

The lingering question of Neocolonialism in selected Swahili Plays

Dr. Evans M.Mbuthia¹ and Mr. Silas Thurania Ikuathu²

^{1,2} Kiswahili Department, University of Nairobi,
P.O BOX 28473-00100 GPO-0722623335, Nairobi, Kenya

Abstract

This paper examines how the question of neocolonialism has been addressed by Kiswahili writers by focusing on some selected plays by Timothy Arege and K.W. Wamitila. The paper's main objective is to identify how the theme of neocolonialism is treated in the works of selected authors. The findings of this study shows that neocolonialism has been perpetuated through cultural imperialism, economic dependency, the roles of International Organizations such as United Nations and its agencies and the tensions that exists between capitalism and socialism. The study shows that Western Countries have contributed a lot to underdevelopment in African countries through exploitation of Africa's natural resources. International Trade has also been identified as being biased in favour of the developed nations. The study was guided by the postcolonial theory; whose main proposition is that Oriental and African countries have historically borne the brunt of colonialism and continue to suffer from its mutant forms.

Key words: Post colonialism, Neocolonialism, Western Nations, Foreign Aid

¹ Corresponding Author Email: mbuthiaem@gmail.com

1.0 Introduction

As early as the 15th Century, foreigners especially Europeans and Asians started developing commercial interests with Africa. This was chiefly due to the presence of unexploited natural resources in the continent. However, the climax of this scramble was in the 19th century after the Berlin conference of 1884. Capitalistic forces resulting from Industrial Revolution in Europe triggered a rush to acquire colonies in Africa and other regions, so as to obtain raw materials for their industries. This marked the beginning of colonialism.

Although the colonialists retreated later in the 1960s, they left behind colonial presence in the form of deeply embedded economic, political and cultural colonization. After the former colonies attained independence their former masters crafted other ways of subjugating them through controlling their economies and thus creating the phenomenon of neocolonialism. This further involved the perpetuation of the colonizers' systems of administration, education system and cultural values that denigrate the morals and values of the formerly subjugated peoples. For example the colonizers believed in the superiority of the European culture over all other cultures.

This paper seeks to examine how Kiswahili writers have over the years responded to this skewed perception of their society by their former colonizers acting in tandem with some leaders who ascended to power after political independence. It interrogates how neocolonialism has continued to manifest itself in the formerly colonized countries. Other objectives of this study are: to show the overall effects of neocolonialism on independent African states and secondly to portray the nature of the relationships that exist between the Developed World and the Developing World. The focus of this study is on some selected Kiswahili plays². We shall analyze the works of two Swahili Playwrights that is Timothy Arege and K.W Wamitila. These are:

- i) *Mstahiki Meya* (2007) (His Worship the Mayor)
- ii) *Kijiba cha Moyo* (A Thorn in the Flesh)
- iii) *Pango* (2003) (The Cave)
- iv) *Wingu la Kupita* (1999) (Passing Cloud)

2.0 Literature Review

Several studies have been done on post colonialism and Kiswahili drama. This section highlights such studies with a view to identifying the academic gaps and delimitation of this research. Fanon (1963) dwelt on the nature of the international relations by focusing on the wanton exploitation of the African countries by the western countries. He asserts that the wealth of the European countries has been derived from the African natural resources. This work is crucial to our study as it hints on the effects and ways in which neocolonialism has affected Africans which is also the focus of our research. His work highlights some of the methods that are used by the

² The English Language rendition of the titles and quotes is our own as the plays are in Kiswahili

Developed World to undermine Developing Nations. Some of these methods include the use of financial aid and donations and international trade which to a large extent benefits the industrialized nations. This bias arises through import and export business that favors the industrialized nations as they import raw materials cheaply while selling machinery, manufactured and technological goods expensively to Africans.

Nkrumah (1965) argues that "Today neocolonialism represents imperialism in its final and perhaps the most dangerous stage" (pg1). He stresses that old colonialism has not been abolished and that it continues to be an African problem. He says that in theory African countries are independent but in reality their economic systems and political policies are directed from outside. This work strengthens the basis of our study as we seek to point out how neocolonialism is manifesting itself in present day and its effects. Equally significant to our study is the work of Rodney (1973) who argues that one of the ways in which Europe developed itself was by under developing Africa. He singles out slave trade of the pre-colonial era and the current international trade as the key contributors to Africa's underdevelopment. His thesis is that laws regulating international trade are formulated with the interest of the Western Nations in mind especially their multinational corporations. Rodney's views are important to our study because it marries well with our objectives which are to show current manifestations of neocolonialism and their effect on African development, as expounded in Swahili Literature.

