

IN-BETWEEN CULTURE IN NGUGI WA THIONG'O'S "A GRAIN OF WHEAT"

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Abstract

Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o is one of the leading names among East Africa's first generation of writers, that is, those Africans who began to write and publish in English at the end of the colonial era. His historical novel *A Grain of Wheat*, which is concerned with the achievement of Kenyan independence, explores several issues such as national consciousness and symbols, decolonisation, independence, and neocolonialism. In the novel, Ngũgĩ portrays lots of realistic themes (violence, betrayal, etc.) and describes people's deep feelings about the colonial world. In this context, this study attempts to read the novel in light of postcolonialism, through a close analysis of the text in terms of its different representations of people's activities, characters, and the Mau Mau revolt. The study shows how a national culture develops and how a national ideology is presented, and reveals the hybrid relationship between the colonizer and the colonized in terms of Homi K. Bhabha's concept of "in-between". In his discussion of the mentioned term, Bhabha uses concepts such as hybridity, mimicry, negotiation, interstice, and liminality to show that cultural production is always most productive where it is most ambivalent. This contact zone, in the context of postcolonial culture, then, becomes a place of colonial invasion and resistance; also a place of cooperation and reception, communication and mimicry and it is used to explain how people choose and create culture from colonial culture. Relying on the theoretical support of Homi K. Bhabha's concept of the "in-between", this study analyses the possibility of the development of in-between culture in the novel which demonstrates that the mixture of cultures is an effective way for newly independent countries to get rid of the shadow of colonialism.

Keywords: colonizer, colonized, hybridity, in-betweenness.

NGUGI WA THIONG'O'NUN "BİR BUĞDAY TANESİ" ESERİNDE ARADA KÜLTÜR

Özet

Kenyalı yazar Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Doğu Afrika'nın ilk nesil yazarları arasındadır ve ömürge döneminin sonunda İngilizce yazıp yayınlamaya başlayan Afrikalılar arasında önde gelen isimlerden biridir. Thiong'o'nun Kenya'nın bağımsızlığının kazanılmasıyla ilgili olan tarihsel romanı *Bir Buğday Tanesi*, ulusal bilinç ve semboller, dekolonizasyon, bağımsızlık ve yeni sömürgecilik gibi çeşitli konuları araştırmaktadır. Romanda Ngũgĩ birçok gerçekçi temayı (şiddet, ihanet vb.) betimler ve insanların sömürge dünyası hakkındaki derin duygularını anlatır. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma, romanı, insanların eylemlerine, karakterlerine ve Mau Mau isyanına ilişkin farklı temsiller açısından metnin yakın bir analizi yoluyla, postkolonyalizm ışığında okumaya çalışır. Çalışma, ulusal bir kültürün nasıl geliştiğini ve ulusal bir ideolojinin nasıl sunulduğunu

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göstermekte ve Homi K. Bhabha'nın "arada" kavramı üzerinden sömürgeci ile sömürgeleştirilen arasındaki melez ilişkiyi ortaya koymaktadır. Bhabha, sözü edilen terimle ilgili tartışmasında, kültürel üretimin her zaman en ikircikli olduğu yerde en üretken olduğunu göstermek için melezlik, taklit, müzakere, boşluk ve eşik gibi kavramları kullanır. Bu temas bölgesi, sömürge sonrası kültür bağlamında, bir sömürge istilası ve direniş yeri haline gelir; aynı zamanda bir işbirliği ve kabul, iletişim ve taklit yeridir ve insanların kolonyal kültürden kültürü nasıl seçip yarattığını açıklamak için kullanılır. Homi K. Bhabha'nın "aradaki" kavramının teorik desteğine dayanan bu çalışma, kültürlerin karışımının yeni bağımsız ülkeler için sömürgeciliğin gölgesinden çıkmanın etkili bir yol olduğunu gösteren romanda ara kültürün gelişme olasılığını analiz etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: sömürgeci, sömürülen, melezlik, arada kalmışlık.

