

Original Article

Identity Crisis, Ambivalence and Otherness in Ngugi's Novel *Devil on the Cross*

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ABSTRACT: *The main objective of this study is to examine how identity crisis, ambiguity, and otherness are reflected in Ngugi wa Thiongo's novel Devil on the Cross. The analysis of the study shows that identity crisis is one of the main points depicted in the novel. Moreover, the novel revealed that due to colonial education and experience, the indigenous intellectuals found themselves in an ambivalent position. Some characters of the novel are placed in contradictory positions as they seek to find out the lost indigenous culture, but they fail to properly speak their own Gikuyu language while they are perfect in English. Furthermore, the middle-class Kenyans see themselves and their people as inferior other than the Westerners. This is because the neo-colonizers strengthen the idea that the West is civilized and a source of knowledge while inviting Kenyans to get knowledge from the Western experience.*

KEYWORDS: *Identity Crisis, Ambivalence, Otherness, Colonialism, Post-Colonial, Neocolonialism.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Colonialism can be understood as an ascendancy of a people or area by a foreign country. It is the practice of extending and upholding a country's political and economic control over another nation, people, or area. Colonialism can be "perceived as a totalizing event which defined the world interims of binary oppositions such as the relationship of colonized to colonizer, the margin to the imperial centre" (Melakneh, 2012:5). During colonialism, the assumption that Western Europeans and, in particular, the British people were superior to any other race based on physical and/or cultural distinctions remained relatively unquestioned. Such beliefs directly affected the ways in which the colonizers treated the colonized. Thereby, in the colonial period, the colonized people were marginalized and oppressed in various ways. They were considered as out of history and civilizations (Harrison, 2012; Guruprasad, 2014). Besides, Ngugi as cited in Killam (1984) indicated that to make economic and political control the more complete, the colonizing power attempts to control the cultural environment such as education, religion, language, literature, songs, forms of dances, every form of expression, hoping to control a people's values and ultimately their world outlook, their image and definition of self through the masked civilizing mission.

Africa is one of the victims that has been facing problems resulted from both colonialism and neocolonialism. Although the colonizers withdrew physically from the land of Africa, their indirect colonization in various ways persists in formerly colonized African nations (Melakneh, 2012). Hence, post-colonial African writers in their literatures in general and in novels in particular, reveal post-colonial disillusionments and struggle against mal governments, corruptions, civil wars, chaos, coups, socio-economic problems and neocolonialism in post-independent nations. Besides, they depict the identity of the colonized African societies by dealing with the huge challenge of building a national identity following a harmful colonial experience (Guruprasad, 2014; Melakneh, 2012).

Jani, (2026) stated that in the aftermath of East African independence movements, literature emerged not merely as artistic expression but as a vital site for reimagining identity, confronting historical trauma, and negotiating the complex legacies of colonialism.

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o is one of the prominent post-colonial African writers who exposes as well as fights against the deep rooted problems of colonialism and the act of mind colonization in the post-colonial Kenya through his famous novels (Getinet, 2012). Ngugi's internationally known novels are *Weep Not Child* (1964), *The River Between* (1963), *Grain of Wheat* (1967), *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982), *Matigari* (1987) and *Wizard of the Crow* (2006). In these novels, Ngugi discloses the ways in which Europeans established and strengthened their colonial power using various means as well as the mal practices of post-independent government in Kenya (Dagne, 2010; Getinet, 2012; Ndigirigi, 2015).

Having the above indicated contribution of Ngugi in mind, the writer of this research analyzes the novel *Devil on the Cross* as it is a remarkable novel of the Post-colonial period. According to Ndigirigi, (2015), it was originally written in his native tongue Gikuyu with the title *Caिताani Hultharaba Ini* and was first appeared in 1980, and it was translated by the author himself into English in 1982. It was written in prison, which expressed his emotions regarding the neocolonial exploitation of ordinary Kenyan people (Ibid).

Gregersen (2013)) stated that the imperial powers are still in control of the colonized peoples' resources, economy, culture and politics. Such supremacy continues to the present through planting the colonizers legacy in the minds of the colonized ones as well as in the form of neo-colonization. As Dagne (2010) stated, Ngugi wrote the novel *Devil on the Cross* in his native Gikuyu Language with the intention to address the task of decolonizing the African mind. He has been prominent amongst those recent African writers seeking actively to decolonize African cultures. His project involves a decisive shift of language regime from the ex-colonial languages, as a principal means of expression (Kasarla, 2015).

