. Ngugi (1977) has used his characters who are diverse and who represent different classes of Kenyan society but together they form a reflection which shows a reader what was the ground situation at the time of writing. There is much going back and forth in time which depicts the much-needed background of the novel and how and why the events take place as such in the novel. Ngugi (1977) has also mentioned African heritage a lot in this book to emphasize the need for Africans to get to know their lost heritage and cultural values for he feels there is a need to reconnect with their roots and it will bring an identity to Africa and will aid in the development of the continent. Ngugi (1977) has used this novel to tell us how nothing has changed on the ground for the masses and how some development has been carried out but mainly for the benefit of some politicians and bureaucrats and not meant for the people. There is a danger of neo-colonialism on the rise and how businessmen use their tools to get what they want, even if that means making the poor suffer even more. The bourgeoisie lacks any empathy for the poor, and they are not prepared to do anything to help their situation their only concern is the bribes they get to further their businesses and agendas.

### Literature Review

*Petals of Blood* presents the story of Munira, Wanja, Karega and Abdullah. These four are very different characters from each other and at the same time, they are close to each other. Munira is an optimistic religious person, who has immense faith in his religion, and he is always faithful to God. He talks about the ills in society and for him, Kenya needs morality to make the system work and religion will provide that morality if people accept to be faithful. Karega is someone who does not share the views of Munira and is a secular unionist who works for the rights of the people. He is also a communist who wants better opportunities and working conditions for the workers. He organizes rallies and protests against the industrialists and the neo-colonial overlords of Kenya. For him, if people want to get their rights in Kenya, they will have to fight for them, and these will not be handed to them on a silver plate. Wanja is the only lead female character in the story and through her, Ngugi (1977) shows what women must go through in a corrupt postcolonial society like Kenya. Wanja has worked as a prostitute to make ends meet and later comes back to Illmorg from the city and works for the betterment of the village. She initiates many old traditions that were banned during the time of colonialism and represents Ngugi's (1977) desire to make the native culture more apparent in Kenyan society. Abdullah is the fourth character and the mysterious one, he is a former Mau Mau fighter who fought against the colonizers and lost a leg in the war. He lost many of his associates during that time and does not like to talk about that timeframe. He is a quiet worker and has set up a bar in Illmorg and just relies on gossip to pass the day. He keeps his affiliation with Mau Mau a secret because many people have believed in the lies of the colonials and have developed a dislike for the Freedom fighters. We see how diverse Ngugi's characters are in terms of their thinking and worldview and this is what demands the reader to interpret the rationale for such diversity from the perspective of new historicism, the hitherto neglected aspect of the novel.

### Material and Methods

The nature of this study is qualitative/descriptive and it employs content analysis of the novel, *Petals of Blood* from the vantage point of the new historicism theory. The theme of foreign culture invading and dominating the narrative is what lies at the heart of any postcolonial work. *Petals of Blood* encompass all such threats felt by the colonized. When Ngugi (1977) mentions how colonialism has destroyed Kenya and its people and their

culture and he present Illmorg as a sample where poverty and restlessness are present. It reflects the fear of colonized who are losing their own identity against a powerful culture. Similarly, the struggle for independence is an important theme for postcolonial writings, and *Petals of Blood* takes place after the independence, but the country is still very much young and there is a continuous talk on how independence was gained and all the armed struggles that were carried out so the wounds of colonial oppression are still very much fresh. The very phenomenon of decolonization starts from reclaiming one's past and culture. Frantz Fanon (1963) in his book, *The Wretched of the Earth* explains the urge which drives postcolonial writers' efforts to reclaim their forgotten and farthest past because they feel ensnared by western culture and fear the loss of their own identity. Ngugi's (1977) book gives us a very detailed insight into the national and cultural heritage of Africa. Unlike Orientalists, Ngugi (1977) had first-hand experience of the native culture, and he asserted it fully in its richness in his work.

### **Circulation of Power and Kenya's Social Apparatuses in *Petals of Blood*: A New Historicist Perspective**

New historicism deals with the question of understanding cultures and especially those that are foreign to the critic's own culture by relying solely on the text and one of the most important dynamics in any culture is the power dynamic itself. Power and its flow through that culture and the role of texts in depicting that is very crucial in new historicism. New historicists also look at texts to identify how power is defined in culture because some cultures historically have single people ruling over them acting as kings while others have groups of people called elders with whom they turn to solve their matters. New historicism considers power a dynamic concept and moves from top to bottom and sometimes from bottom to top to discern various power manifestations, "All she wanted was power, power especially over men's souls, young desperate and lost power, I thought, to avenge herself of the evil done to her in the past" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 54).

