

# This world is upside down history essay

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worker shields his eyes as the sun's glare hits him. The heat of the sun is burning the man's skin as he finishes building a house. His waterfall of sweat has created a sea of sorrow that he cools himself with. The blood from his work has stained his body and fragments of the house. The house he has built can easily contain multiple families, is made of brick, has wooden floors, and multiple windows. The worker takes his meager pay and stumbles back to his home which can barely hold his small family, a small hut made of wood and leaves, with dirt floors and no windows. The worker here sheds blood and sweat to create a house, but is left with scraps and a very low salary. This is a small representation of what Matigari is seeing in his world. In Matigari's world, conditions are much worse with most of the population living in harsh conditions, alongside unfair governmental policies and unfair working conditions. The citizens live under a government that is nearly identical to those in charge before the country's independence. This is the same problem that Kenya has been dealing with in post-colonial times. Kenya's post-colonial government is similar to Matigari's with the new government working with the previous settlers, letting the settlers retain their power, and oppressing the citizens of the country. Matigari repeatedly says the phrase " This world is upside-down," (p. 116). This statement means that the society he is seeing is unfair, especially when he thinks, " So a handful of people still profited from the suffering of the majority, the sorrow of the many being the joy of the few," (p. 11). Throughout the novel, Matigari is seeing how this thought is expressed in every corner of society. The workers in the factories receive low pay, have to work on Saturdays, and do not receive overtime for working Saturdays (p. 92). When he is in jail he finds <https://assignbuster.com/this-world-is-upside-down-history-essay/>

out how paranoid the new government is when he finds that a teacher was accused of teaching communism to students, and a student was arrested for questioning how the country was run (p. 44). Matigari does see this as a problem caused by colonialism alone. The country's government is allied with the former settlers, and oppresses the people just as much as the colonial government did. Everything that is made or done by the working people is given to the settlers and their allies. These former settlers still own large properties of land and control the resources of the land because they still retained their power from the colonial period. The oppression that is occurring has resulted from the effects of colonialism. To Matigari, the "new" government and the problems that come with it are the exact same as before the country gained independence. The problem of the world being "upside-down", during the post-colonial period did not disappear after independence. This is due to the new government working closely with the previous settlers, and becoming a more oppressive government. After gaining independence, only a few things changed, with all of the changes being detrimental to society. One major occurrence was that there was a larger elite group that controlled the rest of the population. These elite were made up of all of the previous white settlers, plus the new governmental figures, and the few black people from the country that received education. The changes forced new problems on the country while also retaining all of the previous problems. These problems include famine, poverty, oppression, unfair laws, unfair working conditions, no freedom of speech, no land reform, and the white settlers still having most of the power. No attempts were ever made to fix these problems, and the government becomes more oppressive as time goes on. An important example of this is during the meeting with the <https://assignbuster.com/this-world-is-upside-down-history-essay/>

Minister for Truth and Justice. Armed police and the army lined the walls, the minister has people arrested during his speech, and he makes strikes illegal, thereby limiting the population's voice in how they are being treated even further (p. 84-91). This chapter shows how little the country has changed since independence by displaying multiple actions of the country's elite. These actions exposed how similar the country's current administration is to the previous regime that ruled in the colonial period. The elite even tried to prevent revolts by making certain activities illegal. Teaching Marxism and communism, even if the teacher is not promoting the ideas, was outlawed, and the teacher who was teaching it was jailed without trial (p. 101). This reaction stemmed from colonialism because communism promoted a different form of government with different leaders and different policies. Making these changes would result in a revolution, so colonialist powers and certain governments outlawed the practice in order to prevent the rebellions ahead of time. Neocolonialism is related to these problems by the country still relying on the previous settlers. The country is shown to have very few rich people, and the majority of the population being very poor. The rich citizens were mostly made up of the previous white settlers and their descendants. This can be shown by the settlers in the novel. During colonial times, Settler Williams controlled the land, the produce, and the materials that Matigari slaved over (p. 18). In fact, the entire nation was under similar rule due to the colonization of the country. After decolonization, the settlers received the land and the same power that Settler Williams had (p. 38-41). This created the issue of neocolonialism in the country by allowing the previous settlers to keep their land, power, and wealth. The country still depended on these settlers because they had the power over the economy

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and the influence over the government. Their power was further increased through giving the Minister for Truth and Justice and His Excellency Ole Excellence personal shares in the settlers' company (p. 90). This created a larger influence over the country than they already had. Another relation to neocolonialism is through John Boy's actions. If Settler Williams is the representation of colonialism, then John Boy is the symbol of neocolonialism. John Boy is one of the new people in control, but he is only there because of his allegiance to the old colonial power and former settlers. This exact situation occurs in neocolonialism because no land reform is put into place. The country reverts to a colonial-like period with wealthy landowners of mixed races. Therefore, the country is still dependent on the colonial power because decolonization does not happen in an instant. The country becomes stuck in the neocolonial period because it cannot function fully without the old settlers. Decolonization then takes years to fully take root because of the country's dependency on economic and political aid.