The Post-Independence Dilemma

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A Study of Neo-Colonialism

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Significance of the Study

The formal transition from colonialism to independence across Africa and South Asia during the mid-twentieth century was accompanied by a wave of optimism. The end of direct colonial rule was widely heralded as the beginning of genuine sovereignty, national self-determination, and cultural resurgence. For many nations, independence ceremonies symbolized the collapse of imperial domination and the ushering in of a new era in which native leadership, grounded in the aspirations of the people, would navigate the postcolonial state toward economic development, cultural rejuvenation, and political emancipation. However, the intervening decades have revealed that independence, in many instances, has been more symbolic than substantive. The aspirations of newly independent nations have frequently been thwarted by economic dependency, political instability, social fragmentation, and the continuation of structures and mentalities inherited from colonial rule. The phenomenon of neo-colonialism—the perpetuation of colonial systems through indirect, covert, and internalized mechanisms—has come to define much of the post-independence experience. In this light, the present study seeks to explore the complex interplay between formal independence and the lingering presence of imperial power in its modern, mutated forms.

The significance of this study lies in its unwavering attention to the subtle yet pervasive continuities between colonial and postcolonial power. Drawing on three pivotal post-independence novels—Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross*, and Salman Rushdie's *Shame*—the book foregrounds the persistent structures of domination that have endured despite political sovereignty. It explores the ways in which former colonies, while formally free, remain economically, culturally, and ideologically tethered to former colonial powers and to global capitalist systems that reproduce the hierarchies of the colonial world. These literary texts, situated in Nigeria, Kenya, and Pakistan respectively, serve as rich cultural sites through which to examine

the lived experience of neo-colonialism. Achebe, Ngũgĩ, and Rushdie, each in their own distinctive voice, construct narratives that critique the failures of nationalist leadership, the emergence of corrupt and comprador elites, and the complicity of local institutions in sustaining neo-imperial control. While rooted in specific national and historical contexts, the novels offer a shared thematic concern with the disillusionment of postcolonial promise and the continuity of structures of domination. By reading these texts comparatively, this book reveals that the neo-colonial dilemma is not confined to any one region but constitutes a transnational condition with shared logics and symptoms.

The study's significance further resides in its interdisciplinary and theoretically grounded methodology. Postcolonial theory, while rich in its critique of cultural hegemony, hybridity, and subaltern agency, has sometimes shied away from a sustained critique of political economy and the material foundations of neo-colonial power. By contrast, this book reorients postcolonial literary criticism toward the socio-political and economic dimensions of domination. It seeks to recover and extend the insights of theorists like Frantz Fanon and Kwame Nkrumah, who viewed neo-colonialism not merely as a cultural phenomenon but as a set of institutional arrangements that preserve foreign domination through local intermediaries. In doing so, the book revitalizes a materialist and structuralist reading of postcolonial conditions—an approach that is as urgent today as it was during the immediate aftermath of decolonisation.

Moreover, this work intervenes in contemporary debates about the relevance of postcolonial studies in the age of globalisation. It argues that neo-colonialism, far from being a historical relic, has adapted to the global order through new mechanisms: the imposition of structural adjustment programmes, the dominance of international financial institutions, the privatization of public sectors, and the ideological ascendancy of neoliberalism. These developments have rendered post-independence states increasingly vulnerable to external pressures while simultaneously hollowing out their democratic institutions and cultural autonomy. The selected novels serve as literary ethnographies that document, dramatize, and critique these developments from within.

This study also underscores the indispensability of literature in understanding the complexities of neo-colonialism. Literature, unlike political discourse or economic analysis alone, can capture the affective, symbolic, and experiential dimensions of postcolonial life. It can articulate the disillusionment, ambivalence, and resistance of individuals and communities caught in the contradictory aftermath of independence. Achebe, Ngũgĩ, and Rushdie, as intellectuals and cultural critics, use

fiction as a vehicle for social commentary, historical revisionism, and political advocacy. Their novels not only reflect the neo-colonial condition but actively engage in its critique, often exposing its contradictions, fallacies, and ideological apparatus. In focusing on elite complicity, ideological mystification, and the betrayal of nationalist aspirations, this book also seeks to question celebratory narratives of postcolonial nationalism. It interrogates the role of the native elites who, far from dismantling colonial structures, have often inherited and perpetuated them for their own benefit. This critique is particularly relevant in a world where authoritarianism, ethno-nationalism, and neoliberalism have converged in many postcolonial states to produce new forms of exclusion, inequality, and repression. As such, this study is not only historically situated but also urgently contemporary in its implications. By offering a comparative literary critique of neo-colonialism in Nigeria, Kenya, and Pakistan, this work affirms that postcolonialism must remain attentive to material conditions, institutional power, and the lived realities of those who continue to suffer under reconfigured forms of colonial domination. It is through such sustained critique—both literary and theoretical—that the emancipatory possibilities of decolonisation can be reimagined and pursued.

1.2. Objectives and Scholarly Contribution

The present study is guided by a set of interrelated objectives that together aim to reframe and deepen our understanding of neo-colonialism in the post-independence period. At its core, this book seeks to expose the structural persistence of colonial modalities within newly sovereign states, emphasising that the formal end of empire did not necessarily entail the end of imperial power. Instead, the logic of empire has mutated into new forms—political, economic, cultural, and ideological—that are less visible but equally pervasive. These forms are analysed here not through abstract theorisation alone, but through their literary representation, dramatization, and critique.