Mkangi (1995) blames international organizations especially UN and its agencies for giving Western Countries undue advantages over the African states. He wades into the conditionality set up by the World Bank and IMF to regulate economic development by asserting that their rules and regulations are discriminatory and counterproductive to the developing nations. For instance, he sees no rationale behind the World Bank policy of promoting cash crop farming at the expense of food crop farming and yet some African countries are not food sufficient and rely on donations. The policy emphasizes the growing of coffee, tea, sisal, pyrethrum, cotton and sugarcane. Paradoxically, the prices of these products are set and determined by the buyer (western countries through their multinational corporations). Mkangi wonders why then African countries do not set prices when buying machinery and technological products from such Western States. These views are to a large extent similar to those of Rodney (ibid). Though this study is different from ours, it reinforces our argument on the role of the International Organizations in promoting neocolonialism.

Wafula (1999) investigates the history of Kiswahili drama in Kenya and Tanzania with specific reference to stylistics and thematic changes. In his analysis of Mohamed's Amezidi (He has gone overboard), he identifies the problem of economic dependency as having undermined Africa's development. He argues that donor countries and organizations have denied Africans a chance to be creative in solving their own problems. Furthermore, he argues that loans and donations from western countries are offered with many strings attached which increases debt burden. His work

differs from ours in that we analyze the question of neocolonialism in Swahili plays with reference to four plays while Wafula tackles the historical development of Swahili plays. However, he also tackles the problem of the economic dependency which is also part of this paper's concern. These views are corroborated by Liu (2012) who says that poverty in Africa is as a result of colonization and plunder of natural resources. He terms foreign aid and foreign direct investments as elements of neocolonialism. Though he says environmental and institutional factors also play a part, he concludes that inappropriate western influence is a big hurdle to the development of Third World Countries.

Kairi (2014) examined neocolonialism and globalization in two Kiswahili plays, *Sudana* and *Posa za Bikisiwa*. His emphasis was on the relationship between neocolonialism and globalization while our study focuses on the relationship between developed countries and developing countries from a neocolonialism perspective. Ikuathu (2017) has analyzed the theme of neocolonialism in two Kiswahili plays by Timothy Arege in which he identifies various ways in which neocolonialism manifests itself. He argues that cultural imperialism, economic dependency and use of colonial styles of governance as the main colonial tools being perpetuated in Africa. From this literature review it is evident that there are some works dealing with the lingering question of neocolonialism penned by Swahili writers. This is as a result of the fact neocolonialism continuing to persist as an African problem since 1960s up to the present time. This study therefore aims to make a contribution to this pervasive phenomenon.

3.0 Theoretical perspectives

This paper is founded on the Postcolonial Theory. Said is considered as the father of this theory though there are other leading contributors to the development of this theory. In this respect, key figures are Spivak and Bhabha. Said's theory gained momentum when he published *Orientalism* (1978). In this book he criticizes the false image that the western countries perpetuate about the people of the East (The Orient). According to Said, the west through explorers, poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists and imperial administrators have shown the east as uncivilized, primitive, cruel, sneaky, evil, and cunning and given to sexual promiscuity and perversion. On the other hand citizens of the west perceive themselves as embodiments of positive values, such as kindness, uprightness and honesty.

Said uses the concept of 'Othering' to stress on this racial dichotomy perpetuated by the west. In this context, othering refers to discriminatory tendencies where people of the Orient (Arabs, Chinese) are seen as of lesser pedigree. According to Said, othering has been used by the people of the west to justify their military control even in independent states not to mention economic exploitation. Apart from othering, Said explores how Nordism has been used to portray the people of the east as inferior. Nordism is the ideology that the whites or the Caucasian Race is superior to all other races. In this respect, Nordics (all Germanic peoples of Northern Europe

such as those from Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Iceland) are believed to have been born with superior intelligence, physical strength and beauty.

According to Said, the whites' superiority was taught in schools and in effect enabled quicker subjugation of the colonized peoples. Due to this, many colonized people aped the white man's culture in dress, speech, behaviour and lifestyle while at the same time looking down upon their ways. Wamitila (2002) stresses that although Said talks about the people of the East, there is a need to look at these false images in a wider perspective by including Africans as they too have suffered the same fate as the people of the East. In a later work, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Said actually confirms that false images and stereotypes have not only been perpetuated against the Oriental People but also on Africans, Latin Americans and Indians. He also blames leaders from such regions for not standing up against neocolonialism.

The key tenets of this theory are 'othering' and 'Nordism' and they will be used extensively to underpin the arguments in this study. Othering is the view that colonized people are dramatically inferior to their former colonizers. On the other hand Nordism is the erroneous view that White man's Culture is superior to the culture of all other people. Consequently, Literatures written in colonizing cultures often distorts the experiences and realities of the colonized peoples.

4.0 Discussion and Results

In this paper, we examine the plays by Wamitila and Timothy Arege to see how they have responded to the problem of neocolonialism. The plays under focus are *Pango* (2003), *Wingu la Kupita* (1999), *Mstahiki Meya* (2007) and *Kijiba cha Moyo* (2007). The findings from this research indicates that the lingering question of neocolonialism in the selected Kiswahili plays manifests itself through the following Social Economic dynamics; Economic dependency, Structural adjustments Policies, Cost Sharing, Preference for education in foreign lands and medical services vis-vis local expertise. In addition this disruption caused by colonialism in its different facets impacted heavily on the concerned society as the second section of this discussion will point out.

