

# NEO-COLONIALISM AS VIEWED IN Ngugi Wa Thiong'O's *Devil on the Cross*

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## Abstract

The present work aims at operationalizing the concept of Neo-colonialism in order to enable an approximate measurement of its existence in a fictional society. The work discloses the newly discovered system of exploitation, currently applied upon black natives under their unawareness. The system consists of initiating the elites of the society, i.e. the ruling class, to exploit illegally their citizens for the welfare of imperialists and their local watchdogs. In order to reach our goal, a conceptual framework covering criteria of economic, political and cultural influence of the former colonial powers on the ex-colonies is established and applied to a case study-Fictional Kenya.

**Keywords:** Cultural exploitation-Economic exploitation-Political exploitation-Social and sexual exploitations.

## Résumé

Ce travail vise à explorer scientifiquement les possibilités de fonctionnement du concept 'Neocolonialism' en vue de permettre une évaluation approximative de son existence dans une société imaginaire. Cet article décèle l'actuel système d'exploitation illégal des nègres et leurs ressources par les impérialistes et leurs marionnettes sous l'inconscience de ces derniers. Ce système consiste à initier les élites africaines, c'est-à-dire, la classe bourgeoise africaine à exploiter illégalement le prolétariat pour le bien-être des impérialistes et leurs marionnettes africains. En vue d'atteindre notre objectif, nous nous sommes décidé de mener une étude approfondie sur l'influence économique, politique, culturelle et sociale des pays métropoles sur leurs ex-colonies. De ce fait, nous avons préféré appliquer ces critères sur le Kenya imaginaire.

**Mots-clés:** Exploitation culturelle-exploitation économique- exploitation politique-exploitation sociale-exploitation sexuelle.

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## INTRODUCTION

The main concern in this research is Neo-colonialism throughout Ngugi Wa Thiong'O's *Devil on the Cross*. The concept 'Neo-colonialism' means the geopolitical practice of using capitalism, business globalization and cultural imperialism to influence a country. It is the continuation of the economic model of colonialism after a colonized territory has achieved formal political independence. The concept was applied most commonly to Africa in the later half of the twentieth century. European countries had economic exploitation in which African raw materials, particularly cash crops and minerals were expropriated and exported to the sole benefit of the colonizing power. The idea of neo-colonialism, however, suggests that when European powers granted nominal political independence to colonies in the decades after World War II, they continued to control the economies of the new african countries.

According to Jean Paul Sartre (2001:03) in his book 'Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism', and Noam Chomsky (1979:42), in his 'The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism'; in post-colonial studies, the term neo-colonialism describes the influence of countries from developed world in the respective internal affairs of decolonization that occurred in the aftermath of the Second World War (1939-1945) the colonial powers continued to apply existing and past international economic arrangement with their colony countries, and maintain their control.

The political science term '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 (1939-1945). Neo-Colonialism became the standard term describing a type of foreign intervention because of its practical and historical application to the international economic, social and political affairs of the countries of the usage in the Bandung Conference –Asia-African Conference) in 1955, from which derived the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961. The formal definition of 'neo-colonialism' was established by the All-Africans People's Conference (AAPC) and published in the 'Revolution on Neo-colonialism' of the organization. At the Tunis Conference (1960), and at the Cairo Conference (1961), the AAPC specifically identified as Neo-colonial behaviour, the actions of the French community of independent states which was organized by France. *Neo-colonialism, the last stage of imperialism* (1965:98) by **Kwame Nkrumah**.

Ngugi describes Neo-colonialism, the last stage of imperialism, as a new system of colonization discovered by western people and currently applied upon black Africans to exploit them via the neocolonial leadership. In *Devil on the Cross*, the major incident is set between fictional Kenyans representing the black natives. In fact, Neo-colonialism is relevant in the novel. It is obviously viewed through the novel that workers and peasants are exploited in miscellaneous ways by the neo-colonial ruling class, i.e., imperialists via their puppets. Theft, robbery, corruption, violence, etc. are the different