While reading *Devil on the Cross*, the current researcher learned that the colonized people's internalization of colonial legacy; that is problem related to identity crisis, ambivalence and otherness is reflected in the novel in various forms. Thereby, the writer of this research is interested to analyze how Ngugi revealed the existence of the above mentioned problems in post-colonial Kenya through his widely known novel *Devil on the Cross*. Although there have been several researches conducted concerning this novel, none of them mainly focused on the issue of identity crisis, ambivalence and otherness.

The main objective of this study is to analyze Ngugi's novel *Devil on the Cross* in relation to effect of mind colonialism. Having the general objective in mind, this study has specific objectives. These are:

- To show how characters in the novel internalized the colonial subjugation of indigenous culture, language, people and values, and superiority of the colonizers culture, language and self-definition;
- To determine how otherness and ambivalence were reflected in the novel

2. METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative using a method of textual analysis. The source of the study was both primary text or the selected novels and secondary data that were gathered from the existing library documents and internet sources. The analysis of the novel followed same procedures. First, through critically reading the novel, sample relevant extracts were selected. then, the selected extracts were categorized into themes such as identity crisis, ambivalence and otherness. Finally, the analysis was made based on post-colonial theoretical perspective.

3. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF THE NOVEL

Ngugi WA Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross* is a remarkable novel of the Post-colonial period. It was originally written in his native tongue Gikuyu with the title *Caitani Hultharaba Ini*. It was first appeared in 1980 and was translated by the author himself into English in 1982. This was written in prison, which expressed his emotions regarding the neocolonial exploitation of ordinary Kenyan people. With this understanding, the novel is analyzed in this article in three themes: Identity crisis, ambivalence and otherness in a respective order.

3.1. IDENTITY CRISIS IN DEVIL ON THE CROSS

According Ferdous (2015), the colonized loses his /her autonomous identity under the influence of mimicking colonial legacy. Many characters in the novel *Devil on the Cross* are in the identity crisis while assimilating themselves into modernity and civilization of the West. Identity crisis is seen in the novel when Kihaahu wa Gatheeca feels proud for his children speak English fluently but fail to speak local languages properly as indicated in the following extract.

As for my children, I have quite a few. All of them speak English through the nose, exactly like people born and brought up in England. If you were to hear them speaking Gikuyu or Kiswahili, you would laugh until you pissed yourself. It is so funny. They speak the two languages as if they were Italian priests newly arrived from Rome- priests without priestly collars. But then the children are mine and I don't mind that they speak their national languages like Italian foreigners (Ngugi, 1982: 109).

The above extract reveals the mental colonization of the colonized people. Here, Kihaahu considers English as superior to his national languages, Gikuyu and Kiswahili. This is due to the fact that he does not seem worried about his children's inability to speak their own language in favor of the foreign language. As a result, in neo-colonial Kenya, children like Kihaahu's express themselves in English and hence become British, losing their Kenyan identity. In this connection, Ngugi as cited in Killam (1984:51), contended that "language is a huge marker of identity, and losing it or mixing it with another language could mean losing one's identity". This shows that one who disregards his/her language is defined, or define himself/ herself through a European memory and, in the process, his/her own memory becomes destroyed. Besides, continuing use of the English language as a medium of expression in third-world countries like Kenya affirms the pervading effects of linguistic imperialism (Fanon, 1967; Kaur, 2014). The implication of identity crisis related to language is also reflected in the novel when Ithe wa Mbooi expresses his sadness that his children do not speak English fluently.

So that is why my children can't speak English through nose like real European children? And to think how often they have made me feel ashamed in front of people of my class because whenever they are spoken to in English, they normally reply in Gikuyu? (Ngugi, 1982: 121).

