

# Ngugi as a postcolonialist

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## Abstract

Postcolonialism includes a vast array of writers and subjects. In fact, the very different geographical, historical, social, religious, and economic concerns of the different ex-colonies dictate a wide variety in the nature and subject of most postcolonial writing. African literature represents the writings of African nations living on African soil reflecting the African native sensibility and atmosphere. The paper discusses that the variation between before and after colonialism. The author lived in the period of colonial how he represents the ideas and thoughts in his novel *The River Between*. The presenter shows that he is Postcolonialist.

**Keywords:** Postcolonialism, circumcision, indigenous , Kamenó and Makuyu.

Postcolonialism is a period of time after colonialism, and postcolonial literature is typically characterized by its opposition to the colonial. However, some critics have argued that any literature that expresses an opposition to colonialism, even if it is produced during a colonial period, may be defined as postcolonial, primarily due to its oppositional nature. Postcolonial literature often focuses on race relations and the effects of racism and usually indicts white and/or colonial societies. Postcolonialism includes a vast array of writers and subjects. In fact, the very different geographical, historical, social, religious, and economic concerns of the different ex-colonies dictate a wide variety in the nature and subject of most postcolonial writing.

African literature forms a major part of twentieth century world literature. African literature represents the writings of African nations living on African soil reflecting the African native sensibility and atmosphere. African literature refers to literature of and from Africa. African Literature has received worldwide recognition when Wole Soyinka was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1986, and also Nadine Gordimer was awarded the same in 1991. The writers who were active in the fifties and sixties had their ears tuned to two kind of music : a vanishing world of tradition and myth, and the harsh world of colonialism. The novel leads with its assurance, its poise, its mastery of its intensions , its firm and quiet tone, and its unswerving purpose

Ngugi's novel *The River Between*. Ngugi shows that colonialism brought about change in Kenya (and Africa at large). Before the advent of colonialism the people were one, united by a common culture and its rites. But with the advent of colonialism, there was conflict: some people accepted the new religion, Christianity, which condemned the indigenous culture, especially female circumcision as barbaric. Ngugi comes out more clearly in this novel where he defends female circumcision by emphasizing its spiritual value, how it is the girl's gateway to womanhood.

The narrative thrust of Ngugi wa Thiongo's *The River Between* (1965) derives largely from an anxiety surrounding circumcision--an indigenous Kenyan rite practiced upon both boys and girls that ensures their successful passage into adulthood. Coupled with the novel's setting between two mountain ridges, Ngugi's portrayal of circumcision (particularly female circumcision) enacts a sustained sexual metaphor that crudely genders these mountain ridges as a female-coded liminal zone and, in addition, portrays the contending Kameno and Makuyu claims for these ridges as figurative "circumcision" narratives themselves.

Ngugi's attention to female circumcision bear upon the novel's rather unsubtle gendering of the Kenyan mountain setting. Kameno and Makuyu mountain ridges dramatize a cumbersome psycho-sexual allegory that points towards the anxiety surrounding female circumcision; the mountain ridges, that is, are crude signifiers of the "ridges" of Muthoni's labia that are excised much in the same manner that Kameno purists would excise the presence of Christianity that had corrupted their social landscape

Father and mother are circumcised. Are they not Christians? Circumcision did not prevent them from being Christians. I too have embraced the white man's faith. However, I know it is beautiful, oh so beautiful to be initiated into womanhood...Sureley there is no tribe that does not circumcise. Or how does a girl grow into a woman?" (30)

Clearly circumcision carries multiple, shifting meanings that are continually brought into crisis against each other. Arguably anti-colonial, masculinist, secular, and spiritual, circumcision in one sense assumes a foremost position in the conflicts symbolized by the novel's setting.

The author shows the experience before the independence of Kenya in this novel. Before colonial period the people are united after colonialism the people are divided. The author is suffered in his own country. He wrote about their own rituals and customs. He is the first one from east Africa. He is taking the challenges to explore the ideas to the world. So he called as postcolonialist.

## WORK CITED

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