aspects that specify the manner in which neo-colonizers ill-treat the working class. The exploiters use priests and pastors to defeat workers and peasants. As stated in the novel, schools, churches and mosques are places where workers and peasants are given brainwashing poison: the interpretation of the gospel in the favour of neo-colonialism. Priests and pastors tell the workers to endure in suffering for they will have a reward in heaven: "Happy are the poor since heaven is theirs." (Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross* p.188). So, black natives are not aware of the foreigners' cunningness and thus, they cannot react against injustice due to exploitation. However, the workers and peasants' conscience is later awoken thanks to some educated people who are appointed leaders and spokespeople of the society. Therefore, the population decides to react against the corrupted neo-colonial government. Ngugi denounces the disturbing economic, social and political exploitation for it can never contribute to the welfare of the African societies. He is against the degrading treatment of the neo-colonial leadership not only in Kenya, but also in most African countries.

As far as neo-colonialism is concerned in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross*, we find that theft, violence and capitalism are typical for the ruling class. These aspects of exploitation are sustained by corruption and bribery. Consequently, black natives are victims of this harmful situation. Thus, taking into account all these elements, a number of questions rise in our mind: Why does neo-colonialism remain persistent? What are the root-causes and effects of neo-colonialism? Can silence bring solution to the problems of neo-colonialism?

Our assumption is that the departure of white colonies from African countries does not indicate the end of colonization. It coincides, however, with a class of a new system of exploitation of black natives by same colonizers via and even together with the neo-colonial administration. Like in the colonial period, neo-colonizers have set a neo-colonial puppet government and imposed Christianity, their education and languages to black natives because they knew these were efficient weapons to blind them and to eradicate their culture as well.

In the same perspective, we assume that greed and selfishness of the ruling class are the key-factors that favour neo-colonialism. The uncommitted leaders are much interested in satisfying their needs rather than working for the welfare of their people. As a matter of fact, workers and peasants are exploited for the benefit of neo-colonizers and their puppets.

We assume that the triumph and salvation of natives must result from their common effort and their unity in the struggle against not only the neo-colonialists, but also their puppets with determinism until victory is won. To reach this, they have to pass from passivity to action for their salvation resides in the opinions that they have to express at all costs.

In order to reach the target of this research, we are going to apply the sociocriticism analysis, the documentary approach, the thematic analysis and John Peck's approach. As long as we are analyzing a fictional work, it would be impossible to achieve this research without making recourse to 'sociocriticism'. In fact, 'sociocriticism' is an analytic approach of literary facts which linger over the social universe within a text. It takes into consideration the textual structures together with the social context from which they are issued. In Ngugi's novel, 'Devil on the Cross', sociocriticism helps us to experiment social problems like capitalism, different aspects of exploitation like theft, corruption, sexual harassment,...

The documentary approach which consists of reading numerous books of various types related to our subject so as to be supplied with the means other writers used to treat the problem of neo-colonialism. Afterwards, this approach has also enabled us to cope with the theme of our study. In the same perspective, we have also referred to the thematic analysis for the meticulous achievement of the present research. Indeed, in the practical use of this approach, we have read the novel 'Devil on the Cross' a number of times in order to collect information related to our research.

Likewise, referring to John Peck's approach, in his critic book "*How to Study a Novel*" (1983: p.3), in order to understand a work of art, a critic should look for different oppositions which exist in that work. According to Peck, the world faces up a lot of elements which are in tension. These oppositions can be between something good and evil, peace and war, love and hatred, strength and weakness, order and disorder, capitalism and communism, elitism and socialism, virtue and vice, life and death, etc. Most of the elements mentioned above are noticed in the novel of our study, some of them will be taken into account in this research.

As stated by Peck, if a reader focusses his/her ideas on the contrasting relationships in his/her reading of a work, he/she is on the way to understand the work and cope with the theme as well.