From the above quotation, we can learn that the black Kenyan bourgeoisies have deeply swallowed the colonial subjugation of their language and culture, which justifies Ngũgĩ's (1986:11) experience in colonial school, which says "one of the most humiliating experiences was to be caught speaking Gikuyu in the vicinity of the school". It is really amazing to learn that one feels ashamed for his children to speak his own language. Hence, like Kihaahu, Ithe wa Mbooi wants his children to be English rather than Kenyan. Such identity crisis also confirms Ngugi's argument that "the domination of a people's language by languages of the colonizing nations was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonized" (Ibid:16). Due to the effect of colonization, the indigenous cultures and languages of those countries subjected to foreign rule have been often sidelined, suppressed, and openly denigrated by the colonized people in favor of elevating the social and cultural preferences and conventions of the colonizers (Guruprasa; Fanon, 1967).

Moreover, identity crisis is reflected in the novel when the colonized people preferred education by white people with white culture and the English Language. The so-called Kenyan elites (VIPs) undermine their own people, language, culture, and tradition. However, they absolutely believe in the supremacy of the white's education, white's value, white people, and the English Language. When one of the local robbers and thieves, Kihaahu wa Gatheeca, opened a private nursery school for VIP

Kenyans in Nairobi focusing on Kenyan values, no one was interested in that. The following extract is taken as evidence: Then I placed a big advertisement in a newspaper with the following wording:

- New Black Beauty Nursery School
- For Children of VIP Kenyans.
- Owned managed and Thought
- Entirely by Kenyans.
- Swahili Language in Use.
- Kenyan Songs, Kenyan Lullabies etc, etc.
- Cheap in Fees, Dear in Quality.
- Bring One Bring All

Well, I never got a single child. Not even a disabled one (Ngugi, 1982: 111-112)

As we can understand from this extract, no one in Nairobi was interested to teach his/her child in a school that focuses on his/her own Kenyan cultural values and his/her own Kiswahili Language. On the other hand, when Kihaahu opened a nursery school that was led by a European principal and taught in English Language, the school became popular with parents. Let's compare the following extract with the above one.

Then I placed a big advertisement in a newspaper:

- Modern day Nursery School,
- Experienced European Principal,
- Formerly for Europeans Only,
- Now open to a few Kenyans.
- Foreign Standards as Before
- National Languages, National Songs and National Names are Band,
- Foreign Language, Foreign Songs, Foreign Toys etc, etc.
- English Medium of Instruction...

Oh then, parents ringing day and night to reserve places for their children Whenever the phone rang, I would run to wake up the European principal to answer it (Ngugi, 1982: 113)

Here we can learn that, in post-colonial Kenya, the legacy of colonization that praises the supremacy of white people, their language and culture over Kenyan indigenous counterparts exists. In such an identity crisis, the Kenyan language and tradition are undermined not only by the robber black bourgeoisies but also by the elites who dwell in Nairobi. In this regard, Melakneh (2012:162) stated that cultural assimilation was one of the colonial agendas, which "involves the nationwide absorption of the indigenous into the metropolitan culture through certain social classes, particularly the ruling elite classes seen to suffer from identity crisis". Such an act of teaching the foreign culture and language has been deeply planted in the minds of the post-colonial elites. This proves the argument of Fanon (1967) that the colonized subject has two dimensions, which are the self-world and the world of the colonizer whereby the colonizer's world and culture are standard, superior, and normative. As a result, the consciousness of the colonized is framed within a hierarchical view of the world. Thereby, achieving adequacy through adapting the European culture can be understood as the major learning and developmental goal in the minds of the colonized elites (Ibid).

Imitation of European dressing style is one of the issues related to identity crisis that Ngugi satirized in *Devil on the Cross*. This is seen in the novel when Gatuiria's parents urged their guests in an invitation card to wear European clothes when coming to their welcoming party of their son Gatuiria and his fiancée.

- Dress:
- Men: dark Suits
- Ladies: Long dresses, hats, gloves (Ngugi, 1982: 237)