4.1. Economic Dependency

In Developmental Studies, dependency refers to a situation where a country or a region relies on a another country or region in terms of donations or loans for its growth (Ikechukwu, 2017). The author argues that most Third World countries are dependent on the developed world. Common challenges facing most of the Third World countries include high population growth rate, high poverty levels and great dependency. Due to their extreme dependency levels, such countries have failed to grow their economies because to a large extent their economic policies are dictated by the donor nations. In *Mstahiki Meya* the playwright shows the disastrous effects of donor funding and economic assistance. One such effect is the fear that grips African leaders on learning that the donors may cut their lending. *Mstahiki Meya*, the head of the municipal

authority governing a city is in great shock and trepidation on learning that the expected foreign dignitaries may not visit the city after all due to the workers' strike. This is evident in the following dialogue:

Meya: Jina huko nje bwana. Jamii ya kimataifa ingesemaje?

Diwani II: Hata wangewashauri wageni wetu dhidi ya kuja hapa. Sura ya baraza letu itaharibika huko nje. Ni hatari kwa misaada tunayoitarajia baada ya ziara hii

Meya: La muhimu ni kuamua jambo la kufanya. Taka zimejaa katika barabara zetu. Hali hii tutaiondoaje kabla ya kesho? (uk.73)

Meya: Our image out there. What will the international community think about us?

Diw II: These workers might even advise our foreign visitors not to come. Our image out there will be bad. This is dangerous for the donations we expect after this visit.

Meya: We should think of what to do. Garbage is choking our streets. How do we remove it before tomorrow.

As it appears from the above conversation the fear of losing foreign aid triggers panic among the elected leaders. It is also clear that local affairs are dictated and directed from outside by powerful nations that dictate skewed donor conditions. The play also criticizes African leaders who misuse borrowed funds thereby perpetuating the debt burden among the populace. For instance, some use borrowed money to pay salaries and other recurring expenses rather than investing in profitable ventures. The biggest disadvantage with this is that future generations are forced to pay for debts which they did not benefit from. This fact is confirmed satirically from the following dialogue between the Mayor and a council official:

Meya: Hivi una habari kwamba hao wageni wanaokuja ni washirika wetu wa maendeleo? Wanatupa misaada ya kulipia mishahara.

Diwani III: Hili ni wazo zuri kwa matataizo yetu lakini ni mzigo tunaowachia wajukuu na vitukuu ambao hawakufaidi mikopo hiyo.

Meya: Leo si kesho. Tuyashughulikie ya leo. Kesho, kesho kutwa na mtondogoo hatutakuwepo. Wayatakiani ya mtondogoo? (uk.55)

Meya: Are you aware that these visitors are our development partners? They give us loans to pay salaries.

Diwani III: That sounds okay for now, but it is a big burden that we bequeath our grand and great grand children who did not benefit from the said loans.

Meya: Today is not tomorrow. Let's mind about today for tomorrow and the days after we shall not be there. Why are you so concerned about the future?

In this conversation, we see how the playwright uses satire to portray African leaders as being uncaring and reckless about the future of their nations. Because of this they ignore the sound

advice from their economists. For instance, they accept loans and donations blindly without properly interrogating their implications.

Mutiga (2017) argues that dependency on loans and donations promotes laziness and undermines inventions and promotes bad leadership. This is because such leaders are propped up in power by the donor countries as long as their (donor's) interests are taken care of. He concludes that what Africans need is not donations and loans but increased cooperation in trade and equal rules of engagement. This is also the reason why Djankov (2005) argues that economic dependency is a worse curse than that of oil in the developing world. They quote Easterly who indicated that between 1950-2001, there was no difference in economic growth between the countries that received loans and those that did not.

According to Said (1977) the concept of othering has been used by the Western Countries to create biased rules that govern International Relations. He for instance argues that most rules on International Trade are set from abroad and imposed on African states. The play *Kijiba cha Moyo* confirms this fact as shown in the following dialogue:

Musa: Sisi tunaambiwa na kulikubali lao tu. Hatuna hiari. (kimya). Hata ukapinga na wao wameamua, si kazi bure tu?

Zainabu: Sisi vile vile ni washika dau. Ingefaa kutushauri...inavunja moyo. Wao ndio watu na sisi sanamu tu.

Musa: Mhitaji! Mhitaji siku zote ni mtumwa na wao wanajua.(pg 26)

Musa: We are given orders and just accept. We have no choice. Opposing them is pointless as long as they have decided

Zainabu: We are also important. They ought to consult us. It is discouraging. It is like we are not humans.

Musa: They know that being needy is akin to being a slave.

From the above excerpt, the author asserts that young African states are controlled by policies made from outside the continent. This is especially so with regulations set to regulate International Trade and loan repayments. Donor countries and organizations also dictates the kind of projects to be undertaken in the recipient countries. This is despite the fact that local conditions might dictate otherwise. This lack of consultation as a character in the play (*Zainabu*) contends is discouraging as the locals do not benefit.