## **I: CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION**

In Ngugi's '*Devil on the Cross*', problems of exploitation are situated at different levels including:

### **I.1. Cultural level: westernization**

In *Devil on the Cross*, Ngugi depicts a country in the hands of wealthy bourgeoisie, which is fascinated by western ways, and therefore, blindly apes and imitates the colonizers' ideas as well as customs, names, and language. Indeed, he demonstrates that imperialists use Christianity, their language and education as weapons to weaken and at least to eradicate the indigenous culture. He depicts this idea in the novel through Kihahu wa Gatheeca's testimony as follows:

*As for my children, I have quite a few. All of them speak English through the nose, exactly like people born and brought up in England. If you were to hear them speak Gikuyu or Kiswahili, you would laugh until you pissed yourself. It is so funny. They speak the two languages as if they were Indian priests newly arrived from Rome-Priest without mind that they speak their national languages like Italian foreigners. P. 109*

Through the depiction of a westernized and thus burlesque African bourgeoisie, the narrator describes the process by which, the colonized subjects are reproduced as almost the same, but not quite as the colonizers. In *Devil on the Cross*, the thieves and robbers as well as Gaturia's father are seen as blindly copying Europeans and in so doing, mimic them. They adopt the western behaviour; customs and especially modes of speech, but often appear pitiful regarding social, cultural etiquettes that betray their African origins. It is important to note that such a mimicry and aping of western manners is shameful for Kenyans, a microcosm of Africans. There is nothing as terrible as people who have swallowed foreign customs whole without even chewing them, for such people become mere parrots. Ngugi denounces this attitude in the novel (1982), namely '*Devil on the Cross*' through Gaturia's utterances as follows:

*Our culture...sorry, I mean, our culture has been dominated by the western imperialistic cultures. That is what we call in English, 'cultural imperialism'. Cultural imperialism is mother to the slavery of the mind and the body. It is cultural imperialism that gives birth to the mental blindness and deafness that persuades people to allow foreigners to tell them what to do in their own country, to make foreigners the ears and mouths of their national affairs...p.58*

In the novel, the narrator shows an african-centered consciousness and focuses his analysis on the importance of African culture and literature. As he suggests, cultural liberation is an essential condition for political liberation. The loss of African cultures makes black natives from the fictional Kenya apply the western imperialistic cultures blindly and this results in the slavery of the mind and the body.

In colonial Kenya, missionaries and colonial administrators controlled schools, universities, publishing houses, and even the contents of books.

Apart from that, Kenyans were forced to speak English to forget their native languages. Regarding the colonial and neo-colonial impact on Kenyan people in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* (1982), Gaturia says the following:

*Let us look about us. Where are our national languages now? Where are the books written in the alphabet of our national languages? Where is our literature now? Where is wisdom and*

*knowledge of our fathers now? Where is the philosophy of our fathers now? Our stories, our riddles, our songs, our customs, our traditions, everything about our national heritage has been lost to us. P 58.*

As previously mentioned, the colonial system as the neo-colonial one, produce a people uprooted from the masses. Both systems encourage a slave mentality with a reverent respect for the achievement of Europe. In this way, African values are destroyed through the so-called “civilization”. As it can be seen through the above quotation, the colonial system aims to the suppression of the African culture. The acceptance of the western languages, religions and education by Kenyans made the end to their cultures.

## **I.2. Economic level: capitalism**

In his analysis of social facts, Ngugi starts by focusing his attention on the economic conditions and the social classes that constitute the social structure of the society. According to Marxist terminology, Ngugi sees “capitalism” as an unfair system where “the loss of the masses is the gain of the few”. (Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross*: p.105), a system that is the root cause of the political and economic problems that affect post-colonial African countries. In the same perspective, the narrator argues that the system of self-interest in the neo-colonial period is inherited from imperialists. He demonstrates this in *Devil on the Cross* (1982) through the following passage:

*These countries are finding it difficult to starve off poverty for the simple reason that they have taken it upon themselves to learn how to run their economies from American experts. So they have been taught the principle and system of self-interest and have been told to forget the ancient songs that glorify the notion of collective good. They have been taught new songs, new hymns that celebrate the acquisition of money. p.15.*

Indeed, as a post-colonial literary text, *Devil on the Cross*, particularly emphasizes the interconnectedness and uniqueness of african literature and political discourses. In the novel, the city of Ilmorog stands for all Kenya, and Kenya stands for all Africa. Fictional Kenya is transformed into a proto capitalist society where exploitation, social inequality, corruption, and misery have divided Kenyans along class lines. In the quotation here above, the narrator makes it clear that **Capitalism** was brought to Kenya, a microcosm of Africa, by imperialists and colonialism, and most of all it seeks to change Kenyan society as well as Kenyan politics and economy. The narrator clearly conveys this fact through the description of Kenyan cities:

*Nairobi is large, soulless and corrupt. The same is true of all the cities in every country that recently slipped the noose of colonialism. (Ngugi, Devil on the Cross: p.15).*

In the novel, the descriptions of postcolonial Kenyan society are shaped by some specific circumstances and situations, including introduction and development of Capitalism, and the post-independence alienation and disillusionment of Kenyan people. The economic system of Capitalism under neo-colonialism is developed through theft and robbery, etc.

