



NEOCOLONIALISM, NAIPAUL AND NGUGI: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT:

Scholars tend to place Ngugi and Naipaul's essays on post-independence Africa in the perspective of post-colonialism. In this paper, an attempt has been made to compare both writers using neocolonialism as a theoretical framework. Both the authors are found portraying problems faced by the post-independent African society besides the degeneration, malfeasance and corruptness in the African government – the authors' assertions concerning the turmoil may be pointed differed due to their differing perspectives. The current scenario, according to Ngugi, was brought about by the entire system of imperialism, capitalism, and colonialism. Naipaul, on the other hand, attributed it to the African people's deep-seated depravity.

Keywords: Neocolonialism, Postcolonialism, Ngugi, Naipaul.

INTRODUCTION:

After WWII, the end of the colonial system and the freedom gained by several countries in the African continent may be pointed out, did not lead to an inevitable surrender of European imperial authority. Several amalgamations of economic, political, military, and ideological factors underlined the continuing Western dominance. In the 1960s and 1970s, this new form of colonisation grew popular. It may be observed that Nkrumah affirms that in "place of colonialism, as the main instrument of imperialism, we have today neo-colonialism. [...] 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" (*Neo-Colonialism*,x). It may be remarked that authors, V. S. Naipaul and Ngugi wa Thiong'o have come out with specific observations on the ramifications of neo-

colonialism through their works – in Third World countries. The writers have focused on issues like decolonization of the mind and exile.

NEOCOLONIALISM, NAIPAUL AND NGUGI:

Scholars tend to place Ngugi and Naipaul's essays on post-independence Africa in the perspective of post-colonialism. Neo-colonialism stresses colonialism's persistence, whereas postcolonialism mostly obscures the fact that colonialism still persists, albeit in various and intricate patterns. By taking a resistance position, the latter carries a powerful scholarly status, i.e., susceptible to overlooking the various forms of colonialism.

Not only academicians, but also literary critics and writers, were concerned in Africa in this worldwide environment. Sartre and Fanon, for example, used their works and social actions to voice their opposition to the new type of imperialism. In their works, Naipaul and Ngugi replied in distinct ways. Ngugi eloquently demonstrated that the imperialists controlled the African socio-political and economical conditions, albeit in a shady manner. Moreover, the author expresses that a peasant and labour-class revolution might develop positiveness in the African mind. Consequently, it may be remarked that V. S. Naipaul, on the other hand, seemed sceptical about the prospects of the Africans. Naipaul blames Africa's post-independence failure on the continent's people's deep-seated depravity. This biased observation upon African culture and showing favouritism towards European civilization seems to be rooted in Naipaul's intellectual orientation and educational background. Moreover, on the other hand, Ngugi's critique of 'neo-colonialism' was regarded as a mandate for freedom for the homeland through revolution, whereas V. S. Naipaul's connection to Western culture and his mistrust towards the Africans made his condemnation of 'neo-colonialism' more unsystematic than Ngugi's.

It may be remarked that through comparing and contrasting the views of Naipaul and Ngugi, this study probes into the literary depictions of neo-colonialism. A conflict may be observed concerning Naipaul's and Ngugi's opinions on neo-colonialism. This is basically due to their opposing viewpoints. Both the authors are found portraying problems faced by the post-independent

African society besides the degeneration, malfeasance and corruptness in the African government – the authors' assertions concerning the turmoil may be pointed differed due to their differing perspectives. The current scenario, according to Ngugi, was brought about by the entire system of imperialism, capitalism, and colonialism. Naipaul, on the other hand, attributed it to the African people's deep-seated depravity. Ngugi saw revolution as the only option for the indigenous to (re)gain independence and being exploited by the foreigner. But, V.S. Naipaul appears to have felt the option of 'revolution' as an unwise, senseless, and inhuman action. Subsequently, it may be noted that Naipaul and Ngugi used various narrators to describe a similar civilization.

Ngugi communicated his critique of Western schooling on the African mind besides his anticipation for a promising revolt lead by the indigenous intelligentsia like Karega through the narrations of the two intellectuals in his work. There was an inner monologue within this narrative frame that revealed the protagonists' reminiscences and insights which become vital to moral transformations. A third person limited narrative is generally linked with most of the monologues.

Ngugi believes that Africa's bourgeoisie was a diverse group with various threads. There was a segment that hoped for a long-term collaboration with imperialism, in which it would act as a go-between for the proletariat of the European cosmopolitan and the indigenous. This strand included important African leaders such as Mzigo, Kimera, and Chui, who played a pivotal part in the development of neo-colonization subsequently assuming socio-political power in post-independence societies. Munira's allegiance to the imperialists, on the other hand, was shaky. Ngugi grew "more and more critical, cynical, disillusioned, bitter, and denunciatory in tone, alienated from the peasants and working class on the one hand, and unable to be a true part of the imperialism on the other". (*Decolonising*, 21)

Ngugi uses a collective African voice to express the overall opposition to neocolonial operations. Ilmorog was thrust into the forefront of rapid expansion and modernization with the construction of the Trans-African route. People's land was taken away; shopping centres, tourism centres, and other

infrastructure were built; and various machinery and measurement tools were used to enhance the economy. The Ilmorog people were powerless to resist these developments and had no choice but to accept them.