The first objective is to conceptualize neo-colonialism as a historical and theoretical framework that explains the paradox of independence without liberation. While the term has been used variably across disciplines, this book adopts a definition that is both materialist and nuanced: neo-colonialism refers to the mechanisms through which foreign domination persists in the economic, political, and cultural spheres of postcolonial states, often through the complicity of local elites and institutions. In advancing this definition, the study engages with and builds

upon the foundational insights of thinkers such as Frantz Fanon, Kwame Nkrumah, and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, while extending their applicability to contemporary literary and geopolitical contexts. The second objective is to analyse the role of native elites—politicians, intellectuals, military leaders, and bureaucrats—as mediators and enforcers of neo-colonial systems. These figures, often educated in colonial metropoles and shaped by Eurocentric ideologies, become the new ruling class whose interests align more closely with international capital and foreign governments than with the populations they ostensibly represent. The selected novels provide compelling portraits of such elites—whether in the form of corrupt state officials in *Anthills of the Savannah*, comprador businessmen in *Devil on the Cross*, or power-hungry politicians in *Shame*. By focusing on these characters and the systems they inhabit, this study challenges simplistic binaries of colonizer and colonised and instead reveals the complexity of postcolonial power. The third objective is to foreground a comparative and transnational perspective. Rather than treating Nigeria, Kenya, and Pakistan as isolated case studies, the book analyses the commonalities and divergences in their post-independence trajectories. It shows how neo-colonialism functions across different regions through similar mechanisms: economic dependency, cultural alienation, political repression, and elite domination. This cross-regional perspective not only enriches the analysis but also highlights the global nature of neo-colonialism as a systemic condition. It allows the study to contribute meaningfully to the emerging field of global postcolonialism, which seeks to map the intersections of empire, capital, and culture beyond national boundaries.

The scholarly contribution of this book lies in its ability to synthesize literary analysis with political theory, cultural criticism, and historical context. It offers a model of interdisciplinary inquiry that bridges the gap between textual interpretation and structural critique. It contributes to postcolonial studies by revitalizing the concept of neo-colonialism, which has often been overshadowed by more fashionable but less politically grounded terms such as hybridity or liminality. It contributes to African and South Asian literary criticism by providing new readings of canonical texts that foreground their socio-political urgency. It contributes to neo-colonial theory by situating literature at the heart of resistance, critique, and counter-narrative. In doing so, the book also contributes to the broader intellectual project of decolonisation—not only as a historical event but as an ongoing struggle against epistemic, cultural, and economic domination. It affirms that literature is not merely a mirror of society but a site of ideological contestation, ethical reflection, and political imagination. By excavating the neo-colonial dilemmas dramatized in the selected novels,

the study invites readers to re-engage with the unfulfilled promises of independence and to envision alternative futures grounded in justice, autonomy, and solidarity.

1.3. Theoretical and Methodological Framework

This study is situated within the rich and evolving intellectual landscape of postcolonial and neo-colonial studies. As such, it adopts an interdisciplinary approach that combines literary criticism, historical inquiry, political theory, and cultural analysis. The central methodological premise of this book is that literature serves not only as an aesthetic form but also as a critical archive—an imaginative and ideological space through which the complexities of power, identity, and resistance are articulated, negotiated, and contested. By reading literature as both a cultural artefact and a socio-political intervention, this study foregrounds the analytical power of narrative fiction in understanding the enduring dilemmas of the postcolonial world.

At the heart of this framework lies the conviction that the postcolonial novel offers a privileged site for the examination of neo-colonial structures. The novels under discussion—Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross*, and Salman Rushdie's *Shame*—are selected not merely for their literary prominence but for the depth and urgency with which they engage with the post-independence condition. Each text is treated as a form of counter-discourse: a critique of nationalistic triumphalism, a challenge to dominant historiographies, and a space for articulating alternative visions of political and cultural sovereignty. The analytical method employed thus privileges close textual reading informed by historical contextualization and theoretical grounding.

Theoretically, the study engages a constellation of thinkers whose insights into colonialism, neo-colonialism, and postcolonial modernity serve as critical scaffolding. Central to this constellation is Frantz Fanon, whose The Wretched of the Earth remains a foundational text in postcolonial thought. Fanon's analysis of the national bourgeoisie as an internal agent of neo-colonialism is particularly vital to this study's argument. His observation that native elites often assume the role of surrogate colonizers—preserving colonial systems of power while cloaking them in nationalist rhetoric—resonates deeply with the characterizations of power, betrayal, and complicity found in all three novels. This book takes up Fanon's challenge to unmask the pseudo-independence of postcolonial states and explores how literature enacts that unmasking. Complementing Fanon is the work of Kwame Nkrumah, whose Neo-Colonialism: The Last

Stage of Imperialism offers a political-economic account of post-independence dependency. Nkrumah's emphasis on economic sovereignty, his critique of multinational corporations, and his identification of indirect rule through financial institutions all provide a framework for understanding the structural dimensions of neo-colonialism. The study draws on Nkrumah to explore how economic exploitation and global capital operate in the selected novels—not just as background conditions, but as narrative catalysts and thematic concerns. The tension between formal political independence and economic dependence becomes a central axis around which the novels' plots and characters revolve.

Also pivotal to this study is Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's theoretical work, particularly Decolonising the Mind, which underscores the cultural and linguistic dimensions of neo-colonialism. Ngũgĩ's insistence on language as a site of imperial control is essential to understanding the role of cultural alienation in the novels under review. His call for a return to indigenous languages and epistemologies is echoed in the thematic arcs of characters who grapple with Westernized education, identity fragmentation, and the erasure of local traditions. While *Devil on the Cross* most explicitly dramatizes this crisis of cultural identity, traces of Ngũgĩ's cultural critique are discernible in Achebe's and Rushdie's works as well. This study engages Ngũgĩ not only as a novelist but also as a theorist of decolonisation whose work bridges the artistic and the political. Besides, Edward Said's contributions, particularly from Orientalism and Culture and Imperialism, also inform the study's framework. Said's theory of representation and his critique of cultural hegemony are especially relevant in analysing how postcolonial subjects are imagined and portrayed—both by external forces and by internal elites. In *Shame*, for instance, Rushdie exposes the lingering orientalist tropes embedded within both Western and Pakistani political discourse. This study applies Said's insights to interrogate the ideological undercurrents that shape national narratives and postcolonial identities in each text.

