

Trauma of Colonial/Postcolonial Entanglement: Something Torn and New in *Weep Not, Child*

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Abstract:

This paper explores the trauma inflicted by the colonial settlement on the everyday, innocent colonized people as depicted in *Weep Not, Child*, tracing the horrifying consequences it triggers in the lives of victims both on a personal and allegorical level. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o soulfully recreates the turbulent time of social and political upheaval of colonized Kenya in the 1950s. This politically charged novel, published after two years of Kenya's independence in 1964, foregrounds the traumatic journey of a young boy, Njoroge, against the backdrop of the Mau Mau revolution that was organized against the white colonial government. His choice of surrendering to death is his delayed response to the catastrophic events, which eventually exposes the heart of darkness of the colonial entanglement. In this regard, maintaining the recent postcolonial tendency of decolonizing the trauma theory, I argue that Njoroge's personal trauma echoes the collective trauma of Kenya in the sense that they both suffer from paranoia and violence in a critical time when they were in a quest for an identity. In addition, in connection with another monumental work *Something Torn and New: Towards an African Renaissance* by Ngugi, I intend to discuss the significance of the agency of collective trauma in a postcolonial context in an attempt to both historicize and empower trauma. Finally, this paper goes on to argue how the collective trauma of colonial/postcolonial experience can be translated into a constructive force in an act of re-remembering and revisiting the traumatic past.

Keywords: Trauma, Collective trauma, Colonial/postcolonial entanglement, Ngugi