As indicated in the extract, Gatuiria's parents, who belong to the black middle class, urged their guests to wear Western costumes. This mention of the dress type on the invitation card results from their disregard for the indigenous Kenyan cultural costumes. This is also evidenced in the novel when the Old Rich Man (Gaturia's father) advises Wariinga, saying "I'd like you to take off this cloth, these necklaces and these earrings made of dry maize stalks and to put on clothes and jewelry made in Europe" (Ngugi, 1982: 251). Here we can understand that the Kenyan traditional dress and jewelry that Wariinga wore in the party are undermined and rejected by the wealthy Kenyan who swallowed the customs of the Europeans. Besides, all the robbers and thieves in the devils feast wore suits and European style of dressing as they are described in the novel (Ibid: 99-127). Hence, they not only imitate Western ideology of imperialism, but also the Western language as indicated above, Western religion as master of the ceremony says "we want Christianity..." (Ngugi, 1982: 87) and life style like cocktail parties as Kihaahu says "my second wife knows English and she has no jobs other than decking herself out in expensive clothes and jewelry for cocktail parties" (Ibid: 109). Hereafter, what makes them Kenyan is only their black color. Henceforth, such an act results in an identity crisis.

3.2. AMBIVALENCE IN DEVIL ON THE CROSS

In post-colonial theory, the term ambivalence is used to explain the distressed state of the colonized mind which occurs when simultaneously attracted toward and repulsed from culture, action, and ideology that belong to colonizers. Such an ambivalent position is seen in the novel *Devil on the Cross* when Gatuiria unconsciously failed to speak his own mother tongue while he was fluent in a foreign language. The extract below is related to this:

Gatuiria spoke Gikuyu like many educated people in Kenya- people who stutter like babies when speaking their national languages but conduct fluent conversations in foreign languages. The only difference was that Gatuiria was at least aware that the slavery of language is the slavery of mind and nothing to be proud of (Ngugi, 1982: 56)

As reflected in the extract, Gatuiria was not able to speak Gikuyu properly, but he spoke a foreign language fluently. However, Gatuiria is one of the young educated Kenyans who strive to restore their national culture. Such a state of being put him in an ambivalent position. In this sense, he may unconsciously internalize that speaking Gikuyu fluently like uneducated people is a sign of lack of civilization. However, one can easily understand from the extract that Gatuiria's speaking of the Gikuyu like babies is not conscious because he properly understood that a failure to speak one's own language while properly speaking a foreign language is a slavery of the mind. According to Bhabha, as cited in Ashcroft et al (2007:10), such ambivalence "suggests that complicity and resistance exist in a fluctuating relation within the colonial subject". Thereby, "it never really wants colonial subjects to be exact replicas of the colonizer" (Ibid: 10). The novel also presents the ambivalent position in Mwireri. Mwireri was educated at Harvard University and internalized the Western capitalist ideology of robbing the poor, but he thinks that local poor should be robbed by local thieves and robbers.

We, the national experts in theft and robbery, should not join hands with foreigners, to help them to seize our national wealth and carry it back to their countries leaving us only a few crumbs, the price of the heritages they have taken from us. Let's not be their spies, their watchdogs, their disciplines, their soldiers, the overseers of their lairs and stores in our own land (Ngugi, 1982: 166).

Here, Mwireri can be seen as a nationalist because he trusts in national theft and robbery but contends against foreign domination in national theft and robbery. He wants to reject foreign domination and demands to build his national economy by exploiting the local people without interference from foreign power. In this respect, he advises the local experts of theft and robbery not to submit themselves and their national wealth to foreign exploiters so that they are self-sufficient in exploiting the national wealth. However, this philosophy of Mwireri is not free of the colonial or neocolonial agenda. This is evidenced when he says "I don't believe in foreign ideology, but I believe in the ideology of modern theft and robbery" (Ngugi, 1982: 161). This statement obviously puts Mwireri in an ambivalent position. Although he hates the foreign domination and interference in the economy of his nation, he reflects the Western ideology of capitalism. Moreover, he celebrates modern life like the civilized Westerners, such as family planning, and prefers "white or Indian girls" (Ibid: 160). Nevertheless, such ambivalence could be seen as an unwelcome aspect of colonial discourse for the colonizer (Ahcroft, et al, 2007).

