

## **THE PSYCHOANALYSIS OF POST- COLONIALISM AND NEO-COLONIALISM**

**V. KALPANA**

**UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS**

**INDIA.**

### **Abstract**

*Post-colonialism ushers in as emergent discipline, an indissoluble part of the development of national imaginings and an alibi for the emergence of a violently assertive 'new world order' committed to the management and obliteration of difference. Interestingly enough, though the postcolonial theory sounds very ambitious, in practice it concerns itself with things that are historically marginal. Today, with issues of race, class and gender at their core, postcolonial theories deconstruct prevailing ideals of history and uncover the ways in which political, economic and social systems have been constructed and transformed in societies where cultures have been forcibly meshed by imperialism and colonization. According to some, Post-colonialism may wear a radical or oppositional face, but their only masks its complicity with the continuing oppression of peoples in the present, which means neo-colonialism. Sometimes the word neocolonialism shows the relationship between cultural and political problems. This paper gives an eagle eye on the psychological issues of post-colonialism and neo-colonialism.*

**Keywords:***Hegemonic dominance, Imperialism, Oppression, Dehumanizing, Buffoonery*

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### **Introduction**

The term 'post-colonialism' does have a history. It has entered common parlance and is frequently used by critics, teachers and writers. It is important that one understands the variety of what the term signifies if we want to begin to use it self-consciously and productively. The range of issues covered by the term is indeed huge, as are the kinds of readings performed in its. The works are generally considered as postcolonial writing when they attempt to dismantle and de-center European hegemonic authority. Helen Tiffin in postcolonial history (1998) suggests that the term 'post colonial can be used to describe writing that was both a consequence of and reaction to the European imperial process.

Post-colonialism was structured by the neo-colonialism experience. Foreign business interests generally use the term neo-colonialism to describe the high degree of economic policy. In the context of the cultural dynamics of the neo-colonial situation, it also suggests the predominance of the cultural values of the former colonial power over the base culture. However, neo-colonialism actively employs the Us and Then binary social relation to view the non-Western world as inhabited by the other.

The 1960s witnessed the official termination of European Imperialist domination in almost all African countries except for a pocket of white dominated territories – Portuguese Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau, Southern Rhodesia and White controlled South Africa. However, while political relationships were theoretically altered, the long term social consequences of Western influence in the diverse areas of socio-cultural, political and economic control had been so extensive, that Western hegemonic dominance continues to exercise a considerable influence in defining the culture of African society.

On the eve of Uluru, John Thompson the White colonial administrative officer in Ngugi's A Grain of Wheat (1966) is haunted by his post-independence vision of broken jars and test tubes on laboratory floors (38,43). His warning that 'we are not yet beaten, Africa cannot, cannot do without Europe' (144), portends that colonialism was set to enter into complex phrase of being in relationship between African and Europe in their psychological onset.

Colonialism, thriving on economic domination in its indirect manifestation, surfaced as the phenomenon of neocolonialism. 'We have scorched the snake of colonialism, not killed it', Ngugi comment, "or rather colonialism was one of the injured skins the snake can put on' (Homecoming, 45). While methods used have changed, the aim of Western hegemonic control has been consistent, that is, the continued dominance of the West (center) over periphery other

states. European economic interference dates back to 1500 with the slave trade. Trade in raw materials then expanded into full fledged imperialist ventures after the Berlin conference of 1855. After the 1950s a whole series of new socio-economic relationships developed.

The phenomenon of neocolonialism according to Karega in *Petals of Blood*, therefore, is only 'the blood sucking serpent changing the colours of the poison' (124). The essential thematic focus of these post independence novels is not politics or economics but rather the psychology of neocolonialism – that arises from neo-colonial psychological and ideological dependence on the West, and its adverse effect on identity.

*the priest fails to make his victims willing  
slaves, and the soldier is impotent to make  
living slaves .... the trader enslaves the will  
itself and men are led to want their  
own enslavement, thinking it is only  
the pleasure of owning things they want (53)*

The connection between economic and cultural dependency as enforced by the west is clearly understood by this quotation from *Armatis Two Thousand Seasons*.

Munira uses the analogy of the unevenly cultivated garden 'the center was swollen with fruit and water sucked from the rest, while the outer parts were progressively weaker and scaggier as one moved away from the center' (*Petals of Blood*, 49) to illustrate that while Africa supplied raw materials, the finished products were returned for consumption. This ensured that the periphery was always the weaker recipient of the relationship. The taxi driver in the *Beautiful Ones* complains, 'it seems everybody is making things now except us. Africans only buy experience things' (*Beautiful Ones*, 40).