Through the depiction of neo-colonial capitalist system in Kenya, Ngugi raises theft and robbery among aspects characterizing the neo-colonial African elite and leadership. According to him, the African ruling class is composed of the most educated, rich and powerful people of the society. As it can be viewed in “*Devil on the Cross*”, the representatives of such a social category of people are the thieves and robbers who perform at Devil’s Feast in Ilmorog; a sort of competition-conference where the best thieves and robbers of Kenya are gathered and tell their stories and parables to justify their professional expertise in exploitation and criminal activities in neo-colonial Kenya. Ngugi depicts this fact in the novel as follows:

*Every competitor will mount the platform, and he will tell us how he first came to steal and rob and where he has stolen and robbed ... You, the listeners, will act as the judges, so you must clap for each speaker to show how inspired you have been by his account of his earthly wiles. P.87.*

In an allegorical form, the Devil’s Feast attests the economic exploitation of Kenyan peasants and workers by foreign companies and the neo-colonial greedy Kenyan bourgeoisie. The “competitor to choose the seven cleverest modern thieves and robbers” (Ngugi, *Devil on the cross* p.68) of Kenya represents a highest level of economic exploitation in the country. The creation of the Devil’s feast and competition provides Ngugi with space and means to disclose the banality of power in neo-colonial African society.

In *Devil on the Cross*, the narrator clearly shows that the African leadership and the imperialists are tightly united in the system of theft and robbery and have a common doctrine. He depicts this idea in the novel through the following lines:

*The beatitude of the rich and the imperialists go like this:  
Blessed is he who bites and soothes,  
Because he will never be found out  
Blessed is the man who burns down another man’s house.  
And in morning, joins him in grief,  
For he shall be called merciful.  
Blessed is the man who robs another of five shillings  
And then gives him back half a shilling for salt  
For he shall be called generous....P. 209.*

Having a look through this quotation, we easily notice that one of the methods of neo-colonialism is the foreign aid. The inability in the economies to develop after independence soon led many African countries to enlist this aid. Believers in the effects of neo-colonialism feel that accepting loans from Europe or America proves the link between independent African governments and exploitative forces of former colonies. They note as evidence that most foreign aid is given in the form of loans, bearing high rates of interest. Repayment of these loans contributes to the underdevelopment of African economies because the collection of interest ultimately impoverishes African people.

From the quotation above, one understands that neo-colonial leaders together with their masters, i.e. the imperialists encourage cruelty. It is clear that they consider proletaria as idiots whom they mindlessly ill-treat and exploit in various ways and thereafter, they hypocritically come to soothe them by offering them the least of their stolen properties.

Worse still, the “imperialist watchdogs, the children of the Devil” (Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross* p.196), create enterprises where they pen workers like animals, aiming to relish and export their income. The narrator highlights this aspect in *Devil on the Cross* as follows:

*Our drinking of the blood of workers, our milking of their sweat, our devouring of their brains-these three activities should be put on a scientific basis...*

*The three commodities will then be exploited to foreign countries to feed industries there.*

*For every gallon of sweat, or blood, or brain, Kimeenderi will get commission at fixed rate. P. 187.*

Indeed, the ideas raised in the extract reflect the narrator’s view of the neo-colonial leadership. By describing Kimeenderi’s plans, the narrator gives to the readers the image of the post-colonial African elite. He depicts a country in the hands of the wealthy bourgeoisie, which is fascinated by western ways, and therefore, ape to colonizers’ ideals as well as customs aiming at filling their bellies by depriving workers of their rights: “*You sterile bastards: you sold your country for the sake of your bellies*” (Ngugi, *Devil on the cross* p.138).