Hancock (1991), a renowned British economist argues that “Most foreign aid programmes are designed by foreigners, implemented by foreigners using foreign equipment bought from foreign markets” (pg.155). He criticizes such programs for failing to help the poor but few rich people and the donor country. He contends that the main beneficiaries are the contractors from the industrialized western countries. Arege, in *Kijiba cha Moyo* criticizes African states for

promoting another form of dependency in the form of expatriates. He for instance takes issue with how Africans value foreign doctors while disparaging their own medics. Consequently, foreign medical specialists who are shown as diehard capitalists are invited to treat patients. In this play, the doctor treating Sele only minds about the payment and fails to address the psychological problems affecting the patient. He is aggrieved by Sele's questions and reprimands him ordering him to be silent and just accept to undergo plastic surgery. His greed for money is manifested by his insistence on refunding only 5 percent of the total sum in case Sele refuses to undertake plastic surgery. This is seen in the following dialogue:

Sele: *Ikiwa ni hivyo sitaki mambo haya tena. Nirudishie deposit yangu niende.*

Daktari: *Uliyasoma maagano?*

Sele: *Kiasi. Si yote*

Daktari: *Tutakurudishia asilimia tano kwa kukiuka maagano*

Sele: *Sasa ninajua hukuja kunijali. Umekuja kwa maslahi yako uliyoyaficha. (uk.55-56)*

Sele: If this is the case I do not wish to proceed. Refund my deposit.

Daktari: Did you read the instructions?

Sele: To some extent, not all of them

Daktari: We can only refund 5 percent for you have contravened the agreement

Sele: I now know that you came to serve your own interests.

From the above excerpt the playwright seems to hint that Africa does not need external interventions to solve its internal problems. It is important to use homegrown solutions such as depending on and valuing our own specialists and proper utilization of local natural resources. This can be proven from the play where Sele's sickness is diagnosed by a local nurse (Jamila). Jamila becomes a beacon of hope to an erstwhile hopeless family. She says that the ailment is called Body Dimorphic Disorder and that it is curable.

To conclude this part, we agree with the playwright that it is important for African Nations to reduce their over reliance on donations. This will accord them a chance to be creative in utilizing the local resources. Indeed as Rodney (1976) states, development is a requirement that cuts across all societies and generations wherever they are found. He concludes that if a country is left unperturbed by external forces, it will learn to be self reliant and develop fully by utilizing its own natural resources.

4.2 International Organizations and their neo-colonial policies

There are many international organizations at play across the world but for the purposes of this paper, we focus only on the United Nations (UN) and its agencies. We only isolate those UN agencies that seem to condone albeit unconsciously the phenomenon of neocolonialism. These are World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organization

(W.T.O). These agencies have formulated policies that have exacerbated underdevelopment in the developing world. Such policies include; Structural Adjustment Programmes, Cost Sharing Policies and Cultural Imperialism

4.2.1 Structural Adjustments Programmes

According to Obamba (2008) this policy was initiated by the World Bank and IMF in 1988 to assist the developing countries tackle the problem of underdevelopment. Although the programme had good intentions, its implementation created more social economic problems.

For example it forced countries receiving World Bank and IMF loans and donations to retrench workers and freeze employment in certain sectors. Rodney (ibid) says that the aim was to pressurize developing countries to minimize their service delivery to their citizens so as to save money for servicing the loans. Confining ourselves to Swahili writers, we see that, Arege criticizes this programme for creating social ills such as family break downs, psychological trauma, sicknesses and promoting more dependency. All these effects are as a result of job loses. This is evident in the play *Kijiba cha Moyo*, where the main character, Sele and his mother are retrenched. However, Sele's mother having served for more years was not affected psychologically like her son (Sele). Sele, having lost his job at a young age is traumatized to an extent of breaking down psychologically. The following dialogue proves this:

Musa: *Wewe unavyoona ana shida gani?*

Zainabu: *Mimi sijui kwa kweli. Nasikia tu watu wameanza kusema eti anatatizwa na hatua ya kuachishwa kazi.*

Musa: *Kazi?*

Zainabu: *Kazi ndiyo. Wanasema kuwa hakuwa hivyo kabla ya kupoteza kazi. (pg26)*

Musa: What do you think ails Sele?

Zainabu: I do not know. However, I hear people say that it is a result of retrenchment.

Musa: Job loss?

Zainabu: Yes. They say that he was not like this before he lost his job lose

From this conversation the question of neocolonialism is evident in the way young nations are forced to retrench their citizens without considering the social repercussions of the said policy. This is a clear manifestation that African countries are only independent in theory but in reality they are controlled by their former colonial masters. This policy does not only create desperation and unemployment but also retards development. A further indicator of neocolonialism perpetuated through this policy is that their formulation is done without consultation with those who are directly affected by the policy.