It is helpful to add on, the Freudian psychoanalytic approach which is based on the premise that human behavior is driven by an unconscious process. According to Freud significant aspects of human behavior are dominated by repressed unconscious primitive impulses that lay beyond the consciousness. He believed that this unconscious material such as forgotten childhood trauma, hostile feelings towards parent and repressed sexual desires were not only unattainable by the conscious psyche but responsible for much of our everyday behaviour. Unconscious instinctual urges such as dreams or slips of the tongue, could however reveal symbolized forms of our unconscious psyche.

However, J.H Coetzee reflects this point in his famous novel *Disgrace*. *Disgrace* is one among the best novel Coetzee has written. The novel is about a society in the process of being overhauled, in which morality has been 'erased' and 'reborn'. The world being jettisoned is the David Lurie and Mrs. Curren (*Age of Iron*), with its interest in Romantic poetry and the classics – a world whose humanist values have failed to resolve the conflict between coloniser and colonized. The novel closes with its protagonist, Professor David Lurie, in an act suggestive of

atonement for his abuse of a female student, giving up one of the sick dogs under his care for euthanasia. The implication here is that on the scales of justice, Laurie is able to balance the life of a suffering animal with that on the scales of justice, Laurie is able to balance the life of a suffering animal with that of a human, one who by South African designation, significantly, is 'coloured'.

Franz Fanon addresses the same problematic of equating oppressions in *Black skin, White Masks* (1952). Fanon asserts about 'All forms of exploitation resemble one another. All forms of exploitation are identical because all of them are applied against the same 'object': 'man' (83; 88). Fanon analysis is itself, of course, unwittingly hegemonic in its then conventional use of 'man' to signify 'people'.

Likewise, ChidiAmuta, in the theory of African Literature (1989), summarizes African literacy resistance to neo-colonization on the ideological level as direct against;

Psychological timidity fostered by centuries of dehumanizing denigration, against the entrenchment of colonial economic structures as road blocks to genuine development, against the tyranny and endless buffoonery of an insensitive ruling class presiding over societies riven by class inequalities, against the hegemony of irrelevant ideas, and growing sophistication of the ideological tentacles of global imperialism (7).

In Armah's fragments, Brempong's 'status' has been inflated on account of his position as a rich 'been-to'. In a mockery of the traditional welcome to the traveler returning home, Brempong's sister indulges in a comic grotesque dance; 'her kente blouse flapping its elephant ear sleeves in a whirl of colour her teeth flashing and her blubbery buttocks quivering', as she proceeds to pour champagne over her brother's feet, laughing and shouting, 'kai! who calls it a waste, that I should bathe our been-to's feet in the best there is?.....(56).

The central metaphorical construct of the Beautiful Ones is 'the gleam' embodied by the concentrated light of the powerful spotlights that highlight the gleaming façade of the Atlantic Caprice Hotel. The artificial brilliance of the gleam symbolizes the equality false sense of power and prestige. The man, in his lonely battle, refuses to internalize the false reality that the gleam embodies. He resents it only for what it represents, but also because of the power of the gleam to produce a disturbing ambiguity within himself. In spite of his determination to resist the orbit of the gleam's influence, the man too has experienced on rare occasions the uncontrollable feelings of happiness and power associated with the gleam, as when he goes into the shops aware that his purchasing power would draw 'the admiring glances of the people in shops, for whom a man's values could only be as high as the cost of the things he could buy' (114).

To Armah, resistance to the forces of neo-colonization must therefore involve a total resistance to the hypnotism of the 'gleam', or the best for material possessions. Money becomes the determinant of all values and the closest means of appropriating the desired after 'white' culture. The link between the devaluation of the base culture and economic exploitation is promoted by the neo-elite class, who elevate their status in the eyes of their countrymen

through the possession of Western symbols of social distinction like the car, associated with power, sex and speed (the Beautiful ones, 58-59, 149, Fragments, 71, Petals of Blood, 329).

The aspiration after 'visible' status symbols becomes an integral part of the 'middle class syndrome'; the 'blinding gleam of beautiful new houses, the shine of a powerful Mercedes car, the scent of expensive perfumes, and the mass of a new wig" (The Beautiful ones, 256), and in the case of Chimbachirundu, his desire for a new attractive wife, 'a city piece' (Chirundu, 99).

Discussion in the preceding sections articulate psychoanalysis and postcolonial literature but they do not do so by means of critique. This shows a specific issues in psychoanalytic theory and widely accepted readings of postcolonial and neocolonial literary texts are simultaneously subjected to scrutiny. In the final analysis, only an ever vigilant culture of self-resistant and discipline can save the individual and the society from a slide into extremism and anarchy.

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