Introduction

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o is one of the leading names among East Africa's first generation of writers, that is, those Africans who began to write and publish in English at the end of the colonial era. Thanks to his writing and his activism, Ngũgĩ has been a seminal influence on the literature of his Kenyan homeland and in the foreign world of postcolonial literary studies. His critical and political writings have focused sharply on issues of culture and language. His historical novel *A Grain of Wheat* is concerned with the achievement of Kenyan independence and "invents and delimits colonial and decolonised Kenyan national identities" (Nicholls, 2010: p. 85). The novel relates "the four days leading up to Kenya's independence from British colonial rule in December 1963, although the unconfessed events which are the drama of the narrative mostly took place during the Emergency in the 1950s" (Singh, 2015: p. 24). The novel explores several issues such as national consciousness and symbols, decolonisation, independence, and neocolonialism. Ngũgĩ portrays lots of realistic themes (violence, betrayal, etc.) "to give colonialism and nationalism concrete form and content" (Gikandi, 2000: p. 107) and describes people's deep feelings about the colonial world. In this context, this study attempts to read the novel in light of postcolonialism, through a close analysis of the text in terms of its different representations of people's activities, characters, and the Mau Mau revolt. The study shows how a national culture develops and how a national ideology is presented and reveals the hybrid relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. Relying on the theoretical support of Homi K. Bhabha's concept of the "in-between", the study analyses the possibility of the development of in-between culture in the novel.

In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha uses concepts such as hybridity, mimicry, negotiation, interstice and liminality to show that cultural production is always most productive where it is



most ambivalent. According to him, “cultural interaction emerges only at the signifiatory boundaries of cultures, where meanings and values are (mis)read or signs are misappropriated” (1994: p. 34). He also attacks “cultural diversity as giving the false impression that cultures are holistic, separated and static” (Khurajam and Acharjee, 2013: p. 3). In this sense, the “in-between”, which is a position such as that of a migrant who lives in an impartial perception of the world, is “used as the starting point for creating new, dynamic ways of thinking about identity which go beyond older static models, such as national identity and the notion of rootedness” (McLeod, 2010, p. 146). According to Bhabha, the ‘beyond’ is a site “of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion” (1994: p. 1). According to Bill Ashcroft, this “‘in-betweenness’ is perhaps best exemplified in that most essentialized of subject positions—the indigenous” (2010: p. 78). For Ashcroft, it “is not a state of suspended subjectivity [...] but a state of fluidity, porous boundaries and travel between subject positions” (p. 78) which becomes “a place of immense creativity and possibility” (McLeod, 2010: p. 145). These ‘in-between’ spaces provide personalized singular or communal terrain elaboration and collaboration, as well as controversy, “in the act of defining the idea of society itself” (Bhabha, 1994: p. 2). It is a narration of “ambivalent, hybrid, cultural knowledges - neither ‘one’ nor ‘other’ is ethnocentrically elided in the search for cultural commensurability” (p. 127). This contact zone, in the context of post-colonial culture, then, becomes a place of colonial invasion and resistance; also a place of cooperation and reception, communication and mimicry, and it is used to explain how people choose and create culture from colonial culture. According to Ashcroft et al, “it is the in-between space that carries the burden and meaning of culture, and this is what makes the notion of hybrid so important” (2000: p. 109). Partly due to colonialism, all cultures are connected. As Edward Said says in *Culture and Imperialism*, “the history of all cultures is the history of cultural borrowings [...] Culture is never just a matter of ownership, of borrowing and lending with absolute debtors and creditors, but rather of appropriations, common experiences, and interdependencies of all kinds among different cultures” (1993: p. 217). Thus, in-between cultures emerge in the colonial and postcolonial contexts. Following the arrival of the colonizer, local people have to get along with these new people and accept a new model of education controlled by the colonizer which “makes it possible to begin envisaging national, antinationalist histories of the people” (Bhabha, 1995: p. 209). In their minds, two ideologies mix, which leads to the formation of a crossing culture, fusing the colonized’s and the colonizer’s cultures. This new in-between culture belongs to the original culture of both the colonized and the colonizer.