## II: POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATIONS

### II.1. Political level

In *Devil on the Cross*, neo-colonial Kenyan society of the novel is described as mainly dominated by the local elite whose actions and conduct are responsible for most social, economic and political changes. It is important to note that these “local watchdogs” (Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross*, p.97), are those who have money and political power. They are represented through the thieves and robbers who perform at Devil’s Feast. They are those who have taken the political leadership of the country directly from British colonizers.

Indeed, they are the representatives of the “vile class of men who are determined to oppress the whole land” (Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross*, p.183) and “have enriched themselves on the sweat and blood of the workers” (p.187). They are characterized by political corruption, embezzlement and abuse of power.

#### II.1.1. Corruption and embezzlement

It is mostly the testimony of Kihaahu wa Gathecca that shows how local elites gain political power and use it to increasingly exploit workers and peasants and to embezzle the public funds. Kihaahu wa Gathecca not only saw that in neo-colonial Kenya, “as soon as people accumulated property, they all wanted to enter parliament” (Ngugi, *Devil on the cross*, p.114), but also that politics “was the basis of profit for modern Kenyan Bourgeoisie” (p.112). So, Gathecca uses his political position only to run his personal affairs and obtain more riches. All his political actions are directed on exploitation, corruption, bribery, embezzlement and financial blackmail. This idea is highlighted in Ngugi’s novel (p.1982), namely *Devil on the Cross*, as follows:

*I hardly need to tell you that after two years, the millions that I’d invested in the election campaign had yielded quite a tidy sum. And you will note, I hadn’t shed a drop of sweat. All money came from the very people who had voted for me. How? Because it was their tax that would go to pay the money borrowed from foreigner banks.*  
P. 116.

Kihaahu wa Gathecca is a prototype of the neo-colonial elite. He has learned its skills from the Europeans and now he continues to embezzle the country’s fund. The passage here above shows how the members of the political elite grab the political power for their own interest and use their political offices for personal ends and benefits. The great expressing need of money and power is the primordial concern of these so-called new masters. Consequently, their attempt to satisfy the great desire of money leads to a social crisis such as corruption, bribery, dishonesty, etc.

Another aspect of corruption and bribery as depicted by Ngugi in “*Devil on the Cross*” occurs when the Rich Old Man from Ngoriko; that is Gaturia’s father decides to

pay Wariunga's uncle a plot and nice house on the condition that in return, uncle will offer him Wariinga as his concubine. The narrator highlights this idea in the novel (p.142), through these lines:

*A wealthy man from Ngorika got him a house on hire purchase...and then introduced him to a bank manager, who loaned him money for the initial deposit. The same wealthy man from Ngorika got him a piece of land near the Sambugo scheme. You give; I give, so goes the saying. A good feast calls for a return feast. In the same way, uncle did not simply pick up good fortune from the ground for free. Oh, no, he promised his wealthy friend from Ngorika some 'veal' of 'spring chicken'. Wariinga was going to be the chicken whose feathers would be plucked one by one, leaving the flesh naked and unhampered, soft food for a toothless old man. p.142.*

Indeed, this passage clarifies that the capitalistic leads to immoral society since it does not care with ethical values. Thus, capitalism encourages corruption, bribery and embezzlement as well. In the system, only money matters. Capitalism within neo-colonialism has brought Kenya, a microcosm of Africa, to the loss of human values. We firmly deplore the attitude of the fictional Kenya. Its former principles of love, unity and solidarity among kinsmen have changed to zero generosity. The new principle is now 'you give me, I give you' (Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross*, p.142). From this excerpt, one easily understands that bribery is what leads the fictional Kenya. We can see that the whole bourgeoisie, that is, neo-colonial elite and leadership is corrupt up to the level that even one exchanges his own kid with evil interest. Search for interest has prevailed on humanity.