3.3. OTHERNESS IN DEVIL ON THE CROSS

Said (1978) argued that the Western discourse fabricated a false image of the colonized people (the Orient) as the primitive, uncivilized "other", in an attempt to create it as the contrast to the advanced and civilized West. According to Melakneh

(2012:5), this policy of colonialism “systematically programmed colonized people to understand themselves as marginalized in relation to this psychological construct”. This concept of otherness of the Kenyan people, even the elite class, has been reflected in the novel *Devil on the Cross*. Such idea is revealed in the novel when the master of the party of robbers and thieves urges the local thieves and robbers (which could be seen on the basis of the Orient otherness) to learn from the knowledgeable (Occident) foreign delegates who came from International Organization of Theft and Robbery (IOTR) saying “We should never be afraid to acknowledge the fact that we do not know as much as foreigners do and we should not feel ashamed to drink from foreigners’ fountain of knowledge” (Ngugi, 1982: 87). In this quotation, the word foreigner refers to delegates from USA, England, Germany, France, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Italy and Japan (Ibid: 79). As we shall see from this list, only Japan belongs to Asia whereas the rest are Europeans and American.

In the neo-colonial situation, the leading neo-colonizer is America, as indicated in the novel, where an American one is the leader of the delegates of foreign thieves and robbers. As a result, the black Kenyan master of ceremonies says that all the black Kenyan robbers and thieves should get knowledge from their Western masters. This indicates that in post-colonial Kenya, the colonized people internalized the idea that the West is the source of all knowledge and thus, the colonized should always acquire knowledge from them. In this respect, Said (1978) stated that “Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between “the Orient” and (most of the time) “the Occident” (Ibid: 88). Although the new Kenyan bourgeoisies are in middle class position because of their wealth, they still remain as orient others who always seek wisdom from their foreign masters. Henceforth, such colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable other, as subject of a difference that is almost the same in terms of their wealth but not quite the same in terms of the colonial history (Ferdous, 2015). In addition to the black master of ceremonies, the American delegate calls upon the local thieves and robbers to learn from Western civilization.

I think there is no one who does not know that theft and robbery are the cornerstones of America and Western civilization. Money is the heart that beats to keep the western world on the move. If you people want to build a great civilization like ours. Then kneel down before the god of money (Ngugi, 1982: 89).

As indicated in the above extract, the civilized West is different from uncivilized areas like Kenya. This extract also reveals that the West is universally understood as civilized. This view is intensified in the novel when the leader of the foreign delegates recognizes “an Englishman was the first to say that time is money. We Americans believe the same: time is many” (Ibid: 79). The idea that the West, particularly the British, is the source of all knowledge is underpinned by this American leader of the delegates. Related to this, Urch, as cited in Asma (2015), argued that while the Africans were developing an interest in Western culture and knowledge, the colonialists began to realize the necessity of training Africans for service to the white man. Analogously, Said, as cited in Ashcroft et al (1995:1), argued that “the most formidable ally of economic and political control had long been the business of ‘knowing’ other peoples because this ‘knowing’ underpinned imperial dominance and became the mode by which they were increasingly persuaded to know themselves: that is, as subordinate to Europe”. The idea of otherness is also mimicked by black bourgeoisies in the novel when the black imperialists undermine Kenyans. This is revealed in the novel when Kiharu boasts about his technique of robbing his citizens in the following extract.

I soon found out that no prominent Kenyan on acquiring a large farm would employ a Kenyan as his manager; he would only employ a foreigner European. A prominent Kenyan who was a success as big business would not employ Kenyan manager or accountant (Ngugi, 1982: 112)

According to this extract, in the eyes of the prominent Kenyans, Kenyan elites are viewed as inferior to Europeans. Europeans are considered civilized managers and accountants who have knowledge and the ability to bring success to the companies of the black imperialist. On the other hand, the indigenous Kenyan elites are stereotyped as people having lower status and incapable of being managers and accountants in companies situated in their land and owned by black Kenyans like them, regardless of their individual differences. Here, we can learn that the European discourse that portrays the West as capable leaders, omnipotent, and civilized intellectuals while the colonized as primitive, weak, and backward others has been internalized by the mimic Kenyan robbers and thieves. In other words, this disinterest in native Kenyans is one way of creating a polar difference between Europeans and other Kenyan orients, even if they are educated. In this relation, Fanon, as cited in Guruprasad (2014), stated that as the colonized culture and lifestyles are devalued by colonizers, the colonized is socially constructed as an inadequate subject. Likewise, Ferdous (2015) argued that the colonial discourse encouraged the colonized subject to ‘mimic’ the colonizer, by imitating the colonizers portrayal of the colonized people as incompetent and backward. This creation of “other” implies that the Europeans are people with good civilization and enlightenment, while Kenyans are backward people who are not able to do what the colonizers are able to do. This is why Fanon, as cited in Guruprasad (2014:10), argued that “an entirely new world must come into being to overcome the binary system in which black is evil and white is good”.