4.2.2 Cost Sharing Policy

This policy too, was a creation of the World Bank in 1988. This policy required all the states south of Sahara to share the cost of educational and health services with their citizens. Obamba (2008) argues that the application of this policy in Kenya forced the government to offload a big portion of the costs of education and health to citizens against the recommendations of the Ominde Commission of 1964 which recommended that the government should shoulder all the educational costs. The results of this policy were deterioration of quality of teaching and research, educational institutions and lack of teaching materials. On the health sector, public hospitals experienced shortages of drugs, water, staff and medical equipment. In the play *Mstahiki Meya*, the playwright dwells on the problem of drugs, staff and water shortage in public hospitals, partly as a result of cost sharing policy. In this play it is clear that most citizens are unable to meet part of the cost leading to lack of access to services. This is evident in a conversation between the doctor-in-charge (Siki) and a nurse (Waridi). The hospital has only these two as staff members.

Waridi: *Hawana hela za kulipia huduma wanazotaka. Wengine hawana hata karatasi ya kunakilia udodosi wao.*

Siki: *Lakini hawa watu hawana pesa.*

Waridi: *Ni amri Daktari. Kama wakubwa wenyewe wamekwishasema sisi tutafanya nini? Si basi tu? Bora kutazama tu. Nchi yenyewe change kwa kila hali. Nao hao Wazungu wanahimiza mfumo wa kugawana gharama(pg3)*

Waridi: These patients do not have money to pay for their services. Some even lacks booklets on which to record their diagnosis.

Siki: But these people have no money.

Waridi: It is an order doctor. If our bosses have ordered what can we do? Our country is young by all means. The Europeans are urging us to implement cost sharing policy

From the above excerpt we see that some unpopular policies are imposed by UN agencies on developing countries. This can be said to be promotion of neocolonialism. The playwright here, satirizes African leaders for implementing blindly foreign made policies without proper interrogation of their social, economic and political impacts. In this play, the decadence in the health sector is indicated by the absence of drugs, clean water and medical equipment such as gloves. Because of this extreme shortage the doctor recommends that the some sick patients be given a solution of water, salt and sugar so as to give them hope.

4.3 Cultural Imperialism

This refers to the imposition of one culture over other people's culture on the assumption that the new dominating culture is superior to the one being dominated. In *Culture and Imperialism* (1977), Said argues that western countries have always assumed though mistakenly that their

culture is superior to that of the Africans. This view is one of the foundations of the postcolonial theory that guides this research. Thus, eurocentism became the ideology that facilitated the domination of all the cultures of the formerly colonized peoples. Fanon (1963) says that the process of portraying the inferiority of African cultures was so intense that Africans internalized foreign values especially through education system.

Missionaries who preceded the colonialists advanced a spirited campaign against African cultures while stressing on the need to embrace western culture. As a result, African religion, songs, dances, dress, herbal medicine and local languages were scorned at. For examples, former British colonies made English their official languages, preferred British Education system and embraced Christianity. In this section we highlight elements of cultural imperialism that are still visible in independent African states.

4.3.1 Preference for education in foreign lands

Western education was brought by missionaries into African states because it was assumed that Africans were uncivilized and that education was the only way to achieve civilization. By doing this, traditional education was discarded. This foreign education was offered in a discriminately manner. For example, Blacks were offered low quality education while the Whites offered the best quality in their exclusive schools (Ngugi, 1986). This view is supported by Nyerere (1967) who argues that Colonial Education was not meant to prepare the youths in serving their nation but to entrench Colonial Culture in Africa.

As the colonial Education widened the class gap between the white and the blacks, Independent African leaders have continued this trend where the rich take their children abroad especially to their former colonizing countries to pursue quality education. On the other hand, the poor educate their children in public schools where education quality is poor. In Mstahiki Meya, the main character who represents a typical African leader agrees with this proposition as shown in the following excerpt:

Bili: *Mama anakupigia simu kutoka wapi tena? Au amesafiri kwenda nyumbani!*

Meya: *Hata kidogo. Anakwenda ng'ambo kuwaona watoto wake. Siku ile nilikuambia kuwa hawasomei hapa tena. Viwango viko chini kidogo.*

Bili: *Nakumbuka uliisha kunitajia kuwa wangeenda kusomea Ng'ambo. Mpango mzuri.*

Meya: *Ndiyo hivyo bwana. Elimu yetu hapa ni ya kawaida mno. Haina kubwa la kumfaa mtoto mwenye mzazi anayeona mbali.*

Bili: *(anatabasamu) kweli bwana, elimu ya kina yakhe hii. (kimya) (19)*

Bili: Where is madam calling you from? Has she travelled home?

Meya: Not at all. She has travelled abroad to see her children. The other day I informed you that they no longer study in our country. The quality levels are so low.

Bili: Yes I remember you telling me that they would go abroad.

Meya: That's how it is. Our education is for the commoners. It is not fit for a visionary parent.