In addition to these key thinkers, the study draws from Ania Loomba's expansive synthesis of postcolonial theory. Her attention to the intersections of race, class, gender, and imperialism enriches the analysis, particularly in examining how neo-colonialism is not monolithic but intersects with multiple axes of power. Loomba's work enables the study to account for how gender and class complicate the otherwise homogenizing narratives of national liberation and cultural revival.

From a methodological standpoint, the study employs close reading as its primary analytical tool. Close reading here entails a sustained engagement with the language, structure, imagery, and intertextuality of the selected

novels. However, it is not undertaken in isolation from historical and political context. Rather, close reading is paired with contextual analysis that situates each text within its national and global milieu. This methodological duality—of the textual and the contextual—ensures that the study remains grounded in literary form while being attuned to the broader structures of meaning that the texts invoke and critique. Additionally, the study is attentive to narrative strategies and formal experimentation as politically significant. For example, Rushdie's use of magical realism and metafiction in *Shame* is analysed not merely as stylistic choice but as a means of subverting dominant historiographies and revealing the fissures in national identity. Similarly, Achebe's polyphonic narrative structure in *Anthills of the Savannah* is read as a democratic gesture that contests authoritarianism and allows for a multiplicity of subaltern voices. Ngũgĩ's deployment of oral storytelling and allegory in *Devil on the Cross* is examined for its capacity to recuperate indigenous forms of resistance and critique the logic of capitalist exploitation. Importantly, this book does not treat theory as a rigid framework imposed upon literature, nor does it treat literature as a passive illustration of theory. Instead, it seeks to foster a dialogic relationship between text and theory. The novels themselves are allowed to challenge, nuance, and even subvert theoretical assumptions. In this way, theory is not only applied but interrogated and refined through the literary encounter. This reflexive posture ensures that the analysis remains open to complexity, contradiction, and interpretive multiplicity.

In sum, the theoretical and methodological framework of this book is deliberately eclectic, historically grounded, and critically engaged. It affirms the power of literature to serve as both a site of ideological struggle and a repository of alternative imaginaries. By bringing together diverse theoretical perspectives and applying them through rigorous textual analysis, the study illuminates the ways in which neo-colonialism is experienced, resisted, and re-imagined in the post-independence novel. The result is an interpretive project that not only deepens our understanding of literary texts but also contributes to broader debates about power, identity, and liberation in the global postcolonial condition.

1.4. Contribution to the Field: Rethinking Neo-Colonialism through Literature

This book contributes to a growing scholarly concern with re-evaluating the structural continuities between colonialism and post-independence nationhood in Africa and South Asia. Its central argument—

that neo-colonialism is not merely a political or economic phenomenon but a complex system sustained through culture, class, language, and elite complicity—expands the analytical vocabulary of postcolonial criticism. While many studies of post-independence literature have emphasised themes of disillusionment, hybridity, or identity, fewer have systematically examined how literary texts reimagine the machinery of postcolonial domination. This study thus offers a new synthesis that bridges political economy with literary form, ideology with aesthetic representation. Moreover, the book challenges the tendency in postcolonial discourse to romanticize the nation-state or to overemphasise cultural hybridity as a form of resistance. While hybridity and ambivalence have their place in postcolonial theory, this work argues that attention must be returned to the dynamics of power, exploitation, and resistance that persist within independent nations. The literary texts examined herein do not merely reflect postcolonial conditions—they expose the ways in which cultural production can be co-opted by neo-colonial forces or, conversely, used to resist and subvert them.

The comparative framework of this book—drawing texts from Nigeria, Kenya, and Pakistan—also provides a critical intervention. Much of postcolonial literary scholarship remains regionally siloed, often examining African or South Asian literatures in isolation. This study breaks from that tradition by highlighting how different postcolonial contexts reflect a shared condition of unfinished decolonisation. In doing so, it opens space for cross-regional solidarities and analytic comparisons, demonstrating that the neo-colonial condition is both globally pervasive and locally manifest. Additionally, the emphasis on literature as a diagnostic and critical tool underlines the relevance of the humanities in understanding global systems of power. This book positions literature not as a passive reflection of political reality but as an active force in shaping, contesting, and imagining alternatives to neo-colonial domination. In doing so, it speaks to ongoing debates within literary studies, global history, and political theory.

1.5. Originality of the Study

One of the most original contributions of this book lies in its sustained and unified application of neo-colonial theory to a tri-continental literary corpus. While works such as Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* and Ngũgĩ's *Devil on the Cross* have been widely studied, they are often examined in isolation or solely within African literary contexts. *Shame*, on the other hand, is more frequently approached through postmodern or

psychoanalytic lenses than through the framework of neo-colonial critique. By bringing these texts into critical conversation, this study uncovers resonant patterns and shared critiques of postcolonial state failure, ideological mimicry, and the betrayal of anti-colonial struggle.

Furthermore, this book offers a detailed exposition of the role of native elites as internal agents of neo-colonialism—a topic often discussed in abstract terms but rarely explored through sustained literary analysis. It shows how literature not only documents this betrayal but also performs a counter-narrative that seeks to restore suppressed histories and epistemologies. This dual movement—of critique and reconstruction—is a hallmark of postcolonial literature, and one that this study foregrounds with clarity and rigour. Also innovative is the attention paid to the language politics and narrative strategies deployed by the authors. From Ngũgĩ's use of Gikuyu to Achebe's ethical realism and Rushdie's hybridized magical realism, the book demonstrates how form itself becomes a site of resistance or complicity. Rather than treating narrative style as incidental or decorative, it foregrounds it as central to the political work that these novels perform.

Finally, this study contributes a model for interdisciplinary research in postcolonial studies. It brings together literary analysis, political theory, decolonial historiography, and sociological insight into a coherent framework that is both accessible and intellectually robust. It speaks to scholars across multiple fields, including African studies, South Asian studies, literary theory, global history, and development studies.