1. The Possibility of an In-between Culture

In a colonial relationship between native people and colonizers, it is possible for natives to be affected by the culture of the colonizer. According to Bhabha, “what comes to be textualized as the truth of the native culture is a part that becomes ambivalently incorporated in the archives of colonial knowledge” (1994: p. 138). Initially, the colonizer’s invasion creates a precondition for the development of an in-between culture. In the novel, after the invasion, the whole country is enveloped in a shadow that makes people fall into a state “of fear and anxiety, projection and panic in a form of circulation *in-between* the colonizer and the colonized” (p. 206). The story goes as follows:

One day, people in Thabai and Rung’ei woke up to find themselves ringed round with black and white soldiers carrying guns, and tanks last seen on the road during Churchill’s war with Hitler. Gunfire smoked in the sky, people held their stomachs. Some men locked themselves in latrines; others did among the sacks of sugar and beans in the shops. Yet others tried to sneak out of the town towards the forest, only to find that all roads to freedom were blocked. People were being collected into the town-square, the marketplace, for screening. (Thiong’o, 2012: p. 5)

Readers might see the character Gitogo running through the wood to his aged mother and the white men shouting at the natives. When the old woman hears the news that her son is shot dead, she does not cry. The terrible events she undergoes are brought on by these white men. They make people feel lost and frightened. As Bhabha says, “the great spreading of fear more dangerous than anger, is equivocal, circulating wildly on both sides. It spreads beyond the knowledge of ethnic or cultural binarisms and becomes a new, hybrid space of cultural difference in the negotiation of colonial power-relations” (1994: p. 204). In the novel, the protagonist Mugo is a victim of colonialism. His fear, anxiety and panic are shown clearly: “Mugo felt nervous [...] Now he lay under the blanket and remained unsettled fearing, as in the dream, that a drop of cold water would suddenly pierce his eyes” (Thiong’o, 2012: p. 1). These words describe the fearful heart of Mugo and the evil of the white men. It is a truth that colonial rule was a nightmare for the people of that age. For Mugo, what frightens him is not only his betrayal but also the white men who invade his homeland. It is cold like the water that goes through the body of the people and the nation. This is a kind of spiritual and physical hurt for the native. It is a shadow surrounding people, which is difficult for the colonized to eliminate.



The panic induced by colonialism is not only physical and spiritual but also material. The colonizers occupy the natives' land, take away their food and arrest them. Their lives are disturbed; peace and comfort are no longer present. As no crops grow on the land, the country appears sick and dull. All the things that once belonged to the natives are no longer theirs now. They must share with the white men even when they do not belong to them any longer. They had to ask for it from the white men. As the novel relates, "day and night, they made us dig. We were stricken ill, we often slept with empty stomachs, and our clothes were just rags and tatters so that the rain and the wind and the sun knew our nakedness" (p. 79). The native men who do not participate in the revolt are forced to slave for the colonizer, while those who take part become the colonizers' enemies, and the colonizers try to arrest them or even kill them. After the native men are arrested by the white men, those who are left at home suffer. The elderly, women, and children, who stay at home, lose not only their sons, husbands, and fathers, respectively, but also their land and food, which leads to food shortages. In the novel, Mumbi, a brave woman, always hopes that her husband, Gikonyo, might return to her one day. Therefore, she tolerates the hard life and takes care of her mother-in-law. One day, when Karanja tells her that Gikonyo will never come back to her because he is dead, her whole world is destroyed by the newcomers, and she no longer resists Karanja's advances. At that moment, she feels emotionless and is indifferent to the world around her. Moreover, the man who stands before her and makes love to her is no longer her friend. As we can see, harm is done, indirectly or directly, no matter what white men do. Bhabha says, "the threatened "loss" of meaningfulness in cross-cultural interpretation, which is as much a problem of the structure of the signifier as it is a question of cultural codes (the *experience* of other cultures), then becomes a hermeneutic project for the restoration of cultural "essence" or authenticity" (1994: p. 126). What Karanja does to Mumbi is just like what white men have done to the native people.