Bili: It is true. It is for the poor

From the excerpt above we learn that African leaders prefer foreign education, while the local education is seen as a preserve of the poor. Due to this preference, improvement of local learning institutions is ignored. This is a clear manifestation of how western countries have dominated local affairs. This is a neocolonial tactic to perpetuate dependency.

In Kijiba cha Moyo, foreign education is criticized for alienating the learners from their society. The elites who have acquired foreign education imbibe foreign values to the detriment of their societal expectation. Some have no respect for their peers and parents. The dialogue below shows this:

Bi. Rahma: *Aisha desturi gani hii? Mtoto wa kike atoke nje, sisi wazee wako tuko hapa, kisha utupuuze na kuelekea kwenye vitabu? Huu ndio ustaarabu kwenu?*

Aisha: *Si hivyo. Kuna jambo alioniambia Sele nami nikawa silielewi. Nataka nifuatilie.*

Zainabu: *(Kwa ukali) Jambo la kuambiwa tu linakufanya utuone kama vitu. Utuvunjie heshima sisi wazee wako?(uk.24).*

Bi. Rahma: Aisha what kind of behavior is this? A girl child getting into the house and ignoring her parents and straight away engaging herself with her books? Is this what European Civilization is ?

Aisha: That's not the case. I wanted to confirm something that I heard from Sele.

Zainabu: (Bitterly) Just hearsay makes you to treat us like Objects? Showing no respect for your parent.

From the above dialogue we see that the author criticizes Western Education for alienating some elites who after going through this education despises their backgrounds. Some Africans are so alienated that they hate their bodily appearance and character traits. They ape the appearance and character of the Europeans. Due to this some decides to undergo maxillofacial surgery so as to make them resemble Europeans. In Kijiba cha Moyo, Sele, the main character dislikes his appearance and so he decides to improve his face through plastic surgery. He hopes that this would make him European-like. He says, "Sipendi hili kovu. Siupendi huu uso kwa ujumla. Sipendi hii pua. Pua mbaya hii". (uk.33-34)(I don't like this scar.... I don,t like this face in general....Idon't like this nose....This ugly nose.)

Rodney (1972) argues that Foreign Education had the effect of creating mental confusion on Africans, feelings of inferiority and creation of underdevelopment. We see this as the main reason why Sele is behaving like this in this play. However, Sele symbolizes many African elites who have been uprooted from their culture by the Western Education system.

It is also worth noting that Western Education left a lasting mark on Africans in the form of foregrounding foreign Languages while downplaying the importance of local languages. Because of these tendencies, many characters in the plays under consideration resort to code switching while using Kiswahili to manifest their self importance. This portrays one lingering impact of neocolonialism which is the continued use of foreign languages such as English, French and Portuguese in their respective former colonies. These languages have been entrenched through the Education systems of the formerly colonized countries and have become part of their national cultures. As Ngugi (1986) says, continued use of these foreign languages is perpetuation of colonial slavery. He for instance criticizes the Kenyan Education System for forcing learners to speak in English, write in English and even think in English. This, he argues removes the learner from his known environment and takes him into the unknown.

4.3.2 Foreign Foods and Feeding Habits

Types of foods and feeding habits forms a large part of a peoples culture. The coming of the colonialists influenced a change in African's feeding habits, as foreign foods and habits were introduced and perpetuated by post-colonial era leaders. To date, importation of foodstuffs and drinks has become a custom. In Mstahiki Meya, the city's governor prepares to receive foreign dignitaries by importing food and drinks from Russia and France. He has no room for local foods which he utterly despise. He says:

Meya: *Nitawapa mapokezi ya kupigiwa mfano. Hoteli ya Kifahari. Vyakula kutoka kila utamaduni. Si sembe. La hashu. Mvinyo nitauagiza kutoka Urusi na divai kutoka Ufaransa, wale na kunyua wajue kuwa Cheneo si mji hivi hivi. Wajue kuwa Ufadhili wao unadhaminiwa.*(uk.25)

Meya: I will give them the best reception. In a high end hotel. We will obtain food from various cultures. Not ugali.³ Never ever. Alcohol will be imported from Russia and wine from France. They need to know that their loans and donations are valued by this city.

From the above monologue, one notices that African leaders greatly values and adores foreigner foods and drinks at the expense of their locally available ones. This is neocolonialism. It is also clear that the state concerned is dependent on foreign assistance. Through this portrayal, the author citizens leaders who misuse borrowed money on such trivial things as entertainment instead of development.

4.3.3 Foreign Medical Services

Besides obsession with foreign education and feeding habits, the elite in independent African states also have a preference for foreign medical services. Some people especially the rich have

³ Maize flour cooked with boiled water and allowed to form a smooth solid

low opinion about their health facilities. As such they seek medical services abroad together with their families. Consequently, little attention is given to local health facilities. In the play, Mstahiki Meya, the mayor takes his wife to a western country to deliver there. He hopes that by doing this, she will not only get the best medical services but also enable the child to acquire foreign citizenship. This symbolizes neocolonialism. The following dialogue confirms this:

Bili: (*Anatabasamu*) *Vipi mama? Alishapata mgeni au vipi?*

Meya: *Bado karibuni.*

Bili: *Mara ile nyingine alionekana akiwa amechoka sana.*

Meya: *Ndio maana amesafiri ng'ambo. Madaktari wetu hawa wa kubabaisha tu. Kule ng'ambo ndiko kuliko na wakunga wenyewe. Sikutaka kubahatisha. Halafu tena mtoto akizaliwa huko anapata uraia wa huko.*(uk.26-27)

Bili: (Smiling) How is madam? Has she delivered yet? Meya Not yet but soon.