1.6. Timeliness and Contemporary Relevance

This book emerges at a time when the foundational assumptions of postcolonial and decolonial scholarship are being revisited with renewed critical vigour. As scholars continue to interrogate the afterlives of empire, there is an increasing awareness that the formal conclusion of colonial rule has not necessarily translated into genuine autonomy or equitable development for many postcolonial nations. While much attention in academic discourse has focused on the colonial past or on imperial representations within the former metropolitan centres, this study reorients the critical lens toward the neo-colonial present—one in which older forms of dominance have been refashioned through new mechanisms of control, complicity, and influence.

In particular, this book draws attention to the ongoing dynamics of economic dependency, political instability, and cultural alienation that continue to characterize many societies in the global South. The persistence of unequal trade agreements, debt dependency, and foreign

intervention in national policy-making underscores the fact that imperial modes of domination have been reconstituted rather than dismantled. These processes are often obscured by the language of development, modernisation, and international cooperation, yet they perpetuate structures of hierarchy and subordination that are deeply reminiscent of colonial paradigms. By analysing literary representations of these conditions, the book asserts the continued relevance of the neo-colonial critique. The novels of Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Salman Rushdie serve as cultural texts that expose the subtleties of post-independence disillusionment. Far from being dated responses to a past historical moment, these works resonate with contemporary realities in which national sovereignty is compromised by elite complicity, economic marginalization, and ideological coercion. They speak to a broader and ongoing predicament in which political independence has not guaranteed social justice, economic self-sufficiency, or cultural resurgence.

The significance of this study lies in its insistence that the discourse of decolonisation cannot be confined to historical retrospection. Rather, it must be engaged as a living, urgent, and unfinished project. The notion of independence, often celebrated as a watershed moment in national histories, is here re-examined as a complex and contested process—one that continues to evolve, regress, or remain incomplete depending on the socio-political context. The book thus invites a rethinking of liberation not as a singular event but as a sustained struggle that unfolds across generations and across multiple domains of life. Moreover, by situating literature at the centre of this analysis, the book foregrounds the role of cultural production in shaping political consciousness and historical memory. Literature is not treated merely as a reflection of social reality but as a site where critical questions are posed, ideological conflicts are staged, and alternative futures are imagined. The post-independence novels studied in this work function as repositories of critique and resistance, offering insight into the lived experiences of neo-colonialism and the complexities of national identity in postcolonial states.

In this regard, the study contributes to ongoing debates about the scope and relevance of postcolonial critique in the twenty-first century. It argues that the central concerns of postcolonialism—power, identity, sovereignty, and resistance—remain as urgent today as they were at the moment of political decolonisation. By revisiting these concerns through the lens of literary analysis, the book provides a nuanced and timely intervention that connects historical critique with present-day conditions and future imperatives. Ultimately, the book encourages scholars, students, and readers alike to reconsider the narratives of independence and modernity

that have shaped dominant understandings of postcolonial societies. It calls for a renewed critical engagement with the material and ideological legacies of empire, and for a recognition of the imaginative labour required to envision and enact decolonised futures. In so doing, it affirms the continuing importance of literature as a space for political reflection, cultural recovery, and emancipatory possibility.

Neo-colonialism: A Study of the Post-Independence Dilemma in *Anthills of the Savannah*, *Devil on the Cross* and *Shame* is an attempt to bring back into critical focus the question of postcolonial sovereignty—not just as a legal or territorial concept but as a condition of psychological, cultural, and material self-determination. It asserts that the political betrayal of independence is not merely a failure of individual leaders or isolated governments, but a structural problem rooted in the continuity of imperial power and the internalization of colonial paradigms by post-independence elites.

Through a detailed examination of three major postcolonial texts, this book sheds light on the entangled nature of power, complicity, resistance, and narrative. It reminds us that literature is not a retreat from politics but a vital arena in which the crises of the real are confronted, contested, and reimagined. The novels of Achebe, Ngũgĩ, and Rushdie do more than narrate history—they interrogate it, revise it, and, at times, refuse its terms. In attending to these acts of literary insurgency, this book contributes not only to a better understanding of the neo-colonial present but also to the formation of critical tools for its undoing.

1.7. Overview of Chapters and Key Themes

The structure of this book follows a thematic and comparative trajectory that mirrors the historical arc of neo-colonial emergence, consolidation, and cultural reproduction. Each chapter foregrounds a specific aspect of the post-independence crisis as narrated in one or more of the selected texts. While each novel originates from a distinct national context, the thematic overlaps between them illuminate the transnational character of neo-colonial domination and postcolonial disillusionment.

Chapter One lays the theoretical foundation of the study. It provides a critical genealogy of colonialism and its mutation into neo-colonialism. Beginning with classical colonial practices—direct rule, territorial occupation, and epistemic domination—it then traces the emergence of neo-colonialism as an indirect but pervasive form of control. Through the writings of Nkrumah, Fanon, Ngũgĩ, and others, the chapter argues that neo-colonialism operates through economic dependency, cultural subjugation,

political interference, and the complicity of native elites. This chapter also revisits debates in postcolonial theory, identifying the gaps in literature that this book seeks to fill.

Chapter Two turns to *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), Chinua Achebe's political allegory of post-independence Nigeria. The chapter examines how Achebe portrays the betrayal of nationalist hopes by Western-educated elites, who quickly become agents of repression and inequality. Particular attention is paid to the characters of Sam, Chris, and Ikem, whose transformation from liberators to oppressors exemplifies Fanon's concept of the "national bourgeoisie" (1963, p. 150). The analysis underscores how Achebe critiques the corrupting nature of power, the failures of intellectuals, and the alienation of the ruling elite from the masses. The chapter also explores the symbolic role of Beatrice, whose character gestures toward feminist and spiritual alternatives to militarized leadership.

Chapter Three addresses Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross* (1980), a revolutionary novel that satirizes the collusion between global capitalism and local comprador elites. The chapter explores how the novel dismantles the façade of independence by exposing the ongoing economic exploitation and ideological manipulation by transnational corporations, Western financial institutions, and their domestic allies. Ngũgĩ's use of Gikuyu, the oral narrative tradition, and allegory is interpreted as a radical act of linguistic and cultural decolonisation. The novel's emphasis on workers, peasants, and grassroots mobilization reflects Ngũgĩ's belief in revolutionary struggle as the only path to genuine liberation. This chapter demonstrates how *Devil on the Cross* reclaims narrative space for the subaltern and re-centres the debate on class struggle in postcolonial societies.

