



Letter to Nyuki from Post-Colonial Aethina

Author
Komungaro
Joan Mbabazi





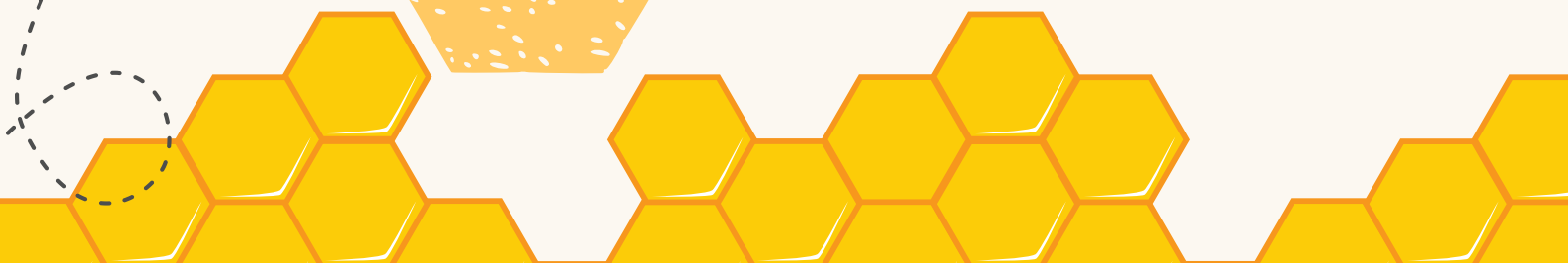
Aethina's birth was commemorated by a majestic flag flapping in the wind, signalling the end of an era and the promise of a new future of autonomy and self-determination.





Nyuki, did you know that our newfound freedom, dreams, and hopes will be thwarted when our colonisers oversee the construction of a new prison, its walls transparent, its form fragile and destructible yet hauntingly eternal in presence?

Inside the precinct of this prison, our leaders are the prison guards. Our colonisers have puppeteered them to extract every bit of labour from us to keep this machine running. They have also been instructed to keep us in a state of social deracination, chronic unemployment, and wage theft to whip us into submission. Our fate is in the hands of private entities and multilateral lenders who have huge stakes in our education, food and nutrition, health, transport, housing, industrial development etcetera.


The inequality gorge that has been created by these conditions is insurmountable. It has launched us into a space brimming with fragmentation along ethnic, gender, class and racial lines, used to paint crime. Some crimes are black, brown or white. These colours are further used to determine the nature and duration of punishment, which has *coincidentally* targeted majorly black and brown bodies in the periphery and the imperial core. We have become spectators of our existence. We are trapped in a cycle where our labour is the only currency. We toil endlessly to create and produce, at the expense of our own lives, but the fruits of our labour remain out of reach, locked behind walls of unaffordable prices. The choice to stop, rest and reclaim our time is a life sentence to years of generational destitution.

The neocolonial stooges, our prison guards, installed by our colonisers, have gained immense wealth from our exploitation. They share the profits from selling our labour and resources with their masters, in exchange for keeping this machine running! They have been propped up by our colonisers and international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund(IMF) and World Bank, giving them access to power and international legitimacy.






In exchange for supporting systems that exploit us to the bone, they receive military aid and financial assistance that strengthens their grip on power. They have taken over all state institutions (the army, high court, parliament), turned democratic procedures that would accelerate their demise into circus shows and stifled any form of radical political organising just to maintain and sustain their grip on us. They rape, torture, kidnap and maim any dissenting individuals. Freedom of speech is an illusion. They have labelled us rebels, pigs, vagabonds, to dismiss and delegitimise our struggles against bad governance.



They have fancy names for their crimes. *Corruption, bureaucracy, nepotism, negligence* that only earn them a slap on the wrist instead of prison sentences, and in some instances, bigger positions. They write proposals for loans and grants in our name but spend the money funding their lavish lifestyles. They buy cars whose prices do not match our logistical realities. They take their kids to elite schools abroad while letting the schools back home fall into utter dilapidation. They pretend to promote science but don't even have the decency to pay medical interns or deploy them in areas with a low doctor-to-patient ratio, which is the entire country. They deploy state machinery to serve the interests of the wealthy elites and their masters; foreign corporations enforce infrastructural apartheid by displacing and dispossessing marginalised communities and pushing them into ghettos and slums. They distract us with morality codes by proposing and passing draconian laws under the guise of maintaining cultural purity, all while alienating huge factions of our people who existed before our colonisers reigned from social, economic and political participation.



There is a cresting wave of fear, anxiety, despondency, utter hopelessness and defeat sweeping through the masses. The machine is crumbling and down with the rest of us who did not ask to participate. Even though we are aware of its fragility, trembles at a small rock cast upon its shadow, it has successfully managed to sterilise our imagination. We are all exhausted, oscillating between being useful and being used up; we barely have time to nourish our souls, rest, recuperate, organise, re-strategise, and remind ourselves of our humanity. Our creative capabilities are slowly declining and regressing.





We have failed to manage beyond the rebellious strategies that our ancestors used. In preparation for its inevitable demise, we have been unable to adjust our resistance tactics to match the machine's surveillance mechanism, sharp fangs and pent-up aggression. While resistance is a sure way to our freedom, we must imagine new ways of living, restructuring our society, and representing the masses' political subjectivities beyond electoral politics, peaceful protests, and signing digital petitions. The empire has co-opted all of these to further its expansion. It is no wonder its existence feels natural and everlasting.

The essay above is an analysis of Nyuki, a political comic published by Akina Mama wa Afrika. Nyuki—Swahili for “bee”—is a symbolic story that follows the journey of bees, creatures known for their collective labour and communal strength. Using this allegory, the comic unpacks the legacies of colonialism, imperialism, and patriarchy, revealing how these forces have shaped modern wealth inequality. Told from a Pan-African feminist perspective, Nyuki challenges dominant narratives and reimagines taxation as a tool for justice, equity, and Ubuntu. Read the Nyuki Comic here [The Bee Story: A Metaphorical Tale of Wealth Disparity and The Need to Tax the Rich](#).



About the Author

Komungaro is a feminist scholar who draws experiences from ghetto communities to inform her writing.