Power and its circulation are one of the most important questions that new historicist deals with to understand a culture and its context. As power is considered something that is not constant or static but something that flows through the culture, society, text and literature and these all influence the people. In addition to power, its circulation and its effect on the people are studies with great interest. Power is something that can be constructive or destructive and it is up to the end user who uses it in the way they deem fit. Power, in the hands of an honest government that is made up of the elected officials of the people, will be good for the country. Power and its use thus depend on the end user as to how they intend to use it. In this regard, literature, and texts become crucial tools in the propagation of power and internalizing it in society. Texts are an important part of a culture, it is through texts that history is preserved, and it reaches future generations and power decides what will be written in those texts and how much will be written, which decides how much truth or facts will reach people. Therefore, power decides truth, "Mr Munira. But you choose to be confined here! You wanted to write down the truth. You are a big man yourself. A teacher. A man of God. You ought to be sympathetic. It might have been you. Well, it might be you next time." (Ngugi, 1977, p. 229-230).

Kenya was under the brutal suppressive regime of the British empire; things didn't change for the better when they got freedom. They no longer had to deal with the colonizers, and they were not killed, or mass slaughtered like before, but the system stayed the same. It was the same struggle for everyday life, and *Petals of Blood* does justice by showing the precarious nature of Kenyan society and its social apparatus of the time. Colonizers had all the power, and they used it to subjugate the people, and now after they got independence, things did not improve either. Ngugi (1977) writes, "Preceding independence when there was much talk of how different life would be...Aah, you see how I talk as if all this was ages ago. Yet only a few years... Yes, a few years" (p. 46). These lines clearly show the level of

optimism and a chance of a brighter future that people thought they would have if they could have their government, but a system formed on the same footing as that of colonizers. *Petals of Blood* is set in the years after the independence, and not much time has passed. The novel is meant to show how little things changed before and after the independence. Ngugi (1977) mentioned things of daily life and how people were missing them and by including these details, he shows how exactly miserable life was in Kenya again, as he says, "Maybe, soon, after independence, everyone would have at least a corrugated-iron roofed house and a tank in which they can catch rainwater" (p. 46). This is how Ngugi (1977) shows life in Kenya where people don't have enough food or water and the governments are busy with corruption and looting while the poor die. New historicism views power as dynamic and studies how it moves in society, and there are instances in which Ngugi (1977) shows this by telling us about the strikes that have taken place across the country. "I hardly ever read the newspaper. I have lived in a world to myself. I did hear something about a strike over food or something" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 61). The political powers of the country wanted a total ban on the strikes as they feared they would lose their power, "The MP called for a total and permanent ban on strikes" (Ngugi, p. 232). The political representatives wanted to curb the strike power of the people by imposing a ban on them, and the irony is that these people were selected to serve, but they chose to close their eyes and continue with their corruption. Ngugi (1977) does not just stop here but uncovers further tactics used by the political forces to undermine the legitimate struggle of the people when an MP says that "the strikes should be regarded as deliberate anti-national acts of economic sabotage" (p. 232). These strikes that were labelled as anti-national and anti-economical were carried out by teachers who did not get paid enough and by farmers whose crops had been suffering for years now.

Power structures are maintained and people have an active role to play. When Munira first comes to Illmorg, he is treated as an outsider even though he wants to educate people and wanted to help the town but was treated as Outcast. This has partly to do with the power apparatus of the society where many teachers have come and gone, and none have stayed, and they have lost their hope and trust in the institution of school. Munira would want to educate children they won't listen to him until they had established that he was there to stay and was given the power to educate them. This is an instance of new historicism in which the circulation of power in a society where a teacher influences a student, and a student influences his teacher so everyone in a society has some sort of power over others, "I know of a school where the children went on strike because the teacher had confiscated a love-letter" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 31). Therefore, people in power were afraid of the strikes and they wanted to curb them in the start. Strikes in Kenya or any other country don't just act as a way of demanding rights but also as a way of disapproving of the government. It acts as a motion of no confidence for the government. It's a circulation of power within the society where people influence the government. Ngugi (1977) shows the fear of corrupt authorities and critiques that the real power must reside with the people as they stood against the colonizers and if they wanted, they can stand against the government to demand their rights.

