

ISSN : 2347-503X

Research Chronicler

International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Vol II Issue I : January 2014

Editor-In-Chief

Prof. K. N. Shelke

www.research-chronicler.com

Research Chronicler

A Peer-Reviewed Refereed and Indexed International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Volume II Issue I: January – 2014

CONTENTS

Sr. No.	Author	Title of the Paper	Download
1	Dr. M. Ravichand S. Pushpa Latha	Bigger Thomas – The Hero in the Novel <i>Native Son</i> by Richard Wright	2101 PDF
2	Sushant Chaturvedi	The Kite Runner through Wayne Booth's Evaluative System	2102 PDF
3	Ms. Upasana Dugal	Multi Touch: A Finger Synchronized Screen	2103 PDF
4	M.K.Sharma Ankur Kulshreshtha Richa Sharma	Formulation of Linear Programming for Cost Optimization in Soap Stone Powder Industry	2104 PDF
5	Dr. Archana Dr. Pooja Singh	Spousal Violence: A Woman's Destiny	2105 PDF
6	Dr. Sutapa Biswas	Interpreting the 'World Within': A Psychoanalytical Study of the Characters from <i>The God of Small Things</i> and <i>Cry, the Peacock</i>	2106 PDF
7	Kamna Dubey Naveen Kumar Pathak	Nayantara Sahgal: A New Perspective to Women's Writing in India	2107 PDF
8	Dr. Sahebrao B. Ohol	Challenges before Co-operative Dairy Industries	2108 PDF
9	Ramchandra R. Joshi	Rethinking Classics, English and Indian: A Comparative Approach to Milton's Satan in <i>Paradise Lost</i> Book I and Bhasa's Duryodhana in <i>Urubhangam</i>	2109 PDF
10	Dr. Krishna Mohan Jha	Sarjanatmak Bhay Ki Kavita	2110 PDF

11	Mr. Anant Singh	Manpower Planning in Pharmaceutical Companies in India	2111 PDF
12	Shamrao J. Waghmare Miss. Vijaya D. Bidwai	Ngugi's <i>A Grain of Wheat</i> : a Saga of Common Masses Struggle	2112 PDF
13	Ms. Deepali Agravat	The Concept of 'New Woman' in the plays of G.B. Shaw & Vijay Tendulkar	2113 PDF
14	Dr. Anurag Agnihotri Rajkumar	Empirical Study of Indian Export and Exchange Rate Elasticity	2114 PDF
15	Ms. Richa Pathak Dr. Aparna Tiwari	Empowered Indian Women in Selected Novels	2115 PDF
16	Vijay Lingayat	A New Media to Explore English Language Learning Skills: A Perspective Approach	2116 PDF
17	Dr. P.B. Patil	Migratory Modes in <i>The Shadow Lines</i>	2117 PDF
18	Dr. Hasmukh Suthar Prof. Vishal Joshi	Importance of Correlation in Rural Higher Education	2118 PDF
19	Dr. Meenakshi Kaushik	The Role of HR as a Knowledge Facilitator	2119 PDF
20	Dr. V. A. Patil	Feminism without Illusions	2120 PDF
21	Dr. Prakash M. Joshi	The Role of Linguistics in English Language Teaching	2121 PDF
22	Dr. Keyur K. Parekh	Rasa Theory	2122 PDF
23	Mayur Wadhvaniya	Philosophy of 'Marjaranyaya' through the characters: An Analysis (With special reference to <i>The Cat</i> and Shakespeare)	2123 PDF
24	Ms. Nisha Chanana Dr. Naresh Kumar	Organizational Role Stress among Management Teachers: A Comparative Study	2124 PDF
25	Harshad K. Bhosale	The Promise and Peril of Civil Society in Russia	2125 PDF

Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat*: a Saga of Common Masses Struggle**Shamrao J. Waghmare***Mandangad ACS College, Mandangad, Dist-. Ratnagiri (M.S.) India***Miss. Vijaya D. Bidwai***SRTM University, Nanded***Abstract**

Struggle is universal phenomenon. In case of Kenya context struggle is seen on massive level. In mass struggle every aspect of Kenya is participated to liberate motherland Kenya. Ngugi being a singer of Kenyan heritage glorified it through his writing. In a manner Ngugi become a singer of numerous unsung common masses. In *A Grain of Wheat* Ngugi presented a mass struggle of Thabai villagers. It is a story of common masses continuous struggle against exploitation. Colonizers have utilized every possible means to suppress natives. A novel also presents dark experiences of emergency in Kenya led by non-natives.

Key Words: Struggle, exploitation, protest, victimization, emergency, colonialism.