Chapter Four turns to *Shame* (1983) by Salman Rushdie, exploring the less frequently studied terrain of neo-colonialism in post-independence Pakistan. The chapter argues that Rushdie's magical realist technique and postmodern sensibility serve not as aesthetic excesses, but as strategies to depict the surreal and fragmented nature of political violence, patriarchal control, and neo-imperial intervention. By focusing on characters such as Iskander Harappa and General Raza Hyder, the chapter dissects the cycles of authoritarianism, hypocrisy, and mimicry that afflict postcolonial leadership. Rushdie's representation of gendered violence, especially through the figure of Sufiya Zinobia, offers a metaphor for the silenced trauma of the nation. The chapter contends that *Shame* reveals neo-colonialism as a psychic and cultural disorder as much as a political

structure, linking national dysfunction to internalized colonial epistemes and unresolved histories of partition.

Chapter Five provides a comparative analysis of the three novels, identifying the shared patterns and divergent strategies they deploy to critique neo-colonialism. While Achebe, Ngũgĩ, and Rushdie differ in stylistic approach, ideological emphasis, and cultural specificity, their texts converge in exposing how power, once claimed in the name of liberation, often becomes a tool of repression. This chapter synthesizes the insights generated across the book and theorizes a composite model of postcolonial entrapment, one that accounts for both external pressures (e.g., global capital, former colonial powers) and internal complicities (e.g., class hierarchies, gender oppression, and intellectual disengagement). This chapter also engages with contemporary reflections on neo-colonialism in the 21st century, drawing connections between literary critique and present-day political realities.

CHAPTER II

FROM COLONIALISM TO NEO-COLONIALISM

2.1. Colonialism and Postcolonialism

Since different forms of historical and contemporary interaction between different people and different nations can be characteristically described as colonial, defining colonialism is not an easy or straightforward task. Etymologically the word colony is originally a Latin word meaning farm or settlement. According to this view, colonialism simply means the transfer of population to a new land or territory. Thus, in its broadest and oldest form, the word colony refers to Romans settling in other lands. However, this definition does not explain many aspects of the term colonialism. In her book titled Colonialism/Postcolonialism Ania Loomba cites the term "colonia" as:

> a settlement in a new country...a body of people who settle in a new locality, forming a community subject to or connected with their parent state; the community so formed, consisting of the original settlers and their descendants and successors, as long as the connection with the parent state is kept up. (1998, p. 1)

Ania Loomba, however, adds that colonialism indicates much more than this, so this citation is insufficient. According to Loomba, colonialism encompasses the confrontation, invasion, and domination from different countries, religions, and ethnicities and it indicates that "peoples" means two different groups, the "natives" and the "newcomers" who aim at "forming community," which is actually a process of "re-forming" or "unforming" the native communities (Loomba, 1998, p. 8). The main objective of colonialism is keeping the target lands' people and their goods under control and it is carried out by means of direct rule. Therefore, according to Loomba, colonialism includes many practices some of which are warfare, commerce, enslavement, and rebellions and these practices take place during the process of "conquest" and "control" (1998, p. 8). Although there were many different causes or reasons for colonisation in different parts of the world, the eventual outcome was identical

everywhere; natives and the colonisers were engaged in the most "traumatic relationship" of history (Loomba, 1998, p. 8).

Colonialism is prevalent all over the world, that is, it is not only the European expansion into Africa, Asia or America which roughly started in the 15th century. On the contrary, Loomba states that colonialism has been not only repetitive but also a common characteristic of humanity (1998, p. 8). Historically, it can be dated back to the 2nd century when the Romans were dominant on a very broad territory. Similarly, Genghis Khan, the famous commander of the Mongols, invaded many parts of Asia and the Middle East in the 13th century. Some other major colonialist civilisations include The Aztec Empire and Inca Empire in the Americas, Vijaynagar Empire in southern India, Ottoman Empire in Asia Minor, and Chinese Empire. Although these early colonial practices cannot be separated from modern European colonialism, unlike the early practices, the newer European colonialism changed the whole world. There is a clear distinction between these earlier practices of colonialism and modern colonialism. From the Marxist point of view, colonialism which was not capitalist or pre-capitalist in its early periods, outgrew into a capitalist movement in Europe (Loomba, 1998, p. 9). Colonialism in its modern form focused not only on the goods and prosperity of the target countries which were conquered but also on restructuring them. This complex relationship resulted in a flood which was not only about sources and wealth but also about human beings between the colonisers and the colonised lands. Although this flood was in both directions, the benefits and earnings were almost always one-sided, from colonised countries to the so-called mother country. As colonialism is a broad term to analyse, the focus here will be on the British colonial and post-colonial history and literature written in English, especially in Africa and India.

According to Simon Gikandi there are four stages in colonisation of Africa. The earliest one started with the conquest of West Africa by the Europeans towards the end of the 15th century and it culminated in the 17th and 18th centuries which were the major periods of slavery. Gikandi explains the second phase of colonialism in Africa as a period in which practices of colonialism spread all over the continent. To illustrate, Christianity covered almost all colonised countries and additionally missionary schools were established. The main purpose of this was to bring up the African intellectuals, writers and also the readers of them in accordance with colonisers' own ideologies (Gikandi, 1992, p. 22). The African continent was physically occupied in this second phase, and under the mask of the civilisation process, the European colonisers exploited the resources and labour force for their own benefit. The stage which lasted