### **Political Capital, and the Portrayal of the Mau Mau Rebellion in *Petals of Blood***

Ngugi (1977) has written *Petals of Blood* not just as a critique of the economic system of the country but also the political system as he terms it useless and corrupt. When Kenya got independence, People were hopeful that things would be better now, after all, thousands had given their lives to drive the occupying forces out of the country and as years have passed, they have not seen any major changes in the system which affected the day to day lives of the common people. Cities had no proper cleaning system, and the government employees were not interested in doing their duty. Kenya got rid of the colonizers but never managed to reform the system that was made by the colonizers for governing the country. For Ngugi (1977), it was a system of colonizers, and they would have made it only to prolong

their rule. It has no function for improving the livelihood of the people and making their lives better.

Illmorg was a remote place situated in the countryside, and its MPs would only visit the place if there were any elections. Other than that, most people did not even know the name of their representatives, "Nderi wa Riera was the envy of most of his parliamentary peers. His area was so remote from the city that he was hardly ever troubled by endless complaints by his constituents" (p. 208). Such was the condition of Illmorg, it has no communication with his representative who was happy that it stayed that way and was enjoying his life in the city. Riera is living his best life as Ngugi (1977) demonstrates in the novel that he spends most of his time in resorts situated across the country and spends his life around prostitutes. Illmorg was suffering from numerous issues while their MP was on holiday celebrating his lavish lifestyle, "Riera had gone to Mombasa for a business inspection and on-the-spot investigation of two tourist resorts which had been mentioned in the foreign newspaper" (p. 209). It was common for Kenyan politicians to embark on the so-called inspections, and it was usually a cover story to spend some days in a resort. Riera was fortunate in this way that his constituents could never reach him and so he spent most of his time partying. He was so clueless about the situation in his constituency that when he was asked about the drought in the Illmorg he shrugged it off saying it was nothing much and he did not even know that there was a delegation there to meet him.

Nderi was not interested in helping people but was thinking about how to get rid of the delegation that had come, "He was visibly impatient for two o'clock to come: he was visibly ready and expectant for a fight: he was old and experienced at political manoeuvring" (p. 210). The above quote shows how the political system functioned in the country and how they used their political power to make sure that people stayed poor and poorer. Power was the goal of elected officials and when they got it, they used it for their remaining terms to make as much money as possible and spend their lives in as much luxury as possible. It was also a dynastic thing for Kenyans as fathers were mostly replaced by their sons in the representative assembly and the power stayed within the family. Ngugi (1977) shows this circle of power that has caused much misery to the country as nobody is concerned for the people and the dynastic politics in the country only results in making the elite richer and richer. It was famous political families that kept their hold on the country and they started the practice of capitalism by using their businesses and getting contracts for massive corruption. "Powerful and effected oscillation between the establishment of distinct discursive domains and the collapse of those domains into one another. It is this restless oscillation... that constitutes the distinct power of capitalism" (Mambrol, 2017).

Illmorg did not have a single asphalt road to the city and the poor people had to travel that distance in days but when the government officials needed a place to set up their businesses a highway was made quickly and efficiently for that purpose, showing their true colours to the public. The politicians were well-versed in the art of delaying tactics. When the delegation from Illmorg reaches the city to try to convince the MP to help them get over the period of drought. He tells them about the name he used during the time of colonizers, "I used to be called David Samuel. But I asked myself: Why should we abandon our names for these foreign ones? Ha! Ha! Ha!" (p. 211). The MP was more interested in talking about political things as changing his name to the native one as he had previously used this in his campaign to gain votes by declaring himself as the son of Kenya. Nderi was a seasoned politician, and he had clanged to power for so long that it had corrupted his soul. He was only interested in power and its benefit to his family and not interested in helping the people. The delegation and Nderi started to become hostile towards each other and Nderi did not like the attitude of the delegation. For him, Illmorgians has never bothered him, and he liked it about them, and they were never bold enough to question him when he spoke. they were illiterate anyway, so they won't understand what he was trying to say. Today, he was being questioned and he was caught off guard, while the people were there for their

legitimate concerns due to drought, they had lost a significant part of their livelihoods, but Nderi was not concerned with it.

Nderi thought that this was all a deliberate scheme of his political opponents to divide his vote bank and destroy his political career. He considered Illmorg so backwards and its people so illiterate that they were coming to the capital city and questioning him was just not acceptable to him and he declared them as untrue illmorgian, "His political enemies were sending strangers to Illmorg to unsettle a peaceful people. He had no forgotten what had happened to the two messengers whom he had sent to Illmorg for a bit of a tea" (Ngugi, p. 214). Ngugi (1977) emphasises his thoughts, as he wants to show the MP's true self who is only concerned about the results of the elections and his political power and capital and not concerned about his constituents who gave him that power. In a way, Ngugi (1977) has criticized democracy and its way of transitioning power to the elected officials who are not worthy of the power given to them. The novel *Petals of Blood* and its emphasis on power struggle and its circulation inside the country will be incomplete without talking about the war that leads to a bigger imbalance in the Kenyan community. The colonizers after occupying the country started a massive campaign of looting and using people as slaves to further their agendas that which led to a wave of massive anger among the native community. Native dresses, drinks and songs were banned, people were living in a highly censored place and their lives were dictated in each manner. As Ngugi (1977) writes, "It was a period of mass trial, mass murder and mass torture of the Kenyans" (p. 10). Life under the occupation was a living hell and few people had an idea to resist the colonizers.