Struggle is universal phenomenon. In every epoch it is seen in different manners. In Kenyan context struggle is observed on massive level. In this mass struggle every element of society is participated for a noble cause of liberating a Kenyan motherland from a clutches of colonialism. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o is a singer of Kenyan past glory. In his writing Ngugi glorified a bright and prideful past of Kenya. Also he has offered sublimity to common masses as a part of Kenyan struggle for independence. In a sense Ngugi is a singer of unsung common masses. *A Grain of Wheat* demonstrates Ngugi's pessimistic treatment of African history. Thabai village is the centre of action in the novel. The natives of Thabai are proposed to offer honor to Mugo. He is a national hero and leader. He has faced many sufferings and tortures as a challenge with courage on the eve of Kenyan freedom on December 12, 1963. It also focuses the stiff of exploitation by the non-natives during emergency. Non-natives have crossed all

the boundaries of exploitation. This is genuinely presented by Ngugi in this novel. There is the growth in number of White exploitative agents. Thompson considers himself as the messenger of civilized section. He has a misconception about, Kenyans such as they are primitive, uncivilized, tribal, followers of superstitions, evil customs etc. He wants to bring the Kenyans into the so called civilized British flow:

In a flash I was convinced that the growth of the British Empire was the development of a great moral idea: It means, it must surely led to the certain of one British nation, embracing peoples of all colors and creeds, based on the just proposition that all men were created equal... In it he argued that to be English was basically an attitude of mind: It was a way of looking at life, at human relationship, at the just ordering of human society. Was it not possible to reorient at people into this way of life by altering their social and cultural environment? (Thiong'o, 1976, 52-53).

Thompson thinks that it is a task assigned to him to change the savage into the civilized. The Whites consider themselves superior in every respect than the Kenyans. They have decided to change social and cultural environment of Kenya. In this process of change, the Whites have used every possible means of exploitation. The Whites considers the natives as primitive and lovers of violence.

The whites have certain misconceptions about the Kenyans. The Whites consider Kenyans as liars. The peak of exploitation is that Thompson spits on the face of native man. In civilized society it is considered manner less. The Whites consider themselves civilized, but behavior is primitive. “*A Grain of Wheat* is a broad binary opposition between the forces of oppression on the one hand and the forces of resistance on the other” (Gakwandi, 157). The novel explores the struggle between exploiters and the victims. The colonizers have created a systematic legal mechanism of exploitation.

The Whites have created the mechanism of detention camps for physical exploitation of the natives. The detention camps are houses of cruelty, torture and inhumanity: “*A Grain of Wheat* the author probes into the psychology of those characters who have undergone serious difficulties and consequent disillusionment but who during the time of emergency have found some meaning and purpose in life in the tough fight for their country’s independence” (Pandurang, 91). Ngugi through the characters presents the suffering and agony of natives during emergency. Detention camp is the

production of emergency. However, emergency provides the target of struggle to natives. It has changed the outlook of natives regarding the life. Emergency inspires natives to protest and fight against the exploiters for the liberation of Kenya. Manda camp is most notorious in this regard. It includes eighteen thousands suspected natives arrested by the White soldiers under various charges. The Whites’ treatment to the detainees is like animal. The White soldiers tie up tightly the hands and legs of the detainees. They provide the detainees a trashy food. The sanitary conditions of the detention camp are miserable. The result is that it converted into the house of diseases. John Thompson adopts the temperate outlook when he is appointed as in-charge of Yala camp. He has tried to change the way of torture for revealing secrets from the detainees. He asks the prisoners about their family members to reveal the secrets. He tempts them by saying that if they confess they could join their family and live normal life. He has improved the medical facilities of the camp.

Family members of detainees are also tortured. The family members of the prisoners in detention camp are not allowed to meet them for many months. The family members are forced to work on the farms of White masters. These family members of the prisoners at the time of working on White masters farm express their pains through songs:

The Children of Israel

When they were in Misri

Were made to do work

Harder than that done by cows and donkeys (Thiong’o, 137).

The White masters never differentiated between animals and human. The novel is about the pathetic condition of the Kenyan society in the colonial period and the misuse of the colonial power by the White colonialists. The above lines of the song are uttered by Mumbi at the time of working on the White master's farm. And here the seeds of protest are sown in the minds of the natives. Emergency is unforgettable event in Kenyan history. It imprints its footprints on the very grass-root level: "In *A Grain of Wheat* the military struggle is in the past; the seeds of war have borne fruits; the harvest has been reaped. What asks the novel, of the next crop? That which must now be sown and tended is to be weathered in the new climate of independence and must feed the demands of peace" (Cook, 104). Mugo and Kihika in the novel are considered as grains of wheat. Both sacrificed in their way. The Kenyan social structure is saturated. It is necessary to bring social harmony. Every aspect of society is caught in the blaze of emergency. Everyone is living a life under the dark shadow of fear. Mugo reveals the secret of Kihika's place because of the fear. He thinks that the White man can do anything. The fear has affected the Kenyan society for a long time. The experiences of both in detention camp are horrible. Mugo and Gikonyo are devastated physically as well as mentally after releasing from detention camp. The effect of this is that Gikonyo cannot recognize his wife in a sufficient light. The Whites seized the lands of detainees. When the detainees released from camps, they entered in the landless village. Thabai

village is shifted elsewhere. Mugo's land is also seized.