from 1880 to 1935 is the third phase of European colonialism in Africa. In this period colonialism expanded into almost all parts of the African continent. It is also at this stage that Europeans introduced political and economic systems into Africa and overthrew its own cultural systems by which they tried to reshape the African communities in accordance with their own desires and wishes. According to Gikandi, this period was significant because it witnessed the very first seed of resistance. To put it more explicitly, culture and literature became important weapons against colonialism in this period. In the first quarter of the 20th century, some new African writers focused on both the problems and opportunities that colonialism created for them. The last stage of colonialism, which is called "the last stage" by Gikandi is the period when African countries decolonised themselves and became politically independent after lengthy and difficult periods of efforts between the years 1945 and 1960 (1992, p. 171). Here the term political independence has a major significance because it implies that Africans or natives who got the control back from the colonisers are the new rulers of the newly founded African states. This last phase also brings the term postcolonialism under discussion. In other words, the dismantling of colonial control which started in the 20th century and reached its peak in 1960s is a crucial point for African history, because many countries gained independence one after another, a process which gave birth to the term postcolonialism. The term post-colonial, usually in the hyphenated form, was used before the development of postcolonial cultural critique and it was a political and academic practice. Moreover, the term which had a Marxist perspective was also applicable to all social sciences. In his book *Postcolonialism: A Historical Introduction* Patrick J. Young states that "In this earlier usage, the phrase 'post-colonial states' has been used to describe many states from Albania to Vietnam that have since mediated Marxism in its various forms with a free-market economics" (2006, p. 58).

However, postcolonialism is a term that emerged as a result of colonialism, and according to Bill Ashcroft this term implies the "discourse" that works through the consequences of colonial period especially on culture and community (2002, p. 169). In other words, it particularly reflects the culture from the colonial period to present day which stands for the post-independence period. Not only Third World's culture but also almost the culture of the whole world was dominated by the ideology of the colonisers, or more specifically by the Western ideology, so post-colonial literature provides a framework to analyse, reread, and redefine texts, events and theories which were developed to support, reinforce, and justify colonialism. It also gives an opportunity to

revisit and analyse the colonial institution, the relationship between the colonisers and the colonised through the eyes of the colonised. Since colonialism predominated many parts of the world and many people suffered under colonial dominance, postcolonialism plays a significant role in reflecting and analysing the struggles of formerly colonised peoples. Ashcroft explains that postcolonialism is not about the period "after independence" (2002, p. 194). On the contrary it is the period starting from the very beginning of colonisation. Ashcroft's idea has two crucial points. The first one is that the effects of colonisation have been visible since the very beginning of colonialism and have been felt from the moment of first colonial contact. The second is that postcolonialism is not merely a historical marker but a continuing framework of resistance, critique, and cultural negotiation that responds to ongoing forms of imperial influence and their enduring legacies. Furthermore, Bill Ashcroft and his colleagues provide a definition which has a wider scope by writing that the uses of post-colonial as a term

> cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonisation to the present day. This is because there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression. (2002, p. 2)

From another point of view, Ania Loomba claims that although the age of colonialism is over, "the whole world is post-colonial" (1998, p. 12), because people who were once-colonised live everywhere. Thus, postcolonialism is not only a reference to the colonial period but also to a victory against the oppressions of the colonial period. Furthermore, post is a prefix which refers to several victories. As its name indicates, post-colonial era is a period in which the colonised people realised many historical achievements by resisting against the colonisers and Young states that "paradoxically, it also describes the conditions of existence that have followed in which many basic power structures have yet to change in any substantive way" (2006, p. 60). In other words, postcolonialism represents not only a moment of emancipation but also a complex historical condition shaped by persistent inequalities and structural continuities with the colonial past. According to Young, post-colonial theory draws from multiple genealogies and ideological currents, including:

> a product of revolutionary Marxism, of the national liberation movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the political and cultural consequences of the success of those movements, the tricontinental economic and cultural critiques of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s and the

> historical effects of migration, past and present forced or voluntary. (2006, p. 61)

From the point of view of literature, colonial literature includes the works written not only by the Europeans but also by the natives of the colonised countries during the colonial times and it covers all kinds of public and private writings, letters, fiction and scientific works, government records, and trade documents. However, Elleke Boehmer explains that it is a tough task to differentiate or draw the borders of literature in the colonial period because the scope of it covers not only the literary works created in Britain, but also every piece of work written in any part of the empire throughout this period. Boehmer also adds that every literary work representing local people, their traditions or motifs, such as works of Rudyard Kipling, are regarded as works of colonial literature (2005, p. 2). Boehmer also adds that colonialist literature, on the other hand, deals with colonial expansion. In general colonialist literature can be defined as the "literature written by and for colonising Europeans about non-European lands dominated by them" (2005, p. 3). Colonialist literature is also a reflection of imperialist perspective and it, in a way, supports the idea that as European culture is far better and superior, it is justified for the empire to colonise and rule these countries. (Boehmer, 2005, p. 3).

Postcolonial literature, however, does not simply mean the literature written after the end of empire. Moreover, postcolonial literature is described as the works of literature that "critically or subversively scrutinizes the colonial relationship" (Boehmer, 2005, p. 3). It is also important to note that postcolonial literature is all-inclusive, which means it covers the works produced both during colonial and postcolonial periods. The interdependent nature of colonial and postcolonial literature is expressed by Loomba as "the interdisciplinary nature of colonial and postcolonial studies which may range from literary analysis to research in the archives of colonial government, from the critique of medical text to economic theory and usually combine these and other areas (1998, p. 2). This observation underscores the complexity of postcolonial inquiry, which necessitates the convergence of literary interpretation with historical, political, and economic frameworks. Rather than operating in isolation, postcolonial literature engages with institutional structures, cultural practices, and ideological formations, offering a layered critique that reflects both the material and symbolic legacies of colonial rule. Such an approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of how power operates and reproduces itself beyond formal independence, reinforcing the value of interdisciplinary analysis in postcolonial scholarship.