Ngugi (1977) is not just affected by the Mau Mau rebellion like a normal Kenyan, he has seen the war and its horrors as his elder brother was a Mau Mau fighter and his village was destroyed by the government in response to their aid to the rebellion. So, he has seen and suffered the horrors of war, and this is depicted in many of his writings. As Ngugi (1977) says, "Only those that have grown up in war-ravaged times know deep down that wars never end; they just mutate and live on another form" (p. 11). The power struggle in the country took its turn to the worse when Mau Mau fighters killed some white people and the government responded by imposing an emergency and subjugating the people even more. The Mau Mau rebellion is central to the suffering of the present Kenyan society depicted in the novel. Ngugi (1977) has shown that the divide still exists in the society and the colonizers' taught curriculum has led to massive hatred for the Mau Mau fighters even though they were fighting for the freedom of the very same people. Ngugi (1977) shows the fear that people felt during the time of emergency as anyone caught with even a minor suspicion of helping the rebellion was hanged and his family was made to suffer. As Karega's father tells him in the novel, "Your sister is helping the Mau Mau. Can't you tell her? Can't you remind her what happened to her husband who has been caught with homemade guns" (Ngugi, p. 277-78). It was an age of terror and bloodshed.

When the Mau Mau started their activities, they were certain that they can gain freedom and the bloodshed that followed was perhaps not envisioned. The government came down hard on the people, it was primarily a battle of supremacy, and the colonizers needed the colony for its manpower and resources, and they were not ready to give it up. After the first few initial attacks, the government imposed an emergency and strict measures were allowed. Karega's sister's husband was caught making weapons and working for the Mau Mau rebellion and was executed. Those days were dangerous to live in Kenya, as a major suspicion would lead to imprisonment or execution. Concentration camps were set up where people were taken for questioning and inhumane measures were used with no regard for the prisoners' wellbeing. And those who survived all this were killed by diseases inside the concentration camps. As Abdullah's adopted son would later come to know about his father's involvement with the Mau Mau rebellion and his role in the fight against the colonizers and due to which he paid a heavy price, he felt proud of his father and wished that one day he can be like that, "When I grow and finish school and university, I want to be

like you: I would like to feel proud that I have done something for our people. You fought for the political independence of the country; I would like to contribute to the liberation of the people of this country” (Ngugi p. 403). Ngugi (1977) has used the novel to give a message that sometimes resistance becomes necessary, and one must stand for their right. When Mau Mau fought for the liberation of the country they fought for freedom and for giving the right of rule back to the Kenyans and Ngugi (1977) has a soft spot for the freedom fighters as he calls them heroes in his various writings. “I die for you, you die for me, and we become a sacrifice for one another. So, I can say that you, Karanja, are Christ. Everybody who takes the oath of Unity to change things in Kenya is Christ” (Ngugi, 1967, p. 93).

The Mau Mau rebellion is an important part of Kenya’s history and one cannot understand a post-colonial Kenya without understanding the events that took place during the rebellion. Kenya after the colonization endured mass brutalities and sufferings at the hand of the colonizers. Kenyans were made to work tirelessly in the slave camps and the working conditions were worse and the pay if they got any was the bare minimum. Ngugi (1977) himself lost his brother to the rebellion as he was killed by the government. Disease ran rampant and people died everywhere some by gunshot and some by disease in concentration camps. For Ngugi (1977) Mau Mau was an important link in the chain of the African struggle and how they fought for their freedom. Ngugi (1977) then discusses that rebellion may have won them their freedom from the colonizers but now a new enemy has been born in the form of new colonial overlords that are ruling Kenya. They have come under the disguise of Democracy and give people the illusion that they work for their benefit but, they are only helping themselves. Ngugi (1977) critiques neo-colonials and their practice of keeping the people of Kenya subjugated. Ngugi (1977) wants to see action and is calling for a second rebellion against neo-colonials. Because nothing has changed for the man on the ground. Ngugi (1977) shows life in Illmorg as an example that they did not have enough money when the colonizers were here.