Colonizers also use "educational institutions to augment the perceived legitimacy and propriety of itself" (McLeod, 2010: p. 99) to maintain their colonial power. John McLeod points out that "colonial power was buttressed by the production of knowledge about colonised cultures which endlessly produced a degenerate image of the Orient for those in the West, or Occident" (2010: p. 26). Colonizers try to change the native people's ideologies through education. As Ania Loomba states, "turning away from colonial culture is often a necessary precondition for paying serious attention to the literatures and cultures devalued under colonialism" (2015: p. 101). In school, they teach native students to dislike and neglect their own culture. Once, when Kihika



was in school, he argues with Teacher Muniu who talks of the circumcision of women and calls it a heathen custom (Thiong'o, 2012: p. 104). When Kihika says that the Bible contains no such a saying, the teacher becomes angry, and one Tuesday morning, Muniu assembles the whole school in the church building and decides "to give the boy a chance to save his soul" (p. 105). During this, all pupils keep their silence while Kihika leaves Mahiga school, disgraced. They attempt to teach children about the host country's knowledge and culture, and at the same time, they attack those who resist them and enslave those who are obedient. No matter what, the colonizer presents a new challenge for the colonized not only in their lives but in their mind, which makes the native culture change and provides a precondition for the development of an in-between culture.

If the invasion of the colonizer provides a precondition to the development of an in-between culture, then the resistance of the colonized is a force of its development. In any way, resistance is more likely when the invasion happens; conversely, the resistance creates a chance for communication between the colonizer and the colonized. Therefore, communication allows for the merging of white culture and native culture, which leads to a new culture, namely, an in-between culture. As the primary means of resisting the colonial invasion, the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya records a piece of the culture of this country. It is a symbol of culture during resistance. Ngũgĩ describes the resistance of the colonized in the main plot of this novel from the beginning of the invasion to the achievement of independence. The colonizers such as Colonel Robson think that the Mau Mau rebellion is evil. It is a movement that, if left unchecked, will mean the destruction of all the values on which civilization has thrived (p. 66). However, for the colonizer, it is the only way by which the independence of their country could be accomplished. As more and more fighters and patriots make a sacrifice for the movement and strive to resist the invasion, they create a history for the country—Mau Mau—with those heroes existing throughout the novel.

In the novel, Warui's life is, in a way, one story of the movement. He has taken part in the meeting of Young Harry, has helped build people's own schools, and listens to Jomo's speeches in the twenties (p. 22). Warui is one of the few who saw in the recent employee of the Nairobi Municipal Council a man destined for power. He knew the story of the underground movement. Many patriots like Warui take the history of their country about the invasion of the white men. They are like ghost who haunted the colonized, making them frightened and anxious. With their blood, they try to change their fate as the colonized, which creates a new page in their history.



They try to keep it even not too much so that the in-between culture appears in the process of resistance.

The invasion and resistance make the development of an in-between culture possible. The colonized people struggle in the ocean of their own culture and the colonized culture. Some succeed, while others fail. Frantz Fanon declares, ‘in the underdeveloped countries preceding generations have simultaneously resisted the insidious agenda of colonialism and paved the way for the emergence of the current struggles’ (2004: p. 206). Colonized Kenyans also had to hold on to their culture while resisting the invasion of white culture. However, it is a difficult process during their move toward the future when there will be no invader. After all, every developing thing is changeable. Ngũgĩ contends that before the advent of colonialism, at the end of the last century, Kenya’s material base and level of productivity faced only natural barriers, such as insufficient rainfall. However, colonialism erected another barrier to development, which is the capitalist mode of production that would lead to Kenyan resources being robbed and its land and labor commandeered. This colonial past, he makes clear, is still embedded in the Kenyan present, with the masses still creating wealth for others to seize and the leaders denying the people the right to debate or challenge the government’s ‘nation-building’ policies.

In the novel, Kenyans would have their own life to live before the arrival of the white people. Ngũgĩ shows the various ways in which colonialism affects people. It is a complex and traumatic experience for each individual. Mumbi, the most beautiful woman in the town, has a good family and would have had a better future if her land had not been colonized. Additionally, the arrival of colonialism breaks up her family comprising her brother and husband and leads to the unexpected birth of a son. Moreover, to her surprise, the man who is a hero in her mind turns out to be the man who has killed her brother. However, the changes in her life mature her. On the other hand, the three best friends, Kihika, Karanja, and Gikonyo, go different ways when faced with the challenge of colonialism. Once, they used to sing songs about love, their country, family and so on together, but these happy times have faded away. After Kihika dies, Gikonyo loses his belief in his wife and his family, and Karanja betrays his friend and serves the white men. Once, they had hoped for the independence of their country, but later, each start to have differing opinions about the resistance, life, their beliefs, and so on. In effect, they are all victims of colonialism. Colonialism disturbs their original ideology about their own culture. It leads to the collision of their culture with the colonizing culture. The conflicts are produced by jealousy of and hatred for white people’s better lives. The difference between native and white