According to Boehmer, "postcolonial writers sought to undercut thematically and formally the discourses which supported colonisation-the myths of power, the race classifications, the imagery of subordination" (2005, p. 3). Thus, post-colonial literature is not something that simply marks the collapse of colonialism; rather, it reflects the heritage, influence, and repression of colonial period and this point of view allows postcolonial literature to include people who were displaced by colonialism. For example, the African-Americans or Asian origin people who live in Britain are regarded as postcolonial subjects, even though they live in metropolitan cultures. In general, the word postcolonial, a term used to generalise the whole process in which colonised people experienced many consequences, has many different structures and it is almost impossible to escape from the effects of colonialism.

2.2. Neo-colonialism

Direct domination which was employed by the European imperial powers was not feasible after 1945, but it took them almost two decades to realise this fact. According to Young, there were three main reasons for the collapse of the colonial system. Firstly, he points out that the most important factor was that colonised people started to resist this system. In addition, these people were backed by the Soviet Union and some other countries. Secondly, Young stresses that the Europeans were exhausted due to long wars which also caused huge economic problems. As a result, they were unable to maintain colonialism, since it required significant financial outlay. Finally, the third reason was the USA as colonialism constituted a barrier against its economic expansion. When the causes that Young has written are considered, it can be concluded that the two world wars resulted in markedly different outcomes for colonised nations. While World War I deepened the exploitation of people in underdeveloped countries, World War II ushered in a new geopolitical configuration: neo-colonialism. However, the new system was not fundamentally different from its predecessor; rather, it represented an indirect and more insidious continuation of colonial domination. As Young states, "the new system that replaced it, however, was in many ways a more subtle, indirect version of the old one" (2006, p. 44). In other words, it is impossible to claim that European imperialism came to a definitive end with the process of decolonisation, particularly during and immediately after World War II. This new historical phase—often referred to as the neo-colonial age—designates the persistence of colonialist and imperialist domination, albeit through new mechanisms and under the guise of political independence.

Neo-colonialism has been used for more than fifty years, though it is hard to give a general definition of the term. In a general framework, neo-colonialism stands for a new version, but it is the restructured and reshaped version of colonialism, thus continuation of its flaws and oppressions which occur in a lurking way to exploit the natives of the colonies after they have become independent nations. Some critics indicate that it was first used by Jean-Paul Sartre, a figure who stood against colonialism, in one of his essays in 1956. On the other hand, there are some others who see the basis of the term in Leninism, in which it is used to explain the system of new domination which was put into practice after the end of the colonial period. In her essay "Mechanism of Neo-colonialism" Diana Haag writes that neo-colonialism is a colonial policy which was carried out by the old colonisers or new imperialists not explicitly but implicitly with the help of some "hidden mechanisms" (2011, p. 9). The main purpose of this system, however, was not different from that of the old one: to maximise the benefits from the previously colonised countries and thereby make capitalism more secure and powerful, and most importantly to "maintain the economic, political, ideological, and military influence of colonial times" (Haag, 2011, p. 9). Thus, neo-colonialism is the new policy of the ex-colonisers who still maintain their control over almost every institution of the independent nations.

The term neo-colonialism was officially first seen in "All African Peoples' Conference" which took place in 1961 and in that conference neo-colonialism was defined as "the survival of the colonial system in spite of formal recognition of political independence in emerging countries, which become victims of an indirect and subtle form of domination by political, economic, social, military or technical means" (Martin, 1982, p. 191). Some critics towards the end of the twentieth century have used neo-colonialism with a political sense so as to refer to the method of oppression and exploitation which contributes to maintaining the Empire's colonial ideology in a totally different approach. Sourav Kumar Nag in his essay "Fighting Neo-colonialism" describes neo-colonialism as "instead of the formal and direct imperialist control by exerting political exploitation, by implementing administrative structures to rule and dominate the colonised masses, neo-colonialism operates indirectly by controlling the economics and cultural dependence of the newly decolonised countries" (2013, p. 137). Hence, neo-colonialism is a new method to exploit the previously colonised nations not only economically but also culturally in order to satisfy the hunger of the imperialist powers.

Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of the independent Ghana, is regarded as the first person who made the term internationally known. In his pioneering work *Neo-Colonialism, The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965), where he presents a detailed discussion of the term neo-colonialism, he expresses that this is the last and most dangerous phase of imperialist ideology and he explains neo-colonialism as follows:

> The neo-colonialism of today represents imperialism in its final and perhaps its most dangerous stage. In the past it was possible to convert a country upon which a neo-colonial regime had been imposed - Egypt in the nineteenth century is an example – into a colonial territory. Today this process is no longer feasible. Old-fashioned colonialism is by no means entirely abolished. It still constitutes an African problem, but it is everywhere on the retreat. Once a territory has become nominally independent it is no longer possible, as it was in the last century, to reserve the process. ... In place of colonialism as the main instrument of imperialism we have today neo-colonialism. (1965, p. ix)

He puts forward that the colonisation that had been in practice for hundreds of years is now obsolete, and the colonialist countries still control the decolonised countries but it is now in an indirect way which is based on cultural, political and economic domination. It is clearly seen that the previously colonised countries are now independent; the concept of independence is only an abstract term which is far removed from reality. From another point of view, Nicholas White defines this as "only pseudo-independence" (2005, p. 2) as it is detected that these previously colonised nations now have a national flag and an anthem. However, these are not enough to believe that these countries are fully independent. Moreover, in order to claim that they are fully independent, they should have cultural, religious, political and economic independence which is impossible to see in Third World countries.

The colonisers withdrew physically from the Third World countries but they left their ideologies behind since they had already planted the seeds to maintain exploitation. They continued to exploit formerly colonised countries by the use of a substructure which was an indirect way of colonisation. They have achieved this particularly by brainwashing the native people and by imposing colonial education, religion, and culture upon them. Obviously, the new method of the colonisers is to colonise these countries mentally, which transforms the natives of these countries into puppets. Mentally-colonised natives have become the accomplices of the colonial powers who made them believe that they govern their countries together to have peace and prosperity. Consequently, Ngũgĩ puts forward that the first step of decolonisation should have been the

"Decolonising the Mind" (1986, p. iii) by which he stresses the importance of mental independence.