### **II.1.2. Abuse of power**

In his analysis of the impact of political independence on Kenyan people, the narrator argues that this independence has been usurped by neo-colonial African elites. They have taken power from the British but do not attempt to change the political and socio-economic structures of the colonial system. Moreover, this new ruling class uses its position only to gain more power and enrich itself at the expenses of peasants and workers. Apart from that, this imperialist puppet government has embraced capitalism and this fact leaves the country open to political oppression and abuse of power as well. This idea is depicted in Ngugi's novel as follows:

*I was taken to court this very morning, charged with intending to steal and with roaming about Nairobi without a house and without being a resident of the city, without a job, without a house and without a permission. Vagrancy or something like that, that is what they called it. but our people, think, I, Wangari; a Kenyan by birth-*

*how can I be a vagrant in my own country? How can I be charged with vagrancy in my own country as if I were a foreigner? I denied both charges: to look for a work is not a crime. p.43.*

Through this extract, Wangari depicts a country in the hands of a wealthy elite and leadership who manage it the way they want. According to him, these “slaves of foreigners” (p.43) think that the country is a private property, that is to say, it belongs only to the bourgeoisie. And whoever does not belong to that class does not have right to circulate in public places. Significantly, one understands that, in such a country, the proletariat is left at the mercy of the ruling class that abuses at its position to oppress, intimidate and traumatize workers and peasants.

It is obvious that, in neo-colonial Kenya, a microcosm of Africa, all the military interventions are aimed to protect the imperialists’ interests and those of their puppets. In other words, local and foreigners members of the system tightly united and courageously help each other to terrorize and therefore to silence or even kill every individual who tries to prevent them from fulfilling their aim. Likewise, they abusively victimize patriots, aiming to protect ogre as painfully and bitterly depicted by the narrator in Ngugi’s novel through the following words:

*As a worker, I know very well that the forces of law and order are on the side of those who rob the workers of the products of their sweat, of those who steal food and land from the peasants..., yes, they protected the eaters from the wrath of the thirsty and hungry. Have you ever seen employers being attacked by the armed forces for refusing to increase the salaries of their workers? What about when the workers go on strike? And they have audacity to talk about violence! Who plants the seeds of violence in this country? Have I ever seen the police being sent to silence the rich? P. 204.*

Concretely, in this excerpt, Ngugi’s criticism focusses on the neo-colonial Kenyan leadership whose military actions have no positive impact on the protection of the masses’ right. However, the so-called loyal forces are only displayed for a unique service: to silence or to quiet the defenders of human rights. Military bases established in neo-colonial Africa are not aimed to keep peace in the newly independent African countries, but they are displayed to provide favourable access to raw materials by imperialists via their puppet government.

## **II.2. Social level: class division, social inequalities and elitism**

As capitalism is a global and worldwide phenomenon, Ngugi’s depiction of post-colonial Kenyan society shows that also in a post-colonial environment such as Africa, Class division, social inequality and elitism are what lead people’s lives. Therefore, it is not surprising that in neo-colonial Kenya, there is, “he who lives by his own sweat and he who lives by the sweat of others” (Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross*, p.57).

Ngugi's class analysis shows that the division between the "haves" and the have nots" (Ngugi, *Home Coming* xvii) reflects what existed between the colonizers and the colonized. In other words, post-independence Kenya, standing for neo-colonial Africa, displays the same social and economic divisions that characterized Kenyan society under colonization. According to Ngugi, this is understandable in the sense that the Kenyan bourgeoisie is manufactured by the British, and form a social elite, African in blood and colour, but European in ideas, opinions, in struggle and in state. Ngugi's social and moral scheme is explicitly elaborated in his novel "*Devil on the Cross*", by one of the members of the working class, Muturi, who argues:

*Listen, our lives are battlefield on which was fought a continuous war between the forces that are pledged to confirm our humanity and those determined to dismantle it; those who strive to build a protective wall around it, and those committed to breaking it up; those whose aim is to open our eyes, to make us see the light and look to tomorrow, asking ourselves about the future of our children, and those who wish to lull us into closing our eyes, encouraging us to care only for our stomach today, without thinking about the tomorrow of our country. p.53.*

Deliberately, through the above utterances, the narrator is depicting the bilateral segmentation of social classes as framed by Marx in his extensive analysis of modern capitalism. In *Devil on the Cross*, the capitalist class division and opposition between bourgeoisie and proletariat is clear and recognizable. In fact, the fictional Kenyan society has the misfortune of moving from one oppressive situation or regime (colonialism) to the post-independence despotic, semi-dictatorial, and corrupted rule of the new African elite, where social differentiation and economic inequality between classes is the norm.