Bili: The last time she appeared really tired.

Meya: That's why she has travelled abroad. Our local doctors lack expertise. The best doctors are those from abroad. I did not want to take risks. But more importantly I wanted the child to acquire foreign citizenship

From the above dialogue we see that obsession with foreign medical services is partly to blame for the failure by Third World leaders to improve their medical facilities. The playwright also takes issue with the importation of foreign doctors to perform various medical operations. This, he believes hinders development because local skills remain untapped. There is also a massive cash outflow that accompanies the importation of expatriates. In *Kijiba cha Moyo*, a foreign doctor who is sought to treat Sele exhibits great greed for money and also addresses the patient threateningly. This points out at his unprofessionalism. He tells Sele:

Daktari: *Mimi niko hapa kukufaa. Ukitaka nirudi nitarudi. Maarifa nimekuja nayo. Ala za kazi nimekuja nazo vile vile kutoka huko mbali.*(uk.54)

Doctor: I am here to help you. If you would like me to go back to my country, then I will. I have brought medical equipment from abroad as well.

This conversation between a foreign medical expert and a patient is indicative of the captive situation that Third world countries find themselves in, situations that can only be remedied by a paradigm shift that should emphasize scientific and technological transfer instead of an over reliance on foreign experts

4.2 The impact of colonialism and neo colonialism

In this section we focus on two plays by K.W. Wamitila. These are: *Pango* (2003) and *Wingu la Kupita* (1999). The play contends that one of the ills brought by capitalism was massive economic exploitation of the African continent by the colonialists. In *Wingu la Kupita*, the author shows how the colonialists used treachery to infiltrate African countries. Later, these

colonialists turned into monsters that depleted the local natural resources. This rush to steal natural resources was motivated by the forces of capitalism especially due to the development of industries in Europe. This is evident from a conversation between a woman and a mother in the aforementioned play.

Mama: *Hapakuwa na sababu yoyote ya kuwashuku. Mwanzo walikuwa wapole. Baada ya muda likazuka jambo jipya.*

Mwanamke: *Lipi?*

Mama: *Ikatudhihirikia kuwa mifugo yetu ilikuwa ikipungua na hasa usiku.*

Mwanamke: *Majini ya Bepar hayo.*

Mama: *Tunguri ziliona jambo moja tu, urogi wa ughaibuni ambao haujui dawa yetu.(uk.26)*

Mama: There was no reason to doubt them. At first they appeared polite. A short while later something new happened.

Mwanamke: What was it?

Mama: Our livestock were diminishing

Mwanamke: Those must be the genies of capitalism

Mama: Later, the cause was discovered. It was the white Man's magic

The diminishing of livestock numbers mentioned above symbolizes wanton plunder of Africa's natural resources by the western capitalists. Indeed as Mwanamke (woman) in the above excerpt says, this is due to the genie of capitalism. However, the playwright also argues that former socialist countries such as China and Japan have also entered the race of scrambling for Africa's natural resources. He points out that these too may acquire the greed of the capitalists such as Britain and U.S.A. In Pango (The Cave), it is stressed that these late entrants might extract all the remaining African natural resources. In this play, the author uses the symbols of Pound, Dollar, Yen and Euro to portray this:

Sota: *Moja kubwa ni...Doo..la!*

Susa: *Na lile jingine?*

Sota: *Pa...uni*

Susa: *Na yale madogo?*

Sota: *Hayasomeki vizuri (akijitahidi) Yuro yu roho na Yeeni.*

Susa: *Basi hayo maneno madogo yatakua*

Sota: *Yataenea Pangoni. Lazima hata yatakuwa mazimwi na kula kila kitu. Labda ndiyo yatakayomaliza asali yetu.(uk.78-79)*

Sota: The big one is doo...lar

Susa: What of other one?

Sota: Pound

Susa: And the smaller ones?

Sota: They are illegible.(Putting more effort).Euro..and Yen

Susa: Then those small ones will grow.

Sota: They will then spread to the entire cave. They will even turn into monsters and eat everything and may be deplete our honey

In the above excerpt the two words mentioned, Pound and dollar, symbolizes Britain and U.S.A while Euro and Yen symbolizes European Union and Japan respectively. Depletion of honey symbolizes the overexploitation of African resources.