According to Nkrumah, although decolonised, a state which suffers from neo-colonialism is governed by either the local elites who are the followers of the old colonisers in terms of ideologies or the military forces that have been stationed by the previous colonialist countries. This is put into action by expressing that it is just for the peace and security of the masses of decolonised lands. Nkrumah explains that another important feature of neo-colonialism is the administrative actions that have been kept under control by colonialist countries so that they can benefit from them. These administrative policies are carried out also by the local elites who are even worse than the previous colonisers as they are only interested in their own benefits and peace. In other words, Nkrumah puts forward that the basis of neo-colonialism is the independence of the previously colonised countries which are still subjected to economic, cultural and political oppression coming from outside. In short, the purpose of colonialism and neo-colonialism are not very different as in both cases the colonies are kept under control and in a dependent position.

Practically colonialism and neo-colonialism have a similar goal, but there are some differences, especially in terms of the mechanisms that have been used to guarantee the dependence of the neo-colonised lands and their peoples. Firstly, one of the most significant mechanisms that help to keep the colonised country dependent is economy and economic tools. To illustrate, colonisers can control the prices of goods and services or they can oblige the colonised countries to buy manufactured products from themselves and to sell raw materials to them as well. Although economic mechanisms constitute a significant dimension of neo-colonialism, this book primarily foregrounds its political, cultural, and educational aspects. From this vantage point, former colonial powers maintain their influence over previously colonised nations by promoting Western-educated elites or bureaucrats to key positions of authority. Over time, these individuals often internalize the values and ideologies of their former colonizers, effectively becoming their ideological allies. As a result, they readily act in service of external interests—sometimes even facilitating coups or orchestrating so-called revolutions—whenever such actions align with neo-colonial objectives. Furthermore, Nkrumah expresses that neo-colonialism also includes cultural and educational dependence which is generally controlled by sending teachers, different types of officers including military personnel, ambassadors or even presidents to the target country (1965, p. 23). Since the new system of exploitation is not directly put onto stage, it is hard to express the presence of it in a specific community.

In other words, imperial powers no longer need to create colonies in underdeveloped lands in order to exploit the natives and their sources which makes neo-colonialism an insidious form of colonialism. Thus, as Nkrumah has stated it is much more dangerous than the old form.

2.3. Agents, Institutions, and Practices of Neo-colonialism

There are many social and economic problems in neo-colonial countries. However, many of these problems mainly stem from the lack of true leaders who only focus on the needs of the masses and who do not follow the paths of colonisers. In other words, especially after the decolonisation period, political and official leaders of these countries, who have had no vision beyond their own benefits, have permitted the previous colonisers to loot their own kin. From another point of view, the rulers of the independent countries are the fruits of colonialism, which means they cannot represent the masses, but can only help advance neo-colonialism and its subtle mechanisms. These rulers are generally educated or brought up in Europe, so they are not able to create a bond with the people they administer. Particularly they cannot relate themselves with the culture that they are in. For instance, many rulers in Africa cannot utter even a sentence in their mother tongue such as in Swahili. On the contrary, they are able to speak in English, which, in their view, gives them superiority over the masses who are not able to understand or respond properly. In many cases, these leaders or elites have the feeling of living in Europe, not in their own country or capital.

Though there are a number of exceptional African leaders who could be called true nationalists, the majority of them act like puppets whose strings are in Western hands. Ndirangu Mwaura stresses the role of these leaders by writing:

> Within Africa, the collapse of European rule meant that "reliable" Africans were selected to take over the artificial states that were carved out. Those who were chosen could be trusted to subvert their own people's interests in favour of the old colonial power. Therefore, at independence, a majority of Africa's new rulers were, in a sense, traitors pretending to a false patriotism — one that never promoted domestic interests over foreign ones. The few rulers who were genuine nationalists were soon eliminated by coups and assassinations with the result that the political, cultural and academic elite, throughout the continent, with few exceptions, became dominated by reactionary, mentally-colonised elements who did everything

> to undermine Africa's success. This remains the situation today. (2005, p. 6)

Yet, at the very beginning, almost all of these native rulers had the common goal which was to increase the life standards in their own country. However, in the long term, the majority of them deceive the masses for the sake of their self-interest. Another problem about the leaders is that when they make an effort to help the masses, they only follow the advice and guidance of the colonisers, so they become the tools of the imperialists, and either unintentionally or willingly the allies of international colonialism and imperialism. Though they are expected to enrich the country and the masses, these elites work to accumulate personal benefit and in order to achieve their personal goals they use political and even military power. At the same time, they do not hesitate to cooperate with the West to exploit and oppress the masses and their own lands. The reason for this transformation is lack of consciousness which might be based on the Western education that these leaders got both during colonial and postcolonial eras. As a result of their Western education, these leaders know almost nothing about their indigenous culture, so they offer what they know, namely Western paradigms. This is even the case in the army, where generals are mostly Western-trained and the rest are generally illiterate members who only have ranks. As these illiterate members of the army feel the pleasure of power, it is also very easy to manipulate and use them for self-interest.

The underlying reason for these leaders' betrayal of their own countries is the absence of genuine nationalist figures, who were eliminated by imperialist powers during the decolonisation period. From another point, the nationalist leaders were put into jails, dispersed or even killed; in contrast, some others who are both loyal to the imperialists and mentally colonised were brought into power and given high ranks and positions not only in the administration but also in the army which ensured to keep all the institutions of these countries under control. Moreover, these elites or leaders were besieged by the Europeans who both gave advice and manipulated them. However, it is not fair to claim that these leaders are all betrayers. There are of course some true nationalist leaders, but those who stood against neo-colonialism and its mechanisms are destined to topple or fall from the position that they hold. This is done through military coups, civil wars, economic crisis, or even assassinations. Nkrumah stands as a good example of these types of leaders who supported that the only way to solve many problems in Africa is to unite the continent and have a common conscience. In order to raise this awareness and to unite Africa, he started many campaigns and actively propagandised which caused his