people leads to conflicts and the collision of white and native cultures. The terrible movement and conflicts allow for the emergence of an in-between culture from cultural confusion. Nations cannot restore their homeland and return to independent lives, as they cannot disregard the colonizer's ways and the ideas, which they have unconsciously adopted. In this collision culture, many natives feel confused about their original culture and begin to struggle between the two cultures. They begin to vacillate between the two sides and feel that they are in a state of in-betweenness.

As the in-between culture becomes more obvious, some people begin to consider it as a part of themselves. They mimic white people consciously and unconsciously. This mimicry, made possible by colonialism, may catalyze the development of an in-between culture. When white people live with native people, the challenge of developing native culture increases. A distinct contrast exists between them. The first wish of the colonized is to keep pace with the colonizer, trying to mimic the colonizer till they finally do not know themselves. Indeed, after seeing the better lives of the white men, many natives start to long for such a life: "The whiteman went in cars. He lived in a big house. His children went to school. But who tilled the soil on which grew coffee, tea, pyrethrum, and sisal? Who dug the roads and paid the taxes? The whiteman lived on our land. He ate what we grew and cooked. And even the crumbs from the table, he threw to his dogs" (Thiong'o, 2012: p. 266). This kind of hope on the part of the natives makes the development of an in-between culture possible. Everybody wants to live a better life no matter their present circumstances. Before the white people arrived, they were satisfied with their own life, but after that, people in the country see the new lifestyle of the white people. Moreover, they, just like Karanja, want to have that kind of life. Readers may remember this man who befriends the national hero Kihika. After the emergence, he chooses to stay at home instead of joining the Mau Mau revolt. He does not regret choosing this road, as he thinks that nobody will be left to protect the women and the children if all the men go to fight. During the revolt, people are arrested, imprisoned, or killed, just like Kihika, and those who remained at home mourn their fallen kin. To avoid this fate, Karanja chooses to stay at home, to protect his country in the way he thinks is right. Unfortunately, his staying does nothing to protect his countrymen who stayed at home. To be frank, he does this for himself. He intends to serve white people, such as delivering a letter for the white lady or keeping eyes on the laboring man for the white. Even more, he takes care of his lover, his friend's wife, by paying her. When he talks to his countrymen, he acts like a white man, shouting at his people. However, when he talks to white



people, he acts like a native black man. Finally, he loses himself and starts living in the in-between. For the native people, he is the tool of the white people, and for the white people, he is a marginal person. Thus, Karanja lives in between the native and the white people.

The detention center becomes a good place for mimicry. The author describes it as a satire of colonialism and takes it for granted. The prison for the arrested people provides a practical place for their mimicry. Ngũgĩ “invokes the multiple connections between language and culture, and argues that colonialism made inroads into the latter through control of the former” (Loomba, 2015: p. 100). He describes a man named Gatu in the detention center who often makes fun of or mimics the voice of the white men. He is a detainee from Nyeri, who always instills them with strength and hope. He has a gift for telling jokes and stories and puts up performances on the communication between him and the white women. Ngũgĩ has a supportive attitude regarding Gatu’s behavior. Ngũgĩ describes him as follows:

The corners of his mouth were set in a satiric smile which tickled many detainees from sadness to laughter and warmth. Even the way he ordinarily walked could be irrepressibly comical, as he nearly always mimed the gait and mannerisms of the white officers and camp warders. His jokes and stories carried a moral. His laughing face and eyes had certain lines of unmistakable wisdom. (Thiong’o, 2012: p. 129)

Gatu’s conscious mimicry is unconscious learning. To some extent, it amounts to the unconscious, hybrid development of knowledge of the culture of the white men and the culture of natives who imitate others. Then, a place between them, called the ‘Third Space’, appears naturally. Through such a place, people can create a special cultural phenomenon for themselves to prevent themselves from feeling bored in the prison. Here, the mimicry in the prison may be the only code for the development of the in-between cultures. As Bhabha states, “it is a form of persecutory paranoia that emerges from cultures’ own structured demand for imitation and identification. It is the archaic survival of the ‘text’ of culture, that is the demand and desire of its translations, never the mere authority of its originality” (1994: p. 138). Ngũgĩ distinguishes “writers who were part of these people and wrote in indigenous languages and those who clung to foreign languages, thus suggesting an organic overlap between political and cultural identities and the medium of literary expression” (Loomba, 2015: p. 101). In the novel, he tries to use people’s mimicry to explain the nuances of native people’s own identities and cultural identities.