Moreover, although the black robbers and thieves belong to the imperialist class, they do not consider themselves equal to foreign thieves and robbers. An example of this can be seen from the novel when the master of ceremonies says “Distinguished

guests, we are your slaves. You have come back to see what we have done with the talents you bequeathed to us...” (Ngugi, 1982: 174). In this respect, Guruprasad (2014) stated that because of the colonial discourses that legitimize the superiority of colonizers, the colonized people lose their dignity and self-respect. Henceforward, they undermine themselves and glorify their colonizers even in the neocolonial times. The American delegate also emphasizes the inferiority of the local thieves and robbers, saying “we have come to you as to our friends who are also the local watchdogs who guard our investments” (Ibid: 88). From this quote, one can understand that the local middle classes are the servants of the Western neo-colonizers. Thereby, it can be seen from the perspective of Otherness.

4. CONCLUSION

This paper tried to look at the extent to which Ngugi revealed the continued seeds of colonization, particularly post-colonial concepts related to identity crisis, ambivalence, and otherness in his *Novel Devil on the Cross*. In this novel, Ngugi curiously depicted the disastrous position of the Kenyan middle classes for losing their language, cultural heritage, self-respect, and identity. As the novel clearly illustrated, the identity crisis of the colonized bourgeoisies in Kenya springs from the agonizing historical experience of colonialism and its child neo-colonization.

As the analysis of this research indicates, the so-called intellectuals and black bourgeoisies prefer the English Language rather than their own indigenous languages. The chaos left behind by colonizers in creating a kind of ruling system in areas, especially in Africa, added to the crisis of identity (Dizayi, 2015). Ngugi (1986:9) stated that the imposition of colonizers’ language in the minds of the colonized people “was the means of spiritual suppression”. Hence, Ngugi believes that the colonized people never drop the colonial memory unless they drop the oppressive colonial language. This is why he said, “my writing in the Gikuyu language, a Kenyan language, an African language, is part and parcel of the anti-imperialist struggles of Kenyan and African peoples” (Ibid: 28).

Another point revealed in the novel is related to ambivalence. Due to the effects of colonialism and its new version, neo-colonialism, the colonized people are placed in contradictory positions. Ngugi revealed this point in the novel. Gatuiria is one of the characters who seeks to find out the lost indigenous culture and argues that the slavery of language is the slavery of the mind. However, he failed to properly speak his own Gikuyu while he is perfect in English. Hence, when practically seen, Gatuiria is in an ambivalent position. Similarly, another character, Mwireri, partially accepts Western ideology of capitalism, but he refuses foreign domination.

Moreover, the novel portrays that the colonized people, regardless of their economic and social class, are perceived as others when compared to their foreign (Western) counterparts. In post-independent Kenya, the indigenous middle class considers itself inferior to Westerners. This is the implication of the ramifications of colonialism on the psyches of the colonized, and that the colonized individual was stunted by a deeply implanted sense of degradation and inferiority (Fanon, 1967). Thereby, the local capitalists praise the civilized, knowledgeable, and capable Western thieves and robbers, and thus plead with them to allow the locals to drink from the knowledge fountains of the foreigners. In other words, the Kenyan robbers and thieves who can be perceived as other orient undermine themselves and wish to get wisdom of theft and robbery from their Western masters who can be taken as Occident.

Besides, in the minds of these local bourgeoisies, the Westerners are lords whom the locals must serve as slaves. Moreover, the locals internalized the colonial subjugation of the indigenous people as incapable and hence refused to hire them in their important company posts; instead, they prefer the whites to lead their companies. Furthermore, the neo-colonizers strengthened the idea that the West is civilized and a source of knowledge while inviting Kenyans to get knowledge from the Western experience. Such portrayal witnesses Said’s (1978) observation that the wisdom, histories, values, and languages of the Oriental peoples have been ignored and even distorted by the colonialists in their pursuit to dominate these peoples and exploit their wealth in the name of enlightening, civilizing, and even humanizing them.

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