Ngugi depicted historical situations from the collective point of view, expressing the deep feelings of ordinary Africans about the encroachment of foreign forces. The Africans exhibited their feeble resistance and surprise as the machinery swept the whole thing in the mode of business and advancement, including the huts. "We stood there watching the machines thunder toward Mwathi's house. It can't be, we said. They did, however, draw closer to it. We predicted that Mwathi's fire would consume them. [...] Mwathi, on the other hand, was nowhere to be found. Mwathi was not present. We assumed he had fled and braced ourselves for his wrath. We speculated that he might not have been present at all". (Ngugi, *Petals* 315) This was not an individual's voice; however a huge group's voice who had witnessed their landholdings snatched away and homes demolished.

As it comes to the case of Naipaul projection, his narrators served as a proof to a degeneration of Africa and therefore as a critique to define – who must be held guilty for the existing socio-cultural and economical catastrophe. It may be stated that in accordance to Said's *Orientalism*, V.S. Naipaul has attempted in portraying one of his characters as "members of valiant Third World minorities, "allowing him to "quite purposefully" be "transformed into a witness for the Western prosecution" (53), thereby gaining power to make assessors. From a critical perspective, Naipaul appears to have given his storyteller, Salim, the authority to charge Africans in lieu of the mayhem. Consequently, the various storytellers created by Ngugi generate trustworthiness and factual stories. On the other hand, Naipaul's are unbalanced. More proof can be discovered in the parallels between the narrator and the presumed author.

Ngugi, instead, opposed colonial plunder under the pretext of religious redemption, socio-economic assistance and educational support. Keeping the socio-economical condition in view, Naipaul appears to have asserted that the African economy had been wrecked by Africans' corruption, incompetence, and

hunger for violence. For Ngugi, the decline of the African economy was caused by the entire system of imperialism and capitalism.

When it came to the nature and function of education, Naipaul considered that Africans were too wicked to be educated. Because of their terrible character, African pupils, like Ferdinand, would become the successors to the corrupted administration, ensuring that corruption would persist. Ngugi, on the other hand, showed the role of educational institutions in establishing colonial dominance besides preserving the neo-colonial structure, along with – how indigenous intelligentsia were trained in the European methods of fighting against the system and steered the revolution in Africa. Most educated individuals, like Munira, evolved into “efficient machines for administering a colonial system” (Sicherman, *Ngugiwa* 20). They ultimately turned out to be agents of neo-colonialism. This, according to Sicherman, was accomplished by separating the pupils from Africans, particularly their background as farmworkers. One another well-known character, Karega, is found to have been portrayed as Africa’s hope, actively engaging with the proletariat.

They also had opposing religious narratives as a result of their differing perceptions. The western Christianity was superior and its goal was clean due to the narrator’s pro-European tendencies. Father Huisman, in Salim’s opinion, delivered progress to a bleak Africa. “I began to think of him as a pure man. His presence in our town comforted me. His attitudes, his interests, his knowledge, added something to the place, made it less barren” (Naipaul, *Bend* 62). The Africans, instead, remained vicious and ultimately assassinated ‘Father Huisman’ in a violent and crude manner.

Female voices were silenced in Naipaul’s novel *A Bend in the River*. Under the eyes of the male narrator Salim, three types of female characters are shown: the mother figure, the African women and the Western lady. Naipaul addressed his bias towards women, particularly African women, through the narrator Salim.

Ngugi employs even his female characters, as revolutionary weapons; while Naipaul is found employing women characters to keep the imperial and patriarchal order in place. Women oppressed by males and Africans abused by

colonists share the same conceptual foundation in *Petals of Blood*. Women are labelled “oppressed” for the reason that they have been subjugated in addition dominated. The Subaltern countries were also subjugated on the same basis: colonial and/or imperial powers exploited and ruled them.

CONCLUSION:

Despite the fact that both Ngugi and Naipaul portray the dreadful circumstances that Africa faces after independence, their perspectives on the colonialist's new mechanism of manipulating as well as governing Africa are vastly diverse in nature. Naipaul and Ngugi offer opposing narratives on neo-colonialism, each from a different standpoint. The numerous narrators in Ngugi's film allow diverse Africans to tell their own stories, plights, and rebellions. The narration of Naipaul hushes the African voice and denigrates their movement. A prejudiced and limited storyteller can only see the chaos and corruption of post-independence society, and cannot see the imperialists' continued rule of Africa. Ngugi blames it on neo-colonial exploitation, whereas Naipaul blames it on the African people's immorality.

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