2. Development of an In-between Culture

The colonial culture is composed of a kind of mutual communication. Not only is a foreign culture imposed on the colonized culture but it is also a reaction to the culture of the colonizer and shifts from control and hegemony to their innovation. According to Bhabha, “cultures come to be represented by virtue of the processes of iteration and translation through which their meanings are very vicariously addressed to *-through-* an Other” (1994: p. 58). In the journey of its development, culture enriches itself increasingly. According to Edward Said, “*voyages* in represent [...] a still unresolved contradiction or discrepancy within metropolitan culture, which through co-optation, dilution, and avoidance partly acknowledges and partly refuses the effort. *The voyage in*, then, constitutes an especially interesting variety of hybrid cultural work. And that it exists at all is a sign of adversarial internationalization in an age of continued imperial structures” (1993: p. 244). This kind of hybrid culture not only indicates the colonized but also to colonizer.

Literature is always a representation of a culture. As part of postcolonial discourse, studying Western values is meaningful, as they construct “European culture as superior and as a measure of human values” (Loomba, 2015: p. 95-96) which helped maintained the colonial rule. However, any culture has its merit, even an uncivilized culture. Megan Vaughan thinks that “custom and tradition are ‘constructed’ and ‘invented’ by both colonialists and their opponents” (qtd in Loomba, 2015: p. 70). In the novel, Thompson, for the native, is the representation of white people’s power. Standing in his shoes, he may be evil to the colonized, and he refuses to accept everything about their ‘Otherness’. However, he is quite interested in African literature. Thompson first comes to East Africa during the Second World War as an officer seconded to the King’s African Rifles. He has ever taken an active part in the 1942 Madagascar campaigns. After the war, he returns to his studies in Oxford, which had been interrupted. It is there, while reading history, that he finds himself interested in the development of the British Empire. Initially, this is merely a historian’s academic interest without personal involvement. However, having gotten engrossed in the poems of Rudyard Kipling, he experiences a swift flicker, as if a flame has awakened. He sees himself as having a doomed fate, a man poised for great things and becoming convicted. They talk about literature, history, and war; they are all enthusiastic about the British Mission in the World. The two Africans come from a family of chiefs and demonstrate a real grasp of history and literature. This fills Thompson with wonder, and he starts glorifying it. His mind starts working, and he begins writing his book *Prospero in Africa*.



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 reorientate people into this way of life by altering their social and cultural environment? *Prospero in Africa* was a result of an assiduous dive into English history, and the General History of Colonization from the Roman times to the present day. He was influenced by the French policy of Assimilation, but was critical of the French as he was of what he called “Lugard’s retrograde concept of Indirect Rule. (Thiong’o, 2012: p. 63-64)

Obviously, the strength of experience beyond those enslaved, suppressed memories, Africa, is, in fact, everywhere. The slave quarters of the daily life and customs, languages and dialects in the plantations, in the name and the word, often disconnected from their taxonomy. As colonizers, they do not take the native as a true man. During the invasion, they tread on the natives, and look down upon them, feeling happy to touch the red earth of Kenya. They think the Africans are born actors, that’s why “he finds it so easy to lie” (p. 66) when Mugo reveals Kihika’s secret to Thompson. Ironically, a colonizer such as Thompson does not believe in what the colonizer says but does what the colonized says. To some extent, these colonizers start to recognize some parts of the native. Thompson’s faith in British imperialism once makes him declare that to administer a people is to administer a soul (p. 65). The colonizers want to change the colonized because they think the colonized are uncivilized. However, as time goes by, both the colonizer and the colonized change. During Thompson’s time in Kenya, Thompson changes his original belief about the local people: “Did Thompson know he was being double-crossed? He must have known. That’s why he was always so sad. Did he himself taste other women, like Dr Lynd? Ha! Ha! Ha! They changed to the dog incident. They became angry. They sympathized with Karanja” (p. 189). Ngũgĩ asks these questions in his novel when Thompson wants to protect Karanja from the dog, which shows that Thompson and many other white people, as the colonizers, also live in the ‘Third Space’. They struggle like the colonized people who live in the in-between culture. Two situations may occur when someone begins to understand something: One is to get away from it; the other is to get along with it. During this formation of culture, some natives or the colonizer choose the latter. They put the two cultures together to become an in-between culture. Thus, when two cultures melt together, though some people on each side try to keep their position, an in-between culture is produced, which belongs to each side. In the process of communication, even the colonizer may get absorbed in this hybrid in-between culture.