### **Reclaiming the Lost African Culture, New Historicism and Ngugi’s Vision of Africa in *Petals of Blood***

There is a common theme of mourning for the lost culture throughout the world of previously occupied colonies and countries. Africa has suffered the most in this regard. For centuries different European colonial powers occupied the land and used it to propagate their interest and supply the host empire with manpower and supplies. They looted the colonized of their wealth and tried their best to rule them as long as they could. But it was not the theft of minerals or taking away their freedom that caused the most damage to the ecosystem of natives, it was the subjugation and destruction of their indigenous culture and the forced conversions. Africa was a very colourful place before the advent of colonization, they had their religion and norms. Festivals and elders were leading different tribes. In terms of landscape and historical value, Africa was a very different place to Europe, and this is something the colonizers envisioned to change. There were forced changes in their day-to-day activities and conduct, and the colonisers did not just introduce their traditions and cultures and even English as a language to suppress the local culture. Africa lost the unique touch it had about the world and was converted to a hybrid culture and European traditions. Throughout African literature, landscape and nationalism are most valuable. But it is a landscape which is the most important part of old African culture, as it is concerned about how the land is being used and the spiritual values attached to that land. African cultures were embedded in their landscape, and their nationalism, and Pan-Africanism all emerged from the land; therefore, land has the primary importance in African culture. It’s the land that identifies a community’s spiritual, social and political identity. For Ngugi (1977), and other African writers land is a prominent and important figure.

Ngugi’s (1977) vision of landscape is also affected by other factors, as he was a member of the Gikuyu community, one of the largest native communities in Kenya. Gikuyu

formed the bulk of the Mau Mau fighters and was not liked by the government. When the Gikuyu community was displaced from its native land of white highlands, Ngugi (1977) like many others from his community felt a longing for the ancestral land and it became one of the central reasons why land and its effects on culture became an important part of his writings. Ngugi (1977) thought much like a new historicist that literature is affected by external powers such as social and political but also the economics of the time, "New historicism deals with the textuality of history and the historicity of texts" (Mambrol, 2016). The same is true for the new historicist approach of understanding the culture by studying the texts of the time but also by understanding the social and economic problems occurring at the time. When we talk about colonized Africa and the literature written at the time, for a new historicist, the writing of the time has to be studied with colonialism in mind, the country is subjugated and suppressed. It will affect the writings and literature of the time as new historicist accounts for a writer's subjectivity, "Literature must be studied and interpreted within the context of both histories of the author and the history of the critic" (Christensen, 2022). That is why suppression, bloodshed, rebellion, and nationalism have been the main themes of African literature during colonialism and after colonialism. For the Gikuyu people, the land was not central to their economy and spirituality but also to their religion. So, the land was an important part of their connection with their gods and after the advent of neo-colonialism in Africa, it was endangered by the greed of the corporations and local elite whose only concern was making money.

Ngugi (1977) shows this love for the land in his novel *Petals of Blood*, when the primary setting of the novel is a small village of Illmorg whose population's entire livelihood is dependent on the usage of land for agriculture but at the same time, they are very considerate of land and weary of strangers. When the government builds a highway there, it is not liked the community and then the neo-colonizers come and start to buy the native land. They build businesses and factories there. The locals and the elders of the village show resistance to these new schemes of modernity. The entire story of the novel can relate to the land as droughts come and affect the people, they starve, and they organize dances in their fields to ask the gods for rain, "Ngugi generations were even conceived, gave up their horns and humps to god in ritual for rain" (Ngugi, 1977, p. 88). The heavy rains come, and they ask for them to be stopped so that they can sow the seeds. The songs of harvest and the emptiness of the village at harvest time and the interactions between Munira and Abdullah about the crops in the bar are the highlights of the novel. Ngugi (1977) has depicted the native culture and things such as land and traditions that played a bigger part in the African lifestyle and at the same time uses the novel to criticize the neo-colonial approach of the government as well as the lost local culture of the country.

## Conclusion

This research focused on reconceptualizing Ngugi's (1977) postcolonial and anticolonial novel, *Petals of Blood* through the lens of new historicism and found that the novelist purposefully makes Kenya's colonial past a significantly prominent theme of his novel. Indeed, "the postcolonial theory put forward the idea that colonial literature omitted the history of the colonized by silencing them" (Iqbal, 2021, p. 12) and the same has been pointed out in Ngugi's novel, which has effectively questioned and overhauled the centuries-old colonial narratives written about Africa and its people by showing resistance not only to colonial and neo-colonial forces but also to the feudal lords who proved to be the new masters for their people in the name of democratic norms.



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