In *Wingu la Kupita* the author sharply contrasts capitalism and socialism and openly shows his bias for socialism as a better social, economic and political ideology. For instance, he criticizes various evils of capitalism such as increase in greed, theft of public resources, and displacement of people to pave way for land grabbing and increased use of state machinery such as the police to silence the opponents. In a dialogue between Bosi (Boss) and Jaribosi (protagonist), we learn that there are many tensions between capitalism and socialism:

Jaribosi: *Lakini tutakuwa tunakosea kuwamisha watu bila kuwaonyesha pa kwenda.Tuwadhulumu wale kwa kuwa ni wanyonge tu.*

Bosi: *(Kama anajisemea) Hayo ndiyo uliyofundishwa Leningrad? Ndio makosa uliyofanya badala ya kwenda Harvard kutambua maana za Free Market Economy na Individual Enterprise.(uk.43)*

Jaribosi: It is a big mistake to force people to migrate without giving them an alternative land. This is an injustice against the poor.

Bosi: (As if to himself) Is that what you were taught at Leningrad? You made a big mistake. You should have gone to Harvard to learn the meaning of Free Market Economy and Individual Enterprise

From the above dialogue, we see that the author blames capitalism for entrenching some social ills. This ideology is one of the colonial modus operandi and therefore it is a continuation of neocolonialism.

5.0 Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it is obvious that the question of neocolonialism has been a subject of concern to many African writers from 1960s to date. In this paper, we have studied four Kiswahili plays, two by Arege and two by Wamitila. Wamitila's plays deals with the lingering matter of the tensions between capitalism and socialism, the two ideologies that have shaped the Africa's social, economic and political landscapes since the end of Cold War. Arege's play examines various manifestations of neocolonialism in Africa such as cultural imperialism and the role of the International Organizations in continuation of neocolonialism. It has been

shown that the Third world countries have largely lagged behind in development due to the dictates of the international aid community who have imposed counterproductive policies that treat the symptoms rather than the underlying problems of the developing nations thus causing more harm than good to their intended beneficiaries. This economic dependency is a big factor in the continuation of neocolonialism.

It is however important to note that some policies that had been imposed on developing Countries in the 1990's that had the hallmarks of neo colonialism which form the focus of The texts under analysis were abandoned in favour of more populist policies akin to the ones practiced in Welfare States.

References

- Arege, T. (2009) *Kijiba cha Moyo*: Nairobi. Longhorn Publishers (2009) *Mstahiki Meya*: Nairobi. Vide-Muwa Publishers
- Fanon F (1963) *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York. Grove Press Inc GoK (1964) *The Ominde Commision Report on Education in Kenya*; Nairobi:Government Press
- Hancock, G. (1991) *Lords of Poverty: The Power, Prestige and Corruption of the International Aid Business*: London. Atlantic Monthly Press.
- Ikechukwu, E. (2013) "Dependency Theory and Africa's Underdevelopment: A paradigm Shift from Pseudo-Intellectualism: The Nigerian Perspective *Katika International Journal of African and Asian Studies*. Vol.1
- Kairi, M.(2014) "Ukoloni Mamboleo na Utandawazi katika Tamthlia za Sudana na Posa za Bikisiwa. M.A. Thesis Chuo Kenyatta.University(unpublished)
- Mbuthia E.M.(1991) *Uchunguzi wa kazi za Boukheit Amana(Mti mle)*,MA Thesis University of Nairobi (unpublished)
- Mkangi, K. (1995) *Walenisi*: Nairobi. East African Educational Publishers
- Mutiga, M. (2007) "Trump Offers Africa a Chance to Kick Out Aid Addiction and Chart its own Path" *katika Sunday Nation* 22/01/2017. Nairobi.Nation Media Group Publication
- Nkrumah, K (1965) *Neo-Colonialism,The Last Stage of Imperialism.:* London. Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd.
- Nyerere, J. (1967) *Education for Self Reliance* <http://www.swaraj.org/shiksshantar/resorces-nyerere.html>(retrieved (Retrieved 2.1.18)

Obamba, M. (2008) "Governance of Higher Education, Research and Innovation in Ghana, Kenya and Uganda" in African Network for Internationalisation of Education (ANIE)

Pamba, S.E. (2012) "An Analysis of the Impacts of Structural Adjustment Programmes on Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Case Study of Kenya (1980- 2010). M.A Thesis. University of Nairobi. (Unpublished).

Rodney, W. (1976) *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*: Dar es Salaam. Tanzania Publishing House

Said, E. (1977) *Orientalism*: New York. Pantheon Books Publishers. (1993) *Culture and Imperialism*. New York. Vintage Publishers.

Wafula, R.M. (1999) *Uhakiki wa Tamthlia: Tamthlia na Maendeleo Yake*. Nairobi. Jomo Kenyatta Foundation.

Wamitila, .K.W. (1999) *Wingu la Kupita*. Nairobi. Phoenix Publishers (2001) *Pango*. Nairobi. Phoenix Publishers

(2002) *Uhakiki wa Fasihi: Misingi na Vipengele vyake*. Nairobi. Phoenix Publishers.

Wa Thiong'o (1986) *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Nairobi. Heinemann Educational Books.