In the novel, Ngũgĩ presents a largely unfinished story of under-development in Kenya, both in parallel and in contrast to the official version of Kenyan independence history. He presents various specific cases of oppression, discusses how colonial patterns have continued into the flag-independence era, and highlights the contradictions inherent in the present situation. Towards the end of the novel, he details the meeting on independence. However, has true liberation been achieved, or do the natives still live in the in-between? According to Bhabha, “the liberatory people who initiate the productive instability of revolutionary cultural change are themselves the bearers of a hybrid identity (1994: p. 38). Edward Said also believes that “the immense cultural shift from the terrain of nationalist independence to the theoretical domain of liberation.” (1993: p. 268). According to Loomba, “liberation, for them, hinged upon the discovery or rehabilitation of their cultural identity which European colonialism had disparaged and wrecked” (2015: p. 178). Even if these people gain independence, they cannot return to the time before the arrival of the white people. In line with the theory of in-between cultures, people change and adapt to a new in-between area. Differentiating “between the semblance and similitude of symbols across diverse cultural experiences—literature, art, music, ritual, life, death—and the social specificity of each of these productions of meaning” becomes crucial, “as they circulate as signs within specific contextual locations and social systems of value” (Bhabha, 1994: p. 172). Ngũgĩ, following his reexamination of Kenyan history, discovers that no such thing as Kenyan independence ever existed. When General R. talks excitedly about the little drama to be enacted on Independence Day, when the rain wets people’s bodies, and the history of colonialism reappears, the memory haunts the natives. The colonial war is not only ‘the war’ of the local people and the invader but also ‘the war’ of culture between the colonizer and the colonized, which culminates in the appearance of the ‘Third space’ between them. Moreover, a new culture is produced and developed in the space. Consequently, independence brings partial, not complete, liberation to the colonized people. They completely cannot eliminate the shadow of being colonized. However, bloodshed may exist for long in the natives’ lives, this time for the hope of a better life and a stronger country in between the cultures.

Conclusion

In *A Grain of Wheat*, Ngũgĩ describes the invasion-induced confusion and discusses the native people’s struggle. People struggle in the ‘Third Space’ between themselves and the colonizer and try to utilize their culture throughout. Most try to escape from white people’s control to battle for

their nation. They make sacrifices to realize their dream of getting their life back again. They expect to create a world like before, but they end up creating a new world, as history cannot be changed; all that can be done is to grasp the present and create the future. Although they finally become independent, they are not what they were before. For Ngũgĩ, any country that has suffered at the hands of colonialism can be reborn. With the new, hybrid culture, its people will be well. Surviving and flourishing in this in-between culture is possible and inevitable. Using Bhabha's theories on culture, hybridity, and ambivalence, this study demonstrates that the development of the in-between culture is a trend. Although the development of in-between cultures is a short-term development for a colonial country's culture, it is an inevitable trend for the colonized. What must be mapped as a continuous historical reality of the new international space is, in fact, marked by the cultural differences, which are inscribed in the interstitial channels, and by issues processed 'in-between', weaving in the temporal break of 'global' text. In-between culture creates new insurgent acts of cultural translation of sense. After all, in today's world, a country must develop a kind of diversified culture based on its national circumstances. The development of an in-between culture in *A Grain of Wheat* demonstrates that the mixture of cultures is an effective way for newly independent countries to get rid of the shadow of colonialism.

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