A Grain of Wheat is about the freedom movement led by Mau Mau. It focuses on individual suffering, pains, agony during emergency: "In *A Grain of Wheat*, Ngugi calls on us to moderate callow judgments of the individuals with a more profound human compassion; not least because in a true summary we ourselves are in desperate need of this same compassion" (Thiong'o, 97). Some of the characters betray each other. But we never hate them. Mugo deceives Kihika and reveals his whereabouts. The result is that Kihika is caught by Whites. He betrays Kihika and the betrayal is outcome of personal jealousy. In the words of Mugo: "I wanted to live my life. I never wanted to be involved in anything's. Then he came into my life, here, a night like this, and pulled me into the steam. So I killed him" (Ibid. 174). Mugo out of prejudice helps the Whites. Karanja plays a role of faithful native agent of the colonial masters. He has deceived his natives by playing the role of head of the Whites' home-guard during emergency. He is selfish by nature. He is the black exploiter, exploits his own fellow natives. "Yet in the main *A Grain of Wheat* presents guilty humanity to our compassion not our righteous anger, since we are all seen as partaking of a common corruption" (Cook, 100). Extremity in the behavior in the characters is outcome of their mental sickness. Our concern to the characters is not because they suffer undeservedly but they are guilty and self-aware. The Whites have used the Africans for fighting against the Africans. Karanja's appointment as the head of the home

guards and offered him limited authority. The Whites force Karanja to exploit his fellow natives. The home guards sexually exploit the Kenyan females. They can pick any women for their sexual satisfaction. The freedom movement in Kenya is the outcome of the natives protest. Natives are exploited by paying them trivial wages. It harms and challenges the ego and pride of the natives. The Whites deliberately separate the natives from their conventional stream. The Whites have used the means of racial discrimination for exploiting the natives. Aggrieved by all these agonies, the natives have used to protest against inhuman treatment. After the World War Second, the second generation in Kenya have become aware of the social, economic cultural and the political condition of Kenya was unpleasant. The soldiers after returning from the war disappointed by overrule of the whites in case of land.

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o used a technique of flashback for presenting experiences of the characters in the freedom struggle. He portrays atmosphere of desires and fears, success and failure, honesty and disloyalty of the struggle period of Kenya. Colonial forces have imposed many unjust conditions on natives. In fact the natives choose a way of violence to oppose it. In a struggle violence arises in the novel. Innocent natives like Gitigo are also the victim of the White soldiers without any cause. The Whites disposed the only support of Gitigo's mother in the old age. They have snatched the only support of his old mother.

Wambui is the typical production of emergency in Kenya. Her helping to the

freedom fighters is a part of protest. Wambui was not very old, although she had lost most of her teeth. During the Emergency, she carried secrets from the villages to the forest and back to the villages and towns. She knew the underground movement in Nakuru, Njoro, Elburgon and other places in and outside the Rift Valley. The story is told how she once carried a pistol tied to her thighs near the groin. She was dressed in long, wide and heavy clothes, the picture of decrepitude and senile decay. She was taking the gun to Nyakinyua. As luck would have it, she was suddenly caught in one of those sporadic military and police operation which plagued the country. People were collected into the square behind the shops. Soon came her turn to be searched. Her tooth started aching; she twisted her lips, moaned; saliva tossed out of the corners of her mouth and flowed down her chin. The Gikuyu police man searching her was saying in Swahili: pole mama: made other sympathetic noises and went on searching. He started from her chest, rummaged under her armpits; gradually working his way down towards the vital spot (Thiong'o, 1967, 19). It is violation of the police manual code. The whites have to find native women. The colonizers used natives to exploit natives. The non-natives and their followers are free to kill anyone either suspected or not. When the Whiteman knocked the door Mumbi lost her courage. They broke the door of the home of Mumbi and shot Gitigo.