Obviously, In *Devil on the Cross*, Ngugi intends to reflect the disgusting situation of post-colonial Kenyan society as well as the manifestation of inherited colonial attitude characterizing neo-colonial Kenya, that is, neo-colonialism and capitalist society based on political and economic inequality between social classes. Ngugi as well, depicts this issue in the novel by Mwireri, one of "national experts in theft and robbery" as follows:

*So, I would like to say this: I am very sure that people can never be equal like teeth. Human nature has injected inequality... there are some who are VIPs by nature, natural managers of wealth, and others who trash, natural destroyers of wealth...some people, the majority, can only be dragged into modern society with a rope around their necks or a string through their noses, while other, the few, are born to do the pulling. There are two types of human being*

*in every country: the manager and the managed, the man who gives, and the man who wants to receive. p. 78-79.*

Simultaneously, Ngugi shows the social division and the economic gap between the characters. On one hand, we have Wariinga, Wangari and Muturi, who represent the proletariat, that is, the workers, peasants and students of the fictional Kenya. They are oppressed and exploited as well by the capitalist system imported in Africa by the colonizers and that is now part of neo-colonialism. On the other hand, there are the elite or the members of the local bourgeoisie who hold political and economic power and therefore, rule the country. However, as stated in the novel, the members of this elite are those who have replaced the British imperialists. As viewed in the previous extract, it is the social inequality between the two classes which creates a dichotomy in the neo-colonial Kenyan society.

### **II.3. Sexual level: sexual harassment**

In his analysis of the multiple problems of exploitation of black natives in neo-colonial the fictional Kenya, Ngugi points out sexual harassment and rape. Mostly, Wariinga the main character in the novel. Firstly, very young, with all her integrity and her virginity, Wariinga is embezzled from school by a Rich Old Man from Ngorika who makes her his concubine and makes merry with her in hotels, bars, etc. A few days later, the Old Man impregnates her. However, when Wariinga reports it to him, he denies responsibility. They quarrel and finally, the Old Man rejects her. The narrator depicts this idea in his novel "*Devil on the Cross*" as follows:

*How could you possibly have conceived as soon as if I were the only man who went with you? Go away and look for the young man who has got you into trouble, and tell him to marry you or to take you to the forest or somewhere else for an abortion. I thought all along that I was going with a clean schoolgirl, a girl without too many problems, a girl I have loved to marry, so that she could be balm for my old bones. But instead, I picked on Kareendi Road-to-Yield, did I? Wariinga did not know whether to weep or scream or protest. P.146.*

From this passage, one easily understands that the Rich Old Man, one of the neo-colonial Kenyan bourgeoisies, is as cunning as the fox. He seems to show love to Wariinga, but in reality, he is animated by love affair. That is to say, he aims to exploit her sexually. As viewed in the passage, the Old Man considers Wariinga as a toy, a mere flower that he uses to decorate his doors, windows, tables and bed, and now, as the splendour of her body has vanished and withered, he throws her to the rubbish heap.

In addition, another dichotomy raises between Wariinga and Boss Kihara, a white man's shopkeeper top manager. Indeed, after Wariinga has given birth to a baby named Wambui, she takes a secretary course in Nairobi and when she finishes her

media school, she wanders in the streets in search for a job. Then she is appointed Boss Kihara's secretary. However, some days later, the boss solicits her for love affair. The lady resists. Boss even attempts to rape her in his office, the lady shouts aloud. Boss feels shame and fear. So, he gives up and releases the lady. Ngugi highlights this idea in the novel "*Devil on the Cross*", through these words:

*And suddenly, Boss Kihara pounces on Kareendi. One hand holds Kareendi by the waist. The other tries to feel for her body. Kareendi attempts to free herself from the man's gripe, at the same time beating her fists on his chest and also trying vainly to open her handbag to take out the folding knife she normally carries. The sound of their heavy breathing fills the office. Kareendi senses that she is about to be overcome. Suddenly, she forgets that this is her boss and cries out: "if you don't let me go, I will shout for help".p.23.*

The passage here above clarifies that Boss Kihara is one of "the imperialist watchdogs, the children of the devil" (Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross*, p.196) who always oppresses the Kenyan peasants and workers. He is an official, i.e. he occupies a high position in the neo-colonial administration. But, because of his sexual lust, he abuses of his authority by transforming his office into a bed where he sexually exploits his employees: "my little fruits, my love, we need not even accommodation. The office floor is adequate. If these offices could talk, they would tell many things. A smooth floor makes a fantastic bed" (Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross*, p.23). Worse still, Boss Kihara is a rapist. This shows that he does not mind with neither the suffering of his workers nor their dignity.