Ngugi has presented the non-natives adamant mentality through the character of Thompson. He is the loyal District Officer. He is the loyal servant and acts as per the

directions of his colonial masters. He opposes independence of the colonies. He decides to resign the job of District Officer and return to his motherland. The non-natives are not prepared for independence: "Would these things remain after Thursday and perhaps for two months and then test tubes and beakers would be broken or lie un-washed on the cement, the hot-houses and seedbeds strewn with wild plants and the outer bush which had been carefully hemmed, would gradually creep into a litter – filled compound" (Ibid. 41). Non-natives consider themselves superior to the natives. He calls the natives petty creatures. John Thompson was very cruel with the detainees. He treats them with hatred. The result of this is the death of eleven detainees. The media has raised this issue. It has discussed in the House of Commons. On the mistake of Thompson, the colonizers initiated a very light action to save him: "In *A Grain of Wheat* there is a larger community of whites'. British for the most part... and we see, the forces of the belief in the civilizing mission with its emphasis as a benevolent paternalism. This theme is consolidated in John Thompson" (Padma, 65). John Thompson after action becomes kind and helpful with detainees. There is a shift in his thinking.

The whites think that the Mau Mau activists belong to savage culture and love the bloodshed. Kihika states:

All oppressive people have a cross to bear. The Jew refused to carry it and were scattered like a dust all over the earth. Had Christ's death a meaning for the children of Israel? In Kenya we want a death which will change things, that is to say, we want true sacrifice. But first we have to be

ready to carry the cross. I die for you, you die for me, and we become a sacrifice for one another. So I can say that you, Karanja are Christ. I am Christ. Everybody who takes oath is a Christ (Ibid. 91). Kihika wants to create a sense of protest in natives' mind. He is a social goldsmith who can easily catch the pulse of society; "During the Emergency, Kihika has realized that violence could be justified only if it were seen as a painful necessity, in which one participated as a sort of ritual sacrifice" (Cook, 105).

Both Kihika and Mugo sacrifice in their own way. They regenerate energy for resistance in the villagers. Kihika is radical by nature. He considers violence necessary to resist. He appeals the natives to drive the Whites away from Kenya. He expects sacrifice from everyone. The speech of Kihika is with sense of unity. He wants unity among the natives for struggling against the Whites. Kihika is a clever activist. Kihika epitomizes the history of many Kenyan national freedom fighters who suffered during colonial period. He explains how he is a victim of Whites exploitation. The natives work hard. The Whites get a huge benefit from it and pay less to the natives. Whites become wealthy landlords. Economic and physical exploitation is meted to natives.

Karanja, the native supporter of the Whites, after being appointed the Chief of home guards, helps the Whites for exploiting the natives. On one occasion he says to Mumbi:

You don't understand. Did you want us all to die in the Forest and in detention so that the Whiteman could live here on this land alone? The Whiteman is strong. Don't you ever

forget that? I know, because I have tested his power. Don't you ever deceive yourself that Jomo Kenyatta will be ever released from Lodwar. And bombs are going to be dropped into the forest as the British did in Japan and Malaya. And those in detention will never, never see this land again (Thiong'o, 1967, 141).

Karanja threatens Mumbi and demands a sexual intercourse. He is singing the greatness of Whites power and strength. Mumbi protests against Karanja and says, "Why don't you wear your mother's skirt and Mwengu? When others went to fight, you remained behind to lick the feet of your White husbands" (Ibid. 199.) Mumbi strongly protests against the activities of Karanja. To get some relief from tiredness they sang the song:

We shall never rest
Without Land,
Without freedom true
Kenya is a country of black people
(Ibid. 33-34).

These lines express the strong anger and protest against the Whites. The non-natives have culturally exploited the natives by converting them into Christianity. Jackson in this connection comments, "I had called myself a Christian. I had put a White collar around my neck and thought this would save me from the fire to come. Vanity of vanities,

References

1. Thiong'o, Ngugi Wa. *A Grain of Wheat*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers Ltd. 1967.
2. Gakwandi, Shatto Arthur. *The Novel and Contemporary Experience in Africa*. London: Heinemann. 1979.
3. Pandurang, Mala. *Ngugi Wa Thiong'o: An Anthology of Recent Criticism*. New Delhi: Fine Arts Press. 2007.
4. Cook, David. *African Literature- A Critical View*. London: Longman. 1983.

saith the preacher, vanity of vanities. All was vanity. For my heart harbored anger, pride, jealousy, theft and adulterous thought" (Ibid. 82). The Whites have threatened the natives. They have put before them the strong option of the new religion. The Whites want to popularize the new religion. They want to convert the natives. The Whites misused the power for this task.

Thus, Ngugi has presented the naked picture of repression meted to natives by the non-natives. In his first three novels Ngugi has consistently explored the marginalization of the natives by non-natives. Due to lack of leadership and colonial repression the Kenyan society is near destruction. By introducing missionary education non-natives started to isolate socially from their family. Land is most significant element in all three novels. Kenyans seem that alienation from ancestral land means the death. The chapter also presents the disillusionment of young generation of Kenya. Unlimited suffocation by the non-natives is responsible for a sense of revenge in young generation. A stark picture of detention camp is heart-touching presented in the chapter.