As reflected in the novel, Boss Kihara's philosophy centers on "take care of me, and I will take care of you. He who wishes to sleep is the one who is anxious to make the bed." (Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross*, p.19). That is the reason why, because Wariinga has refused to share bed with him, the following day, he accuses her for coming late for five minutes and dismisses her from job. Wariinga innocently and harmly loses her job as reflected in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross*" through the following lines:

*Miss Kareendi, it seems as though you don't much care for work. It would be better for you to go home for a while. If ever you feel that you need work, as other girls do, I haven't closed the door. Take this month's salary and next month's too 'in lieu of notice'. Our Kareendi now has no job. Once again she roams the streets in search of work. P. 24.*

Analyzing Wariinga's fate, one easily understands that, the fictional Kenya as depicted in the novel, stands for a country where sexual harassment prevails at work. It is clear in the quotation above, that girls and women face and experience sexual

exploitation on multiple facets: “*If ever you feel that you need work, as other girls do, I haven't closed the door.*” From this, one notices that, in modern Kenya, standing for modern Africa, the former principle of solidarity among kinsmen has changed into zero generosity, nothing for nothing.

Modern administration is characterized by immorality and bribery as well. According to Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross*, this displays immorality as the only way by which girls and women can access to job in post-independent Kenya. He shows this in the novel through these lines:

*Ah, Kareendi; Jobs are very hard to come by these days. But a girl like you... it shouldn't be difficult to find something for you to do. But Kareendi, a matter like this can't be finalized in the office... Rendez-vous is the same and the target is till Kareendi's thighs. The modern love and lodging has become the main employment bureau for girls, and women's thighs are tables on which contracts are signed. P.19.*

Through the depiction of prostitution in modern Kenyan administration, Ngugi wants to disclose a moral debasement currently happening in most post-independent African countries where women's thighs are exchanged with job. According to him, no girl or woman can get a job unless she resorts to immorality. Today's offices' slogan is “modern problems are resolved with aid of thighs” (Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross* p.19). From this slogan, one understands that moral values are trodden down by the so-called ruling class whose norms of access to job are left at the mercy of the Devil.

## CONCLUSION

In the present research, we have dealt with neo-colonialism as depicted in Ngugi Wa Thiong'O's *Devil on the Cross*. In our close and deep analysis of the novel, we have noticed that despite the so-called independence of Kenya, a microcosm of Africa, the presence of the colonial power is still strongly felt in the post-independence period. All along the work, we have attempted to disclose the newly discovered system of exploitation, currently applied upon black natives under their unawareness.

In fact, along the analysis of the novel, we have shown that with “*Devil on the Cross*”, Ngugi provides a detailed and exhaustive exploration of life in post-colonial Kenya. At the same time, he criticizes the neo-colonial stage of imperialism as well as the capitalist society that emerged in Kenya after independence, looking particularly at the effects that global capitalism has upon people. As it can be viewed in this study, the novel is thematically concerned with how foreign companies and the corrupt local elite greedily exploit workers and peasants of Kenya, a microcosm of Africa.

The research depicts cultural exploitation, political exploitation, economic exploitation, social and sexual exploitations. However, it is clear that Ngugi's criticism of neo-colonial Kenya, a microcosm of Africa, is not based on hatred, but rather on a corrupt and parasitical bourgeoisie.

Our objective in carrying out this work is to let the readers be able to detect the strategies currently applied by the foreigners in exploiting illegally the African wealth through the neo-colonial ruling class, i.e. their puppets. The present study discloses the reader and any other researcher the new system of colonization discovered by the colonialists and currently applied upon black natives under their unawareness. The system consists of initiating clansmen to exploit their co-citizens, and destroy their land, wealth, culture, etc. for the benefit of overseas comers and their puppets. In fact, the work discloses the multi-dimensional ways in which black natives' rights are abused by people on power.

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